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JSIS B 436

Alternate Take-Home Exam: 6/10/2014

I. As the President of Dystopia attempting to build Blue and Green allegiance to a strong nation-state, I would develop a strategy based on one or more of the tolerant and intolerant approaches to managing minorities. Tolerant strategies include gentle assimilation, multiculturalism, and voluntary separation, while intolerant strategies include forced assimilation, segregation, and ethnic cleansing or genocide (Chirot 2014). These strategies also range from inclusion, to categorization, and to exclusion, and have varying effects on the degree of integration of minorities into the nation, majority-minority power configurations, and national cohesion.

Tolerant strategies employed by leaders include gentle assimilation, multiculturalism, and voluntary deportation. Gentle assimilation and multiculturalism would involve setting aside reservations for the Green People in education and government institutions in order to allow for equal representation of the two major groups in the political system. More Blue People should also be encouraged to apply for business licenses to balance the proportion of businesses owners in Dystopia and reduce Blue jealousy. If using a multiculturalist strategy, Greenish could be established as the second official language of Dystopia in order to be more inclusive of the Green People in Dystopia’s courts, parliament, and administration. Law enforcement should crack down on housing and employer discrimination. Balancing the roles of Blues and Greens in the life of the nation would hopefully improve relations between the Blue and Green People, support mutual understanding, and lead to inclusive nation-building and shared values of democracy, equality, and national progress. If this proves impossible and if a referendum held in a Green-concentrated region of the country approves voluntary separation, then the Dystopian government, controlled by the Blue People majority, could declare a sovereign Green nation and allow the Green People to secede from Dystopia.

Intolerant strategies include forced assimilation, segregation, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. Forced assimilation in Dystopia could involve discouraging the use of Greenish in public and requiring that children attend Blueish-medium schools in order to ensure that the future generations of Green People conform to the social and cultural norms of the majority Blue People. A compulsory, Blue-centric education system would include required instruction in Blueish through the secondary level, promotion the national history of the Blue People, and exams evaluating students’ knowledge of Blue language, history, artistic and literary canon, and culture. Children of Green People may even be forcibly removed from their guardians, who are to be considered unsuitable if they have no speaking or comprehension ability in Blueish or refuse to practice Blueish at home. Another approach to managing the Green People minority is segregation and policing the relations of Blue People and Green People. Blue People should be separate from Green People in all daily activities and public facilities, including in the workplace, schools, housing, hospitals, systems of public transportation, and in other services. Intermarriage between the two groups is also prohibited. The final intolerant approach, ethnic cleansing or genocide, would first require state-sponsored discrimination and media campaigns to instill fear in the Blue population and convince them that the Greens are ultimately a threat to Blue success. The President of Dystopia would try to radicalize the Blue population with the dissemination of anti-Green People propaganda and organize militias to begin the systematic extermination of Green People.

As the President of Dystopia, I would choose to initiate multiculturalism as a viable strategy for integrating the Green minority into the political life of the nation while allowing them to preserve their language and culture. Multiculturalist polices at the federal level in Dysopia would lead to equality and the nonviolent coexistence of Blue and Green People. These policies would reinforce equal political representation and access to state power; encourage the Green People and other minorities in Dystopia, such as the mountainous tribal groups and foreigners in the capital of Melancholy city, to preserve their language and unique cultural traditions and values; and would recognize the new solutions that would stem from increased interaction and cooperation between Blue and Green People.

The United States has practiced all of these strategies to deal with minorities for the purposes of national consolidation. Tolerant strategies that the U.S. has and continues to practice include gentle assimilation, gradually making everyone a part of the same nation and pressuring immigrants to sacrifice their cultural heritage, language, and customs to the state. Gentle assimilation is achieved in the U.S. through the extension of citizenship, intermarriage, homeownership, and fluency in English. The U.S. practices multiculturalism in that it allows for the formation of separate communities, promotes ethnic diversity, and doesn’t expect immigrant minorities to abandon their languages or cultures. The United States also concluded that voluntary separation would be a workable option in the nineteenth century for returning freed slaves to Africa, specifically to the coast of West Africa in Freetown, Monrovia, Libreville.

Intolerant strategies implemented by the U.S. included forced assimilation, exemplified by American-Indian boarding schools in the nineteenth to early twentieth century, like the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, where Native American students were educated in English, banned from speaking their native languages, and forced to discard their Native American identities and culture. The U.S. accepted racial segregation in the South until the 1970s, tolerating the separation of African-Americans from whites in public facilities and justifying this with the idea of “separate but equal.” Finally, the United States has organized campaigns of ethnic cleansing and genocide. For example, the U.S. relocated thousands of Native Americans, including the Cherokee, Muscogee, Seminole, and Choctaw, from the southeastern U.S. as part of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and thousands died in making this journey. The United States has applied each of these strategies in its attempts over time to build a strong, unified nation based on a shared American culture, values, and beliefs.

II. Ethnic, religious, linguistic, or regional identity conflicts become violent in modern nation states when identity mobilization occurs under conditions of fear or perceived threats to certain communities, state discrimination, and blame for economic crises (Chirot 31-35). Violence is also supported by mythmaking and the remembrance of real of invented grudges, as the past can be reinterpreted to explain identity conflicts or the fundamental differences between groups. Under the aforementioned conditions, identities are often manipulated by the elite for political purposes, especially when resources are scarce and identity groups are forced to compete with one another. The five levels of identity conflict include no serious violence, political conflict with occasional violence, low-level war, major war, and genocidal war (Chirot 2014).

Although there may be differences between ethnic, religious, or regional groups, in some cases there may be little or no violence. Ethnic groups are able to coexist, albeit not without recognition of the differences between them. For example, Switzerland contains four different cultural and linguistic regions and has four official languages, including German, French, Italian, and Romansh. These linguistic groups are not in conflict with one another, as they all identify with the center and their languages are supported by the federal government. In Morocco, Arabs as the majority group live alongside a substantial Berber minority, with the population being very mixed between these two groups. Although Berbers are seen as a distinct group, they have been fully integrated into the nation and the Moroccan government has made efforts to protect the Berber identity in its commitment to cultural plurality. Political conflict with infrequent cases of violence characterizes the next level of identity conflict. For instance, India has been relatively successful in unifying its regional, linguistic, religious, and ethic groups as a multicultural federation, yet there are still cases of communal conflict and discrimination against Muslims. The U.S. South into the 1960s also embodies this level of identity conflict. The U.S. had to sacrifice its commitment to black enfranchisement after the Civil War to achieve stability, allowing for Southern autonomy and the rise of Jim Crow until the 1970s, with frequent cases of lynching and even race riots (Marx 132). Thus, identity conflicts without incidents of violence are common and can either move toward reconciliation, repression, or deterioration of relations between identity groups.

Political conflict can devolve into low-level war, with identity groups competing over control of the state or forming separatist movements. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict may be described as a low-level war, with neither identity group willing to compromise. The majority of Arabs in West Bank and Gaza Strip perceive the Zionist movement as a new form of colonialism and deeply resent the Israeli government for imposing checkpoints, limiting transportation, and refusing to take action on the construction of new Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories. And many Israeli Jews continue to see the claims of Palestinians as a threat to their territorial integrity and their right to the land. Israeli repression of Palestinian Arabs in West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Israel proper has precluded total war (Chirot 27). The series of Indo-Pakistani wars over Jammu and Kashmir since independence in 1947 are also low-level wars in that the Muslim majority in the region wants to accede to Pakistan, but the conflict has remained a territorial dispute and has become less violent in recent years. Major wars can occur if the state makes no attempt to reconcile rival ethnic or religious groups, resulting in the deaths of thousands each year until the war is either won by one side or until differences between the groups are resolved. For example, the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s occurred as a result of the demands for political autonomy by different ethno-religious groups, with the issue of ethnic minorities in the newly created countries left unsettled. The twenty-six year long civil war in Sri Lanka, in which up to 100,000 people died in a Tamil insurgency, ended in a Sinhalese victory. This case was short of genocide in that it did not involve the systematic extermination of the minority Tamils or the majority Sinhalese, though thousands of civilians died in the conflict. Low-level and major wars may become genocides if no action is taken to develop a lasting resolution to the conflict, if the conflict reaches the level of the state, or if neighboring countries injudiciously intervene in minority affairs.

Genocides or wars of extermination are rare, but can occur and are defined by attempts to eliminate all members of a particular religious, ethnic, regional, or socioeconomic group. The Khmer Rouge of the Cambodian genocide massacred more than a quarter of their population in an attempt to return Cambodia to an agrarian society, also targeting Vietnamese and Cham minorities (Chirot 28). The genocide in Cambodia, lasting from 1975 to 1979, was largely motivated by communist ideology and ended in mass slaughter. The Rwandan genocide in 1994 in which the Hutu political elite massacred approximately 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus was the horrifying outcome of extremist Hutu ideology, Hutu resentment of Tutsi domination, and of fear, which the state capitalized on. The Tutsi were regarded as a threat to nation, and the past was manipulated by the Hutu-captured government and media to use violence as a discourse and accomplish the goals of the genocide (Lemarchand 75). Genocide is regarded as the worst-case result of identity conflict, however, it is rare and identity conflicts are usually resolved by the victory of one side and the realization of relative of stability, consensual peace, or partition.

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