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A Regional Approach to Conflict Prevention and Management

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Abstract

This paper deals with the usefulness of a regional approach to conflict prevention and management, theoretically as well as empirically. Conflict prevention, peace-keeping and post-conflict reconstruction is a field where regional cooperation has a great potential, but where the success stories are relatively few. Unfortunately, the same is true for many multilateral solutions and instruments. This only proves that the whole approach to conflict prevention and management is misconceived and too much focused on shortsighted ‘fire-brigade’ actions. The case studies (Europe and West Africa) in this paper show that regional conflict prevention and management usually comes too late, with the wrong means, and that post-conflict reconstruction is poorly understood, underfinanced, and generally neglected. It also becomes evident that there is a largely unsettled relationship between multilateral efforts, including those approved by the UN Security Council, and regional approaches to conflict management and prevention.

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Introduction

Due to globalization and the end of the Cold War the world order is moving beyond national sovereignty. Even if threats can come from different sources and levels of society (domestic as well as international) a post-sovereign political rationality assumes that solutions to problems of security must to an increasing extent be found in transnational structures. Conflict management is consequently getting internationalised, whether on a global or regional level. From having been seen as a rival approach to universalism and multilateralism regional approaches to conflict prevention and management have become increasingly important.

The idea that conflicts within a certain region are best dealt with directly by the region concerned is not new; in fact it was discussed already when the UN was formed and also mentioned in the UN Charter. In the earlier debate, however, the 'region' was simply conceived as an intermediate actor, to which a security task could be *delegated* from the multilateral level. With increasing regionalization, however, the region becomes an actor in its own right, transforming itself from object to subject. Most multidimensional regional organizations have developed some kind of institutionalized conflict mechanism (e.g. EU, ECOWAS, ASEAN, SADC). However, hand in hand with increasing regionalisation the relationship between multilateral (UN) and regional approaches have become strenuous and diffuse.

This paper takes its departure in that an increasing number of interventions are regional rather than multilateral. The aim of the paper is to provide a rather simple framework for assessing the usefulness of a regional approach to conflict prevention and conflict management during various phases of a conflict. The framework is then deliberately applied to two non-Asian cases: Europe and West Africa, as a means to contribute to a broader comparative debate on the role of regional approaches to conflict prevention and management.¹ Given the fact that a regional approach must not be treated in isolation from multilateral approaches, the UN

¹ Sections of this part of the paper draw on Hettne and Söderbaum (2005).

Security Council in particular, the relationship between UN and regional organizations also receives special attention.

Regions are thus important actors in conflicts and complex humanitarian emergencies (CHEs). The emphasis on regional interventions is triggered by the belief that a regional organization can better than the immediately concerned states take the role of mediator in ethnic and other conflicts, and in terms of culture and values still be closer to the parties than extra-regional mediators. As will be shown below there is, however, also the risk of taking sides in the conflict, or exploiting the situation for political and economic gains.

Regionalization of conflict may have such dire consequences for a region with weak institutions that intervention has to be improvised as an emergency. As will be revealed in the cases below, such military interventions are often suboptimal, but ineffectiveness may nevertheless sometimes be preferable to inaction. At least there are learning processes involved. We have to recognize that most international and regional (and unilateral) interventions in domestic conflicts so far have been problematic, even failures, mainly because of the extreme complexity of intervening in a society in conflict. The discussion below concerning what we call the conflict circle will pinpoint the complexities involved and indicate when and with what means external interventions should take place.

The Analysis of Conflict Management

Conflicts are not sudden events but should rather be seen as historical structures that are transformed over time. We suggest six crucial elements in a framework particularly adapted for analysis of external (including regional) involvement in protracted conflicts and crises: (1) the early prevention, or 'provention' of conflict, (2) preventive diplomacy, (3) modes of external intervention, (4) peace settlement, (5) conflict resolution, and (6) post-conflict reconstruction. The analysis builds on the idea of a 'conflict circle' as a simplified way of understanding conflict dynamics, but it must be emphasized that there is no 'natural history of conflict' in the real world. The 'conflict circle' could be relatively short, if conflict prevention

and resolution takes place before the conflict turns violent, or very long, if early conflict prevention fails.

1. *Provention*. The very first phase precedes the ‘conflict’ even in its latent form. This is called ‘provention’, combining the promotion of conditions conducive to peace and the prevention of conditions conducive to violence (Burton, 1990). The normative position taken here is to try to prevent a conflict before it even emerges by dealing with structural root causes. In this context we are particularly interested in a regional approach, where ‘provention’ would imply an effort to remove the very root-causes of conflicts inherent in the usually imbalanced development process. Hence the importance of ‘development regionalism’, which is a way to break vicious circles. International development assistance has also a preventive role, to the extent that a conflict-consciousness is ‘mainstreamed’ into international development cooperation. This is, for instance, acknowledged in the Cotonou-agreement between the EU and the ACP-countries, which apart from conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction also deals with the issue of what here is called provention.

2. *Prevention*. One source of the current interest in prevention is Boutros-Ghali’s *Agenda for Peace* (1992), where he called for early warning systems, fact-finding missions and confidence-building measures. The idea caught on and a number of regional associations have some conflict prevention body, at least on paper. There are also an increasing number of specialized NGOs. The first preventive intervention was in Macedonia. Boutros-Ghali’s definition is by itself a stage approach as he defines preventive diplomacy as ‘action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur’ (Boutros-Ghali, 1992: 11). In this definition the first stage seems to coincide with what above was called provention, and the third stage implies that the conflict has already turned violent. Here conflict prevention is confined to the period (or stage of the conflict circle) after it has become manifest but before it has turned violent.

3. *Intervention*. By intervention is mostly meant military intervention in order to put an end to a violent conflict or a CHE. Whether it is termed ‘humanitarian intervention’ or not is due to the nature of the crisis. Distinctions can be made among different modes of military intervention in acute security crises:

- The *unilateral* carried out by one intervenor without asking for permission

- The *bilateral* where there is some kind of (more or less voluntary) agreement between the intervenor and the country in which the intervention is made.
- The *plurilateral* by an ad hoc group of countries or some more permanent form of non-territorial security alliance.
- The *regional* carried out by a regional organization.
- The *multilateral*, finally, normally means a UN-led or at least UN-sanctioned operation, which implies the involvement of the whole ‘international community’.

Here we are mainly concerned with regional and multilateral engagement as the two modes which, preferably in some kind of combination, should be the predominant form of intervention in the future, to the extent that legality and legitimacy continue to play a role in international relations. Unilateral and most plurilateral interventions lack legality in terms of international law but may on some occasions appear legitimate (see the discussion of Kosovo below).

In this context it worth pointing out that in spite of the increasing importance of military interventions by regional organizations there is no coherent data/database (that we know of) that covers regional military interventions in ongoing armed conflicts (with at least 25 battle-related deaths).² In our preparatory work we have listed 17 military regional interventions in ongoing armed conflicts: Arab League of Nations in Palestine (1948) and in Lebanon (1976); EU in DRC (2003), Macedonia (2003) and Bosnia Herzegovina (2004); IGAD in Somalia (2005?), AU in Burundi (2003) and Sudan/Darfur (2004); ECOWAS in Ivory Coast (2002), Liberia (1990-97/2003), Sierra Leone (1996-1999), Guinea Bissau (1998-1999); SADC in DRC (1998) and Lesotho (1998); CIS in Tajikistan (1993) and Georgia (Abkhazia/1994); and PIF in Solomon Islands (2003).

4. *Peace settlement* is the formal ending of a conflict and may include principles of conflict resolution to be applied, or simply be confined to conditions of cease-fire. There are also endings which are not formalized in a peace agreement, for instance a military victory of one side, or when fighting reaches a stalemate. In the latter cases long term peace-building is usually not considered. The idea of a ‘hurting stalemate’ is based on the strategy of separating

² The Correlates of War Project, Minorities at Risk Project, Keesings Contemporary Archives, Uppsala Conflict Database, Conflict Barometer/Heidelberg Institute on International Conflict Research, Overt Military Interventions, and the International Crisis Behaviour Project have no mapping of military interventions carried out by regional organizations.

the conflict, presumably having a logic of its own, and social change in general (Zartman, 1985). In accordance with the more holistic approach favoured here, it is, on the contrary, essential that the terms of the peace agreement address the root causes. The fact that so many peace agreements do not hold is the main argument to focus on root causes. There are also more ‘superficial’ reasons to continue a war, namely the many vested interests (the greed factor), which develop in the course of warfare.

5. *Conflict resolution* may of course take place before a conflict turns violent. Here we discuss post-conflict resolutions. In any case the way out of the conflict goes through political restructuring of some kind, i.e. a new political relationship between the contending groups. There are in principle three forms of conflict resolution in divided societies. First, constitutional change, modifying the skewed ethnic power structure and establishing a power-sharing arrangement within a particular state formation. Second, the dismemberment of the state, sometimes accompanied by an organized ‘ethnic cleansing’, is an option that remains open when the preferred solution—constitutional reform—has failed. Third, a completely reversed process is the integration of neighbouring states into a regional formation (ultimately to become a regional security community), a process, providing solutions to ethnic tensions simply by downplaying the role of borders, so central to the old Westphalian order based on national sovereignty.

6. *Post-conflict reconstruction* is completely different from the physical rebuilding of war-torn societies (for instance in post-second world war Europe) in which the inner societal coherence is still intact. In the process of normalization it is of utmost importance that the destroyed society is reintegrated in the regional economy, communication network, and system of resources in a supportive way through regional cooperation.

Case Studies

In what follows we investigate two contrasting cases: the Balkans and West Africa. These two cases are undoubtedly intriguing in their own right, but they are deliberately chosen in order to go beyond Asia as a stimulus of a broader comparative debate on the role of regional approaches to conflict prevention and management. In the simultaneous humanitarian crises in West Africa and in the Balkans there was initially little interest from the outside world. The

Liberian crisis was the first in a number of conflicts in the West African war zone. It started during the Gulf Crisis (1990-91) and the Yugoslav break-up (beginning in 1991) happened before Maastricht was a reality (1993). Thus, in neither case was there much preparedness for what happened. The institutional development was crisis-led.

The Balkans

The Balkans proved to be a difficult challenge for regional crisis management, and we are still not able to assess the outcome of the attempts at conflict resolution. One can speak of a primitive 'regional security complex' (with high negative security interdependencies) (Buzan & Waever, 2003); peoples are split among several states; there is no formal regionalism; there are few spontaneous regional activities apart from smuggling; and there is certainly no regional civil society. It provides a major security dilemma for the new Europe, since the subregion must be seen as forming part of Europe rather than constituting its 'near abroad'.

The various attempts at conflict prevention in the Yugoslav crisis appeared as rather ambiguous and tentative, as the situation as such was unprecedented. Bosnia and later Kosovo are examples where prevention have been confused and ineffective. In the Bosnian crisis, gradually every conceivable security organization (the EC troika, UN, OSCE, NATO) became involved in a sort of trial and error process, and ultimately an ad hoc group of great powers, rather reminiscent of the 19th century type of power balance politics known as the Concert of Europe, took over the negotiations (plurilateralism). Ultimately, the US pillar of NATO, leading to the Dayton agreement in November 1995, was the single most efficient factor in putting an end to the Bosnian war – if not the conflict.

In the case of Kosovo, the sovereign state of Yugoslavia was attacked by NATO because of terrorizing its own (Albanian) population. As a consequence, part of its territory was de facto occupied and cut off from the rest of the country (1999). This intervention was also of still more doubtful legitimacy in terms of existing international law. Kosovo was important not only for crisis management in Europe but also for the changing legal status of intervention in humanitarian emergencies. The NATO intervention not only acknowledged such a right (and duty) but also bypassed the UN since a veto could be expected in the Security Council. The subsequent Independent International Commission on Kosovo took a bold approach in

acknowledging the possibility of external intervention by a ‘coalition of the willing’ (here called plurilateral intervention) even in the absence of multilateral (UN) sanction. The Kosovo report says that this intervention in the light of then existing international law was ‘illegal’ but ‘legitimate’ (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000).

The first really preventive *regional* intervention was in Macedonia, which has become a key testing ground for an independent, post-NATO European security policy. Unfortunately no ‘proventive’ measures (such as removing injustices and making the influence of ethnic groups more balanced) were taken in this case, which shows the unfortunate bias towards focusing on one method of intervention at the time. Few observers would thus consider the EU response to the Balkan crises (Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia) an unqualified success. The record has rather underlined the persistent power vacuum in a Europe searching for a viable security order, institutional responses lagging behind the events.

In the future the question of prosperity and peace in the Balkans will be a European (EU) responsibility. It seems necessary, however, to sort out who is doing what in the institutional overkill that characterizes the European integration. Even if the various security organizations declare that their cooperation is excellent, their mandates and objectives are not the same.

The Dayton model confirmed the ethnic cleansing during the war, as very few returning refugees could go to stay in their original homes. The subsequent peace process, which therefore turned out to be longer than was expected at the time (it is still not concluded), was supervised by a complex, rather improvised plurilateral organization led by NATO (its European pillar) and, in charge of civil affairs, a High Representative, representing the EU. Subsequent elections with increasingly nationalist outcomes show that the post-conflict reconstruction has been largely without results.

West Africa

The African continent is similarly plagued by insecurity and conflicts. Although there are of course exceptions, the security problem is not in the first instance defined by the conventional security dilemma, but arises rather due to domestic factors and the weakness or ‘failure’ of the states themselves. During the Cold War such intra-state crises were not allowed to escalate,

especially not into brutal civil wars, and were seldom regionalized as has been the case since the 1990s.

Although most contemporary conflicts in West Africa are defined as ‘domestic’, they are deeply embedded in a regional context and quickly become regionalized. This implies that the conventional distinctions between international and domestic and between state actors and other actors have become blurred and even lose much of their significance in the new situation. Instead of speaking of a larger number of isolated so-called civil wars, we may speak of regional war zones. The root causes of the various conflicts can be traced far back in the history and the political logic of these countries, including their international connections.

The Liberian crisis was the first to break out in a series of crises and coups in the West African war zone; a pattern there is still no end to. In the wake of the Liberian crisis, some ECOWAS member states agreed, in a rather improvised manner, on the establishment of a peace-keeping and peace-enforcement force, ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). In August 1990, an ECOMOG force, ‘Operation Liberty’, was sent to Liberia. Although it took several years of fighting, turmoil, and change of official rulers in neighbouring Sierra Leone, in 1997 ECOMOG was sent to this country as well, and more recently to other conflict sites around West Africa.

During much of the 1990s the ECOMOG was often met with positive reactions around the world, and was surrounded by claims that it gradually helped to solve the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. What have received much less attention, however, are the many problematic aspects of the regional interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. For instance, there was a heated split within ECOWAS itself regarding the ECOMOG intervention, and the fact that it would serve Nigeria’s myopic agenda. Nigeria was the most important actor behind the intervention, and the Nigerian dictator at the time, Ibrahim Babingida, warned the other West African leaders of a pattern of insurgencies throughout the region: ‘Today it is Liberia, tomorrow it could be any one of you’ (Adeleke, 1995: 577). The ECOMOG intervention was also contested by the OAU on the grounds that it was the OAU, and not ECOWAS, that had the legitimate mandate to intervene under the OAU Charter. Furthermore, in more or less all the cases the ECOMOG intervention forces became part of the conflicts and even fuelled further violence. The various groups, including ECOMOG, soon lost sight of why and whom they were fighting, but they all also became embroiled in the warlord political economy logic

of the war (Bøås, 2001: 711). Needless to say, in a situation when violence has already erupted, it can be difficult to refrain from the use of military force. But it is possible to conclude that the interventions were certainly not success stories. This is a similarity to the Balkans in spite of the great institutional differences.

There were clearly alternative strategies of conflict management and so-called ‘peace-making’ in West Africa. Conflict management and interventions were generally introduced too late and undertaken with the wrong means. As emphasized in the conflict circle, military interventions are often a direct result of the lack of proactive and preventive strategies in the first place. In general the regional interventions were short-sighted. It is believed that conflicts could be ‘solved’ by ‘quick-fix’ military solutions and ‘fire brigade’ operations, which seek to put everything back to what it used to be, or that the often deep-seated historical conflicts can be solved through peace agreements or multiparty elections. One fundamental problem in this regard is that conflict often continues soon after a cease-fire agreement has been signed and the intervention force has left the scene. Peace agreements are certainly necessary, but violence tends to break out again simply because the root causes of the conflict are not addressed. In cases where the political economy of warlordism has become deep-seated this is of course extremely difficult.

The immediate and medium-term challenge in the effort to consolidate security regionalism is to move towards a more coordinated, transparent, norm-based and institutionalized structure with proactive and preventive means as well as proper post-conflict reconstruction rather than the current ‘quick-fix’ strategies (Adibe, 1997). This implies that the ECOMOG, and other regional intervention projects, must transcend the present ‘fire brigade’ operations, whereby military intervention is conducted on an arbitrary basis, and in which personal relationships and the mood and temper of political leaders are allowed to destroy or manipulate the process. It would also prevent that the security organization stays/becomes an instrument in the hands of the political leaders which can be used against domestic opposition within the countries or for their own personal interests. For this to occur there needs to be a change of attitude on the part of politicians and the national bureaucracy as well as foreign donors on how to understand conflict dynamics and how to build peace.

Similarly, the special relationship to the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), which in fact was the first really organized partnership between UN and a

regional intervention force, is interesting, but a failure as well: ‘those looking for a model of UN burden-sharing with regional arrangements should be directed away from ECOWAS and Liberia’ (Adibe, 1997: 84). In spite of many important differences compared to Liberian case, the relationship between ECOMOG and the UN missions in Sierra Leone was not functioning smoothly either, and the most important lessons can perhaps be learnt from how this relationship should not be handled (Adebajo, 2004: 204-206). In spite of this we believe that a model between the UN and regional conflict management must be developed.

Conclusion

This paper has two overlapping aims: (i) to assess the usefulness of a regional approach to conflict prevention and management, and (ii) to assess the relationship between multilateralism and regionalism in the field of conflict prevention and management. This section provides conclusions for each of these two questions in turn.

The role of a regional approach to conflict prevention and management

The case studies suggest that regional conflict management usually comes too late and with the wrong means. Provention is of course problematic in the sense of being counterfactual. That a conflict never takes place is not the source of satisfaction that it should be. Prevention, on the other hand, attracts a lot more interest, since everybody can see the difference in terms of material costs and the amount of suffering between a conflict subdued at an early stage and a conflict that is fully developed, not to speak of the costs of post-conflict reconstruction. In spite of that, also prevention is usually coming too late, because the mechanisms for early management of emerging conflicts are at best embryonic. Early warning has not quite become the instrument hoped for, which is most clearly exemplified by Kosovo. Similarly the Liberian crisis erupted without much reaction from the ‘international community’. The same can be said about the Rwandan genocide as well as the current crisis in Darfur. The discussion on the Darfur crisis simply repeats earlier mistakes: late reaction, uncertainties about whose responsibility it is to react, etc. The UN is going through a period of credibility crisis. The USA is busy elsewhere. The EU is divided and passive. The Arab League is reluctant. Generally the African Union takes on a role, but the resources for playing such a role are very

limited. The real problem is, thus, not early warning but early action, or the lack of it. For these reasons conflict management tends to be identified with peace-keeping – or rather (as the trend seems to be) peace-enforcement.

In the case of Liberia the crisis took place in the shadow of the first Gulf war. When the global community finally acted by the establishment of UNOMIL, the response was too weak, undertaken for the wrong reasons as well as with a malfunctioning relationship to ECOMOG. The international community seems to be able to deal with only one crisis at the time, which is one comparative advantage of regional crisis management. In the African cases this management is so far usually confined to ending the actual warfare, i.e. peace enforcement. There are too little resources for either prevention or post-conflict reconstruction. Here international development assistance and global cooperation thus has an important role to play. The need is to encourage the development of specialized institutions for conflict management, preferably within regional organizations. Over time these institutions must be able to make independent assessments of emerging conflicts, the earlier the better, at the same time as they have operational capacity. Nevertheless it is essential that all phases of the conflict circle are kept in mind all the time in order not to repeat the original mistakes which led to the crisis.

Since there are few successful interventions in ongoing conflicts there should be a stronger focus on the early phase, i.e. prevention and prevention rather than military interventions. In poor regions this has to be part of the international development aid system and mutually agreed on in partnership arrangements.

Future policies should therefore strengthen the capacity to act in different phases of the conflict circle, not only the peacekeeping phase. The post-conflict reconstruction in particular is poorly understood, underfinanced, and generally neglected. A regional integration approach is needed to make this process sustainable. Therefore there is an urgent need to financially support the establishment of specialized security units within, and firmly under the control of, the emerging regional organizations.

Moreover, further development of regional security mechanisms are predicated upon more clearly defined, norm-based and institutionalized procedures so that the private (or semi-public) interest of political leaders can be regulated. Such institutionalization is an important

strategy to ensure a shift from the political economy of violence and militarized notions of state stability towards new and more appropriate solutions to the complex conflicts and CHEs. In other words, there is a need to encourage the new role for regional peace-keeping but at the same time it is important to develop the relationship to a more rules-based and norm-based order — to most observers this must be provided through the UN system.

The UN and regional organizations

The issue of regionalism versus multilateralism has been controversial since the establishment of the UN. The UN Charter was made compatible with so called ‘regional arrangements or agencies’ and this idea has unsurprisingly surfaced again as the number of failed states has multiplied. In 1992 the UN Secretary-General’s *Agenda for Peace* called for involvement between UN and regional organisations in UN activities like preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and post-conflict reconstruction. Since then this has been more intensively discussed and there is an ongoing debate within the UN system concerning the role between the UN and regional organisations in the security field. In the UN Secretary General’s recent report ‘In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All’ it is stated that ‘the United Nations and regional organizations should play complementary roles in facing the challenges to peace and security’ (p.52).³ In the 1993-2005 period the UN Secretary General convened six high-level meetings with regional organisations involved in security matters from all the continents. In December 2004, the High Level Panel (on Threats, Challenges and Change) set up by the Secretary General to reflect on the reform of the UN, acknowledged that regional groupings have made ‘important contributions to the stability and prosperity of their members’ (p. 85).⁴

The High Level Panel also made the remark that if UN Security Council is to be made more active and effective in preventing and responding to threats, it needs to utilise Chapter VIII provisions of the UN Charter dealing with regional organisations and arrangements more. The Panel suggested that regional organisations can be a vital part of the multilateral system.⁵ The

³ Available online at <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/>.

⁴ Available online at <http://www.un.org/secureworld>.

⁵ Under the UN Charter, regional organizations (‘regional agencies and arrangements’) are not properly defined and therefore different transnational (e.g. Portuguese Speaking Countries Community), continent/megaregional

critical requirements from a UN perspective are that: (1) regional action should be organised within the UN Charter and consistent with its principles; and (2) the UN and regional organizations need and should work together in a more integrated fashion than has been the case so far (Takhur, 2005; Takhur and van Langenhove, 2005: 10).

From this point of view, the relationship between UN and the regional organisations is focused on how and in what ways regional organisations can contribute to the UN Charter/System/Security Council. It is then crucial to make sure that (or in the analysis, determine whether) the regional military operation is carried out with UN acknowledgment, and if so with what mandate: a traditional/modern peacekeeping mandate (Chapter VI), a robust peacekeeping mandate (Chapter VII) or a peace-enforcement mandate (Chapter VII, Art.42). It is only the latter two cases that require endorsement by the UN Security Council under the UN Charter. Hence, the UN Charter actually encourages the role of regional organisations in non-military dispute settlement (Chapter VI, Art. 33), as well as prevention and prevention. But it has become increasingly difficult to uphold the line between chapter VII ('*pacif settlement of disputes*') and Chapter VII provisions ('*breaches of the peace and acts of aggression*'), *inter alia* due to the changing nature of conflict in the contemporary world order.⁶ These are some of the questions the policy discussion on the reform of the UN Security Council and the relationship between the UN and regional organisations focus on (Graham and Felicio, 2004).

From the point of view of those favouring the UN, it is proclaimed that the UN is the only possible foundation of a rules-based order — and NATO and US go-it-alone strategies and similar attempts are held out as problematic and anti-models for the future (Takhur, 2005). The UN will provide legality (and impartiality). However, there is an increasing recognition for the role of regional organisation also from this point of view. The argument of one of the

(e.g. OSCE), regional (e.g AU, PIF) and sub-regional (e.g. IGAD or ECOWAS) organizations have been regarded as classifiable under Chapter VIII of the Charter.

⁶ UN Charter Article 33.

1. The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.

2. The Security Council shall, when it deems necessary, call upon the parties to settle their dispute by such means.

UN Charter Article 53

1.The Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority. But no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council ...'. Also see Appendix.

more well-known proponents, Ramesh Takhur, is that there is an increasing gap between legality and legitimacy, and this is evidence of an eroded sense of international community (Takhur, 2005) But this is at the same time evidence of that the UN cannot provide legitimacy left alone; which should also come from the regions (for instance, because the region can be a corrective to ‘external imposition’). What is important for Takhur and the UN perspective is that such legitimacy should be compatible with the UN Charter/System, which in effect implies that the regional agencies should be *contributing to* multilateralism. According to Takhur, regional organizations ‘may insert fresh blood into multilateralism’ and fill some gaps in multilateralism. But in order to do so, it requires that regional organizations are working within UN framework. Thus, the dominant view from the UN-favouristic point of view is that there is a need for a multilateral sanction for regional interventions to be legal and legitimate. The reality is however very different from an idealised hierarchical order in which the regional level intermediates between a global space, occupied by multilateral organisations such as the UN, on the one hand, and a national ‘floor’ of sovereign states, on the other.

Whereas the ‘old regionalism’, marked by the Cold War divisions, was an arrangement that prevented the UN from interfering in a constructive way in regional conflicts, the ‘new regionalism’ seems to herald a world order in which the UN and regional organisations will have to resume a *shared responsibility* for resolving regional security crises, rather than the UN *delegating authority and distributing mandates*. One reason for a continued need for this shared responsibility is the exhaustion of UN power and decline in its authority and the still rather embryonic character of emerging regional formations, particularly obvious in the African case. Here the main concern is with regional and multilateral engagement as the two modes which, in some kind of combination, should be the predominant form of conflict prevention, management and intervention in the future, to the extent that legality and legitimacy continue to play a role in international relations after the war against Iraq. Unilateral and even plurilateral interventions lack legality but may on some occasions appear legitimate, and the bilateral case is rare and, furthermore, not an intervention in the strict sense of the word since it presupposes some kind of agreement.

Multilateral and regional (plurilateral) actors represent different types of *potentially competing authority structures*. The challenge is to make them complement one another. But

in our view it seems unrealistic to think of intermediate regional security organisations that are at the same time subordinated to the UN Security Council and representative of the states in the region, also because the state-centric approach is becoming increasingly irrelevant, as the world enters the post-sovereign stage. It is true that security can only be pooled or transferred by states, but in the process the states are being locked into a larger regional and interregional framework, shaping their behaviour. In the future, the UN may have to operate in a new political landscape of regional and interregional formations which define themselves as they evolve out of shared interests and perceived threats among a large number of actors, state actors and others. The ultimate outcome may be a ‘regional multilateralism’, a world order in which the rule of international law still has a role to play.

The optimal form of peacekeeping combines the legality (and to some extent legitimacy) of multilateral (UN) interventions with the higher efficiency in terms of closeness and commitment (legitimacy) with regional interventions. The regional spill-overs and regionalization of many so-called ‘domestic’ conflicts require regional solutions. Although the regional interventions need to be relevant for their own specific types of security threats, there should be some kind of multilaterally acknowledged rules-system in order to prevent abuses (i.e. a clear trend of regional interventions). A two-pronged approach (‘multilateral-regional’) can be sequenced, since the multilateral operation takes longer time to organize compared to the regional (‘regional organizations being faster’). There are of course distinct problems with regional organisations which must be kept in mind, especially in the Third World, such as resource constraints, organizational weaknesses, lack of neutrality, and the role of the regional hegemon. According to Diehl, these characteristics are rather negative for regional as compared to multilateral peace-keeping (Diehl, 1994: 131). However, one has to admit that multilateral peace-keeping is not always forthcoming, and if it comes it usually comes late and for the wrong reasons. The argument put forward here is that a *balance* between multilateral and regional is to be preferred compared to a *delegation* of multilateralism. Finally, it is also important to keep the full conflict circle in mind, which suggests provention and prevention rather than simply military interventions (which in turn necessitates coordination and coherence in development policy, linking it to trade policy, foreign policy, environmental policy, security policy etcetera). The general trend is that regional organizations are better at provention and prevention as well as post-conflict reconstruction as compared to multilateral efforts — but again, a combination of multilateral-regional strategies seems to provide the most feasible solution in most cases.

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Appendix. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter: Regional Arrangements

Article 52

1. Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.
2. The Members of the United Nations entering into such arrangements or constituting such agencies shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council.
3. The Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the Security Council.
4. This Article in no way impairs the application of Articles 34 and 35.

Article 53

1. The Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority. But no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council, with the exception of measures against any enemy state, as defined in paragraph 2 of this Article, provided for pursuant to Article 107 or in regional arrangements directed against renewal of aggressive policy on the part of any such state, until such time as the Organization may, on request of the Governments concerned, be charged with the responsibility for preventing further aggression by such a state.
2. The term enemy state as used in paragraph 1 of this Article applies to any state which during the Second World War has been an enemy of any signatory of the present Charter.

Article 54

The Security Council shall at all times be kept fully informed of activities undertaken or in contemplation under regional arrangements or by regional agencies for the maintenance of international peace and security.