

WEEKLYLEAKS

By Johan Galtung (*)

The revelations contained in the wave of WikiLeaks documents that have taken the world by storm are an indictment not only of US diplomacy but of today's diplomacy in general. What kind of ludicrous language is this, so focused on the pathology of mainline media discourse? It is negative and concentrated on individual actors, usually from the elites of elite countries. It is immature gossip, the kind of "analysis" of power typical of adolescents. Where is the analysis of culture and structure which is far more important than actors who come and go? Nowhere; they are incapable of it. Where are positive ideas? Where are the ideas about how to convert the challenges, such as climate change, into cooperation for mutual and equal benefit? Like water distillation projects using solar energy at Israel's borders with Lebanon and Palestine? Like positive US-Iran cooperation on alternative energy?

The state system, which was established to balance the interests of states in an anarchic world, has failed, as demonstrated by the numerous wars it has generated. It is fading, as colonialism had faded earlier, surviving only in the US empire, which is also fading.

Nationalism, in contrast, is on the rise. A nation is a group of people with a common culture (including religion), a common language, a common history and vision of the future, and a territorial attachment to a "homeland". There are about 2000 nations in the world, and only 200 states, meaning that most states include many nations, usually with one dominant nation. But rising nationalism offers no good solution to the world's problems either.

We need and deserve something better -not perfect, but much better. We cannot build globalisation on such absurdities. And yet some kind of globalisation is inevitable, as a consequence of the new global modes of transportation and communication.

The late German physicist and philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker advocated the concept of "Weltinnenpolitik" (global

domestic policy), a vision of one global culture and a world state. To be sustainable, such a system would need to protect a livable natural environment and satisfy the four basic human needs: survival, welfare, identity and freedom.

Since violence is the consequence of unresolved conflicts, the key to survival is conflict resolution.

To guarantee people's welfare -meeting the essential material needs of food, housing, clothing, health care, and education- they must have an income they can live on. The necessary resources are available, the only problem is that today their distribution is extremely unequal.

A global identity would require unity in diversity, welcoming the rich variety of cultural expressions while recognising that their common goal is human happiness. It would require respecting all world views that respect the others. It would be wrong to try to impose the culture of a single nation on everyone else. That would not be sustainable and would generate resistance.

Freedom means having options in one's choice of cultures and structures. Freedom encourages the unlimited creativity of the human species in reflecting on how it is programmed and how it can change its programmes.

Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the right to live in domestic and world structures that make the realisation of human rights possible. This implies that conflict resolution becomes a human right and duty. So does an economy in which basic physical needs are guaranteed. Currently, the bailout of banks absorbs about 90 percent of the funds made available by governments from taxpayers' money, as compared to 10 percent made available to stimulate a basic needs-oriented economy. This proportion should be reversed.

Another implication of Article 28 is the need for mutual respect, curiosity, and learning through dialogues of civilisations. It also implies a world federation, maybe of regions and big states. A unitary world state would impose the unity of one civilisation on the rest, which is unacceptable. A loose world confederation would have too

little unity. The best solution is a world federation.

Who are the people who would be capable of realising a world culture based on basic human needs within a world federation? Thanks to WikiLeaks the writing on the wall is clear: not the current brand of diplomats! US diplomacy is revealed. Most of what has come out is known or predictable as elements of imperial policies, even in friendly countries, given the way the US sees itself as an "indispensable nation". Paranoid, it suspects revolt and a lack of servility everywhere while it pushes its "national interest" at the expense of anybody else's and, of course, any truly global domestic policy.

The diplomats of the WikiLeaks documents belong to an era of the state system that we have to put behind us. They should be retrained or retired and thousands of new civil servants should be trained for world domestic policy. They must drop the ridiculous secrecy and confidentiality in how they are dealing with us, humans and nature alike. They have no right to hide their incompetence behind veils of secrecy. Democracy means transparency, not feudal games.

Wikileaks, thanks. May you become Weeklyleaks. We need you.
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