Online Seminar Report

Kyoto Peacebuilding Center
Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan (GPAJ)
AFICS-Japan

Legacy of Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Omnilateralism
Presented by
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And
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December 4, 2021

Opening Remarks

Yasushi Akashi (Former Under-Secretary-General of the UN)

In the early 1990s, Namibia, Cambodia, Mozambique, and El Salvador can be pointed as successful cases of the UN peacekeeping operations combined with peacebuilding. However, in the middle of the 1990s, the UN experienced setbacks in Somalia, Rwanda, and Former Yugoslavia. In this way, the UN had both successful and unsuccessful experiences in the 1990s, and the Brahimi Report evaluated precisely the causes of success and failure including a series of suggestions and proposals in his report issued in August 2000.

Talking about UN's operations in Former Yugoslavia, it can be characterized as the discordance between the UN and the U.S., more precisely, between UN Secretary-General (SG) Boutros Boutros-Ghali and the U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright over the use of NATO air force in peacekeeping operations in specific "safe areas". We need to evaluate the reasonableness of NATO airpower in places such as the "Srebrenica" safe area. The insistence by the U.S. on the full-scale NATO air strikes was considered a hindrance to the overall strategic peace. In the case of military deployment to certain areas of Croatia, Albright was unhappy with Boutros-Ghali, who insisted that instead of sending UN Peacekeepers, stronger multi-national forces should be deployed. There were also other confrontations between Boutros-Ghali and Albright, and it ended up with the U.S. vetoing the renewable of the 5-year term of Boutros-Ghali who became the first SG who was denied serving two consecutive terms. It shows that the antagonism against P5 countries, especially, superpowers, makes the UN functionality difficult.

Finally, I would like to highlight the brilliant vision of Boutros-Ghali after Dag Hammarskjöld and amplify his distinguished accomplishments.

Presentations

Prof. Sukehiro Hasegwa (Former UN-SRSG in Timor-Leste)

During the period of 5 years when Boutros-Ghali was the Secretary-General from 1992 to 1996, I served as the Manager of the UNV Electoral Advisors in Cambodia under the direction of then SRSG Akashi in 1993, then Director for Policy Planning in UNOSOM II in Somalia in 1994 and Resident Coordinator in Rwanda from 1995 to 1996. During this period, Boutros-Ghali issued three Agendas for Peace, Development, and Democratization.

A. Three Agendas

● Agenda for Peace 1992

In his first Agenda for Peace, Boutros-Ghali pointed out the need for a comprehensive approach to peace and security, incorporating preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. He also drew the attention of the international community to the reality that peace and development could no longer be regarded as separate undertakings.

● Agenda for Development 1994

In his second Agenda Boutros-Ghali issued in May 1994 at the request of the General Assembly, he indicated development as a multidimensional enterprise that involves more than economic growth and the development of the society as a whole that requires good governance.

● Agenda for Democratization 1996

In 1996, Boutros-Ghali presented this last agenda at the end of his tenure as the Secretary-General after Christmas just one week before the end of his term as the Secretary-General. This agenda reflected not only his understanding that peace, development, and democracy are inextricably linked but also his belief that the process of democratization must take place not only within States but the international community as a whole.

B. The Agenda for Democratization

What I find of historical importance is Boutros-Ghali`s understanding of democracy and democratization that remain relevant 25 years since their publications. As you recall, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was a euphoria in the West, celebrating the triumph of liberal democracy and the end of history. Immanuel Kant's proposition that perpetual peace is possible only when there is categorial justice was adopted by John Rawls in his Theory of Justice and became the foundation for good governance based on the principle of democracy.

- Democracy

Boutros-Ghali accepted the merit of democratic governance, but he thought that there was no one model of democracy suitable to all societies. The path adopted by each society depends upon its historical circumstances, socio-economic situation and political will, and the commitment of people and actors too in any particular way of governance. Boutros-Ghali said, therefore, each State must be free to determine for itself how to adapt and tailor the democratic institutional structures to enhance the welfare of its people.

- Democratization

Democratization requires a comprehensive approach, addressing not only the holding of free and fair elections but also the construction of a political culture of democracy and the development and maintenance of institutions to support the ongoing practice of democratic politics. Democratization must seek to achieve a balance between the institutions of the State and civil society. For democracy to take roots in society, democratization within States must also be supported by a process of democratization among States and the international community.

C. Boutros-Ghali on Global Problems and Solutions

1. Boutros-Ghali found the domination of the UN and other international organizations by what he called global forces or powers. He said the existing decision-making system on global issues at the UN system was dominated by major powers, particularly P5s, that can run counter to democratization within a State and internationally and undermine people's commitment to democracy. The structures of the United Nations system need to be made more democratic in terms of the decision-making process.

2. Increased access to communications facilities such as radio and television would raise people`s awareness of problems and opportunities and lead them to demand more accountability, and more participation in governance —and more say in the decisions that affect their lives.

3. Continued domination by global powers and their rivalry would become "a source of individual insecurity, social disarray, and dangerous fragmentation, creating fertile ground for fanaticism, ethnocentrism, and isolationism."

Lack of participation and accountability in governance at the international level would undermine the process of democratization within the State. For all States, democratization at the international level has become an indispensable mechanism for global problem-solving in a way that is accountable and acceptable to all and with the participation of all concerned.

Dominance by one country or group of countries must over time evolve into a democratic international system in which all countries can participate, along with new non-State actors involved in international affairs.

In conclusion, Boutros-Ghali called for three steps to take to solve the growing global problems.

First, transform the structures and decision-making process of the United Nations based on the democratic principle.

Secondly, enable the participation of new actors on the international scene by building their capacity effectively

Thirdly, there is a need for fostering a culture of democracy internationally.

These steps will not only require a society of States committed to democratic principles and processes but also demand an enlarged international civil society deeply involved in democratic institutions, whether State, inter-State, or supra-State, private or quasi-private; committed to democratic practices, procedures, and political pluralism; and composed of peoples ingrained with those habits of openness, fairness, and tolerance that have been associated with democracy since ancient times.

D.   An assessment of Boutros-Ghali`s diagnosis of the global problems and proposed solutions

1. Boutros-Ghali proved excellent in diagnosing the problems faced by the United Nations and the international community, but he was ahead of time in calling for a fundamental transformation of the international system.

2. Nonetheless, there were some signs of progress made in the advancement of human rights, particularly women, and the awareness of citizens especially the youth about the accountability of governments.

Assessment

1. Excellent insightful diagnosis of global forces at work

2. Boutros-Ghali was not yet fully aware of the impact of globalization:

     (a) Impact on the Earth's ecosystem, and

     (b) Transnational migration, terrorism, epidemic

Also, he did not emphasize strongly the negative impact of human greed & animosity which will increase the growing divide among peoples of different races and ethnicities.

3. Boutros-Ghali did not also foresee the effect of social media and other communication facilities that motivated the disadvantaged people to move across national borders to reach a better world. Also he was unaware of the accelerating advancement of artificial intelligence and its role in the rapid development of algorithms , biotechnology, and singularity in 2045.

4. Boutros-Ghali's central theme that I support strongly is the need to transform the global governance structure from that of the Westphalia system to the higher system of global governance.

5. A century and a half ago, Japan succeeded in building a central government out of 260 independent daimyo clans and realized unity, stability, and peace in Japan. We need to change the global system of

governance, as Einstein said, it is insanity to be doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. What Boutros-Ghali tried to change the mindset was a world revolution in the mindset of world leaders by issuing the three agendas for peace, development and democratization.

Dr. Wolfgang Papé (Former European Commission Official)

I would like to start with two concrete examples from welfare (pandemic) and warfare (Afghanistan) where the outdated understanding of the 'nation' leads to the dysfunction of public governance. Above all for the issues of globalization and in particular climate change, we must reach beyond the only western-inspired and narrowly nation-based so-called multilateralism. Omnibus (for and by all) ought to be the new vehicle: to widen the input of non-Western experiences, and to include non-state stakeholders in governance.

The COP already signals this trend towards omnilateralism with Eastern understanding of cycles for the environment and 'holism' beyond the rather Western individualism. Likewise, NGOs -- more trusted than national officials -- increasingly enhance global commitments. However, narrow-minded and parochial politicians still claim diminishing national 'sovereignty' against global solutions by consensus of all relevant stakeholders.

Direct democracy with quantitative voting may suit the directly informed local level where you can move to 'Village B' if outvoted. However, already at the level of regional integration (e.g. EU, ASEAN etc.), because of their complexity and bearing, the qualitative requirements for the deliberations in the public interest render simple crowdsourcing for decisions inappropriate. The higher the stage of governance, the more the voices of expertise and civil society are needed. As there is 'No Planet B' as a refuge for decisions at the global level, the current trend prevails towards the inclusion of all voices of legitimate stakeholders for the common public good, i. e. omnilaterally.

Panel Discussions

Professor Heung-Soon Park (Former dean of the graduate school, Sun Moon University in Korea, and Former President of the Korean Academic Council on the United Nations System)

The legacy of Boutros-Ghali has not been sufficiently studied in the scholastic community and UN circle. Through his three reports - Agenda for Peace, Agenda for Development, and Agenda for Democratization - Boutros-Ghali presented provocative vision under the transformative, transitional and confusing time in the early 1990's when the different notions of the End of History and the Clash of Civilizations existed at the

same time. Under these challenging times, Boutros-Ghali was bold enough to seek for his second term. I am wondering what his reaction was when he failed to get his second term, and what differences he could have made if he had been elected for his second term.

Regarding Dr. Papé's presentation on omnilateralism, his idealism, globalism, and cosmopolitanism are in tune with current trends of the world. He also suggested interesting ideas of consensus-building imitating the EU, however, the question comes out about practical steps for the scholastic community to move forward towards the omnilateralism in reality, especially in East Asia where the political leaders are afraid of losing their grips and the political situations are not bright.

Ambassador Yanagisawa (Former Ambassador of Japan to Malawi and Former Vice President of JICA)

With regard to Boutros-Ghali's "Agenda for Democratization", I agreed with the idea that each country should pursue its own path for democratization, because of the horizontal state-to-people relationship and total liberty of people, which are thought to be pre-conditions for democracy, are missing in many non-Western countries. I would like to mention that democratization and development should proceed hand in hand so that people's education level, social structure and political awareness will evolve over time. I also would like to share my observation that while Boutros-Ghali sought to create a kind of "super-government", Dr. Pape's "Omnilateralism" means an international community of the people, reflecting the technology development over 30 years, which enabled people's participation in global politics.

Dr. Alistair Edgar (Associate Professor of Political Science at Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada)

I would like to ask for any views on the institutional and organizational lesson from the experience which Boutros-Ghali had by being vetoed by the United States. By extending the period of the UN Secretary-General (SG)'s single term up to 7 years or so, it would reduce the problem of spending the first term by trying not to upset any of P5 countries. On the other hand, if SG does not need to be re-elected by P5 countries at the end of the first term, SG would be encouraged to challenge P5 countries and the relations between SG and P5 countries might be more problematic.

Dr. Herman Salton (Associate Professor of International Relations at the International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan)

First, we need to remember that "nations" are different from "states". "Nations" refer to certain communities that share a cultural, ethnic, or religious bond, whereas "states" are political and administrative entities. In this respect, the UN has never been about "nations" but about states—they, and only they, are constituent parts of the UN. In this respect, talking of "United Nations" is actually a misnomer: ironically, a more accurate description would be "The United States", rather than "United Nations".

Secondly, if it is true that no single model of democracy exists, how can we "democratize" international organizations such as the UN? On the basis of what principles? In line with this argument, we also need to think about what kind of democracy we want to bring to international relations.

Thirdly and finally, we should remember that the P5 may also control the Secretary-General (SG) through the USGs. Many appointments of Under-Secretaries-General are decided by states, especially by the P5, rather than by the SG. So the SG is not only controlled through the veto power of the P5 but also through the appointment of his cabinet members.

Free Discussions

Ambassador Takahiro Shinyo (Former Ambassador to the United Nations and Germany)

I would like to point out three things. First, UN Charter prescribes human rights and fundamental freedoms, but there is no single word "democracy". By raising the concept of "democratization", Boutros-Ghali perhaps tried to listen to voices of small and medium countries to balance the power in the UN system, coping with the monopoly of big powers.

Secondly, omnilateralism presented by Dr. Papé is idealistic. Looking at the reality of ASEAN, for example, it is based on a consensus decision-making principle. Because of it, nothing moves on, when controversial, and no important decision is made. In the case of the EU, its decision-making is not decided always by consensus but by voting, so things can move. However, the EU also lacks democracy, and that's the reason Brexit occurred and East European countries turn their backs to the EU.

Thirdly, pandemic clearly has shown that only sovereign countries can master their own problems. It is revealed that WHO and EU seldom make initiatives, and we are going back to the sovereignty again. Accordingly, we should not be so idealistic, and should not expect the UN too much.

Lastly again, there is no word "democracy" in the UN Charter, and we have to be careful about the

definition of "democracy". The most important thing is human rights and fundamental freedoms as prescribed in the Article 1 of the UN Charter.

Professor Hasegawa:
Boutros-Ghali was bitter about the United States, and he criticized that the United States treaded the UN as the extension of its foreign policy and used it as a tool. Do you have any views on it?

Ambassador Shinyo:
  Boutros-Ghali was very much interested in Admiral Togo, who defeated Russia, and every time he came to Japan, he always visited Togo Shrine. It shows that Boutros-Ghali was not willing to follow big powers. He was also interested in the reform of the Security Council to challenge the hegemon of big powers. However, it can be said that Boutros-Ghali was careless about dealing with big powers and did not pay enough attention to the feelings of big powers.

Ambassador Tadamichi Yamamoto (Former Ambassador to UNESCO and Former UN SRSG in Afghanistan)
  When the Security Council does not function due to the dominance of superpowers, and things go in different directions, other mechanisms such as the wisemen's council need to be incorporated to streamline the decision-making mechanism at the UN.

Ambassador Tadanori Inomata (Former Ambassador to Costa Rica)
  Looking at ceasefire agreements at the corona pandemic period, it can be said that the global governance of economic social aspects was working linking with security and political dimension at the UN.
  Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of the UN System's operational activities culminated in the adoption of a new QCPR resolution. Consultations leading up to the adoption of the resolution were held in a virtual format for the first time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which can be considered as the example of recent achievement of global governance.

Akio Nakayama (Former IOM Country Director in Myanmar)

In Myanmar, the UN has not had good relations with the government even before the military coup because of Rohinga crisis, etc. However, the UN took active initiatives to combat Covid-19 in consultation with the NLD government in Myanmar. For example, IOM coordinated inter-agency response to the immediate needs of returning migrants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The UN country team faces significant challenges in response to the post-coup multiple crises including the continuous health crisis.

Ambassador Shinyo:

Only the Security Council decision is legally binding. Economic and Social Council can issue recommendations, and it's not legally binding. If we stick to the consensus principle, nothing moves. The reform of the Security Council is impossible if we try to touch on permanent membership status. However, if we work on semi-permanent status, it will be possible. We need to see the reality.

Besides, we need to keep the United States in the UN system. The U.S. walked out from UNESCO, Human Rights Committee and WHO, but the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the U.S. is filled by China, so we need to make efforts to keep the U.S. in the UN.

Mr. Ken Inoue (Former UN Chief Governance Advisor in Timor-Leste and JICA Senior Advisor on Democratic Governance)

Looking at 'system' aspect of democracy, there are so many kinds of political system which can claim 'democratic'. Then, if we consider the 'value' aspect of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as prescribed in the UN Charter, are essential.

To be realistic, we need to be reminded of the words of Daj Hammarskjöld "UN's role is to stop us from falling into the hell, not to bring us to the heaven".

Prepared by Keiichi Tanabe

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