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"The role of Culture in Defence and Security Policy:

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In Europe, cultural action is still put aside of most of the discussions on the subject of defence and security, although the notion of "soft power" is nowadays a common say in almost all European strategy.

The space for discussion on these notions is such a state of constraint (through member-states armies convergence, weapons harmonisations and industries, pre-EU heritage, etc...) that original concepts have no chance to emerge, since the debate seems the exclusive field for dominating main political parties. Therefore, a deep reflexion on pre- and post-conflict issues, which seem to be still uncompleted, appears as the last space for innovative reflexions on the subject.

At the time when the pace of European integration is accelerating, the germs of some fundamental paradigm changes in politics become more visible. We could stress three of them, all highly relevant to the perspective of a renovated Defence and Security Strategy.

The first one concerns the power shift (or balance) from national levels to local authorities,. In this regard, the three objectives of the Structural Funds (convergence, regional competitiveness, and co-operation), combined with the different neighbourhood policies, or the different bilateral agreements with third countries, re-assert clearly that an inter-regional approach cannot be disconnected anymore from the European External Policy.

Therefore, the "instrumentalisation" of Culture in the frame of National(istic) Cultural Diplomacies, as understood and used until recently (cf. Lettre de Cadrage sur la Diplomatie Culturelle, Bernard Kouchner, French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sept. 2009 "La mondialisation s'accompagne d'une compétition accrue dans tous les domaines. La prospérité et la sécurité de notre pays, la promotion de nos intérêts et de nos valeurs passent par une capacité renforcée à projeter notre langue, notre culture, nos idées, notre

vision de la société et du monde." "C'est là, j'en suis convaincu, une politique qui relève essentiellement de l'Etat et une des missions fondamentales du ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes."), is no longer relevant, since the objectives of local authorities are not supposed to be aligned to block-to-block negotiations/disputes, or neo-colonial attitudes, but to reinforcing multilateral local level partnership and promoting their own capacity to "create, attract, participate in the global dialogue".

In this respect, as a piece of memory, we should carefully consider the striking simultaneity of the creation of the Ministry of Culture by General de Gaulle in France in the 60s and his decision at the same time to step out of the NATO Integrated Command. These two facts seem to be politically linked, and have since ruled the role of Culture in the Foreign Policy of this country. For example, 75% of the budget of CulturesFrance, now Institut Français, is based on a subvention from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not the Ministry of Culture. The commitment is diplomatic, not cultural. The current mission is to slow down, as much as possible, the inevitable loss of sovereignty, visibility and economic influence one could expect in the case of a former colonial power.

At the time when Europe is integrating along regional lines, such archaism should be irrelevant, and we have to understand that Culture should not anymore be a "soft weapon" for acquiring national prestige.

International Cultural exchanges should be understood as cultural co-operation examples, and therefore their role in facilitating peacekeeping has to be entirely reconsidered.

It is not anecdotal that one of the main methodologies for cultural development today, the Agenda 21 for Culture, has been issued by the biggest global network of local authorities, United Cities and Local Governments, and not by a coalition of nations.

The second change concerns the revision of the analysis of the causes of conflict, a revision made urgent in the gloomy shadow of the theory of the "Shock of Civilisations", which unfortunately is insidiously making its way in western media and in the minds of many of our fellow citizens, on both sides of the debate. It is the most dangerous threat for global balance, and the "eco-compatibility" of its messianism is impossible and absurd.

Inevitably this leads to a new analysis of the role of culture in the generation of conflicts, as well as in their resolution. Most of the current conflicts have very strong cultural motivations, as they have terrible cultural side-effects. Understanding this, beyond the usual clichés about Culture and the Artists, is one of the best ways to combat the so-called "inevitable" war between civilisations. Instead of considering conflicts at a nation-state level, ecologists should think of them as local disputes with multiple causes and seek their resolution through neighbourhood discussions, reciprocity, and the tolerance of cultural diversity.

The UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity, an international Treaty ratified by more than 140 member-states and the European Union, is also stressing the growing role of local authorities, local solutions for Culture and Culture for local solutions, including a local dimension for understanding and respect between people. It is therefore assuming that one

of the causes of conflict is also to be found at this ground level. In its latest support programme, the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, local cultural development as a peacekeeping factor is considered as one of the decisive criteria.

It is also interesting to reconsider the failure of the 5 + 5 doctrine which has linked 10 western Mediterranean countries, 5 on the north, 5 on the south, in order to secure the borders between these two blocks, with a strict border-police approach, giving absolutely no consideration to cultural diversity. This attitude has solved neither the influx of illegal immigration nor the economic disparities and cultural misunderstandings which fuel potential conflict.

As seen from the poor suburbs of Marseille, where my political activism drove me, the third paradigm change concerns the clear interaction between "tranquillity inside and tranquillity outside". They are today indivisible, since they are fuelled by the same global and instant communication. Counter arguments to the "Shock of Civilisation" will also be very useful in our own sensitive areas. The misunderstanding factor is similar, and carries the same potential danger for violence.

Therefore, conflict is no more localised in a sole territorial or market dispute, which could be eradicated by "surgical hits" and sophisticated missiles, it is also clearly based on a cultural misunderstanding that few special forces are trained to face today. We should remember that, since Vietnam, war is not only technological but cultural, global and local. Indeed, the taliban in Afghanistan may have been recruited in our suburbs, the real question being not only "how", but, "what have we done in those suburbs to make those kids amenable to propaganda, wherever it is coming from?". This question relates clearly and mainly to cultural policy. For this reason alone, cultural policy has to be seen as one of the most sensitive and central tasks of government, not anymore as an incidental element of national pomposity.

A few examples:

As everyone may know, the page is not blank. There is plenty of experience out there, over the last 20 years or more. Things are possible:

First of all, do not forget the responsibility of popular musicians launching songs of war and hate on the waves of Radio des Mille Collines in Rwanda, or through turbo-folk songs in former Jugoslavia.

Take the time to read the prominent European cultural activists Ritva Mitchell and Simon Mundy's reports on Vukovar in 1997 for the Council of Europe. In Vukovar, at a time when guns were still hot, they were sent in UN helicopters in the middle of the city as the first attempt to re-start dialogue between opposed communities, directly on the cease-fire line. Somewhere in the system, someone finally came to the clever conclusion that only cultural activists could re-initiate the knitting of the threads of peace.

Have a look at the undisputable success of the Forum Itinérant de la Jeunesse in Katanga in october 2007, a mobile festival for the explanation of Democracy, the struggle against

Xenophobia, gathering lyrics workshops, philosophers, jurists, rappers, concerts, and public debates. It probably cost ten times less than any blue helmets operation.

Visit "Pekabo", a night shelter for boys in the heart of Kinshasa, where "Shégués", as they call themselves, in their majority former trained-to-kill children-soldiers stolen to their parents, who could easily kill you for a matchbox, all of them being illiterate and having no chance to re-start a proper educational process, begin to regain dignity and mental stability by dancing and playing music under the coaching of the admirable Hubert, from the Tam-Tam Theatre, the most efficient and courageous peace corps activist I have ever met during my travels.

In Liberia, imagine a cost-effective, life-saving, easy-going "atelier humanitaire culturel", where kids, instead of endorsing outlaw attitudes, could start experimenting arts through an all-terrain unit, with a small recording studio, P-A system, power generator, local-radio broadcasting system. If we really want it, we can start dozens of them tomorrow morning. Capacities are available, financial needs are small, expectations are enormous.

And finally come with me and A.M.I., my cultural organisation, in the poor suburbs of Marseille, up to 50% unemployment, more than a hundred nationalities, an unacceptable part of the population living under the limit of poverty, strictly no future for the youngsters, even though quite a few of them often present university qualifications, all of this creating an hyper-realistic violence generator, at first against its own inhabitants and genitors, of course, but also providing desperate fighters for all kinds of combats, whether they happen in the luminous or the dark sides of the globe, and you will see that, when all social measures have failed to prevent violence, only the music remains.

All of this is true and very concrete conflict prevention.

Suggestions:

Therefore, I think the following 6 suggestions, or at least hints for further reflexions, would make sense, and could pull ourselves back onto very concrete tracks.

They are not listed in order of importance, since the urgency of any of them seems obvious, if not too late:

- 1) In any crisis unit there needs to be cultural expertise. In the Iraq conflict only the Dutch contingent had a cultural policy advisor and it almost certainly saved man lives.
- 2) In any humanitarian crisis there needs to be cultural expertise, otherwise help will not reach people fast or effectively, and the trauma of disaster will take longer to recover from.
- 3) There needs to be expert and articulate training in cultural conflict prevention guidelines for all diplomats.
- 4) There has to be cultural expertise in the EU's new External Action Service and the cabinet of its High Representative.

- 5) We need to push all the agencies involved in peacekeeping, peace-establishment and reconciliation to have cultural capacity building as a strong strand, as strong as economic development, education, and the improvement of governance.

- 6) We need to push the UN and all its agencies (in particular UNITAR, ILO, UNHCR, UNDP, and the missions on the ground) to have as strong programmes for cultural development as they have for the environment. This has to be true of the EU and NATO too.

Conclusions:

A certain type of political renovation has very little chance to appear if not respecting a few fundamentals, one of which being the indisputable link between bio-diversity, cultural diversity and democratic pluralism - each of these items nourishing the other two, transforming them from passive concepts to political dynamics.

On this subject, the mediocrity of old strategies is obvious every day. A radical change in the political approach is the condition for delivering innovative, transversal, integrated propositions, including cultural.

Ferdinand Richard, March 2011