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BOOK TITLE: *POLITICS AMONG NATIONS*

AUTHOR: *HANS J. MORGENTHAU*

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By the time Professor Morgenthau wrote his book *Politics Among Nations*, the United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) were the two superpowers. The demise of the USSR left the US as the only super power. After September 11, 2001, the Osama Bin Laden and his Al-Queda network brought on the world stage a second super power. This dangerous development forced Saad Fagih to remark "What Clinton is saying is there are two superpowers again: the United States and Osama Bin Laden" (Time Dec. 28, 1998:70). With the emergency of the Osama Bin Laden Factor, most of Morgenthau's prescriptions are now bottom up!

Since the discovery of the Nuclear Bomb and the emergency of terrorists, the continued existence of mankind on earth depends largely on an in depth understanding of the relations among nations. It is in pursuance of the above objective that Professor Morgenthau produced that compact, intelligent, classical and altogether worthy book *Political Among Nations* which is a standard work on International Relations.

In his opening chapter, Morgenthau's political realism has led him to the conclusion that there can be no permanent peace without a World State. But added that there can be no world government unless there is a world community and a sense of world community cannot form unless national decision makers resolve world conflicts via a return to wise diplomacy. He holds that a legalistic approach to international relations leads to idealism whereas a political approach induces realism. This realists or "power" school of thought which Hans Morgenthau became one of her strongest advocates was already explored by E. H Carr and F. L. Schuman.

Morgenthau replaced idealism with realism, saw human nature as good and rational and laid emphasis upon social institutions built upon abstract principles. He described six tents of political realism, with emphasizes on morality and the possibility of peaceful adjustment.

The main thrust of *Politics Among Nations* is perhaps indicated in these words: while at all times the promotion of national interest of the United States as a power among powers has been the main concern of American foreign policy, in an age that has seen two world wars and learned how to wage total war, the preservation of peace has become the prime concern of all nations. It yields in importance only to the most elemental considerations of national defense and security".

He warns that if there is continuous international and domestic instability, USA may resort to "complete and intensive identification of the individual with the nation (P. 111) just as was applicable in Russia. He added that "a political policy seeks either to keep power, to increase or to demonstrate power" (P. 140). He consummated his analysis by listing three limitations to national power – the traditional Balance of power system, International Morality and World Public Opinion and International Law.

Sovereignty he asserts is "the supreme legal authority of the nation to give and enforce the law within a certain territory and in consequence, independence from the authority of any other nation" (P. 312). The above shows that sovereignty is indivisible. Politically and constitutionally, he agreed that the federal government is sovereign, but it is "psychologically impossible to admit that individual states are no longer sovereign; constitutional theory simply divides sovereignty between the federal government and the states, thus trying to reconcile political realities with political preferences" (p. 322). Thus to Morgenthau as a Rousseau, it is a logical stupidity to hold that sovereignty is divisible and federalism to him is consummate fraud. "Far from expressing a theoretical truth ... to give up a part of national sovereignty for peace is tantamount to the advice to close one's eyes and dream that one can eat his cake and have it too". (p. 3).

Looking further into the possibility of world peace, Morgenthau notes that there has been a feeling for the moral unity of mankind since the stoics "there has been alive in western civilization a feeling for the moral unity of mankind" (P. 379). He added that people erroneously believe that men fight because they have arms whereas the truth is "Take away their arms, and they will either fight with their bare fists or get themselves new arms with which to fight" (P. 308).

As for the alternative to the use of violence to bring about social change, Morgenthau prescribes the subsequent: "The vital function of peaceful change with the state is performed not by any particular agency acting in isolation but by domestic society as an integrated whole to bring a state of affairs in conformity with its conceptions of justice". (p. 420). He succeeded in making readers see the Holy Alliance, the League of Nations and the United Nations as three unsuccessful attempts to establish "International Government; that the world can only be saved from self-destruction if nations transfer their sovereignties to a "World Authority" but this is not possible because "no society exist with the presumed range of world state ... the most extensive ... is the nation state".

On federalism, he rejected the Swiss and American type as a solution to the dilemma of how to establish a world state, saying that the former is the product of peculiar and unique circumstances while "the United State was founded upon a moral and political community, the constitution did not create but found already in existence" (p. 495).

Morgenthau then went on to describe the efforts of UNESCO and other prominent UN agencies to create world community and concludes that the minimization of international conflicts. How can international problems be mitigated and minimized? This is the final question which calls for examination. Morgenthau held that through the revival of a diplomacy of compromise, the above question would be answered. Diplomacy is the best means of preserving peace (p. 547). Yet in the case of the Talibans and the Iraqis, the US ignored the use of diplomacy.

Either by forgetfulness or neglect, the author did not touch the sensitive problem of the security of the United State of America and the former Soviet Union. This problem, he termed "concrete" as though substantive national interest other than the mere drive for security were involved. For instance, it was for security reasons that the former Soviet Union and the United State tried to occupy all small Asian counties after the Second World War and this precipitated the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. As if to compound the confusion, Morgenthau has shown clearly that he has no clear conception of National Interest thus he sort of cover this up with the meaningless phrase "the national interest defined in terms of power". He means simply perhaps that human nature defined it that way. This is Stark Bismarkian continental pessimistic irrationalism raised to the international level to explain 20th century world politics. By exalting power as the key concept of foreign policy, he is unconsciously prescribing violence as an instrument of diplomacy.

In one of his book *The Restoration of American Politics* (Chicago 1962) pp 177 – 175 he confirms the above claim "The unity of mankind ... a spiritual or humanitarian impulse in the nuclear age has been greatly strengthened by the desire innate in all men for self-preservation". Granted that this book – *Politics Among Nations* – was intended to satisfy primary and secondary schools leavers, they would have unquestionably accepted that via the control of weapons, and the institution of a federal system, a world community would emerge. This is Morgenthau's dream! On the contrary, his idea military power alone does not mean power unless backed by economic viability, largely population; national awareness, good morale and a good quality of diplomacy can be bought by even his most ardent critics. Perhaps the US attacked Iraq recently in order to show that they have national power which they can use to guarantee a regular supply of oil

In his "Modus Operandi" Morgenthau concentrated too much of his analysis on the developed world thereby excluding the interest of the Africans in most of his definitions. For instance, on the question of definition of National Interest, he fumbled by stating that National Interest is defined in terms of power. In Africa, our National Interest can be centered on any or all of the subsequent: Racial Equality,

Economic Development and Favourable Terms of Trade. While USA and the Commonwealth of Independent State (CIS) will claim the maintenance of their national security as their national interest. In other words, *fear not power is the true dynamics of the relations among nations today*. When we consider the emergence of a Hitler and a Napoleon in Europe, the Morgenthau is right but non-such is currently active on the world scene, and today's leaders bear little taken an approach or methodology devised for interpersonal and domestic relationships and projecting this into the international scene. If Morgenthau had taken the pain to examine the federal states in history, he would have noticed that customs sometimes do not permit the superior military force of a government prevail over the authority vested on the member states or provinces – Canada serve as a good example here!

On the formation of a world state, he erroneously relied on the unpredictable idea of diplomacy rather upon strong government to create the order out of which a sense of community can grow if at all possible. In the catalogue of Morgenthau's inadequacies, we have his believe on the limitation of national power via international morality, world public opinion, international law and the balance of power. But is there such a thing as international morality, international law and the balance of power? Where then was international morality when the two superpowers were killing the Vietnamese in their millions? No international law for them to compensate the Koreans? Why was South Africa not force3d via international law to withdraw her forces from Namiba? Was US justified to attack Iraq and Afghanistan? Are the war heads found in North Korea the same in quality and quantity with those in USA? These are all theoretical expositions which have no practical value after the terrorist attack on the US trade center in New York on September 11, 2001. What is peculiar about Morgenthau is his almost fanatical believe that an "integrated international society" would emerge through diplomacy utilizing persuasion, negotiation and pressure. He admitted that diplomacy had failed many times but asserted also that it has succeeded many times too. Why did it fail? "Because nobody wanted it to succeed" (p. 546). For diplomacy to succeed therefore, nations must prepared to transfer their sovereignty to a higher body or new center and be ready to accept the terms of settled disputes by this center. He tenaciously clung to his dream of a World State. "For the World State to be more than a dim vision, the accommodating processes of diplomacy, mitigating and minimizing conflicts , must be reviewed" (P. 546). He finally quoted Winston Churchill to support his idea of international peace via dialogue.

Thus the fact that the Professor took pains and time to: Wipe off the then existing "false and pernicious" conception of Foreign Policy, analyzed the UN as a world body, included his experiences of the Korean War, elaborated, clarified and refined such concepts as political power, cultural imperialism, world public opinion, disarmaments, collective security, peaceful changes, containment of communism, uncommitted nations, the influence of domestic politics on foreign policy, diplomacy and the balance of power is undisputable. He went as far as including visual aids like maps, charts and diagrams. An appendix showing the charter of the UN, an

impressive bibliography, a historical glossary and an elaborate index were also included. Using a computer typeface, equivalent to the "linotype Caledonia" the publishers organized the book into parts with numbered boldface heading and subheadings using italics only when the author quotes another writer.

After the bombing of the World Trade Center on 11 September, 2001 by terrorists, Morgenthau's prescriptions of the respect for a nation's territorial integrity was abandoned by America and Britain. The coalition forces also ignored his idea of peaceful change when the Talibans and the Iraqis were attacked using the pretext of "fighting the Al – Queda" and "disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction". The idea of International Community and Collective Security has now become that of only America and Britain. This is a very sad and unfortunate development which had turned most theories of International Relations upside down or bottom – up.

I however expected Professor Morgenthau to provide chapter summaries, study and examination questions at the end. Despite his short comings, Morgenthau's work "Politics Among Nations" is one of the best text books we have on International Relations Today.