Nationalism may bring world peace

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The leades of peoples, and of national movements, have historically come from the fringe areas, where they were made aware of their differences with other peoples, and where they had to learn the unity with their own national or linguistic group. For example, Gandhi, the Indian leader, was born in South Africa. "The experience of strangers of having to learn what language you belong, and to which ethnic group you belong, is a powerful way of making people more nationalistic rather than less," he pointed out. That simple mass integration would not be enough to solve the problem of achieving greater harmony between ethnic groups. Now the leaders of the various countries have found a basis for possible political alignment. Class mobility varies greatly both horizontally and vertically, and national leadership has been taken, in actuality, though most people's alignments and perceptions are mixed.

"In these situations, however, where the political alignment of nationality coincides with the political alignment of class, and as a second condition, the class differences and class antagonism are strong, the combination of a nationality and ethnic conflict, and a severe class conflict is far more explosive and devastating than either conflict taken by itself." Therefore, wars of national liberation have been able to attract tremendous popular support. Northern Ireland is just the latest and a most tragic example of this. One class can antagonize another by using the power of the law and the state to keep themselves in a privileged position, for example, South Africa and Rhodesia. Just as one class can attempt to dominate another, so can nations.

"When two governments, who are both in the habit of counting on popular support from back home, and in the habit of enforcing their command by force against those who do not obey, confront each other head on, the risk is great that the result may be a confrontation that may turn escalate."

Deutsch then described three models for war. First, a war may be a rational effort undertaken deliberately in order to achieve some agreed-upon goals, for example, wars of liberation to dislodge a colonial power, or wars of conquest of real estate or money.

A second class of wars are those involving "blind, mindless process of escalation," where each country not only tries to retaliate against what the other country does, but also strives to keep a little bit ahead of the other country. The outcome then becomes one where each of the components would have something to show for.

A third model would be that of the "caste-like, mindless process of escalation," where within a country, interest groups push a government into a sequence of steps, each of which increases the chances for war.

One of the big problems in the study of nationalism and peace research is to decide how nationalism and the increasing importance of domestic politics and the increasing habit of making domestic decisions under the disguise of foreign policy increase the danger of war.

Deutsch then explored the question of what type of peace system the world will need in the near future to avoid major conflicts, that will prevent the world from destroying itself. He chose a two-track peace system.

"It seems to be unlikely that we will find nations and social conflicts among the poorer 2/3 of mankind," but "we can predict that the highly developed nations, those who have high technology and the worst powers of destruction, will be kept at peace among each other." Thus, the world will continue to be beset by little wars, civil wars, wars of social change, in the smaller nations, but hopefully we will avoid dangerous collisions between the big destructive powers. We should never stop trying to maintain peace, but "it seems to me unlikely that it is not practical to get rid of war in all the poorer countries and all the social changes in these countries where there is no machinery, no tradition, no political system, for bringing about changes in old social systems and old class rules."

In the long run, things will go in the other direction. "Mankind and his nations will have to live together," as in Deutsch's analogy, not as a train whose cars are rigidly fastened to some track, and where decisions are made in the cab of the engineer, but like a convoy of jeeps moving smoothly enough country, but which will stay together. "As mankind becomes more one, he will be as a whole trying to help people in other countries as he is in his own."

Deutsch then predicted that, as nations become richer, their desire for material possessions will go down, and the world population will become more receptive to, for example, graduated international income tax, which "would radically change the whole scale of military economic development."

It concluded his presentation by saying that, "We need the full technological, the full economic, the full intellectual and moral potential of mankind in order to get us through the narrow and rapids of threatening international conflicts, and social conflicts."

He stated that with the help of the concern, cooperation of the people that are now growing throughout the world, "I think that the task can be mastered."