

# Governance and the Natural Society

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Human beings, like their brothers among other animals, come into this world with a ravenous appetite, a boundless energy, and a glowing optimism. Ideas like freedom, liberty and the enjoyment of life are not questioned; they are not even matters for intense thought. They are taken for granted. A part of the natural birth-right of all living things.

Plenty of food, comfortable surroundings, friendly relations with other human beings and excitement for the mind are the basic elements for what make up what may be called a quality of life. These basic things are provided from the natural environment and by the family that surrounds a newborn child. When these basic elements are present, the human being is happy; and is satisfied. But, when any of these things is in short supply or absent, the human being like his brother animals expands the family, extends the family, to include more members. More land is needed to collect food and to provide for the comforts of the family. The extended human family seeks to establish a balance between its needs and the capacity of the surrounding

environment to provide for those needs. When plenty of food, comfortable surroundings, friendly relations with other human beings and excitement for the mind are once again provided to all members of the human community, a balance is achieved.

Time and change combine with growing needs to cause a tribal society to unfold -- tribal life -- a way of life enjoyed by millions of people in the world. Over time, the tribal society becomes so distinct in its culture that it becomes a people, different from all others except that they are human beings. All of the basic needs of the human being are finally provided in balance and a human society is formed with all of the social, economic and political qualities that make it unique.

But, like the changing weather, the changing tide and the changes in other animal life, the tribal society changes to match the new variety that surrounds it. And, so the patterns of tribal society, its traditions, customs and everyday practices alter to meet the needs of the people.

The single most successful form of human society is the tribal society; a nation of people large enough to satisfy the needs of its members, but small enough to remain flexible and adaptable to change. There are, of course, larger human societies in towns, cities, states and empires. Beyond the city, however, empires and states are relatively recent forms of human organization. The tribal society, the nation, has existed for tens of thousands of years, while modern states and empires have come into being and existed for only a few hundred years. When states and empires crumble, the tribal society is once again formed.

Tribal life is the primary form of human organization throughout the world. Though most tribal peoples are surrounded by states and empires created during recent

centuries, the vast majority of the earth's citizens continue tribal society. There are several reasons for this: Tribal society provides the individual human being with a clear identity. Tribal society contains enough variety that each person can reach his or her greatest creative potential as food gatherers, builders, community helpers, spiritual leaders, political leaders, artists, thinkers and countless other activities. Tribal society is manageable; it remains small enough to equal human sized successes and human sized problems. Tribal society is equal to the power of human beings and balanced with the natural world. Tribal society is intensely human, vigorous and it is the chosen way of life of the red peoples the world over.

#### Original Power and the Foundations of Government

A Tribal society is a nation of people joined together by common ancestry, origins, heritage, language, beliefs and commitment of mutual support -- a common culture. Each society organizes according to its needs and wants, provides for its common desires, its defense and determines its own future. It is governed by its own traditions, customs and passions; and it establishes specific organizations or institutions made up of its members to perform special activities for the benefit of all or part of the society. Institutions are created to collect food, build homes, provide for spiritual well-being, encourage cooperation and mutual support, help the infirm, care for the sick, provide for the common defense and, among other things, make collective decisions. All of these institutions contribute to the governance of a tribal society. They perform activities within the society that cannot be performed by a single person, but contribute to the well-being of each individual. All together, they make up the

government of the society.

All tribal societies are governed by special organizations or institutions, though their character and form may vary from one nation to another. The form of governance reflects the special needs and wants of each tribal society. And it is due to the unique character of each tribal society, its geographical location in the world, the natural environment along with the distinct passions of the people that the various forms of government have developed throughout human history. Each form of government is suitable to the society that created it. So there are as many forms of governance — organization or institutions — as there are tribal societies. None can be said to be perfect or suitable for any other nation, but each can be said to reflect the the most desirable form of government suitable for the people who established it.

#### Government and the People

No nation exists without some form of government. Like the tribe itself, the government must reflect the needs and wants of the people who create it or it becomes a threat to the survival of the nation. When governments fail to meet the needs and wants of the nation — and many governments have and do fail — either the nation creates new organizations and institutions of governance or the nation dissolves — and many have. It is essential, therefore, for the governing institutions of a nation to change at a pace equal to or ahead of the people. It is through flexibility that the institutions of government continue to fulfill the needs and wants of the nation. Tribal institutions of governance must, as a result, maintain sensitivity to the changing needs and wants of the nation, and, they must be ever vigilant and active in their ability to adjust to

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the changing natural environment. Governments function in two important broad capacities: As the instrument or instruments by which the internal needs of a nation are provided, and an instrument by which the external needs and interests of a nation are defended, protected or advocated. Though the broad functions of government are described as dealing with internal needs and external needs, such a description should not lead one to believe that a tribal society or any nation has divided needs and interests. Like a person, a tribal society or nation has an internal life and an external life — both of which must be balanced to ensure health. Tribal government must function to balance the internal and external life of a nation.

Traditional and modern governments in tribal societies function as the "glue" that holds the society together, and government is the organized instrument through which the society adjusts to the changing natural environment as well as the changing relations between nations. The continuous existence of a nation is dependent upon its government performing both internal and external roles. A successful and prosperous nation achieves a balance between its internal world and the external world. On the basis of this requirement, tribal societies and their governments have done very well. The people and their government must remain intimately connected, and tribal society proves this clearly.

#### Question of Loyalty

A people remain a distinct, identifiable nation as a result of individual loyalties between individual persons, and between individual persons and the nation. To close the circle, the nation is, out of necessity loyal and committed to the well-being of the individual. But, as

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is only common sense, unless the individual sustains a commitment to the well-being of the nation, the nation cannot long endure. And, without the nation, the individual has nothing. The individual cannot survive without the nation. The individual has no identity, no support or meaning except as a part of the nation. It is, therefore, a necessary bond of commitment, and loyalty that ensures the continuous existence of the nation. An act of will causes the nation to come into being, and the same act can destroy a nation.

The loyalty one feels toward the nation must also be expressed toward the institutions of governance, for it is equally true that government cannot exist without the loyalty of those who created it. In this respect, loyalty is like a mandate to the nation and its government. Without the mandate neither exists. With the mandate, the nation survives and the government performs its essential internal and external roles.

The tribal society grew out of the common and natural need among human beings for mutual support, common defense, and spiritual, physical and social comfort. Its success as a way of life is a tribute to the ability to satisfy these basic human needs and provide for an infinite variety of choices. But, despite the qualities of tribal life and its natural suitability to human beings, nations must struggle to secure and maintain this way of life. Natural environmental changes constantly challenge the tribal society. Neighboring nations compete for natural wealth, for land, and seek to impose their way of life on other nations. Each nation is truly on its own to make its own way.

The institutions of governance provide the internal glue to hold a nation together, but they must also promote the interests of a nation and defend those interests externally. Just as the people of a nation

constitute themselves as a nation through traditions and customs, it becomes necessary for a nation to establish friendly relations with other nations. Between the people of a nation, a sacred contract is made -- a *constitution*. Between nations, sacred contracts are also made in the form of agreements or compacts -- *treaties*. Just as natural law constituted the nation, natural law also determines the relations between nations. While individuals in a nation have a place and the support of other individuals in a nation, each tribal society -- each nation -- is on its own to determine how it will survive in the natural world and in relations with other nations. Among brother animals, their nations choose to coexist with their neighbors or they are natural enemies.

#### The Law of Nations and Tribal Societies

Just as natural law is basic to the formation of nations and the development of sacred contracts or constitutions between members of a society, it is also the foundation of contracts between nations, and between nations and states. As a result of contacts and continuing associations between peoples, a pattern of rules and conventions has developed to minimize violent conflict and to maximize international cooperation.

Tribal societies are the original sources of these rules and conventions -- rules of conduct that are basic to human behavior. They include: *All peoples have the right to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural future without external interference; all peoples always have the natural right to use and dispose of their natural wealth according to their needs and wants; all peoples have the inherent right to form and exercise self-government without external interference, and, all peoples may take the protection of another without diminishing their inherent powers of*

*self-government - and they may resume full, independent exercise of their powers whenever they choose. In addition, no peoples can be denied the right to exercise their inherent powers according to their needs and wants.*

As one can readily see, the rules of conduct between nations are not very different from the fundamental elements of a nation's constitution. Indeed, the instruments that record commitment between peoples (agreements, compacts, treaties, et cetera.) may take a variety of forms. Treaties may be oral agreements, beaded belts, monuments, or written documents.

Though the presumption between nations is that they are equal in their inherent powers, no matter what the relative population size, territorial size or other differences, relations between states and nations have not always reflected this natural law. Tribal societies, especially those that have been surrounded by a forming state, are often treated as less than equal, less than a nation with inherent powers. Agreements between tribal societies and states have, as a result, tended to reflect an unequal relationship rather than a growing relationship of equality between nations and states.

#### Tribal External Relations: Struggle and Coexistence

Surrounded by states, *enclave nations* face the modern necessity to engage in struggle to defend against outside pressures while seeking to persuade outside forces of the desirability of coexistence. The tribal government carries the principal duty to both defend the interests of the nation, and to advocate the nation's interests to improve relations with neighboring nations and the state. This is an important function of tribal government; for it is through the active external presence of the tribal society that it can ensure defense of the common welfare of its

members.

The pursuit of coexistence with neighboring nations and states requires a carefully developed knowledge about the interests of such neighbors. And, the effort places especially difficult demands on the tribal government. What are the interests of surrounding nations and states? What are their strengths and their weaknesses? To what extent does a tribal society share common aspirations and interests with surrounding nations and states; and to what extent do a tribal society's aspirations and interests diverge? Are differences reconcilable? Is there a basis for believing that mutual respect can serve as the foundation for arranging a workable relationship - a relationship based on trust and honor? Coexistence is an attractive goal for tribal society in relation to its neighbors. But, there are many obstacles which if ignored can result in a nation losing some of its freedom to choose its own political, economic and social future.

If a nation's constitutional foundations are strong among its members, its capacity to effectively deal with surrounding nations and states is greatly enhanced. If a nation is successful in its relations with surrounding nations and state, the social, economic and political stability of the nation are equally enhanced. A balance in relations becomes more likely, thus increasing the prospects for coexistence. The opposite is equally true, with the result that their is more struggle.

If they are to survive as a nation, they must first choose to make a nation from the individual needs and wants of each person. If they are to survive as a nation, they must maintain a loyalty to the nation and its governing institutions. If they are to survive, they must find ways to deal with the external world - the natural environment and neighboring nations - that preserve the nation and permit it to prosper.

