

NON-OFFENSIVE DEFENCE: A LOOK AT THE FUTURE

The decade which is now coming to an end has probably been one of the richest as regards reflections and initiatives aimed at overcoming the harmful, destabilizing effects of traditional defence policies which, being based on force and on arms superiority, have led to an arms race on a frightening scale.

The challenge being faced involved the possibility of putting into practice new defence policies which, while providing a legitimate security to the affected nations, would not be seen as aggressive or provocative by other societies.

Following this initial scheme, various research centres for peace, both in Europe and the United States, have carried out a large number of surveys full of suggestions, and an idea which was at first felt to be too ambitious has ended up as the basis for an international process of reflection in which governments, and even military alliances, are taking part.

The international projection of these reflections came about in 1982, when, under the presidency of Olof Palme, the independent Commission on Disarmament and Security published the well own report, "Common Security. A Programme for Disarmament", which had a decisive effect on an international level. The central idea of the concept of *common security* is that states have to get together and "organize" their defence policies, rather than "confront them". The security of one country need not provoke the insecurity of another. In short, regional security should be shared. If no-one threatens anybody else, everybody will feel safe. In this way, the Palme report opens the way to the *defensive orientation of military forces* and proposes *non-threatening strategies*.



Over the years, this idea has been gradually developed, new doctrinal concepts have been created and, consequently, new proposals for altering the operational systems of armed forces.

One of these concepts is that of *reasonable sufficiency*, which is based on the belief that it is not necessary to aim at equality in the military potential

of the great powers, but that it is enough to have a force capable of stopping an attack. One can have the ability to stop a foreign aggression, but without having the means to carry out offensive operations. This involves a type of military organization based not on "total superiority", but on *mutual defensive superiority*, that is to say, on the reduction of offensive capacities in favour of defensive capacities, thus making surprise attacks impossible.

This possibility is one of the central aspects of almost all the alternative defence proposals, to the extent that there is an established concept known as "*Structural Inability to Launch an Attack*" (SIA). SIA exists when the armed forces can put into practice an efficient military defence with an organization, a structure, arms and strategies which make an act of aggression impossible. Although *defensive defence*, also known as *non-offensive or non-provocative defence*, is a new concept, it has already developed considerably. What is needed now is to find out how it can be applied in each individual country. The process will be much quicker if we have the collaboration of as many organizations as possible, especially international organizations, NGOs and universities throughout the world.

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