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**Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT**

TO : SA/DDI - Mr. Komer

DATE: 17 April 1959

FROM : ONE/NE - K. C. Clark

22 MAY 59

SUBJECT: Comments on Memorandum for the NSC Planning Board, "Political Implications of Afro-Asian Military Takeovers", 2 April 1959

Att: NSC 5701  
5/20/59

ONE  
Clark

1. The following observations are designed to help you this afternoon. We have not had time to polish our comments or assess this paper as thoroughly as we would like, and if (as I suspect) you don't finalize the paper this afternoon, we would like another crack at it.

2. I think there is a lot of good and sophisticated thinking in this draft, though it is marred by a number of internal inconsistencies, a rather creaky plan of organization, and some problems of definition.

3. General Remarks: Why must this paper be cluttered up with such elaborate justifications for excluding Latin America. I think it is right to exclude it; right also to do another, similiar job on Latin America. What this exercise needs is a brief statement of how and why conditions and trends in LA differ from those in Africa and Asia. Would not this paper have more punch if it were started, for example, with paragraph 11, page 8--an excellent paragraph.

4. The paper should face up more clearly to the distinction (or lack of it) between new military regimes and the governments they have supplanted or may supplant. Basically, it is not a matter of Afro-Asian states suddenly becoming enamoured of military authoritarianism because it has peculiar mystical attractions. The fact is that civilian governments in Sudan, Iraq, Pakistan failed, in one way or another, and the military was the only thing around (institution-in-being) to fill a vacuum. If the governments of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc. continue to fail to adjust to powerful internal and external pressures, they too will probably be replaced--most likely by military regimes. But the successor governments would scarcely be more authoritarian than the existing ones. In short, authoritarianism remains the norm, but various inefficient and outmoded authoritarian regimes tend to get supplanted by more efficient ones. This thought receives implicit attention at various places in the paper, but it should be explicitly stated at the outset.

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5. Specific Comments: Page 3, B 4a: The threat of military invasion is not, in most instances, the root cause of the emergence of military regimes. They come to power for internal reasons.

6. Page 5, 7a: As a passive observation of what will probably have to be done, this is okay. As phrased here, however, it is too easily interpreted as an admonition to foster and encourage military regimes almost indiscriminately.

7. Page 6, 7b: Of course military regimes do not necessarily threaten US interests in underdeveloped areas. There are plenty of civilians, in and out of power, able and willing to do that, and the "goodness" or "badness" of any given military regime is to be considered on its merits. The criterion is not whether the government is military, but what its policies and strength are. (Cf. page 6, paragraph 8, page 9, paragraph 12, and page 13, paragraph 18--all good).

8. Page 9, footnote: Some might categorize Lebanon as a military regime, but the same reasoning would identify the US and France as military regimes--both having generals as chief executives. Lebanon is a parliamentary republic.

9. Page 12, para. 15a: What does this jumble of words mean?

Page 12, para. 15c: Good thought, deserves more prominent billing.

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