

Collapsing States and Re-emerging Nations

The rise of State Terror, Terrorism and Crime as Politics

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More than five thousand nations, or culturally distinct peoples, live in and use a wide variety of ecological niches from the polar regions to the deserts of northern Africa, western China and central Australia. These peoples individually and collectively demonstrate the immense capacity of humans to adapt to extremely different environments. The variety of human cultures match the variety of environments. It is owing to the world's biological diversity that there is cultural diversity, and as long as there are human beings living on this planet it is transparently obvious that there must remain a balance between humans and their physical and spiritual environments. In the western hemisphere there is an intellectual tradition extending back more than three thousand years that speaks consistently of the importance of maintaining a balance in life. As the Haudenosaunee say: Nations that successfully maintain a balance between their own needs with the capacity of nature to reproduce abundance ensure life and satisfaction for seven generations. This is a tradition in thinking and living that nations all over the world practice without the need for instruction.

Some nations, not content to live the balance, have attempted different experiments in organization. In large measure, these experiments distance people from their physical and spiritual connections, and the most successful of these experiments has been the modern state. Instead of living as a part of the natural world, the idea of the state grew to permit nations to dominate the natural world. Rooted in the traditions of the Roman Empire, christened by the Treaty of Westphalia and forced on the global stage by the American Revolution and the French Revolution the modern state system has grown to number 192 individual entities. Each claims a centralized government, fixed invisible boundaries and a minimal or extensive military system to control people and material wealth inside those boundaries. Ranging in size from a one-half square kilometer (The Vatican) to the Russian Federation's 17 million square kilometers, states claim

populations as small as 820 people (The Vatican) to 1.2 billion people (China). (CIA World Book, 1992) Not a single piece of real-estate in the world remains outside the control of a state. Even the Antarctic is carved into bounded areas claimed by states.

The superimposition of the idealistic state over the naturally defined territories of nations has always seemed a probable cause for conflict since the interests of both are so diametrically opposed. I will discuss the contemporary implications of this fundamental conflict, and particularly how the contest between nations and between nations and states is more boldly manifest in the period of transition following the end of the *Cold War*. I will also discuss the phenomenon of the collapsing state and reemerging nations and suggest the need for accommodation, of mutual coexistence, as an approach for mediating the deep and often intractable contention between nations and states.

The end of World War II followed by the immediate declaration of a *Cold War* paradoxically imposed on humankind an illusion that the world was ordered, stable and at peace. Two superpowers seeking to best each other offered a vision of "peaceful coexistence" controlled by nuclear terror—Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Forty-five years after the *Cold War* began it came to an unceremonious end. It ended with the collapse of one superpower (U.S.S.R.), the economic and political staggering of the other (U.S.A.), the rejoining of Germany and the breakup or virtual collapse of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Somalia, Zaire, Uganda, Burma, Surinam, Albania and possibly a score of other states. The end of the *Cold War* revealed the economic and political bankruptcy of scores of states, the collapse of many more states and the struggle of nations to re-emerge from the shrapnel strewn regions of crumbling state structures. The world's political realities surfaced to confront bewildered foreign policy strategists and newly appointed political leaders. Instead of peaceful coexistence, the *Cold War* imposed an ideologically charged competition, a simplistic mind-set that allowed political leaders and their advisors to play polar power politics and to ignore or suppress the actual political realities of an unstable state system and the struggles of nations whose aspirations were muted by globally oriented strategies. The end of one illusion revealed the weaknesses of yet another illusion—the idealistic system of states.

In the rush to proclaim peace at the end of World War II, war weary leaders instituted a widely accepted conception of global relations: power politics--*realpolitik*. They chose to ignore the many unsettled conflicts between nations and between nations and states that appeared immediately after the War. Advocates of *realpolitik* held sway over the Post World War II era. They were persuaded that the only way to stabilize the world, an unruly and messy political world, was to establish a high degree of economic, strategic and political power in just a few states. They advanced the untested notion that through tensions between the "Great Powers"

there would be minimal actual instability in the world. There would be peace in the world. With theories of big-power politics dancing figuratively in their heads France, Great Britain, the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Nationalist China installed themselves, winners of World War II, as the guarantors of global peace. The main winner of World War II, the United States of America, led the charge to establish a world of power-blocs affirmed through the idealistic institutions of the United Nations Organization, International Bank for Development and Reconstruction, regional international bodies like the Organization of American States and the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO).

Meanwhile, the conflicts between nations and states that had flourished after World War I, and many more conflicts revealed after the collapse of the colonial era, hadn't gone away. They remained unsettled and festering. Even as the winners of World War II began to establish a "stable peace," long muted conflicts involving nations began to heat up. In Burma, a state declared by the withdrawal of British colonialism, began to erupt. The nation of Karen had claimed its own independence and began efforts to sever relations with the newly formed Burmese government. The war that began then remains unresolved to the present date. In neighboring India the nation of Naga began to assert its claim to be separate from a newly proclaimed Indian state. That war continues unabated to the present date. Soon it was evident that other nations were not satisfied to be encased in new and old internationally recognized states. Many nations like the Timorese (who are claimed by Indonesia), the Baluchis (claimed by Pakistan) and the Kurds (who are claimed by Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria) had been included in new states without their consent while scores of nations like the Welsh (claimed by England), Corsicans (claimed by France) and the Uygurs (claimed by China) have long wanted to be separate from the states claiming them. Off the front pages of the New York Times and quietly reported by Reuters and the London Times, stories of conflicts erupting into low intensity wars and rocking the foundations of weak states began to foretell events forty-five years later.

Small conflicts and low intensity wars between nations and states broke out in state after state. As colonies in Africa, Asia and Melanesia became independent during the rush toward decolonization in the 1950s and the 1960s, rifts began to open between nations inside those newly proclaimed states.

Nations with historical enmities like the Hasau and the Ibo in Nigeria were thrown into each other's arms to live under a system of government invented by the British. More than two hundred other nations inside Nigeria, many bi-sected by newly created state boundaries in 1960, found themselves under the rule of one nation, the Hasau. No one should have been surprised that tensions between the Hasau and the Ibo (whose numbers had been forced out of the Hasau occupied north) would erupt into violent hostilities. By 1967, the Hasau and the Ibo, who had

declared themselves independent of Nigeria in a new state of Biafra, were at war. Thirty one months later and after an estimated 2,000,000 deaths, the war came to an end and the Ibo were defeated. This war was cast as a "civil war" and not likely to have a global impact. In the world of "east-west power politics" the Biafran war, as it was known to many, was considered of little importance. As the military junta controlling Nigeria today continues to demonstrate, the war in Nigeria, the terrorism in Nigeria promoted by the state has not come to an end.

Similar wars raged on the African continent. In Uganda, the Buganda and Langi nations were engaged in an eight year war with the Kimbu--the leaders of which held sway over the Ugandan state. In Sudan, the government warred against the Dinka nation, and the Toubou warred against the government of Chad. Meanwhile, the state of Lebanon was being pulled apart by six nations, the Palestinians were at war with the state of Israel and the Oromo and Tigrai fought Ethiopia's Haile Salassie and his successors in Addis Ababa.

As the sternly tenacious *Cold War* claimed more years, the numbers of conflicts erupting into wars continued to grow. The war dead mounted in remote nations like Maya in Guatemala, Balukistan in Pakistan, Tibet invaded by China, Corsicans seeking separation from France, Kanakia seeking separation from France and the Moluccas battling the newly formed government of Indonesia. Between 1945 and 1991, nearly 250 hot wars were waged killing an estimated 17 million people. (Griggs, 1993) By one count an estimated 79% of these wars (Vasquez, 1993: 130) concerned issues involving territory or territoriality related issues. After examining the data myself, I found that in the greater majority of these contests the issue of "political status" proved to be a major component of most territorial contests. Issues of fundamental consequence to human security, to human survival were being contested in scores of *little wars* while the great powers divided the world into spheres of ideological influence.

Of the 250 hot wars waged in forty-six years, 145 of those wars (six of every ten) involved nations warring against nations or nations fighting states. By 1994, 87 of the wars that began sometime in the previous 46 years were still being waged.

"War is politics by another means," wrote Carl von Clausewitz in his oft cited 19th century treatise on war. Since the rise of the modern state during the 19th century, war has been regarded as a permanent part of the international landscape, an inevitable consequence of human evil: Nationalism. The increasing frequency of "small wars" between nations and states put pressure on state leaders to change their tactics. They sought to defeat national movements once and for all. Governance by terror became the accepted response. State authorized terror aimed at suppressing the political aspirations of nations, organized terror squads (representing political

ideologies, religious ideologies and national interests), and organized criminal groups seeking control over state structures were the sub-text masked by the *Cold War*. The maxim for the post-World War II era would appropriately be: *Terror is politics by another means*.

Due to its intense emotional value, the term *terrorism* is often used to mean many things; usually anything that terrifies. The term has its origins in the French Revolution, but its popular usage in the post World War II period has tended to obscure rather than enlighten. Laqueur in his 1987 volume entitled *The Age of Terrorism* offers this definition, which I believe sheds as much light on the subject as any:

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[Terrorism] is the use or the threat of the use of violence, a method of combat, or a strategy to achieve certain targets, that it aims to induce a state of fear in the victim, that it is ruthless and does not conform with humanitarian rules, and that publicity is an essential factor in the terrorist strategy. (Laqueur, 1987:143)

State terrorism is a time-honored practice that gained respectability in the post World War II period. State terrorism gave birth to the modern state when Maximilien Robespierre and his Jacobin followers rose to power in France and instituted the *Reign of Terror* between 1793 and 1794 at the culmination of the French Revolution. Invoking the "good of the people," Robespierre began a kind of terrorism where the power of the state was used to control political opponents and maximize the power of the state. (Hyde and Forsyth, 1987:14, Harris, 1983:31) Robespierre's "government by fear" through the Committee for Public Safety resulted in the killing of an estimated 40,000 people at the guillotine or by other means, and more than three million were arrested and jailed. (Hyde and Forsyth, 1987:15) Some of the more notorious examples of state terrorism were practiced by Adolph Hitler's Germany, Joseph Stalin's Russia, and Mao Zedong's China. In the post World War II period, Hitler and Stalin would be vilified for the horrors committed against peoples controlled by the state, but few voices would be raised against the terrorism of states like Indonesia, Chile, Guatemala, Bangladesh, Argentina, Brazil, Surinam, Syria, Paraguay, Sudan, Morocco, Uganda, Spain, Rumania, Cambodia, Iran, Haiti, Albania, Iraq and scores of other states which instituted government by fear. In 1980, twenty-four countries were recognized by the U.S. State Department to have carried out systematic campaigns of terror against political enemies outside their borders. (Harris, 1983:31) Though its form has varied from state to state, the purposes and outcomes have been the same.

In Indonesia, state terrorism takes the form of a World Bank sponsored "transmigration program" aimed at moving 20 million people a year from the island of Java to other islands claimed to be a part of the state. The principal targets for relocating Javanese is the western half of Papua New Guinea and ~~on the~~ island of Timor. Both are sites of extensive violence initiated by security forces and conventional military. The people at whom terror measures are aimed include the Dani

nation and scores of other non-Javanese peoples living in west Papua. The Timorese have suffered the loss of one-third of their people since Indonesia began its programs in the middle 1970s. The Indonesian government has been reported to have used tape-worm infested pigs as a terrorist technique to kill and maim whole nations that rely on fresh pork as a main part of their diet. (Hyndman, 1987, 1986). An estimated 200,000 of the 2 million Papuans have been killed since 1969. The Indonesian government has also used other forms of "economic development" to instill terror in the non-Javanese nations on the island of Sumatra. Nations reliant on natural forest cover and undisturbed jungles on Sumatra and in Borneo have found themselves the targets of "eco-terrorism" aimed at controlling unwilling nations and reshaping the delicate tropical environments to meet the economic interests and needs of developers in Jakarta.

A variation on this pattern of state terrorism is being conducted in Brazil where the government seeks control over vast, undeveloped territories occupied and used by many different nations. By promoting mining in northwestern jungles, the Brazilian government is supporting terrorist acts being committed against the Yanonami people whose villages have been attacked by miners. Again, control over the a nation and the implementation of government policies is wanted by means of state terror.

The Israeli government began using terrorist tactics against the Bedouin tribes in the Negev Desert practically from the day the new state was founded. Confiscating goat herds--the main source of a livelihood for the Bedouins--and using force to drive people off their lands, the Israeli government succeeded in driving 99 percent of the Bedouins from their homes in the desert. The land has been expropriated by the government to settle Jewish citizens. (Bailey, 1993) Striking terror in the minds of Bedouins achieved the state's political aim.

Uganda became an independent state in 1962. A state in which there are no fewer than forty distinct nations, Uganda was seen from the outset to be one newly independent state that would have difficulties. Not until a young army officer by the name of Idi Amin seized control over the government from Milton Obote in 1971 had the state suffered from major strife. Once Amin took power, the agencies of the state were immediately turned into instruments of terror. Proclaiming himself "President for Life," Amin's government tortured and killed tens of thousands of people from many of the nations inside Uganda borders. Amnesty International estimated that 300,000 people may have died by the hands of state terrorism.

Professor Richard Griggs, at the University of Cape Town in South Africa estimates that perhaps 69,000,000 people (the vast majority from nations) perished world wide between 1945 and 1993 from the hands of state terrorists. (Griggs, 1993) Between victims of state terrorism and

casualties of war, during the post World War II period, an estimated 84 million people have perished.

The counter-part to state terrorism is what I call "populist terrorism." Individuals, organizations, groups and nations whether concerned with political, economic, environmental, religious or strategic interests can and do undertake terrorist acts usually against a state or a symbol of the state. The source of inspiration for many non-state terrorists is the notorious nineteenth-century Russian Mikail Bakunin who was born in 1814. (Hyde and Forsyth, 1987:15) A political anarchist, Bakunin regarded government as a criminal institution that was intrinsically evil. His organizational skills were reflected in a method terrorist organization that is used by many groups today:

organizing terrorist groups into cells, or small units. Two members of each cell belong to other cells, linking three cells in such a way that only two members know the plans of more than one cell. This protects against any one person knowing a great deal about activities.

Between 1968 and 1993 the RAND Chronology of International Terrorism recorded 8,000 incidents of terrorism initiated by non-state parties. (Hoffman, 1993:30) Targets of attacks have mainly been diplomatic installations, military, business and government offices. Infrastructure as a target of terrorist activities has remained relatively rare. (Hoffman, 1993:30) Jonathan Harris in his volume entitled **The New Terrorism** allows that there are two categories of non-state terrorism:

One broad category is termed "nationalist-separatist." Extremists of this type represent nations, national minorities, ethnic or racial groups fighting for freedom from what they regard as foreign rule. Examples include Northern Ireland's IRA, the Spanish Basques' ETA, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the anti-Turkish Armenian groups, the African National Congress in South Africa, the French-speaking activists of Canada's province of Quebec, and, in the United States the Puerto Rican FALN.

The second major class of terrorists is based on political ideology. This is a complicated category with several subgroups. The largest of these is formed by the various extremist forces of the radical left. These include revolutionary socialists and communists of various persuasions: Trotskyites, Maoists, Castroites, admirers of Che Guevara and Ho Chi Minh; **** At the opposite end of the political spectrum are the right-wing extremists [who] favor ultra-nationalistic dictatorships or police states, like those that once ruled Nazi Germany or fascist Italy. (Harris, 1987: 33-36)

The lethal potency of terrorist acts against the state was relatively minor until far more destructive and highly technical methods other than bombs became available on the open market. Political

terrorists are not considered by experts in the governments as destructive or threatening as religious and nationalist terrorists. Indeed, some researchers have measured a higher degree of lethality growing out of nationalist incidents. (Hoffman, 1993:31) Such evidence points to a greater tendency of nations and states to use "terrorism as a form of warfare" against each other. Chemical, biological and nuclear terrorism are not likely to become tools of the trade for non-state terrorists, but as Iraq's use of poison gas on Kurdish villagers in 1990 seems to indicate use of such complex weapons as a tool of state-terrorism is not unthinkable. In the years after World War II, the shape and character of war itself has radically changed. One terrorist can exact political concessions from a state, or a state can intimidate whole nations into a condition of subordination by merely instilling fear.

Fearful of a world political environment that does not lend itself easily to explanation, voices rise in the academy and in government calling for the imposition of stringent centralized authority by state governments to control "nationalism." These voices demand postponement or denial of political self-determination for nations while the voices call for the introduction of military force to hold collapsing states together. Such reactionary demands to recapture the illusion of state stability is folly—as the period from 1945 to the present clearly demonstrates. State authoritarianism is not the answer.

Protracted warfare whether described as low intensity or sustained terrorism has in the post World War II international environment created great strains on the state system, obliterated whole nations and permitted the criminalization of government. Since 1945 no fewer than 32 state governments either collapsed and disappeared or have become so crippled by corruption that they stand as little more than bankrupt corporations. If a measure of a state's capacity to exist as an international personality is dependent on its ability to defend its borders, operate a central government and conduct its affairs and fulfill its responsibilities to other states then the list of virtually collapsed states is long indeed. The countries of Liberia, Nigeria, Chad, Rwanda, Burundi, Haiti, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Tadjikistan, Mozambique, Somalia, Burma, and Ethiopia are examples of states that are, but corporate shells with no capacity to function as states. They are all states in virtual collapse. The only alternative to these failed states is the bedrock nation which remains intact. Where the state system failed, nationalism succeeded.

As Michael Ignatieff observed in his book *Blood and Belonging, Journey into the New Nationalism*:

The key narrative of the new world order is the disintegration of nation-states into ethnic civil war; the key architects of that order are war lords; and the key language of our age is ethnic nationalism. *** ...with blithe lightness of mind, we

assumed that the world was moving irrevocably beyond nationalism, beyond tribalism, beyond the provincial confines of the identities inscribed in our passports, toward a global market culture that was to be our new home. In retrospect, we were whistling in the dark. The repressed has returned, and its name is nationalism. (Ignatieff, 1993:5)

Where states have failed (consider Yugoslavia for example) nations have re-emerged as the substitute.

I indicated an explanation for the apparent increase in so-called "ethnic conflicts" in my remarks prepared for the Moscow Conference on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (September 1993), and included in a paper presented in Amsterdam on the self-government of indigenous peoples ("State Craft, Nations and Sharing Governmental Power" February 1994):

These are not civil wars, but conflicts between states and nations. They are conflicts which result from the failure of the state to perform its function. They are conflicts resulting from a failure of states to ensure the full sharing of political power by all nations within the framework of the state.

This analysis prompts us to recognize that neither terror nor authoritarianism offers appropriate responses to what are, in large measure, structural and conceptual flaws in our thinking about the ability of the state system to provide political stability and a climate for creativity. An alternative to terror and authoritarianism may be in the acceptance of a naturally evolved international political system that reflects the diverse aspirations of both nations and states. Terror as a substitute for politics and authoritarianism as a substitute for creative invention depresses the human spirit and does violence to the human soul. The alternative may be in our recognition of the limitations of the universalist state and a renewed acceptance of mature nations in a mutually defined international political system that embraces variety put to a common purpose: An enriching, creative, free and peaceful world. New state policies that deflect the impulse to terror and the drive for simple solutions in authoritarianism, and, instead accept the challenge of political innovation offer the clearest and more satisfying future for all humankind.

The fundamental conflict between nations and states was thought to have been resolved in the 19th century with the rise of the modern state system. The generalized assumption that "the world was moving irrevocably beyond nationalism, beyond tribalism" was wrong and naïve. Personal identification with a nation is an essential part of being human. Denying human heritage and disavowing the diversity of human cultures in favor of standardized, universalistic values and ideals took human kind to the brink of nuclear annihilation, and the absurdities of a forty-five year *Cold War*. During the post World War II period we saw the increase of low intensity wars and

the practice of terrorism made normal. We have witnessed the collapse of our idealistic illusions and the ruins of power politics. In the end, we return to the place where we began: Faced with finding the most appropriate methods for balancing the wants and needs of the world's 5000 and more nations with the wants and needs of states on a planet of immense variety, but limited capacity. The post World War II period has been a reminder that the selfish childishness of the Age of Enlightenment and the Age of Reason has come to an end, and now human beings must accept the responsibilities of approaching maturity.

While each of us would want the world to reflect our individual values, perceptions and concepts of reality the fact remains, we live in a world of great diversity. We must now turn to the task of learning respect and appreciation for the differences we encounter while working to define new ways for humans of many different cultures to cooperate. To seek and formalize methods of accommodation between the world's different peoples, the world's thousands of nations is our obligation now; and to define new approaches to balancing human wants and needs with the capacity of the natural world to produce. The alternative is to ~~start up~~ ^{repeat} the narrow and failed pattern of global standardization once again--a course which is certainly doomed to failure. ✓

In the Fall of 1993 I urged in remarks presented at a world conference in Moscow, Russia that a Congress of Nations and States be convened to begin the process of defining new measures of cooperation between nations and between nations and states. Shortly after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics I began work in cooperation with the then President of the Russian Supreme Soviet, Ruslan Khasbulatov to organize the first Congress of Nations and States. The nations of Lummi, San Blas Kuna, Tibet, Sami, Papua, and Massai were among many nations which consented to join with the states of Japan, Germany, Russia and the United States to organize and convene the first Congress. While all of the nations consented to enter into a planning process for the Congress, and Russia and Germany initially consented to participate in the process, the United States and Japan remained aloof and even hostile to the idea. Due mainly to U.S. and Japanese objections, the Congress was not planned or convened. I repeat this call now to convene a Congress of Nations and States and bring an end to the human fabricated violence between nations and states. With all that we now know we cannot avoid seeking to balance relations between nations and states. It is our duty to ourselves that compels us. It is our duty to the seven generations to come the commands us.

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