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The North-South Conflict as “True Global Conflict”

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1. Security policymakers have always operated on the assumption that the North-South conflict was never really a "true global conflict." Scenarios of a North-South military exchange of blows are, even since September 11th, as virtual and abstruse as they were during the revolutionary idolization of the sixties and seventies, which declared the heterogenous structure "Third World" to be a subject of world-revolution.
2. Peace and conflict researchers who oriented themselves to the normative model of "positive peace" have never tied the North-South conflict to security policy scenarios but rather to social and political conditions which Johan Galtung had already brought to the controversial concept of "structural violence" at the beginning of the seventies. Even with Willy Brandt such concepts turn up which, at any rate, manifest too little consideration of very distinct developments in the South.
3. The "Group of 77" founded in 1964 came about as a kind of trade union for the Third World and utilized principally in the seventies the stormy UNCTAD conferences to state, with ever-increasing confidence and aggressiveness, its demands for a comprehensive New International Economic Order. This NIEO soon became an inflammatory term behind which a heterogenous hodgepodge of developing nations assembled, although individual groups of countries understood the term differently according to their respectively different special interests. Because the East opportunistically supported their demands, even though it as well pursued its modest South-trade under world market conditions and for its own benefit, one really must speak concretely of a West-South conflict.
4. This group solidarisation got a powerful boost when, in 1973, the OPEC cartel directed its "oil weapon" against the seemingly too powerful West. Backed up by this demonstration of counteracting power, the "Group of 77" used its majority in authoritative UN commissions toward a policy of confrontation through resolutions. As a result, it confused voting power with negotiating power.
5. At the beginning of the seventies, the war in Vietnam as well as the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire and guerilla uprisings in Latin America seemed to herald the twilight of the gods for the Western-dominated international order. All kinds of revolutionary theories fell on fruitful soil in the heydays of extra-parliamentary opposition at politicised universities. Many a revolutionary theorist discovered the "periphery" as a new flashpoint of world revolution and sketched frightening scenarios of an international class struggle. The more they worked themselves up into such revolutionary hallucinations, the more they removed themselves from reality.
6. The West reacted to pressure from the South with the offer of a North-South dialogue which was staged as international theatre in several acts. The Cancun Summit constituted a sad climax (cf. the contribution by Oliver Rathkolb). It deteriorated, as Willy Brandt noted, into a shouting match between deaf men. The UNCTAD conferences in Belgrade (1983) and in Geneva (1987) buried all the expectations which the North-South dialogue had awakened at its onstart. The neo-liberalism of Reaganism and Thatcherism put an end to all notions of a regulative New International Economic Order.
7. When the end neared for the era of great resolutions which aimed at imposing a New International Economic Order, it became evident how fragile the South's much-invoked unity for action was and, therefore, its capability for conflict as well. The rhetoric of "common interests" had shrouded the process of differentiation within the South which justified distinct positions of interest with regard to the North. At the end of the eighties, the report of the Southern Commission headed by Julius Nyerere undertook yet another

desperate attempt to salvage the idea of *Collective Self-Reliance* wrapped up in a common "vision of the South."

8. The economic crisis of the eighties blocked all regional integration projects. At the same time conflicts between nations paralysed cooperative action. The Gulf War between Iran and Iraq weakened OPEC and blunted the "oil weapon." Various wars in Africa brought the OAU to the brink of dissolution and virtually invited foreign powers to intervene. Not until the nineties did globalization pressures encourage tendencies towards regionalisation of the international economy and the emergence of a regionalised world. North and South became categories which signified too little in international capital and trade relationships because the new international division of labour brought about principally a polarisation between the ascending and descending nations of the South. Thus the South became frayed not only at its edges, as Lothar Brock had asserted in his objection to the thesis of the "end of the Third World."
9. By the end of the eighties at the latest, the question was put whether it had not become high time to bid farewell to the concept of the North-South conflict. Even the buzz words which had suggested a Southern capacity for conflict went out of fashion. But the question remained whether in the North-South conflict a structural conflict applied which manifested itself not only in growing social polarisation but also in the North-South gradient of powers. The power relationships in international politics and economics resembled oligarchical power cartels. The arrogance of power produced anti-Western sentiments everywhere in the South which came to be expressed in a furtive gloating over the terror attacks against the symbols of Western economic and military might.
10. If the North-South conflict is still considered to be a "true global conflict," then it manifests itself most readily in this unequal division of powers. The Brandt Report had already advocated not only a redistribution of wealth, but also a new distribution of power, because that determines the international system's rules of the game. An inclination to violence arises when dialogue and negotiations fail to produce conditions for living together in the "global village" which do not heavily offend the sense of justice and the life interests of groups and societies. This is the deep structure of the North-South conflict which the 11th of September, 2001, brought to light.

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort.