

New Nations: Lands of Promise--and Problems

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The tents of mankind are pitched today on one of the great divides of history as the greatest war of all times is being waged. The enemies we are fighting are familiar figures--some of them, unfortunately, allies of ours in the past. They are colonialism, imperialism, race prejudice, poverty, ignorance and illiteracy, disease, and war.

The course of humanity for centuries to come may be determined by the outcome of this struggle; even man's survival on this planet is at stake.

This conflict is so crucial that we have timidly and tentatively made common cause with the communist world against our mutual enemies -- working with the Russians and their allies in the U.N. and agreeing to a series of summit meetings to discuss strategy against our foes.

There are those who would add nationalism to the list as another enemy of mankind today. Arnold Toynbee, for example, goes so far as to denounce nationalism as "a disastrous corruption poisoning the political life of our modern society."

Many commentators on the contemporary scene maintain that in a world of rapid transportation and communication the old concept of nationalism will have to be discarded or radically curtailed and larger regional groups devised, together with stronger international controls and at least limited world government.

No one who really knows the world as it is today can challenge the fact that narrow nationalism is a foe of mankind. At its worst it can lead people to believe that they are God's chosen race or folk and that they therefore have a right to exploit the resources and human beings of other lands---or even of their own country.

But nationalism need not be synonymous with such negative attitudes and actions. It can mean a sense of belonging together, or cherishing a common past and facing the present and future as a group.

Erwin Canham, the distinguished editor of the Christian Science Monitor newspaper, has enlarged upon this idea in his volume on New Frontiers of Freedom, asserting that "Nothing has done the cause of world understanding more harm than the failure of some intellectuals to see the difference between true and noble nationalism and false or dangerous chauvinism or anti-foreignism or isolationism. There is a place and always will be, in our integrating world, for a true sense of nationhood, just as there is for the proud Californian or the exuberant Texan or the canny New Englander in our own nation...."

Many experts on world affairs are using the term "nation-hood" to represent the legitimate and desirable yearnings of people around the globe for independence, as opposed to the word nationalism with its many negative connotations.

But since nations are the largest political units with which most people identify nowadays, our job at present and probably for a long time to come is to refine our concept of nationalism or nationhood, moving towards the time when nationalism and internationalism are complementary rather than contradictory terms.

Above all, we who won our own independence long ago should not and dare not deprive others of this same privilege. Our task is to help the peoples of the world to foster the kind of nationalism which will help them to achieve their legitimate rights and weld the world together rather than the type of nationalism which denies peoples their inalienable rights and hinders mankind in its struggle to survive.

We in the United States ought to be the champions of independence and self-determination everywhere rather than supporters of reactionary regimes around the globe or quiet observers sitting on the sidelines while the fight for freedom is being waged.

It is high time that we recognized the persistence and strength of the new nationalisms in our contemporary world. Since World War II twenty-five nations have been formed.⁽¹⁾ In them are 700 million people or one person in every four on our globe. In 1960 seven more nations are slated for independence. Others are still to emerge.

Historians a hundred years from now will certainly characterize this century as a period of rising nationalism. Perhaps they will support Senator Kennedy's recent statement that "the most important single force is neither communism nor capitalism but man's eternal desire to be free and independent."

The Relevance of Early U.S. History

In order to understand these new nations, we would do well to reread the story of our own early history. Such a study should shed considerable light on the new nations of today, for at the time of our independence, we, too, were a small, struggling nation. People wondered if we were ready for independence or flatly asserted that we were not. We were torn by regional rivalries with little loyalty to any central government. In fact most of our inhabitants were frightened by the idea of a powerful central government and our initial government was so weak that it had to be abandoned and a stronger regime formed in 1789.

English was a fairly common language but by no means a universal means of communication. The degree of literacy was very small and the electorate was limited to men, to whites, and sometimes to property owners and even to church members.

For years we were confronted with a host of perplexing problems. We chose as our first President a general (who turned out to be an unusually good administrator) and we did not develop a party system until the second Washington administration. Even then George Washington was annoyed by the development of such a system.

(1) These include Iceland, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, the Sudan, Eritrea (which federated with Ethiopia), Guinea and Ghana, Lebanon, Syria (later federated with Egypt), Jordan, Israel, and Pakistan; India, Ceylon, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, North and South Vietnam, North and South Korea, the Philippines, Malaya, and Indonesia.

In 1798 the Administration was so intolerant of opposition that it passed the Alien and Sedition Acts by which many editors who expressed views contrary to the Administration were imprisoned.

Rebellion was rife--the most famous instance being the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 when Hamilton sent an army of 15,000 soldiers into western Pennsylvania to quell the opposition of the farmers there to federal control. Some seventy years later we fought a Civil War, in part over the issue of states rights. And even today we are grappling with the concept of states rights and equality for ALL of our people.

No wonder that people wondered if such a small, struggling nation could survive.

Yet, despite the dire warnings of the prophets of gloom, the United States survived, expanded, acquired unity, and developed its own unique form of government and its own cultural pattern, eventually becoming one of the two world powers of the mid-twentieth century.

In the face of such historic facts perhaps a little charity and humility is in order for us as we consider the new nations of the world in 1960.

New Nations as Lands of Promise

The new nations of our day are, for the most part, lands of promise. There are a few like Jordan, Libya, Laos, Somalia, and Togoland whose futures seem cloudy. But the others, given time and wise leadership, should prove to be healthy specimens of nationhood.

Their contributions to the world in the future should be many and varied. We can all be richer as a result of their independence.

One of the dominant characteristics of these new nations, especially if they had to fight to attain their independence, is the tremendous release of human energy in their boundaries. People produce more as nationals than as natives for they know that they are likely to share in the benefits of their productivity instead of having most of the profits of their hands or heads siphoned off by their colonial rulers. This is true in ideas as well as in goods and explains the dynamic quality of leadership in our early history with Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, the Adams', and others--or the vitality of leadership in many of our contemporary new countries.

Given a relative degree of economic and political security, better health standards and better education, the world tomorrow should profit immeasurably from the output of nearly a billion people--whether they be coal miners or farmers, musicians or painters, scientists or political scientists, business men or philosophers.

Furthermore, talent which has been wasted can be discovered and developed for the good of all mankind. Who knows how many Einsteins or Niels Bohrs, how many Gershwins or Shostakoviches, how many George Washington Carvers or Marion Andersons there are in the underdeveloped areas of the world today?

Economically much of the territory of what we call economically underdeveloped areas is still unexplored. In these countries lie untold wealth which has also gone untapped so far in world history. Look at the progress

made in such an unpromising place as the Negev desert in Israel and you will begin to understand what is possible in the next few years in many parts of the globe, given suitable help. That this has a bearing upon our own economic survival was pointed out by the President's Materials Policy Commission as long ago as 1951 when it warned that "with the exception of magnesium and molybdenum our country's requirements already substantially exceed our capacity to produce them.... By 1970 it is estimated that the present rate of increase in industrial output will require us to import 55 percent of all our metal requirements and at least 20% of our total raw materials requirements."

If these new nations can establish stable economies with products for world trade, then they will also be potentially rich markets for the expanding economy of the United States and other nations. But we must remember that they cannot buy unless they can also sell. And we will have to adjust our thinking to considerable international planning of production and trade. That, too, is a part of the wave of the future.

Many Americans are irked by the independent or neutralist position in foreign affairs which many of these new nations are taking. Yet it is just possible that such a position will save us all from annihilation. A powerful African-Asian bloc in the United Nations may yet stand between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. and force us to some kind of co-existence, even though it will probably be a competitive coexistence.

The rise of new nations may also help to eradicate extreme racism from the world--and within our own borders. Already many of us have been made painfully aware of the impact of race prejudice in the United States upon our relations with the countries of Asia and Africa. From the standpoint of world politics, if not from better motives, we will be forced to work for an improvement of race relations within our own country in the months and years immediately ahead of us.

These new countries may also develop new types of economics which will be neither capitalistic nor communistic. From their experimentations in economics both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. may be able to profit in the foreseeable future.

Some religious leaders believe that we also have much to learn from the so-called underdeveloped areas of the world. Such divergent proponents of Christianity as Reinhold Niebuhr and Billy Graham have pointed to the vitality of Christianity in countries where comforts and conformity have not yet sapped its strength. Others view with gratitude the creative thinking now going on in certain circles within Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam and feel that we can profit immeasurably from the new approaches and new thinking of these religious pioneers.

The cross-fertilization of ideas in art and architecture, in science and business, in education and the mass media, and in many other fields made possible by modern transportation and communication and better education of all peoples can add much in mutual enrichment.

New Nations as Lands of Problems

These new nations, however, are lands of problems as well as lands of promise. Some problems are common to all of them; others are limited to a few. Often their difficulties are so involved and so interrelated that it is well nigh impossible to know which one or ones to tackle first.

For a few of the new nations the first problem to solve is the defeat of marauding rebel bands and the strengthening of internal security. This has been a major problem of Burma, Cambodia, Malaya, the Philippines, and Viet Nam. Until people feel secure from such bands, they will not plant crops or even return to their former homes. And much of the time, energy, and money of the new governments must be side-tracked from more important projects in order to meet this immediate issue. This problem has largely been liquidated in most countries, but it still plagues a few governments and retards their present development.

Adequate transportation is a second basic problem of most of these new lands. It is essential to the creation of national unity and to the building of a strong economic base for any society.

When the only means of transporting goods to markets is on the backs of human beings, there is absolutely no use in urging people to grow more crops or produce more goods of any kind. Roads and bridges and ports demand a high priority anywhere. This is a fact which we tend to forget in the United States, not realizing how important it was for national unity to have our transcontinental roads and railroads or not realizing how basic to our economy our rivers and our harbors have been.

A third basic problem of the new nations is that of communications. In most of the newly established countries a basic difficulty is the multiplicity of languages. In tiny Ghana, with only five million citizens, there are at least four major tribal languages. In India, with nearly 400 million persons, there are 12 to 14 major languages, as different as English and Russian, with centuries of literature in each of them. Because of the bitter feelings engendered when one local language is selected as a national tongue, because of the training many of the leaders have had in a foreign language, and because of their international character, English and French are being used widely as official or unofficial national languages in a number of nations. In others, like Indonesia and the Philippines, new national languages are being developed.

In almost all of these new countries the radio and films are being used to an astonishing degree as modern means of communication. When one realizes that only 10 to 20 percent of the people of most of these lands were literate in any language at the time of independence, one can understand how valuable the mass media are.

A fourth problem with which all of the new nations are wrestling is that of industrialization. In the past almost all of their raw materials have been shipped for processing to the country which ruled them. Now that independence has been achieved, these colonial economies are being liquidated and nearly all the new nations are establishing their own industries, especially small plants for cement, canned fruits, cigarettes, and bicycle tires.

Many of them are going farther, harnessing their water power in dams like the Volta project in Ghana, the Inga project in the Congo, the Aswan project in Egypt (or the United Arab Republic), and scores of similar projects in Pakistan and India. Such dams provide water for irrigation, for electricity, and for power in the development of local resources whether they are the bauxite of Ghana or the vast complex of minerals of the Congo.

In most cases such projects are economically feasible and desirable. Occasionally, however, industrialization is carried on as a symbol of supposed political maturity and in answer to the clamor for westernization rather than because it is economically wise.

Industrialization is a costly process and none of these new nations has enough capital to finance such developments. Hence the mad scramble for foreign capital and the control of exports by national governments. Lacking capital for industrialization as well as for schools, clinics, and other social institutions, nearly all of the new governments have established some kind of federal board or boards to control the exports of their countries. Part of the profits are ploughed back into social and economic development; other parts of the profits go into large-scale industrialization. Thus most of the new nations have socialistic or semi-socialistic economies, often called "partnership" economics by them.

As Chester Bowles has pointed out in his recent volume on Ideas, People, and Peace, "The choice is not between a doctrinaire Western capitalism and a doctrinaire Western communism, but between China's version of Communism on the one hand and a mixed economy along Swedish lines, which fosters individual freedom and is compatible with Asian needs and attitudes on the other." What he has written about Asia applies just as well to Africa and the Middle East.

A fifth grave problem all these nations face is the improvement of agriculture. In their desire to industrialize quickly, agriculture is sometimes neglected. But since a large majority of the people in these nations are farmers, it is important that a high priority be given to this sector of the economy. Because of the fragmentation of land caused by existing inheritance laws in some countries and/or the feudalistic ownership of land, this usually means land reform first. Then it means land consolidation, diversification of crops, more scientific methods of farming, better seeds, more irrigation, and more fertilizers. Very often it means the diversification of crops, for most of these countries have relied in the past almost solely on one product.

In most places the government is encouraging producer and consumer cooperatives so that the people may purchase and sell with the greatest advantage to all concerned.

A sixth problem with which all of these nations are concerned is the choice of a suitable form of government and the establishment of stable, forward-looking regimes.

Some, like Burma and the Sudan, have decided upon a unitary or strong central government. Others, like India and Nigeria, have developed a federal system, largely because of the strong regional feeling existing in these countries. Sometimes a federal form of government is easier to administer in large countries and India and Nigeria both fall into this classification.

In all of these nations there is a crying need for competent, educated administrators. The top leadership is often unusually able, but any government needs a large number of permanent or semi-permanent lesser officials. The British have left a small nucleus of civil servants in their former colonies, but even this group is meager compared to the need. To meet this problem, the United Nations has recently started to "loan" administrators just as it has loaned technical experts to economically underdeveloped lands. This is one of the most promising practices in the field to date, even though it is not a permanent solution to the problem.

In the African nations the relation of the new governments to the tribal chiefs is an especially acute problem and one which will take years if not decades to work out.

In some places the relation of church and state raises another vexing question, especially in the two nations which were established primarily for religious reasons---Israel and Pakistan. In other places, like Ghana and Nigeria, the relation of the Moslems to the rest of the inhabitants is a baffling question.

To critics in the West, the crucial question regarding the governments of these new nations seems to be--how democratic are they? Some observers are disappointed and disturbed because all of these new countries have not developed full-fledged democratic regimes like those of the western-world, immediately. My own feeling is that it is remarkable and even surprising that all of them have at least started as democracies, limited though some of them are.

To any student of government it should be obvious that the form of democracy which each of these new nations develops will be its own, even if patterned in part upon that of an older country. Actually they should be different for each must develop its own form of government to fit the needs of its society.

Likewise it should be obvious that it will take years for these countries to evolve their own indigenous democracies. As Justice Douglas reminds us in his book West of the Indus, "Don't forget that it took six hundred years to evolve the House of Commons as the model of the parliamentary system."

Until these people become accustomed to their new freedom and trained in its use, there will undoubtedly be a need for strong action and strong men at the helm--as has been the case in Burma, Ghana, Pakistan, and the Sudan in recent months.

A seventh problem is the urgent need to raise the standards of living of all the people--quickly. All the other problems are insignificant compared to this crucial task.

It is almost impossible for us in the United States to comprehend how most of the world live. If there is one set of figures we need to know, it is that of per capita income around the world. In the United States it is around \$2200 per person per year. In most of the world it is less than \$100 per person per year. In some places it is far less than that. In India, for example, it is approximately \$50 and in a comparatively rich country like Ghana--around \$150.

Consequently most of the people in the new nations are ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clad, illiterate and ill. For centuries they have eked out a perilous existence by scratching the soil on tiny plots of ground near their homes. They accepted their lot as fate and adjusted as best they could to their poverty.

Now they have learned that most of their children need not die at birth, that foul water and unsanitary conditions need not be tolerated, that education need not be a monopoly of white people in the west. They are demanding better standards of living and their demands are loud and insistent. All other revolutions of our day are insignificant compared to the revolution of rising expectations.

If they can have economic and social justice and freedom--fine. If they can have only one, most of the people in these nations will quickly choose justice. We must face the fact that this is how they feel and talk less about freedom than we do about justice. No lesson needs to be learned better or more quickly by the American people than the importance of the right kinds of aid to the peoples of the new nations in their struggle to provide more and better health, more and better sanitary conditions, more and better food, more and better education. Our present policy of emphasizing military aid to the new nations is short-sighted, sterile, stupid, and even dangerous. The sooner we realize that aid in economic and social betterment is more important than military aid the better we and all mankind will be.

An eighth problem is that of caring for refugees and protecting the rights of minority groups. In certain areas of the world there are enormous groups of refugees. This is one of Jordan's principal problems as it is inhabited by approximately 500,000 refugees, 500,000 persons whose former homes were in Palestine, and only 500,000 former Trans-Jordanians. Viet-Nam has almost as large a problem, with 900,000 refugees from the north for whom land and homes had to be provided. A total of around 15 million refugees crossed from Pakistan to India or from India to Pakistan at the time of partition--the largest mass migration in the history of the world. And many of them are not yet adequately cared for. Providing for such refugees is an enormous burden to governments already beset by other pressing problems.

In certain areas of the world there are also large numbers of immigrant groups whose rights need to be protected. In West Africa it is the Syrians and Lebanese; in East Africa the Indians and Pakistani; and in Southeast Asia the Chinese.

All of the new countries are concerned to some extent with minorities but a few are especially involved in this perplexing problem. For example, Malaya is composed of approximately 40% Malays, 38% Chinese, 10% Indians and Pakistani, and 3% other groups. In Lebanon the problem of minorities is chiefly one of religious groups. The same is true in India and Pakistan. In Ceylon it is the Tamil group with its origins in India which is the group whose rights are least likely to be safeguarded.

A ninth problem with which all of these countries are grappling is that of adjusting their foreign policies to the Cold War between the United States and Russia.

For many Americans it seems incomprehensible that several of the new nations should remain neutral or independent in this worldwide struggle. A study of an air-age map should help such critics to understand how a country like India feels in the light of its proximity to China and Russia. An examination of the size of the national budget of these new nations in the light of the overwhelming demands upon their limited capital should also make more meaningful their desire to use all available capital for social and economic aid rather than squander their precious resources on military preparation. Furthermore a study of our own history with its long period of isolationism might help people to understand better how the people of many of the new nations feel about "entangling alliances." Perhaps a study of the Buddhist philosophy of life or the Gandhian movement would add still more understanding of neutralism or independence in foreign policies. Finally, a realistic appraisal of the varied political forces in a country like Indonesia, should shed further light on this type of foreign policy.

Conclusions

There are other problems in these new countries, but these nine should suffice to show how many problems there are with which the people of the new nations must deal.

Many of these are problems with which older countries are also wrestling. The differences are primarily in depth and in the degree of experience in handling them.

Even though the writer has erred often in this paper by broad generalizations, he would like at this point to emphasize that each of these new lands must be considered individually in the light of its past, its present, and its future. Outsiders can help but they cannot solve the problems for these people. They will have to make the final decisions, making their own mistakes--just as we have made--and still are making them--often.

As we follow the development of these new lands, it would be well for us to listen to some of their leaders as they speak to us about their problems and their progress.

When Sukarno of Indonesia spoke to the National Press Club in Washington in 1956, he reminded his audience of the importance of speed, a familiar theme for the leaders of all new nations. Of this he said: "Ours is still a revolutionary nation which only eleven years ago, was 350 years out of date. We are in a hurry because the world has no intention of standing still while we catch up. We must cram the experience of centuries into a generation and it is important for us that the revolutionary spirit of self-sacrifice and solidarity should be maintained. This is our driving force."

To another group of newspapermen in London in 1957 Nkrumah of Ghana made some very pertinent comments about the standards by which new nations should be judged. Here is what he had to say:

"... in making judgements, please use reasonable standards of efficiency and conduct. More often than not, we feel that people overseas expect standards from us, which, from our personal observations, are not achieved in their own countries. None of us has either a monopoly of vice or of virtue. If you happen to be looking for any 'beama' in Ghana, at least reflect whether you have any 'motes' in your own country. We do not ask for more than that."

We should have high expectations for our friends in these new countries but we should also be realistic in our expectations. We cannot or should not expect them to accomplish in a short time and with inadequate preparation under colonial rule what it has taken us nearly 175 years to achieve.

In the worldwide war against colonialism, imperialism, race prejudice, ignorance and illiteracy, disease, and war, the new nations should be our allies. Since many of the major battles will be fought on their soil, perhaps it would be better to say that we should be their staunch and understanding allies and friends.

In a highly interdependent world we share our successes and our failures; no country is isolated in the rapidly emerging international community of our day. What happens to them affects us; what happens to us, affects them.

On the grounds of enlightened self-interest as well as on the grounds of idealism, we should do everything humanly possible to promote the rapid and well-rounded development of their unique types of societies as we learn to live together in the new world community of today and tomorrow.

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