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NATION STATES AND THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT

“Only men wage war-no beasts ever do” Seneca

Introduction

As we look forward to the last two decades of the century, the questions that are likely to wrack us are ‘will there be a war again?’ ‘will this be the last century for humankind?’ Why can’t we attain peace, unadulterated, real peace? ‘Is conflict necessary?’ While it is easy to see the immediacy of the problem, resolving the questions is no easy task. As a matter of fact, under existing circumstances, it may be impossible to figure out any accurate resolution. The past is a poor if horrendous guide. Conflict has plagued the species from the beginning of recorded history. Scientific and technological advancement has proceeded apace. Since the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, a turning point in history warfare has changed considerably. Open hostilities between regularly organised armed forces following a measure of ethical morality in their actions have become a rare form of conflict. More often than not the powerplay is subtle, covert, indirect, Accepted international boundaries are violated infrequently. Formal declarations of war are made even more seldom. Yet conflict rages. Men and women are killed and maimed. Brutality reaches unsurpassed depth. And no end appears in sight.

Why is this so? Since conflict involves humans and human organisations only they may hold the key to the answer we seek. The world as we perceive it today is dominated by two entities; man as an individual and men organised into states. While individuals frequently engage in acts of violence against each other the overall effect of such individual conflict on the human species is

limited. Were it not so, different forms and manners of homicide would have eliminated many of us if not most, by now. Instead we appear to be profligately improving the stock. The more serious aspect of conflict, therefore, does not involve the intrinsic human attributes at the individual level. We are then left with man as a member of the human organisation and the human organisations themselves. It is by a study of these that we may hope to unlock the riddle of our time: is conflict necessary?

NATION STATES

Central

The national world. The community of nations is one of the terms applied to the family of countries that make up planetary human organisation. There are almost two hundred countries of varying sizes, strengths and natures. They differ from each other in a thousand different aspects. Some occupy vast territories while others are represented by relatively small dots on the map. Some are peopled by burgeoning, nay, exploding populations; others are punctuated by stretches of almost uninhabited virgin land. Some follow capitalist urges of the mercantile entrepreneur manifest in laissez faire economies while others permit extremely limited ownership of private property.

In some the state is a means to the end of welfare of the citizen. In others the state is viewed as the end in itself. The differences are many. But certain basic factors that are common to all identify these groups of men. They are states or sovereign countries all of them, to the extent that growing inter-dependence permits the element of sovereignty. Independent states are officially recognised as the authority that represent popular will and are in turn expected to ensure popular weal. Such states in a variety of ways guide and limit the degree of freedom human life may enjoy during its brief sojourn in the form we know it to exist. Although it is stretching the term a bit far from its semantic interpretations, states are frequently taken to indicate or represent nations, groups of men

who voluntarily, at least academically identify in themselves identical physical, cultural and intellectual attributes and express their willingness to live in close interactive proximity in pursuit of common aspirations, reacting on masses to other united groups. The world, in short is a national world today. The nation-state is the single largest unified human organisation and a study of the species as a sophisticated creature is will-nigh impossible outside the framework of this organisation. Although the term nation is obtuse enough to invite contradictory explanations, for the purpose of this discussion we shall study the term in so far as it relates to the concept of state.

Mode of Study. Our topic deals with a study of the interrelation between nation states as a conceptual phenomenon and the potential for conflict, inherent or otherwise. Whereas human history is best defined as a sordid record of organised conflict between groups of men interspersed with relatively tranquil periods, a study of human behaviour at the individual level is the subject of sociological, psychological, anthropological and allied disciplines. In this paper we are primarily concerned with the former although the underlying causes of the latter have been briefly touched upon. First of all, our discussion will study the contemporary concept of nation states in view of its historically accepted imperatives. Subsequently the relationship between the state and the individual member of the population will also be studied. Following this an attempt will be made to evaluate the factors that distinguish one nation state from another. The reason this will be done is that history is replete with conflict between nations or between groups of nations. As will be explained subsequently, conflict at the individual level is really not the grist for historic mills. It is within the purview of behavioural study.

Imperatives of the Nation-State

Evolutionary History. It is now accepted that grouping on the basis of clannish, tribal and regional affiliations gave rise to cohesive socio-political organisation. In the dim past, when languages were in the formative stage, such grouping was admittedly loose. Development of a common framework for communication or even

formation of ideas helped human organisation to coalesce, Physical proximity and commonality of linguistic expression appear to have been a unifying factor while lack of these may have contributed to increasing suspicion and hostility among different groups which had by now become nations. There were, therefore, nations, on both linguistic basis and regional basis, for spatial extension in simpler days tended to diffuse any sense of belonging. The Celts may therefore, on the basis of their common linguistic bonds have been called a nation. But because Celts were living in disparate groups, evolving subtle socio-cultural envelopes of their own quite independently, primarily because of physical barriers to intercourse that prevented steady osmosis unavoidable in today's shrinking world, different groups of Celts became different nations, or more precisely, different nation states. The Anglo-Saxon dominance in England influenced this process somewhat, but the intrinsic facts of the process alluded to remained. We may, therefore, conclude that first came the socio-linguistic-cultural nation that gradually grew and dispersed into numerous socio-political regional States. Further evolution shaped the new nation states. While growth of urbanism led to what we call city-states, development of political thought gave rise to republic States. Medieval Europe was divided into numerous states formed on a multiplicity of bases. Some were dominated by a dictatorial family that passed on the heirloom of authority from generation to generation while others were ruled by oligarchs. Still others practised a form of theocracy. None, history proves, resembled Plato's ideal republic, to any commendable measure and yet all shared a modicum of commonality. Out of this fairly humble origin rose the western concept of statehood. Creed for power, craving for glory, hunger for riches all affected the byzantine politics of those days. While such facts are none too pleasant, they are overlooked at the risk of loss of objectivity. Often it was one man or a small group of men organised around a hypothetical or abstract concept that initiated epochal events leaving a definite mark on history. Sometimes they shaped the flow of history, Count Cavour's attempts at uniting disparate duchies and city-states

into one great Italian nation-state is one of the more recent examples of such events. Instead of having Venetians or Florentines in our midst today, we are consequently left in the company of Italians. Italy is not only a state, nor does it reflect the manifestations of a nation alone ; it is a nation-state. While this sounds like over-emphasising the obvious today, one wonders how it would have appeared to a reader a hundred years ago. Passage of time mellows the characteristics of a geographical region or segment of human population living under one administration and one set of laws into qualities of nationhood. It, therefore, appears safe to assert that while some nations organised themselves into states, many states eventually evolved into nations. The process of states crystallising elements of nationhood is, therefore, as evident as that of nation coalescing into states. Here to ask which of the two came first is to repeat the enigma of the egg or the chick. However, it must be asserted that while one state in its historical progression through time, due to its peculiar and particular set of circumstances and experience may be expected to evolve into a distinct nation, an amorphous nation, being more abstract in its characteristics of ethnics and cultural affinities may straddle a number of political States. The consequences of such a situation may be benign, translated into friendly harmonious fraternity. Often, unfortunately, the reverse is true.

Nation-States in the early 20th Century. Today the international scene is dominated by theoretically sovereign nation-states. This was not so till 1945 when the global stage heard the voices of imperial powers, or rather imperial colonial powers. Although this may be somewhat unpleasant to the former metropolitan or mother countries, it may be helpful to determine precisely what constituted imperial colonialism. Because of the admittedly limited scope of this paper the term will be taken to mean, albeit somewhat simplisitically, a system of government by which one man or a relatively small group of persons could dictate the course of individual and collective lives of much larger groups of indigenous population with whom the former shared no mutual natural affinities and when the latter would not

accept such subjugation of their own accord. The British Indian empire stood out as a massive example of such colonial subjugation for two eventful centuries. Instances of open dissention of the natives and violent retribution from the colonial masters may an otherwise romantic and even idyllic picture of the white Sahib benignly flourishing in the mystical orient. On the whole, however, the subcontinental colony prospered for its European beneficiary who often condescendingly considered themselves benefactors. The same story was repeated elsewhere in the French, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, Italian and German territories. European trading-States and Japan increasingly grasped at the backwaters of the world to fatten their national coffers, gain or regain stature among what they called civilised nations and ostensibly to bring the light of civilisation to these barbaric ramparts of the shrinking planet. The scene, however, underwent rapid changes in the post-war era.

New Wave in the Post-War Era. The second World War was the greatest clash of arms humans had engaged in. It changed everything, or atleast almost everything. Millions perished in the violent upheavals. Milions more had the roots of their lives torn away from under them. Agony and anguish cast their pall on the planet as never before. It was the most sordid of times. And yet, in its aftermath the war proved to have been a great liberator. Drained of their imperial vigour, colonial metroplitan countries loosened their grip on their distant fiefdoms. It was as if a floodgate had been opened. A new force called nationalism swept the colonies. Sometimes the process of liberation was peaceful. But mostly such events were marked by great human suffering. While the British appeared pragmatic and circumspect in the manner of their departure from Asia and Africa, the French, Dutch, Portuguese and some other mother-countries took their time in letting go the rein and this took its toll in further human misery. But one definite pattern emerged in this period. In the period immediately following the cessation of hostilities the erstwhile mercantile imperial powers declined while the USA and to a lesser extent the USSR loomed as supper powers. Anti-

podal ideological, socio-political, economic and military interests and positions of these two super-powers polarised the community of nations into a bi-polar grouping. Hot, battlefield-noisy-war gave way to cold war, a war of wits and nerves, a conflict of intelligence and intellect, a slash of world-wide interests with global implications. Nation and states, liberated or re-emergent tended to side with one or the other for protection and the earth slid towards the brink of catastrophe. Many of the former colonies retained or developed friendly ties with the erstwhile metropolitan state and inspite of the rising tide of nationalistic fervour sweeping Asia, Africa and Latin America in those troubled days, by the 1960s the World became a polyglot confederation, so to speak, of nation-states. Subsequent rise to prominence of the People's Republic of China as an increasingly dominant force or the momentum of the originally noble non-aligned movement among members of the Third World does not in any way alter this fact. The world remains a confederation of sorts, formed unwittingly perhaps, by members that are disparate in a thousand different ways and yet possessing identical commonalities, the interface of which often raises the degree of tension to beyond the threshold of cold war. In short, human life, at both the individual and the collective levels remain tied to the subtle and not-so-subtle results of interaction among states. While differences separating state from state are myriad, the common attributes remain essentially limited and unchanged.

Attributes of Sovereign Statehood. Not to render this discussion any more obtuse, we shall now study the accepted imperatives of statehood. Having done that we are likely to be in a better position to comprehend the qualities of nationhood. Students of elementary political science are taught that to be able to lay claim to sovereign statehood, a particular human organisation states are the highest rung climbed so far in the ladder of human organisation must possess and be able to identify four integral properties.

With any of these attributes lacking, we are told, the entity concerned fails to measure up to the accepted standard of independent nationhood. What are these essential attributes? These are briefly:

- a. *Population.* The majority of which feels close affinity and wishes to establish an independent state of their own and is prepared to make personal as well as collective sacrifices for the sake of first obtaining and then maintaining the element of freedom. Population is the first pre-requisite for sovereign statehood. By population only human population is acceptable as a cogent interpretation. It may be appreciated that non-human population, however, numerous or otherwise remarkable, cannot on their own organise sovereign states. We, therefore, can discuss such states or nations as of lemmings, caribou, beavers or polar bears only with a grain of salt. Only human populations can organise states and no state can be organised without a human population. This, of course, is easier said than done. While the remaining attributes are essential to sovereign statehood, no state can be formed unless a group of humans by mutual consensus (or under duress, on rare occasions) decide to claim the citizenship of a particular state and thereby enjoy the privileges that consequently accrue to them. The citizens must also be willing to share a part of their labour or its fruits in the form of revenues to help run the administrative machinery as they must be willing to pit their individual lives and liberties against forces of aggression so as to uphold their sovereign status. It is people for whom the concept of statehood was evolved, the reverse being too meaningless to be true. It is now accepted that it is the people whose wellbeing the state is devoted to attaining. This may sound idealistic, but this is the idea behind statehood and states that forget this, theoretically forfeit their right to statehood, or at least the moral and ethical authority of statehood. The state, therefore, is a means to attain or strive for attainment of the wellbeing of its citizenry. It being an abstract concept cannot be an end in itself. The people, consequently, are the ultimate authority of the state. This attribute thus warrants deeper study. What is the population after all,

other than a number of men and women voluntarily identifying commonality in interests and aspirations. Men and women are the crux of the matter, individual human being are at the root of statehood sovereign or otherwise, and the crucial relationship between the state and the individual is ignored only at our own peril. Some attention has been devoted to this particular relationship in subsequent discussion.

- b. *Territory.* A state can only be organised on a chunk of terra firma. This means that a well-defined and recognised piece of earthly territory is required. This is the national real-estate and it is the property of the people. The well-defined boundaries must be recognised by neighbouring states and the territorial integrity of the state in question must not be violated.

If it is, the country's defense services which really are a microcosm and reflection of popular willingness to defend independence, must be prepared to sally forth and defend this particular attribute of independent statehood. Often the conflict is unequal and in those cases the brute law of the jungle-legalises encroachment of the strong on the weak. To avoid a regression to such sub human state of affairs international codes of conduct, written and implicit, have come to be accepted. Military force or ability is no longer accepted or acceptable as the sole criterion that decides the fate of a state's territorial integrity. Peer pressure in the community of nations, treaties and agreements, international censure or fear of it, popular resolve for self-defence and the sheer burden of military expeditions on the economy of belligerents often reduce the threat of actual clash of arms to negligible. Countries frequently denounce each other over a variety of issues, but conflicts remain essentially non-military as long as territorial integrity of the one remains unviolated by the other. Territory then decide the fate of nations, and people in a fairly concrete measure.

Its violation is the most obvious evidence of and spring-board for military conflict, the ultimate expression of international disputes. While violation of one state's territorial integrity by another is the major tangible evidence of conflict, the concept of territory itself is honoured in its abstraction and diversity. While there must be some well-defined earthly territory for the state to apply its suzerainty on, no specifications are given. There are states that lay claim to only a few square kilometres as do Andorra, Monaco and a proliferating number of Micronesian island states. Then there are gigantic ones stretching over continental expanses as do the Soviet, American, Canadian and Chinese state. It is a tribute to man's sobriety that sheer size is not allowed to determine codes of conduct and that theoretically at least, in the platform of the United Nations Organisation and in other forums all states are equal. The point here is to remember that a country or group of humans must gain effective control of a piece of territory on the terra-firma before its claim to statehood is honoured. Floating or submarine states may be concepts troubling the minds of political innovators, but they remain as distant as commercial spaceflight to the outer fringes of the Milkyway.

- c. *Government of Administrative Machinery.* All states possess an administrative machinery in some form or other. It appears they must. States today are too large in territory and population and other complexities to permit government by direct consensus of the governed. Man, if not all recognised countries claim popular participation in the governmental machinery. The degree widely varies and the very nature of the system differs in a widely proliferating conglomerate world. One thing is certain. Whatever is the system, the whole populace can never play an equally active role in their own government. Representative participation is bound to dwindle in the face of increasing

complexity of human life. State machinery, whether all encompassing or wellesque as in authoritarian states or benignly indulgent as in liberal democracies or of one of the many intermediate shades, must perforce remain smaller than the citizenry it administers. This leads to the possibility of accumulation of power by individuals or small groups of individuals at the cost of liberty of the masses on the one hand, and degeneration of the moderating forces resulting in decline to a state of anarchy and chaos on the other. Evidently neither extreme appeals to reason as permanently acceptable. A balance must be found or shaped. This balance is what states have sought in past ages, with varying results. The range of present day experience is wide. On what we may call right of centre are liberal democracies as in the USA, Canada and countries in Western Europe. The extreme forms of rightist administration are manifest in the almost absolute monarchies as in Saudi Arabia, Oman and in a few other isolated spots. On the left of the centre are many members of the Third World, unsure of their ideological identities and alignment while the socialist and communist states occupy the extreme left positions in the political spectrum. Admittedly, lines are drawn thinly and this makes generalisation difficult. On the whole, a country's form of government is influenced, among others, by the country's immediate historical experience, coherence and direction of the dominant ideology and perceptions and abilities of the ruling elite. The multiplicity of present-day systems is one of the major flashpoints in international intercourse as we shall see.

- d. *Sovereignty*. Of all the attributes of an independent state this last is the most problematical. Sovereignty is an abstract concept signifying freedom of action independent of any extraneous interference. This particular interpretation of the concept appears archaic and impracticable today. The

growing intensity of international intercourse, developing interdependence in an energy and resource-hungry world and the steady if slow realisation of the essential unity of the human state the world over render the original significance of sovereignty merely academic. However, sovereignty is a fundamental attribute of statehood and warrants some study. The term is derived from the word sovereign, an independent or absolute monarch. When human organisation transcended tribal and clannish differences, relatively large states under powerful rulers were formed. Although initially such leaders appear to have been chosen by popular consensus, eventually they tended to turn dynastic. It was a savage world then, not that it is much better now, and survival and prosperity of a nation demanded unified command of its resources to the detriment of its opponents. The stronger the ruler, it turned out, the stronger the state. This suited everyone. The monarchs imposed and collected revenues ostensibly to strengthen the bulwarks of collective security, but often such revenues ended up lining royal pockets. A feudal hierarchy of serfs and petty landlords was organised to keep the system going. The rulers recruited and armed their armies that were often more a group of mercenaries than a national military force. Smaller rulers paid tributes to more powerful ones to keep this own suzerainty and consequent perquisites safe. Rulers who paid no tribute to anyone came to be called sovereigns. In time the aura of sovereignty took on the halo of divine blessings except in Egypt, Japan and Central American monarchies where the ruler was thought to have geneological lincage directly descending from the divine supreme Sovereign-God. They were, therefore, believed to derive their sovereignty from divine authority. The veracity of such connotations were subject to debate and conjecture but they shaped political and social thought throughout the Middle Ages right upto the

beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Mechanised means of mass production led to a decline of awe in fellow humans. The process of review and re-appraisal received a shot in the arm when the siege of the Bastille led to the French Revolution. No pompous monarch repeated the disdainful remark 'let them eat cake' again. In the New World the American war of revolution further weakened the concept of divine sovereignty of kings. Gradually, it came to be accepted that it was not the ruler who was sovereign, but the state, which he 'managed' on behalf of the people. This sounds simple enough today, but to reach this stage, the world had to pass through much violence. Now, however, the aforementioned and undeniable interdependence of nations and regional, economic and military grouping or trend to such grouping further lighten the original significance of the term.

The Individual and the State

Conceptual Significance of Individuals. While it is important to appreciate the essential attributes of sovereign statehood, one should never forget the conceptual significance of the interrelationship between the state and the individual. No state can be formed and called an independent entity unless it satisfies, to the extent possible in a difficult world, the essential requirements. However, the very first requirement is to have a group of people who by mutual consent decide to claim citizenship of a certain state, and enjoy the privileges that thereby accrue to them. The citizens must at the same time be willing to share a part of their labour, or the fruits of it in the form of revenue to help run the administrative apparatus as they must be willing to pit their individual lives and liberty against forces of aggression to uphold their collective sovereignty. It is, in fine, the people for whom the concept of statehood was evolved. The reverse cannot be true. The quandary inherent in the question of the primacy of the egg or the chick simply

doesn't apply to citizens and their state. It is now generally accepted in the liberal democracies that the sovereignty of states is derived from the collective freedom of their populace. In spite of the fact that repetition often renders truth the patina of cliché, it ought to be reiterated here that ideally speaking the state is devoted to attainment of popular wellbeing, physical and intellectual. Conversely, a state that forgets this cardinal principle, forfeits its ethical and moral right to statehood. The state, therefore, is a means of attaining or at least striving to attain commonweal of the citizenry. It cannot be an end in itself. The people, therefore, are the ultimate authority of the state. And what, in this case are the people other than a voluntary organisation, however loosely held, of individual human beings? Need the significance of the individual be emphasised further?

Man as a Subject of Study. man has been an enigma, a veritable puzzle to himself. This has caused those concerned with the study of human behaviour, conduct, action and reaction to wonder if they would ever be able to unearth the secrets of the human body-mind complex. why does man behave the way he does? what precisely is the meaning of that oft-repeated term 'human element'? And how does this human element affect our subject of study in relation to his state? These questions trouble leaders and thinkers of varying stature, authority and intellect. These Questions become increasingly pertinent in our study of the general environment we find ourselves in. The moment we appreciate that men are not automations and cannot thus logically be expected to conduct themselves in the manner of the latter, we have pried open the door of ignorance a wee bit. The human organism, at the pinnacle of forms of planetary life is a complex entity. It also continues to be a confusing and confounding subject of study. But study we must, for without it our lack of comprehension of the proverbial human element will compel us to grope in the dark in the fashion of the unfortunate fellow who was left blindfolded in a darkened room looking for a black cat that was not there. This admittedly is a

most unenviable position. From an academic point of view, it could well be termed disastrous. Human beings remain elusive as a subject of study. Standing at the apex of the geneological tree of earthly creations, man is his biggest enigma. Leaving aside other aspects of social, political and psychological analyses that entail study of human behaviour, the interrelationship between the state and the individual is a facet of our study that is almost totally based on the theory and practice of such behaviour and on motive forces that generate behaviour patterns. Unless we gain a minimal insight into the forces propelling human conduct we shall find it difficult to comprehend the deep, intensely interactive factors that guide and shape national and international affairs.

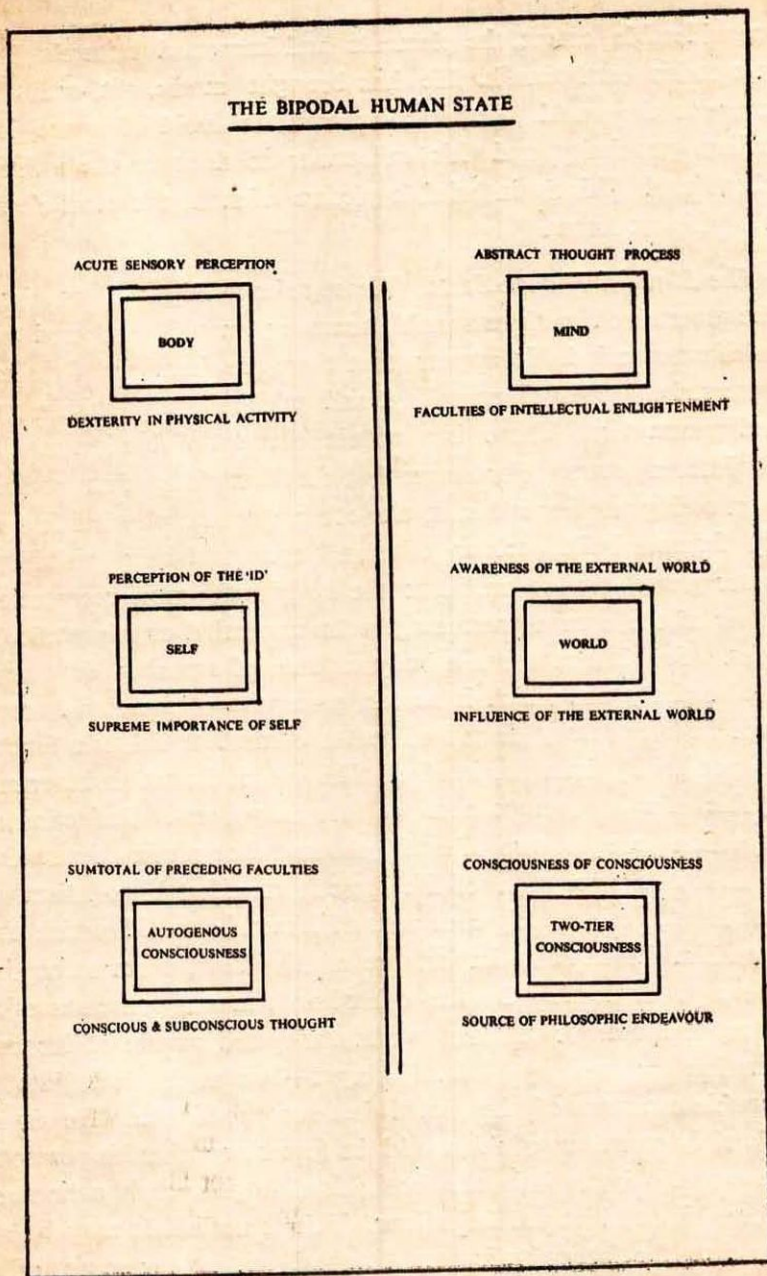
Scope of study. Behaviour, motive forces, psycho-analysis of human activities and characteristics and allied studies admittedly have an extremely wide realm, aspects of which are still under exploration. In our case, we shall only briefly touch on some of the accepted schools of thought and theories on human behaviour and the motive forces that make man act the way he does, so as to help us grasp factors fashioning the so called human element in our Mr. Citizen Man and thereby glean an insight into how he relates to his artificial and organised human environment.

The elevated human State

The Elevation and its Variations. Human beings are members of the species 'Home Sapiens'. In simple English, this means 'rational beings'. Our own classification of our ourselves reflects our appreciation of the remarkable human intellect which permits a man to argue with himself or with other members of his species, with reason and logic so as to devise a rational mode of conduct. This ability to reason, according to anthropologists, sets man apart from other forms of planetary life. Man is considered the most intelligent and capable organism yet to inhabit the Earth. He has devised means, by framing elaborate aural and graphic symbols to communicate with each other and organise into societies and nations. He has mastered

to a considerable extent, the elements and harnessed nature's latent powers to his own benefit. He has brought music, art, crafts and literature to the world. He has conquered the void of space in its immediate proximity, and his endeavour to discover the unknown marches ahead. This is in brief, a picture of man, the most elevated form of life we know.

The Bi-podal Human State. (Please refer to Figure-1) as far as can be ascertained with reasonable accuracy, man is endowed with a multifaceted mind. It appears that there are chambers of the mind that are strictly compartmentalised and which function within well-defined parameters. There is a certain element of dualism manifest in the human state. For example, the first thing that strikes a man on seeing another is his ie the other person's physical features, bodily frame, build, colour of skin, eyes and hair, visibility of muscular growth and so on. But the body is the more receptacle or container of the human greatness, the human mind or his intellectual faculties. So while man has a body capable of amazing dexterity in physical activity and which is acutely perceptive of the world around through its five sensory faculties, he has a mind which is a function of his potentially immense intellect. This mind, the 'other inner man' is capable of a continuous abstract thought process. Reflection and introspection are just two of such abstract thought functions. Once again, in man's perception of life there is manifest bi-podalism. In the one hand, he is acutely conscious of himself, his 'id' which hammers on him the supreme importance of his 'self', from which there is no escape till death. On the other hand, man is conscious of the world around him. A continuous and variegated stream of incoming information or sensory stimuli input—bombards him into an inescapable awareness of the world that surrounds him. He is not only forcibly conscious of this world, its forces or rather his perception of the worldly forces influence both his thoughts and action and, therefore, his conduct and behaviour. This is not all. It may be safe to say that the foregoing is true to some extent for some of the other species of anthropoids high on the yardstick of functional

FIGURE—1

intelligence. Therefore, something beyond these attributes must make man stand out among all known forms of life. This final attribute, the one we are going to discuss, falls within the realms of psychology and has shaped the growth of philosophy. It is being touched upon here very simplistically indeed. In the first instance it may be assumed that the body and the mind are complementary. While empirical tests conducted so far tend to persuade one that thought is an electro-chemical function of neurons in brain cells that are essentially material-objects, mind or the sum total of all thought process is hardly a physical phenomenon. The Question is, can the mind exist independently of the body? While it is possible to conceive, or to be more precise, imagine a vegetable-like physical entity without any mental or intellectual faculties, it is indeed difficult to imagine the reverse. The sum total of the foregoing is a bi-cameral phenomenon called autogenous consciousness. We are aware of both ourselves and to a limited extent of the physical world around us. This is autogenous. It does not essentially depend on our faculties being exercised because both we and the world are there, and the two entities interact. This is one aspect of the bi-podal phenomenon. The other and profound aspect is, human beings are aware of their own awareness. To simplify, a man is conscious of his own existence and that of the physical world of which he is a part. Additionally, he is also conscious of his consciousness just alluded to. This is the ultimate in thought process the human intellect is capable of grasping as yet. This double-consciousness or two-tier awareness is the source of human philosophic endeavour. It is what sets man apart from other forms of life.

The consequences of this extent bi-podal state have been far reaching. While it is true that the vast majority of the human populace suffers from serious deficiencies of one kind or another which precludes fruition of intellectual abilities to their full maturity, the species have been frequently blessed, and occasionally cursed by the appearance of man of transcendental wisdom or conversely, diabolical cynicism. While there is little the reader of this paper can

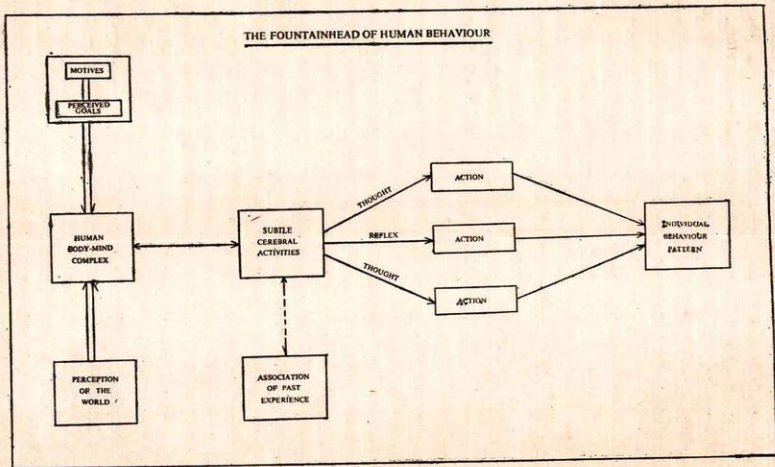
do to accelerate or decelerate the appearance of such personages, the preceding study may be of help in comprehending the exceedingly wide range of man's intellectual potential. While one ought to cheer the arrival of a member of the former, one must caution one's fellows against the hazards of not nipping the specimens of the latter in the bud. In the military particularly, because of the enhanced destructive potential of powerful cynics, we must be wary of them.

NECESSITY AS A MOTIVE FORCE

Function of the Body-Mind Complex

General. The foregoing is recorded here only to form a basis of our study of human behaviour. Having read what is thought of the human mind in particular and the peculiar human state in general, we shall now delve into the currently accepted theories that generalise human motivation and behaviour. Human beings are endowed with a bi-cameral life. On the one hand, is a finely crafted physical body. On the other is its abstract and yet dominant function, the mind. Each acts on the other and the sum total of this interaction is what we shall call the 'body-mind complex' is what we perceive in human behaviour. This statement is likely to bring forth a salve of Queries. How does the human being act or react? And why does he do so? These are two questions frequently asked by psychologists, social scientists, politicians and military leaders among others who are concerned with human behaviour. Many theories have been advanced, analysed, discarded or modified in this regard and the process continues with no end in sight. A distillate of the more reasonable contemporary schools of thought is offered here in the subsequent paragraphs.

Motivation and Human Behaviour. A general study of how motive forces shape and influence human behaviour will help us in our subsequent study of the Hierarchy of need. (Please refer to Figure-2) The body-mind complex called man is continuously bombarded by external stimuli representing perception of the external world. At the same time, man is deeply affected by subtle cerebral activities

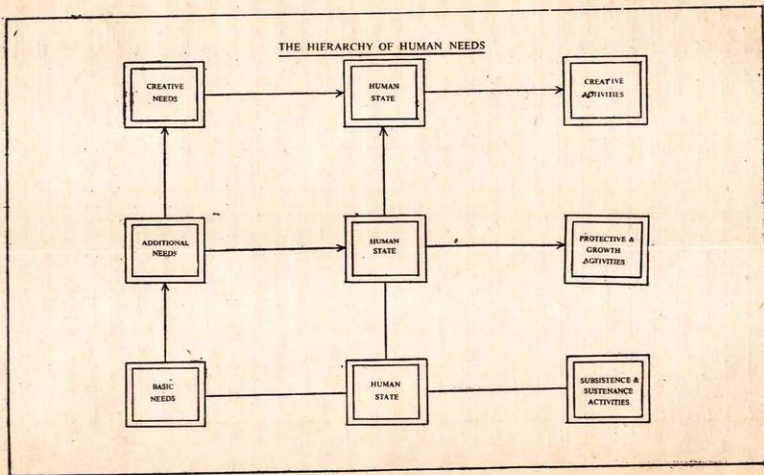


FIGURE—2

like reflection, retrospection, introspection etc. The process is intragenerative and continuous. This means perception leads to thought and reflection or conjecture which in turn draws attention to other stimuli which in turn engenders more thought and so on. Out of this mixture of perception and thought emerge certain objectives which the body-mind complex accepts as necessary goals to be attained. These goals are perceived as such and in the process of their cerebral perception, they are translated into motives. Once the goals impinge on the body-mind complex in the shape of motivation, man goes into action. This action may be deliberate thought rather than spontaneous reflex. Frequently they are on admixture of the two. Whenever a series of actions triggered by the system discussed in the preceding lines is studied to boil down to a generalised course in conduct or line of action, a pattern of behaviour emerges.

The Hierarchy of Need

Perception and consequence of need. (Please refer to Figure-3) This theory proposes that necessity is not only the mother of invention as the old saying goes, it also is the motive force behind human behaviour. The explanation of this theory is subject to complete grasp of the preceding discussion. Proponents of this School of thought claim that the body-mind complex called man acts according to the necessity he perceived. They suggest that necessity motivates man in stages since needs are of different types. It is further said that man is incessantly inflicted with the perception of one need (or necessity, to be more precise) or another. The moment one such need is satisfied, another appears and triggers further action till it is also fulfilled, when another appears and so on. According to these thocrists, man's perception of his needs are never fully satisfied and this is why, human beings are forced to lead a life of continuous work and activities. We are destined to a Sysiphean lot. This is the basis of our dynamic civilisation which would have atrophied if our needs were ever fully satisfied. Proponents classify ambient needs in three categories.

FIGURE—3

- a. *Basic Needs.* These are perceived when man is at the lowest level of his intellectual development. He needs food and water and air (or oxygen) for nutrition of his body-mind complex. These are essential to sustenance. He needs clothing to protect his body from the vagaries of nature. He needs shelter to survive the hostile elements of nature. These needs are basic and must be fulfilled first to ensure survival and sustenance. Only when these are met is man aware of other needs. Perception of basic needs prompts man to initiate subsistence and sustenance related activities. These activities continue till death. Circumstances may ease the procurement of nourishment, clothing and shelter, but a person still must eat, wear clothes and live in a protected shelter before he can initiate other activities.
- b. *Additional Needs.* Once basic needs are satisfied, other necessities emerge. First is the need to ensure that basic needs will be fulfilled without interruption. This forces man to take up 'bread earning' activities. This in the modern world entails formal education and so on. Subsequently, man looks for a measure of physical comfort that may spare him some of the drudgery of mortal life. Science and technology, financial ability, education and erudition and peer-pressure determine or influence the type and nature of comfort seeking activities man will initiate. Gradually, such comforts may reach the level of luxury. However, it must be kept in mind that socio-economic conditions vary so widely that what is considered luxury in one country or region may be termed a simple necessity elsewhere.

As additional needs are satisfied, man keeps on climbing the rungs of this upward ladder and such concepts as status, glory, pride etc (which are equally relative, with different interpretations in different areas) affect him. But the trend everywhere is the same-towards attainment of comfort and pleasure.

- c. *Creative Needs.* When a measure of additional needs have been fulfilled, man's intellectual faculties may start asserting themselves. A novel form of need may then open up. These are creative needs. Fulfilment of these needs or urges have little relevance to the individual's physical state. The urges are engendered by intellectual exercises and are manifest in creative literature, arts and craft, music, science and technology related explorations the resulting in discoveries and inventions and so on. This process, however, must be distinguished from the professional practitioners' craft. People sing and dance, write voluminous books and perform all kinds of research, for a pittance. They are propelled more by basic and additional needs than by creative needs. The difference is subtle, but it is there. Whereas Tagore spent a life powered by strong creative urges, the same cannot be said for commercial writers who fill the literature domain today.

An Overview

It now appears that the human state is a bi-podal phenomenon, riven by a dualism of the self and the non-self. It is motivated by what it perceives as goals and its own perceptions are continuously influenced by a stream of external stimuli from the physical world, and its ability to carryout subtle cerebral activities. Once goals are presented as the motivation, the body-mind complex is activated to action. Such action may be guided by deliberate thought or spontaneous reflex or a combination of the two, but after a study of behaviour under a particular set of circumstances a pattern of behaviour emerges. The pattern varies from man to man.

Goals and motives vary due to environmental conditions. But generally speaking, a hierarchy of needs or a system of necessities triggers action in man. Such necessities are of Basic, Additional and Creative types. While the fulfillment of one need is followed by perception of another, basic needs must first of all be satisfied before additional needs are perceived. This chain of successive need percep-

tion and activities leading to their fulfillment has brought the human civilisation where it is today.

The Hierarchy of need is admittedly a simplistic explanation of human behaviour. It may be imprecise and even inaccurate. But it gives us an insight into the mechanism of the body-mind complex. It can form a basis of further study. Comprehension of the foregoing will, hopefully result in a measure of circumspect maturity in our youthful leaders of man. It may lead to further study of the amazing creature called Homo Sapiens. It opens the possibility that having read this and more, one will find it difficult to take human beings for granted, the one does machinery. Human beings are also machine-like, but in the most elementary sense of the term. Man needs sustenance. But his bi-podal State renders him too complex an organism to be compared truthfully to the most complicated piece of machinery conceived as yet. This complexity of the human organism lends him a peculiar vulnerability. On the one hand, man alone is in a position to question the purpose behind the creation, if creation is the term to use here, of the cosmos. On the other, he can be manipulated by those who peddle the merchandise of subversion, and psychological warfare. He is prone to be persuaded and convinced, however, wrongly. A machine can be programmed to perform an unvarying series of functions. But a man can think and do a million bits of thought and action in a relatively brief lifetime. Inputs may occasionally change closely held beliefs, faiths, taboos and a whole new pattern will then emerge.

Those concerned with human behaviour, particularly political, social and military leaders must attain a measure of understanding of the complex way the human body-mind organism functions. In itself this knowledge may not make us better citizens or wiser men. But this knowledge is bound to give us an understanding of why man does what he does. This knowledge will open our eyes to the dangers and allurements which act as pressures on all men, as individuals and as members of a complex and delicately knit

organisation—the state. Only from here can we proceed further afield in our present discussion.

THE ESSENCE OF CONFLICT

Introduction

General. Conflict as we view it in the context of our present discussion, has two aspects,—individual and collective. As has been mentioned, conflict at the individual level often shapes individual human life and occasionally leaves an imprint on the footnotes of history. It rarely fashions history. With perspective conflict at the individual level loses much of its significance although its implications in the individual environment remain considerable. Our concern centres primarily around collective or rather organised conflict. The latter touches upon numerous lives, often lasts longer and leaves larger residues. Such conflict frequently shapes historical trends and perceptions. As a matter of fact, collective conflict is frequently what history is all about. This difference in scope and significance has been kept in mind in our subsequent dissertation.

Examples from the recent past. In the post-war era conflict initially stemmed from a clash of interests between the forces of nationalism and those of colonialism. Subsequently, the focus shifted to conflicting interests of the superpowers and the regional axes of support and spheres of influence they formed and supported. Conflicts both intra-national and international, have marked our recent history. Scientific and technological break-through, economic ability and intensity of belligerence have rendered the Earth a dangerous and precarious habitat. We have moved from conflict to conflict and no end to this process is in sight. It may not be out of place to mention Berlin, Hungary, Cuba, Ladakh, Kashmir, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, (or Kampuchea as it is known today), The Congo, Suez, Sinai, Cyprus, the Lebanon, Zaire, Eritrea, the Yemens, the Ogaden, Bangladesh, Iran and most recently Afghanistan, the locales of some of the most memorable flash points of the post-war era. The string could be woven much longer. But the

above example should suffice to open the eyes of idealists of ostrich-like temperament and conviction. Although there exist a variety of physical forms in which conflict may appear, the underlying forces are alienation and animosity between persons and groups of persons. It is the degree of animosity and means of venting the same at the disposal of the protagonist (and the antagonist) that determine the shape and intensity of expression.

Origins of conflict

The Root Causes. Some research appears to have been carried out in the west into the roots and origins of conflict. Although generalisations have often lacked the collateral of empirical evidence, certain schools of thought appear more reasonable and logical than others. From a study of these one may glean four major perceptual and motivational factors.

These are :—

- a, *At national and International levels.*
 - (1) *Goals that can be advanced through war.*
 - (2) *The perception of threat.*
 - (3) *Hostility towards other states.*
- b. *At the individual level.* Un-consummated expectations (material or abstract)

Goals that can be advanced through war. It may be assumed with a modicum of logic that because there are certain goals that can be advanced through armed conflict or conflict per se or war as it is commonly called, countries which pursue these goals or the ruling elite of a state who consider such goals desirable get involved in conflicts, Theoretically, conflict is manifest opposition of ideas and ideals, aims, objectives and missions, perceived interests and incompatibility of existing circumstances or present policies. This opposition and incompatibility lead to tension and sustain or enhance the potential for conflict. Adjustments may subsequently be made by either or all the parties concerned to remove or at least lower this potential. Conversely, potential may reach such a level when

the issues may only be resolved by violent means—a test of arms—the ultimate form of conflict. But what are these goals? Theoreticians tend to group such goals under two distinct heads. These are briefly discussed:

a. *Success-Oriented goals.* This set of goals implies those that accrue to or is likely to accrue to the victory in a successfully concluded instance of conflict. These goals are often perceived as more tangible than abstract and are, therefore, a stronger inducement to belligerence. They represent the fruits of victory, war booty, loot and multi-faceted domination over the vanquished. Success-oriented goals may be further broken down into the following sub-categories:-

- (1) *Economic goals* to either overcome existing economic weaknesses troubling one's own country by securing resources or the material fruits of success from the vanquished victim, or to reverse existing or developing economic imbalance by denuding a wealthier state. Economic goals appear to trigger the strongest conflict motivation in the contemporary world.
- (2) *Ideological goals* may lead to conflict between adherents of the major ideologies that contradict each other. While political scientists in the liberal conservative west preach democracy and individualism, those with a totalitarian bent of mind eulogise and practise authoritarianism and collectivism. These sets of values are so divergent that as long as states and statesmen are governed by them, ideological goals of conflict will divide the world into opposing camps. Superpowers rivalry, that much maligned phenomenon, was originally nurtured on such goals.
- (3) *Political goals* often lead politicians to discern conflict and war as highly expedient. War has been called, in almost as many words, politics conducted by other

means. When more humane solutions fail to resolve political problems, conflict in any of its myriad manifestation provides one way out. The brute law of the jungle—'might is right' is often perceived as the ultimate arbiter to any political problem between human organisations. Although numerous factors contributed to the Yom Kippur war in 1973, President Anwar Sadaat of Egypt had felt that initiation offensive hostility against Israel in the fall of 1973 offered a measure of expediency towards resolving what were primarily a set of political problems.

- (4) *Punitive goals.* On 17 February 1979 units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) crossed the international boundary and marched into northern provinces of Vietnam. It was a brief, violent and possibly inconclusive expedition. The Chinese almost openly stated it was a punitive action against Vietnam which had uprooted the pro-Peking Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea in December 1978 and installed a pro-Moscow puppet government under Heng Samrin. As far as one can ascertain through the particularly pea-soupy fog of brief, localised warfare, once these limited goals of the campaign were met, the PLA withdrew. This may be a simplistic explanation of the often brutally violent operation but the fact remains that punitive goals dazzle brightly when diplomatic means have failed to deliver.
- (5) *Military Goals.* Perception of such goals is often based on self-fulfilling fear of military capabilities and presumed designs of other countries. The idea is not to neutralise the military threat in totality. This may well be impossible to achieve. However, the fact that such threats may be actual, potential or only hypothetical does not seem to reduce their gravity or import in the

minds of men fearfully contemplating pre-emptive strikes by 'enemy' forces or states. The logical response to this kind of apprehension is the classic fall back onto the axiom that 'offense is the best defense' manifest in the launching of a fail-safe or fool-proof pre-emptive strike against the perceived enemy before the latter can do the same. This my-pre-emptive-before-yours syndrome is only one of the Catch—22esque scenarios. Military goals and their ramifications—the final expression of conflict assume myriad courses and history is replete with examples. Israeli attempts to reduce the military threats posed by Egypt and Syria to her security in the middle of 1967 were very successful indeed. But one must hastily add that very many goals other than or in addition to military ones also influenced Israel's jumping into the fray the way she did.

- b. *Conflict-Oriented Goals.* These tend to be intangible and qualitative. Initiation and continuation of conflicts are a means to attaining these goals. Although it takes considerable analytical abilities to discern one or more of these goals as motivating factors in a sustained conflict, they are as important to our study as those of the success-oriented variety. Some conflict-oriented goals could be:

- (1) *National Dynamism.* A state may occasionally fall into the doldrums when it is, nationally speaking, engaged in just scraping by and possibly wistfully reminiscing a glorious past. The nation or rather the nation—state in question may appear to have gone into a slumber that tends to perpetuate the status-quo. Sudden or even gradual development of conflict in any one of many possible forms at this juncture could well forge the populace into one solid mass of unified opinions and concerted action. Progression of the conflict to a crisis could breathe in new life into the nation bestow-

ing the land with dynamic resurgence. Conceivably, involvement in a crisis also can well destroy a stuperous nation and it takes the greatest of statesmen to be able to discern the difference.

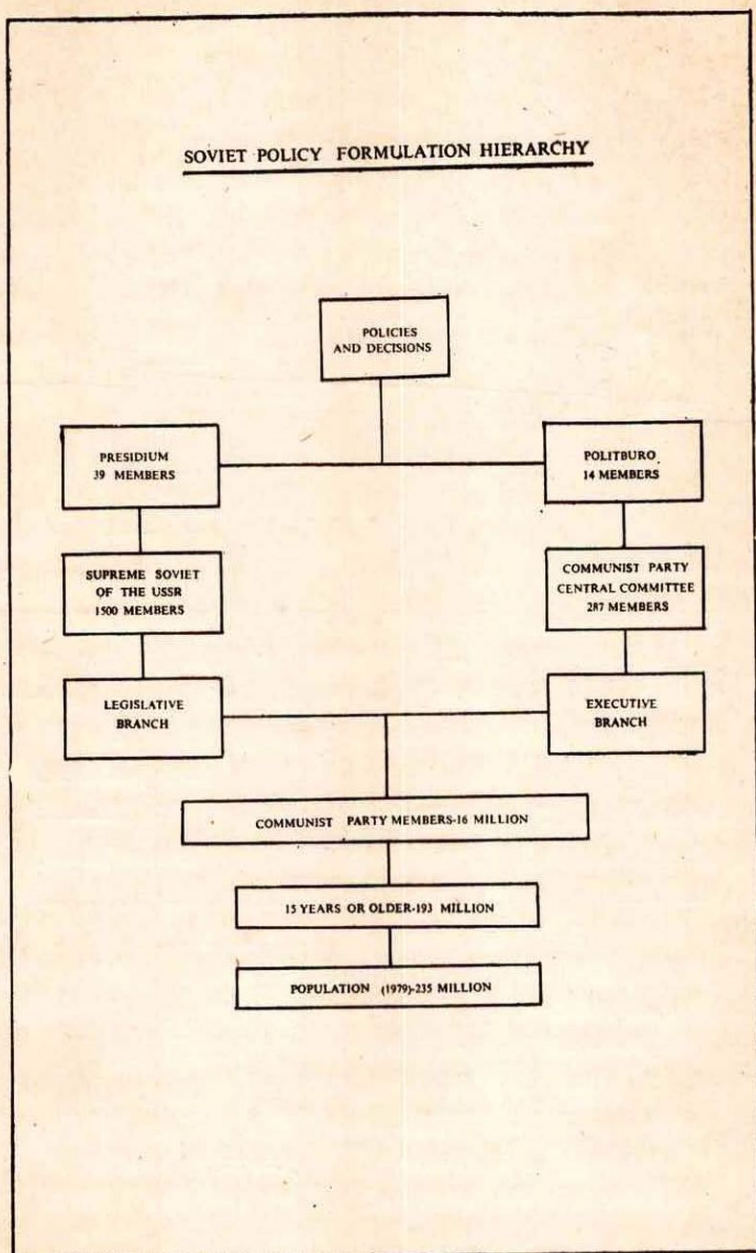
- (2) *National Honour.* Throwing the gauntlet in an international conflict may assuage national honour and revamp national pride. A sense of guilt or shame emanating from the national history may come to haunt a country's psyche till it gets embroiled in a major conflict of crisis proportions. The surprise crossing of the Suez canal and subsequent breaching of the Bar Lev Line by the Egyptians in the fall of 1973 were partly rooted in President Anwar Sadaat's quest for national redemption in the wake of the disastrous campaign in 1967.
- (3) *Mercantile Goals.* Conflict in any of its myriad manifestations, ultimate outcome notwithstanding, tends to increase demand for certain types of goods and services thereby boosting the mercantile forces of the concerned national economies. Although it is presumptuous to say that military conflict persists only because armament-and-munition makers deign so, mercantile goals appear to exert subtle pressures on the national economic-industrial-political policy making. The long-term affects of such wild-fire economic activities may entail consequent high inflationary pressures, but fear of such dangers is lost in the immediate proximity of boom-time benefits of high employment and enhanced profit that accrue due to the conflict management of economies.
- (4) *Enhancement of Influence.* Ruling circles may occasionally find themselves in hot water situations whose origin may or may not lie in any conflict perse. To justify their policies at home and abroad, particularly

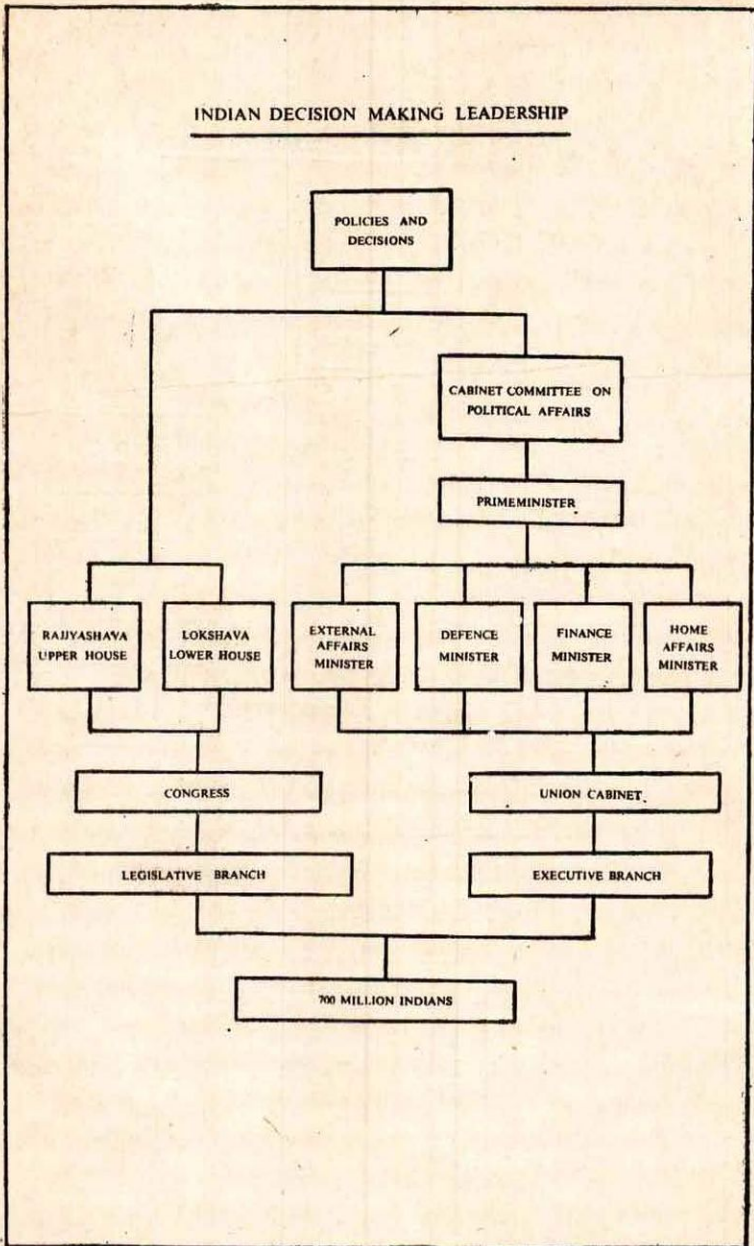
at home, and to consolidate or strengthen their standing within the country they may well be drawn into politico-military brinkmanship. Resultant tension ridden atmospherics and subsequent crisis-management tend to consolidate or enhance the authority and influence of the incumbent administration over the country, and that of the military over the administration. This is why the potential allurements beckons so brightly.

The Perception of Threat. Conflicts emerge or grow when one human organisation perceives threats—actual or potential—to its way of life, thought, cultural expressions, social institutions economic and political activities. Potential for conflict may lie smouldering for many years.

- a. *National Goals and Capabilities.* These vary. Consequent upon such variation each country may logically be expected to view a particular set of circumstances in its own way. Its capabilities may, therefore, shape its particular course of action. National peculiarities are bound to influence decision-making. Such inherent differences themselves tend to raise international tension. But common ground among nations can also be found that are too fundamental to change with a change of administration. This is how Blocs and alliances are forged. The bi-polarised world of a decade ago is ample testimony to this. Although emergence of new centres of gravity is gradually transforming the international community into a multi-polar entity, the basic factors of commonality and contradiction of national goals and capabilities remain the cornerstone of alignment.
- b. *Decision-Making Systems.* It is to be remembered that whatever the professed ideology of a country or the system of its administration, the onus of policy formulation and decision-making at the national level lies on a relatively

small circle of people. We may call them the ruling elite. Whether representative democracy or an authoritarian system, is in power in a country, it is the ruling elite that makes decisions and formulates national policy domestic and external. The socio-cultural background, education, knowledgeability, vision of life's objectives and general philosophy of life of the individual members of this small coterie automatically influence policy formulation and decision-making at the national level. In communist states the Communist Party Politburo is officially vested with this responsibility. (Please see figure - 4) The real authority in this regard, however, may be exercised by a smaller group on the peak of the power-pyramid. Even within the members of such small communities, a single individual may often wield dictatorial power. In countries practising representative democracy constitutional authority is shared, at least theoretically by the executive and legislative branches of government. In most cases, however, the highest decision-making echelon is known as the National Security Council or some other such body. Such a body is an assemblage of technocrats and members of the academe, personages who are trusted to be the best and the brightest in their respective fields. These may cover foreign relations, finance and economics, defence and security and so on. In India, for example, such think tanking is in the province of what is known as the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (please see figure 5). The forms vary but the essence remains the same. The fact is in today's burgeoning nation-states, policies that decide the fate of millions are formulated by a handful. A point here is to clarify what notional policy is. One western analyst termed national policy relating to the external world Grand Strategy. He says "Grand Strategy has been defined as plans for the use of the political, economic and the psychological

FIGURE-4

FIGURE—5

powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during war and during peace, to secure national objectives. Here the emphasis is on long term national objectives. To secure these objectives and to preserve them from attack, the state should utilise each means at its disposal. This calls for close coordination of all the governmental agencies involved in dealing with other nations.”¹ The analyst goes on to explain why the process of policy formulation is easier stated than comprehended. “It is agreed that (national policy formulation) is the coordinated activity of all government agencies to secure national objective, but before anything concrete can be accomplished there must be agreement among civil and military leaders as to what (a country’s) national objectives are or should be. Curiously enough, there has been and still is a wide variety of opinions on this point”.² Be that as it may, the destiny of nations is dependent on the small bodies of men whose job it is to formulate policy. Evident lack of standardisation of such organisations and inherent human variations render further generalisation on this theme impractical.

- c. *National Leadership and threat Perception.* That the quality of national leadership and that of national policy-making process are intertwined cannot be debated. An Oriental student of the subject feels “the threat to a nation’s security arises from the desires of zealous men and nations and their ability to satisfy those desires. A nation’s defensive capacity depend upon its (leaders’) ability to anticipate such threats and to worst the enemy.”³ Although variations in the leadership make-up will influence decision-making, certain

1. W M Mc-Govern, ‘Strategic Intelligence and the Shape of Tomorrow’ Greenwood Press-P 166-167.

2. Ibid, P 170.

3. Rohit Handa, ‘Policy for India’s Defence’, Chentna Publications, New Delhi, P 18.

factors in the context of potential belligerents may remain constant. The author quoted above says that conflict potential among nations remains quite high whatever the quality of leadership on either side. "The rationale behind strategic parity is that no power should be allowed to use normalisation (i.e. reduction of the essential tension between states) as a point against another. If a true normalisation is desired then it must be accompanied by a declaration of present force and control. Otherwise, a country which has reduced its tactical forces or had them rendered technologically obsolete faces the possibility of a fresh attack which it has no means to stave off. If, on the other hand, a tactical reverse can be made good by a strategic response, a leadership which wears a mask of peace will not be inclined to take advantage of small weaknesses in the armoury of their adversaries. Given this line of reasoning, a mere change in the style of functioning between countries is not a guarantee of peace and stable relations."⁴ Admittedly this sounds rather bleak. But the quality of leadership remains a vital factor in deciding the manner of international transactions. Further on this subsequently.

- d. *Public Opinion.* This is a factor that influences national perceptions and policy formulation in the long term. But it works differently in different environments. In liberal democracies where the majority of the population is educated, opinionated and conscious of individual and collective rights and responsibilities, the term public opinion has a measure of semantic accuracy and practical significance. But even in those countries the majority may decide to remain silent when major issues rock the country as in the USA during the 1960s. It is often the younger, idealistic, restless, educated youth that makes issues out of events and policies, create furious ferment and draw national

4. *Ibid*, P 12

and international attention to their viewpoints. These people often shape the cognizable tip of the iceberg of Public Opinion. The real public is often more moderate, circumspect and middle-of-the-road than its more expressive progeny. Only when something perceived to be fundamental is at stake is the full fury of public opinion given expression. This is what happened, in a way, in Iran in the months preceding the Shah's abdication. In authoritarian states public opinion or its formation and expression are strictly controlled by the ruling elite. One may consider the case of Soviet television screening films of friendly Russian soldiers building bridges to the appland of smiling and grateful Afghan natives. Few Soviet citizens are aware of the gravity of their country's adventure in that troubled state. The question of public outcry simply doesn't arise. Besides, dissenters in the USSR are aware of possible consignment to the Gulag. But then even in such difficult environments public opinion may coalesce around more basic and less ideological issues. The unprecedented strike by the Polish dock workers is a case in point.

- e. *Special Interest groups.* In certain countries groups of people not being a part of the ruling elite nor of the public per se may exert considerable pressure and influence over those who formulate or shape policy. These are the special interest groups. It may be in the interest of such groups to conceive the potential of some actual or hypothetical threat publicise its gravity, exacerbate consequent tension and lead the nation to a limited conflict or even full-scale warfare over the issue concerned. Munition makers for instance, may form such a group. In the USA public outcry against the so-called warmongering exploits of the military-industrial-complex rose to a crescendo in the late 1960s. Pacifists and radical student groups charged with some evidence of accuracy of their involvement in Indo-China.

While this accusation may have some element of truth, it would not hold water elsewhere where the so-called military-industrial complex is an integral part of the governmental establishment.

*The stages of perception of threat*⁵. The preceding discussion dealt with factors that influence perception of threat. The following narrative is intended to delve into the actual process of how one country perceives threats in another. Three distinct stages can be discerned in the process of international threat perception. These are:-

- a. *Incompatibility of Aims and Goals*. This is the first stage when potential flashpoints are identified by one or all the parties concerned. Although often the gravest incidents involve two opposing states, this is not uniformly the case and hence our perpetual fear of world-wide conflagrations. Incipient conflict evolves to matured severity out of this initial stage. Because basic national aims and goals of two nations are incompatible the two nations must obtain and then retain independent identity. If their national aims and goals were to a great extent compatible or identical, the two could very well merge into one to every one's delight and collective benefit. Alas, this is not the case today. When for instance, in 1947 the British were on their way out of India, the Indian National Congress, the prestigious forebear of the much factionalised contemporary counterpart, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru looked forward to establishing a sovereign India stretching from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean, from the Khyberpass to the Arakans. This 'Greater India' dream did not come true. The two-nation theory propounded by the Indian Moslem League led to partition of the sub-continent on a communal basis to create a separate homeland for those subscribing to the Mohammedan faith. A

5. D G Pruitt and R C Snyder, 'Theory and Research on the Causes war' Prentice Hall, P 23-25

massive communal conflagration then ensued. Abomination reigned. Hundreds of thousands of both faiths perished as did many Sikhs and Jains. Millions had their lives uprooted from their reasonably peaceful roots. Countless men and women were rendered homeless refugees. The initial bitterness sowed the seeds of distrust and animosity between the two countries. The national goals of secular, democratic India and Islamic, authoritarian Pakistan were opposed to each other from the inception. Such incompatibility engendered incipient conflict that burgeoning establishment and entrenched authority were being influenced by special interest groups driven by avaricious profit motive in their alleged efforts to prolong and intensify the conflict engulfing the region and subsequently affecting policies and actions of other nations. Three large-scale though localised military conflicts the last of which broke up Pakistan, speak eloquently in this behalf. But how did this come to pass. Because national goals and objectives of India and Pakistan have been conflicting and contradictory, the ruling elite in each country has come to regard that of the other with a modicum of animosity. Public opinion, founded on the state controlled media-exhortations also reflected such views. National hostility against each other became an endemic if unpleasant fact of life. Each perceived threats to its own security in the conflicting interests and policies of the other. Such apprehension only feeds on itself and the cumulative tension can only boil over with disastrous consequences. In this regard two factors ought to be kept in mind. These are:—

- (1) *Evidence of Threat.* Whenever a country discerns an evidence of threat in the policies and diplomatic-politico-military-economic stance of another, apprehension tends to solidify into beliefs. Such evidence as may be presented or perceived, is thought to comprise of

two elements, hostile intent and military capability of the potential antagonist. For instance if country A for some reasons comes to think that country B harbours hostile intent against it i.e, country A, and if subsequently it also discovers that country B is actually or potentially capable of realising its hostile designs, country A may feel convinced that it has adequate evidence of threat from the latter country.

- (2) *Fear of Pre-emptives.* This factor follows the former. Extending the example cited in the foregoing, it may be said that once country A discerns what it considers evidence of threat, it is subjected to the fear of some pre-emptive action by country B. This fear-justified or otherwise, may lead country A to adopt a course of action that may well include a pre-emptive of its own. Both countries may then fall victim to the 'my pre-emptive before your pre-emptive' syndrome and may consequently fashion a vicious chain of self-fulfilling nightmares.
- b. *Predisposition to Percèive Threat.* This is one the more malignant and long-term affect of what has been discussed in the foregoing. Prolonged mutual animosity frequently results in an almost permanent sense of distrust among nations and bloc of nations. This phenomenon, however, is equally true of individuals and groups of individuals. If the national psyche of a particular nation-state is geared to perceive threat from any particular quarter, the slightest provocation, intended, implicit or imaginary, may trigger a conflict of crisis proportions. Such predisposition tends to be emulative. This is why it is so difficult to breakdown the age-old barrier of distrust and hostility that has separated the Arabs from the Israelis in the Middle-East and the Indians and Pakistanis in the Subcontinent. This predisposition

to perceive threat gets in-grained over the years into the national personality and is a dangerous harbinger of violence.

- c. *Ambiguity of Evidence.* Such evidence of threat as alluded to in the preceding text is often vague and ambiguous. This is so primarily because threat, interests, national objective etc. are essentially abstract concepts and are dependent upon interpretation. A very fine line tends to demarcate the perceived from the actual when both are not the same. And it takes extremely discerning statesmanship to distinguish such differences. It is then accepted that in the best of instances the ambiguity of evidence poses considerable difficulties to the formulators of national policies. While cautious persons preach circumspect and deliberate reaction, more of action. Such men have frequently been called great leaders and statesmen, national saviours and guardian angels of freedom and liberty. Men of action are guided by a sense of mission and destiny, however, misplaced or far fetched this sense may eventually turn out to be. Expediency may cause caution to be thrown to the wind and pragmatism may have to take a second seat to a "attack now defend later" mentality. Ambiguity of evidence, therefore, tends to exacerbate tension rather than granting the benefit of the doubt to pacifist courses of action.

Hostility towards other states. One of the prime contributing factors to international conflict is one country's hostility to another. This may appear to be emphasising the obvious. Hostility, analysts maintain, is essential to conflict. But whence this hostility? What is its shape and form? And why do aggressive impulses dominate international transactions. Although it is well nigh impossible to furnish all the answers here, an attempt is being made to explain some of the underlying causes.⁶

6. Ibid P 26-29

- a. *Hostility to agents of frustration.* Conflicting ideals and objectives produce great irritants among groups of persons and among nations. One country may, therefore, find the policies of another inimical to its own interests and pursuits. Such policies may frustrate the subject country from attaining its avowed national goals. Identification of such an agent of frustration may engender and direct hostility.
- b. *Venting frustration on Scapegoats.* Occasions may arise when a victimised state, having identified its persecutor, fails to duel with it because of one of many possible reasons. In desperation it may then proceed to find a scapegoat for its failures.
- c. *Hostility amongst the ruling elite.* As with individual persons so with sovereign states and vice versa. Members of the ruling elite of a country—the veritable central hub of national authority—may polarise on issues and personalities and fallout with each other. Such intramural bickering may trigger off the collective formulation of aggressive policies against another state. Conflict born of such background tends to strengthen the hands of some and weaken those of others till some kind of an acceptable equilibrium is restored.
- d. *Hostility to the hostile.* When country A perceives country B to be hostile to her, she herself i.e. country A may become overtly hostile to country B in response. This vicious circle of hatred, antagonism and hostility mars the apparent calm prevailing on the surface of international interaction. Underneath, the community of nations seethes and boils like some witch's brew in the cauldron. The point to remember here is that all such causes are more often than not intricately interwoven and can be studied in isolation academically alone.

- e. *Nationalism and allied differences.* Burning flames of nationalistic fervour are another factor that causes hostility between groups of people and among nations. This factor is accentuated by the establishment of nation-states exemplified by the Bengali nation in Bangladesh. The rising tide of nationalism that swept over the erstwhile colonies in the post-war era contributed to growing animosity with and non-acceptance of other peoples' ways. While the end product has been the birth of numerous sovereign nation-states. One upshot was the ascending curve of international friction between nationalistic movements opposed to or indifferent to each other.
- f. *Perceived infringement on sovereignty.* Ideally speaking, an independent state enjoys sovereignty in all aspects of national and international life. This, however, is a utopian ideal in a world that is becoming progressively resource-hungry and overpopulated. Nations are far more interdependent in the present time-frame than they have been at anytime in the past. Note for instance, the dependence of the western-world on the oil producing states of the Persian Gulf region. This is only a small example from the myriad developments in our technology biased planet. At times such interdependence may lead the action of one state to be interpreted as an infringement by it on the sovereignty of another. Such perceived infringements create tension, evoke hostility and belligerence and may on occasion overflow into confrontation and conflict.

Unconsummated Expectations. In the preceding paragraphs we have studied two separate topics. We have, first of all discussed albeit briefly, the making of nation states. Subsequently, we broached the subject in relatively greater detail, of the essential nature of conflict. But so far the discourse has remained bound to the international forum. A good deal of world tension we live with emanates from the friction of divergent and conflicting national policies of inter-

acting nation-states. However, a larger and perhaps more cogent source of tension and conflict lies at home. With the possible exception of the tiny phosphate rich island state of Nauru in the Pacific, every other country in the world today is in the throes of domestic difficulties of one kind or another. It is a question of degrees and forms that distinguishes one state's internal travails from another's. Whence flows this flood of discontent. A simplified answer lies in unconsummated expectations. Rising expectations of the proverbial good times are the source of much of the discontentment plaguing the world today. The difference in abundance or scarcity of natural resources, availability of technological know-how, growth of a sophisticated economic system and above all the presence or absence of a benign and competent administration acceptable to the people, all contribute to the maldistribution of resources and wealth and the resultant difference in material prosperity prevalent in different parts of the world. The have-nots want to have what the haves have. This is understandable to the meanest intelligence. The haves, on the other hand, having earned what they have frequently by the sweat of their brow, are not in anyway inclined to give it away. This appears to be a perfectly legitimate contention. But it also makes for growing crises between the North and the South, between the East and the West, and between different social strata within one country. This trouble brews worldwide, while efforts are underway to reach some understanding in the international forum on the issue of partial, indeed of extremely limited redistribution of wealth and resources, within countries themselves the picture is grimmer. So are the prospects for the immediate future. And it stands to reason that cumulative domestic tension born of unconsummated expectations—material or ideological—the world over, is bound to affect not only individual life-styles, but also the future of what we gloatingly call the human civilisation.

Potential Flashpoints:

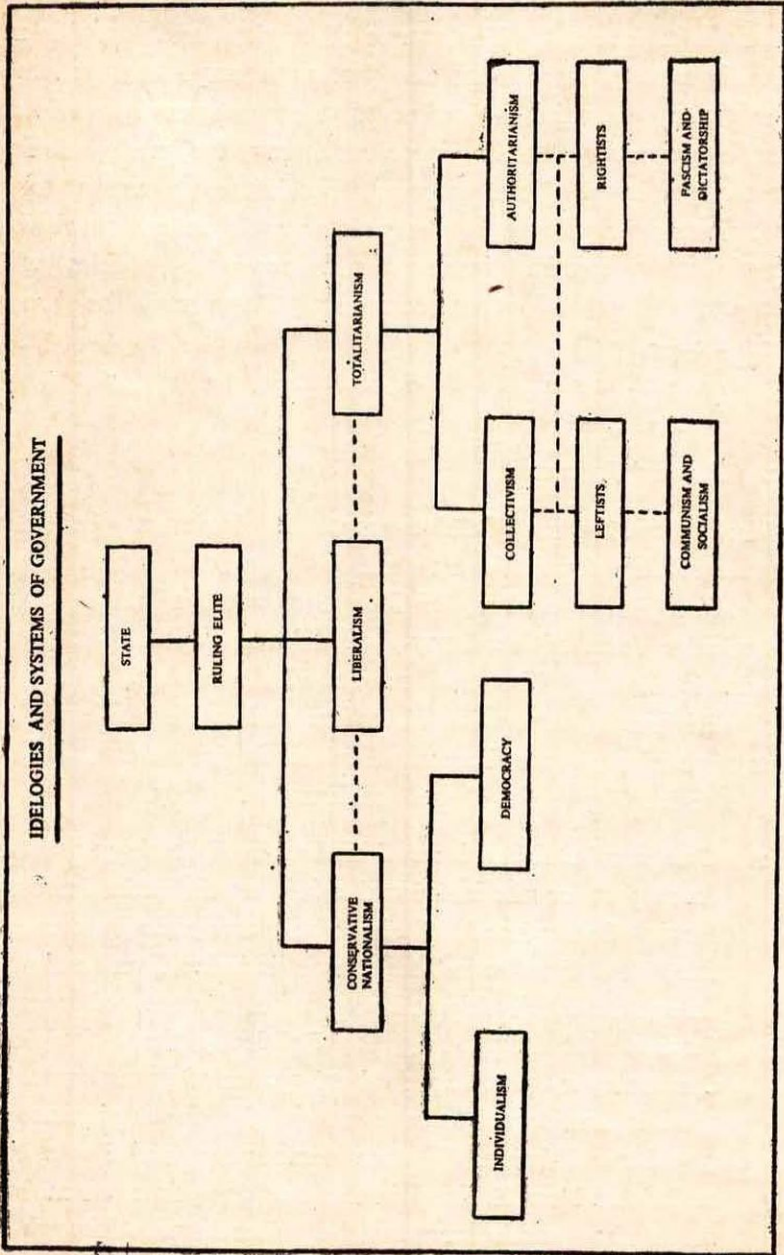
General. A study of the foregoing may lead the reader to conclude that nation states as we find them today are likely to

remain vulnerable to trends to conflict as long as their structural status quo is maintained. The source of tension and trouble may vary widely from instance to instance but an attempt has been made here to identify potential flashpoints that may regress into violence and conflagrations. A broad generalisation may be made albeit at the cost of precision. This, however, is a feature common to all abstract discussions. Potential flashpoints are dependent on national characteristics, perceived interests and accepted policies which interface with those of other countries. They may be broadly categorised as—

- a. *Ideology and System of Government.*
- b. *Ethnology.*
- c. *Cultural Factors.*

Ideology and System of Government. Ideologies may be defined as systems of thought that form the basis of economic and political orders. Ideologies, therefore, lead to the creation and sustenance of a particular form of economy and administration. At present the world is divided into two major ideologies and consequent political divisions, conservative liberalism and totalitarianism. Some students of political science discern a third ideological school, nationalism (please see Figure 6). These are discussed briefly.

- a. *Conservative Liberalism.* This brand of ideology is based on respect for the individual citizen as the most important factor of state-hood, Socially and economically conservative, liberalism translates into individualism and free enterprise, ownership of property and a set of accepted fundamental human rights. Politically the principle of democracy is upheld as the best system of governance. The state is considered to be a means for the attainment of popular well-being. Western democracies and Japan, Australia and New Zealand in the east are prime examples of those who practise conservative liberalism. Although the degree of freedom varies in various aspects, the educated



FIGURE—6

and wealthy practitioners of this ideology display the enlightened quality of expensive, easygoing freedom.

- b. *Totalitarianism*. As an ideology and basis of state policy totalitarianism is just the opposite of conservative liberalism. Totalitarianism places greater emphasis on the state or rather on the ruling eliten that assumes the self-haloed aura of statehood than it does on the citizenry which is reduced to a secondary position. In totalitarian countries the state is the end of statehood and the disciplined labour of the population is the means to its sustenance. Totalitarianism comes in two colours leftists and rightists. On the left are the communists, and a watered-down version for the socialists, who believe in the ultimate supremacy of the state over everything else. On the right are fascists and proponents of dictatorship who place the interests of the ruling elite, the oligarchy or the dictator above those of the state's citizenry. In their own way, rightists are as much an anathema to the leftists as they both are to conservative liberals. But both rightists and leftists of the totalitarian variety have one thing in common. They believe in collectivism rather than in individualism and in authoritarianism rather than in democracy. Examples of states practising either of these two ideologies are bound.
- c. *Nationalism*. Although this has been a relatively new school of ideological thought, it permeates the members of the so-called third world, in particular erstwhile colonial territories. Nationalistic fervour may, however, adopt either of the above mentioned systems as ideological sheet anchor but the resultant combination would not be a purified example of clean ideology. Be that as it may, such wide variations in ideological beliefs and political-administrative arrangements lead to ingrained and inherent differences among their practitioners. Contradictions may

well lead to tension and enhance the potential for conflict. There appears to be no change in that particular trend.

Ethnic Difference. One cannot say that ethnic differences automatically, lead to potential conflict. The human species is thought to have transcended such mean and petty considerations. But also consider the perennial Malay-Chinese problems in the Malayan Peninsula, the White-Black difficulties in the USA, the White-Brown confrontation in the UK or the ethnic Chinese exodus from Vietnam in 1979 or the Yellow-Brown clashes splitting up north-eastern India. Ethnic undercurrents do influence policies. They do shape events and they do affect the degree of international tension ambient at any time. Why is this so? In spite of his civilised erudition man finds it difficult to accept members of other ethnic groups as equal. An element of dormant hostility emanates from the many differences that differentiate the four Great Races. These races are:—

- a. *Negroids or the Great Black Race*
- b. *Caucazoids or the Great White Race*
- c. *Amerinds or the Pre-Columban Americans*
- d. *Mongoloids* or
 - (1) *North Mongoloids or the Great Yellow Race*
 - (2) *South Mongoloids or the Great Brown Race*

What is intended to be driven home is the fact that in spite of enlightenment at the individual level, the human race remains petty enough to be guided by ethnocentricity. As long as nation-states are composed on the basis of ethnic-population, the potential for conflict will stay with us.

Cultural Factors. Growth and development of human society over the ages have produced distinct cultural traits and characteristics that bind members of one society together and at the same time distinguish them from members of other societies. Tomes can be and have been written on the subject. Further studies are underway. What needs to be emphasised here is that human organisations are product of their cultural environment. Because such environments

vary in their qualitative content, differences in social groups persist. Cultural factors may be studied under four heads.

- a. *Language.* Hundreds of languages and dialects characterise cultural difference. Major language groups or systems enable men belonging to different linguistic background to come together and communicate. Languages of the Indo-Aryan system provide one such example. Languages belonging to differing groups furnish a basis of misunderstanding, lack of communication, suspicion and fear of each other to their practitioners.
- b. *Religious Faith.* Theology, Philosophy and empirical science are three modus operandi in man's perennial search for the ultimate truth—the significance if any of life. Because religion embodies fundamental beliefs that leave little scope for rational arguments, communal differences, the practical ramification of religious practices—are often acutely perceived and violently expressed. The greater the importance attached to religious beliefs and practices, the more dogmatic does an individual or community tend to become. Consequent hatred for and hostility towards other communities are similarly accentuated. As long as religious faith has anything to do with state policies, such policies will be potentially hazardous.
- c. *Social Culture.* Each society develops a set of social values and standards. These values, mores, norms and standards are influenced by among other things social cohesion, family ties, religious fervour, peer pressure, view of life's purpose and material prosperity. Each society prizes its own values and distrusts those of others. Lack of liberal education and absence of experience of the existing variations make for suspicion of those practising different social values and norms. Lack of intercourse further aggravates the situation. This is why the agreement between the USA and the USSR to liberalise mass

communications between the East and the West was a highly laudable action.

- d. *Material Culture.* If religious faith is considered spiritual, culture, the physical way of life, may be termed material culture. The material culture of a society determines the view its members take of man's worldly state and the cumulative view of the community as a whole in turn fashions its material culture. It must be stated, though, that spiritual culture often casts its shadow on the material culture of the society. Variations are subtle and yet considerable. Differences may lead to tension and animosity. Because nation-states are veritable social organisations with perimeter fencing, they tend to develop distinct material cultures of their own with peculiar national flavours. Potential flash-points galore.

CONCLUSION

An Objective Overview

The Status Quo. The planet and its population are divided into just short of two hundred states. These states are far from uniform in their characteristics. As a matter of fact no two states are alike in any qualitative respect. They have, however, one thing in common, they frequently encompass a certain nationality in the majority of their population. And if they don't, then over a period of time they develop a nationality peculiar to themselves.

In short the world is divided into numerous nation-states. These nation-states are inherently different from each other and the status-quo tends to emphasise and accentuate such differences even further. This portends trouble in an already troubled world. In spite of polite diplomacy and urbane benevolence on the surface, the community of nations seethes with tension underneath. Hapless victims of conflict appreciate only too deeply that formal suavity manifest in diplomatic get togethers are too superficial to have any significance. International

political Power still emanates from the barrel of a gun. Men, women and children continue to die and suffer in the hands of others. All this happens inspite of natural human mortality being common knowledge. Nation-States and a really meaningful world-peace do not appear compatible. This is an objective if pessimistic interpretation of the status quo.

The Prospect. Having delved into the roots of conflict one tends to deduce that nation-states will grow progressively individualistic. Factional societies will coalesce more firmly, peculiar sets of values, aims and objectives will characterise nations, differences will be more sharply defined and technological development will render international conflict potentially catastrophic. This is admittedly a bleak picture. But it may be worthwhile to remember that it is also logical and, therefore, likely to materialise. Increasing brinkmanship by one superpower or growth of radical religious movements or one of many probable contingencies may create situations when possibilities of a multi-national conflict becomes inevitable. In fine the prospect is potentially bleak. As long as nation-states exist the prospect for global future will remain un-pleasantly dark and sinister.

Recommendations

It is an evidently difficult exercise to suggest recommendations on a subject of the gravest import. However, if the foregoing is any guide, we ought to do all we can to thwart the negative possibilities. It appears imperative, therefore, to find a viable alternative to the concept of nation-states and then having found it, to implement it all over the world. We must not forget that as long as humanity is divided into states based on so-called nationality, conflict will continue to loom large over the horizon. Nation-states are inherently conflict-prone. The potential for tragedy of global proportions is, therefore, ingrained in the unacceptable yet complacently tolerated status quo.

The community of nations ought to be transformed into a community of men. The world must be unified into one supra-national

body-politic where race, creed and colour should be granted only the superficial consideration they deserve. For this the United Nations Organisation is a stepping stone in the right direction. Enlightened leadership in all countries must come together to pool planetary resources to solve global problems in unison. And we may do well to heed Bertrand Russel's gentle warning about the inherent element of violence and conflict ingrained into a world of nation-states and how such factors affected the essential unity of human civilisation. Violence between man and man, between men and their state-machineries and between states themselves with potentially disastrous consequences will loom large over the horizon of the planetary state if the status quo is permitted to persist. Says Russel "The national State largely owing to gun-powder, acquired an influence over men's thoughts and feeling which it had not had before, and which progressively destroyed what remained of the (historical) Roman belief in the unity of civilisation".⁷

Unifying the global population is a utopian vision of massive proportions. The path to its attainment is strewn with pit falls and hidden traps. But to logical thinkers this is the one goal that offers some hope of salvaging our Spaceship Earth. Enlightened, benign leaders and statesmen must rise above petty, superficial national boundaries they have inherited and unite the species into one world-wide nation. In such a unity lies our salvation and to this end should our combined endeavour be directed tirelessly.

7. Bertrand Russel, 'History of Western Philosophy' George Allen and Unwin Ltd, p. 18.