

to the Gazette — the Richard Falk interview

direction...

Gazette: So this would require a major change in the people who now occupy the White House and the Kremlin?

Falk: Well, I think those people are unlikely to be converted. It is possible that social forces will emerge which will bring forth a new kind of leader. Also, there may be an encounter between the state and the shifting society. The Kremlin and the White House will still be part of the old order and there will be conflict between these groups. The changes in the Soviet Union will probably not resemble western development.

Gazette: Considering the absence of an enforcement mechanism, what role does international law play in the present international system?

Falk: Well, that's a complicated question in many ways, because it arises from the assumption that law works only when enforce-

ment mechanisms exist. Much of what we think of as law within a state operates independent of enforcement.

The first thing to realize is that the model of law known as criminal law is only one aspect of law, and even in well regulated societies criminal laws are often difficult to enforce, though we do not doubt their integrity. Otherwise, law serves to allow people to, for example, bequeath property, the sort of action which is separated from enforcement. In the international scene, laws which governments and corporations have no incentive to violate are successful.

The exchange of diplomatic

representatives is mutually beneficial, and there is always the threat that if one side violates the agreement, then the other side will retaliate, so reciprocity operates as an enforcer in international society.

The last point deals with war prevention through law. While international law has not prevented war (between states) we can see that domestic law (with enforcement procedures) has not prevented civil war, which is very common today.

Gazette: Was the U.S. invasion of Grenada illegal in your opinion, and except from a moral point of view, does it matter?

Falk: It was illegal in the normal understanding of the term ... (since) it was an armed attack against a foreign state which could qualify as aggression, in the purest sense of the law, whatever one might think of the internal situation.

The moral issue is more complicated. If the people in Grenada support their liberation (by the United States and the Caribbean states), as I believe is the case, then it is not so clear it was immoral, particularly if Grenada gets a better government.

I think it does matter considerably as to the issue of legality, because when it concerns the United States, a major power which advocates a more ordered international society, it sets a precedent making it more difficult for the United States to criticize other states which do the same for their national interests.

Gazette: What is causing the present resistance to the movement towards a new world order? Is it inherent human qualities? Or something else?

Falk: That is difficult to assess with any confidence. I think the resistance is due to a lot of things, but mainly the basic arrangements of power and loyalty, which tend to change very slowly. We may actually be moving very rapidly towards a new world order, though it might take 50-100 years, which would be a very quick pace for such

major change, when compared to the European transition from Feudalism to Statism.

I do not think human nature is an obstacle. I think it is plastic, in that it can be shaped. The main obstacle is the fact that a large amount of power is centred around supporting the old system. It is difficult for a new idea to get a hearing in our society. It almost has to operate underground, and it will take a special kind of leadership (to disseminate the ideas).

Gazette: How can warfare be controlled or eliminated, considering the complex nature of war? (Complex meaning the complex interplay between individuals and their environment.)

Falk: We do not understand the conditions under which war can be eliminated. War has been around since the dawn of recorded history. The process of establishing a warless world is one that will create its own instruments, structures, and mythologies in order to create social expectations.

First, it calls for the removal of weapons which we use for war, and then the thought of going to war must be eradicated. It might take religious consciousness, or the end of war might come after a terrible war. The growth of an international peacekeeping system could also lead to a warless world.

Gazette: Is the world more or

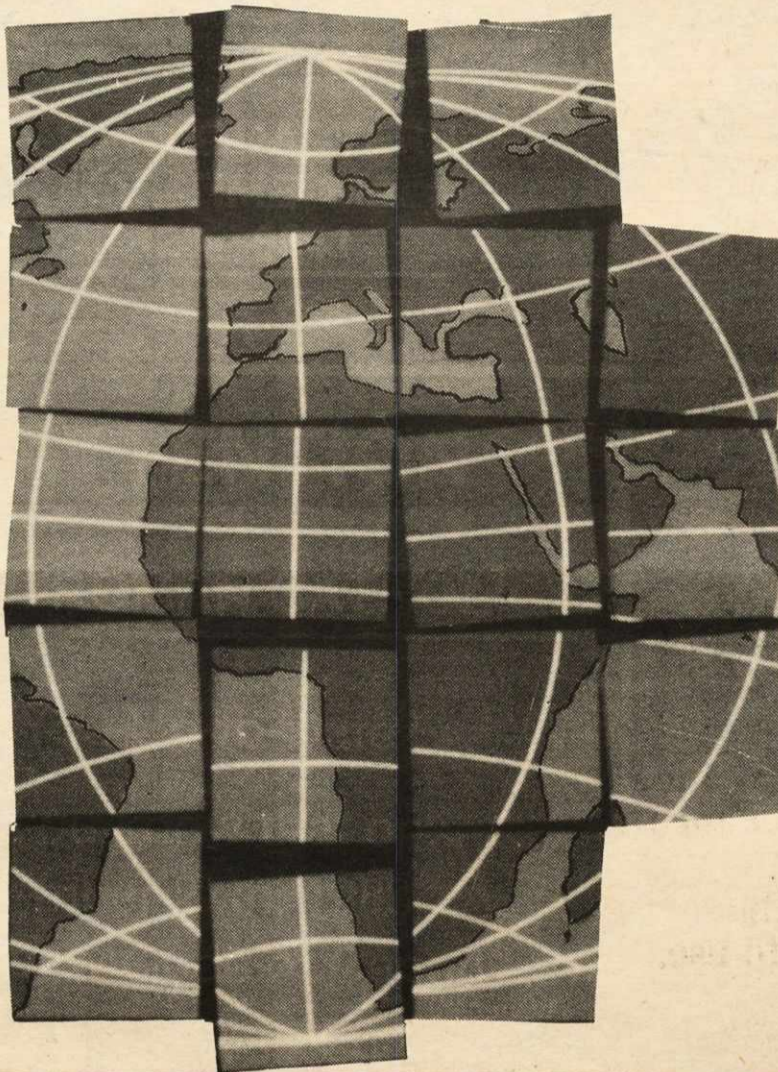
less nationalistic that it was 10, 35 and 60 years ago? What are the ramifications of this?

Falk: I would say that the world is more nationalistic, in the sense that there has been a collapse in the colonialist order, which has aroused nationalistic passions, especially throughout the "third world". But it's important to remember that nationalism and statism are not the same. Since, as is the case in Africa, national groups do not exactly match states.

Loss of confidence in the problem solving ability of states has led people in the industrial world to rediscover their national character. Nationalist movements in Europe seek separatism based upon national passions. This rise of nationalism represents a questioning of our core abstract political realities. It may be consistent with globalism, but it is certainly inconsistent with statism. The state presently confuses the institution of "state" with that of "nation", the idea that everyone in Canada is "Canadian", while some people in Quebec identify themselves not with Canada but with their own linguistic and ethnic composition.

Gazette: What sort of future can we expect for the nation-state?

Falk: That is the key question and it has to be understood in two parts. First, how will the state as an instrument evolve? Second, how will the state system operate in the future? The state and the state system will easily endure (barring disaster) to the end of the century. Whether the state becomes less important and globalism becomes more important depends on (what I call) "subversive education". I think it is very likely that the state will persist in formal terms but in reality be less and less important in the political landscape. But for now I expect a continued drift towards militarization of politics at the state level, with conflict between governments and their people. My fear is that the states will not be able to solve these problems peacefully.



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