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344  
Admin*

Political Implications of Afro-Asian Military Takeovers

Mr. President and Members of the Council:

This study has been a valuable exercise in self-scrutiny within the Department. We welcome Mr. Gray's initiative in requesting it and this opportunity of commenting on certain of its conclusions.

I shall first explain what the paper purports to do and what it does not purport to do. Then I shall discuss briefly four areas of our thinking which are highlighted in the Summary of Conclusions.

These are:

1. Why parliamentary democratic institutions are on the wane in underdeveloped Free Asia.
2. Why we must expect more military takeovers.
3. Lessons from our Latin American experience which are applicable to Asia.
4. The challenge of "second stage revolutions" to authoritarian military regimes.

I

The study considers the short and long-range implications of the military takeovers in Burma, Iraq, Pakistan, the Sudan and Thailand. Iraq excepted, the short-range developments ensuing upon these takeovers have been helpful, especially in Burma.

But the larger implication is whether these military regimes will do what is required of them in the long haul to achieve the stability required to withstand counter-revolutions, anarchy, economic deterioration and other developments which can point a society downhill toward Communism.

The paper is concerned, therefore, primarily with long-range implications. We attempt merely to assess the advantages and disadvantages of military autocracies in

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the Asian mold. We pass no judgment on the relative emphasis which should be placed on security as against economic development in any country.

Nor does the paper deal with any of the policy and administrative changes, or changes in attitude on our part, which may be required if we are to "manage" the Asian revolution more effectively.

The study is focused on the underdeveloped non-Communist countries of the Middle East, South Asia and the Far East -- an area embracing the African Arab States of the Sudan and Egypt. It draws parallels from the developmental history of Latin America and develops conclusions which should bear relevance to the emergent states of Africa, as well as to the area studied.

Japan is excluded as an advanced country and Turkey might well have been excluded because it has weathered its revolution and is pointed toward stability and Europeanization.

The paper recognizes that security, stability and coping with the revolution of rising expectations are the principal concerns of either a civilian or military regime throughout this area. It emphasizes the dangers to military regimes if they do not balance security considerations against developmental necessities, since Communism will continue to pose particular threats to any Asian society in a state of stagnation.

It is obviously difficult and hazardous to generalize in respect of such a vast and varied area. Nevertheless these four major policy implications emerge from the study as applicable to the entire area:

1. With the possible exception of India and Malaya, Western democratic institutions left behind by the colonial powers have proven generally inadequate to the Asian revolution and are now in decline. The crisis confronting a backward society during the modernization process -- especially where security and over-population are complicating factors -- is so profound that authoritarian controls and disciplines are required to guide the revolution on stable courses. The resultant authoritarianism is either imposed or approved by the military component of the society. We must accept these facts.

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2. During this crisis, the acceptable range of choice of regimes in power range in general between government regulation trending toward state-socialism, in which some democratic values are preserved, and the more extreme controls of Communism. The extent to which democratic values influence government, and private enterprise plays a role in economic development, will depend on the extent to which a regime avoids reliance on Communist methods.

3. Communism will continue to appeal to the Asian intellectual and revolutionist because of its proven ability to carry backward countries speedily through the crisis of modernisation and industrialisation. No Asian regime or Western Power can discount this appeal until Western techniques have more completely mastered the "management" problems of development in the context of Communist competition.

4. Military regimes are theoretically as competent as civilian regimes to carry societies through the developmental crisis, provided they understand the problem, keep security and development in balance, and "civilianize" as fully as possible. Since the trend is toward military takeovers, the civilian and military arms of US foreign policy must learn how to work more closely with military regimes in the "management" of their internal revolutions.

I shall now develop four areas of our thinking which throw additional light on these policy implications.

## II

A number of reasons centering on cultural traditions, religion, and the burden of living explain the decline of Asian democratic institutions. There can be no real democracy in countries where the preponderant majority is illiterate, cannot express an intelligent choice between democratic values and Communist blandishments, accepts a fatalistic or quietist religion, recognizes authoritarianism as the traditional way of life, and is too enmeshed in the struggle for survival to have time or energy for individual self-advancement.

In hindsight, we were unrealistic in expecting that the sophisticated norms of democracy could work, either politically or economically, once Free Asia cut its colonial ties and accepted the full responsibilities of government. The area, which is now emerging from a "shakedown" period

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of testing democracy is reverting to authoritarian norms more suitable to indigenous problems and capabilities. This reversion to tradition is accepted by practical politician and intellectual alike, and is endorsed by the Asian military.

Whereas the counter-elites of the colonial period -- the Nehrus or Nahas Pashas -- espoused democratic norms in their struggles for self-government and independence, the counter-elites of today are returning to authoritarian traditions in efforts to move forward more rapidly toward resolution of their problems.

On the economic side, notwithstanding that private enterprise continues to play an important role throughout the area, this authoritarianism is expressed in indigenous developmental systems based on central planning and forms of state-socialism.

We must not become alarmed or defeatist over these developments. Democracies have seldom led traditional agricultural societies through the barrier of modernization to sustained economic growth. This has been done only in our country and in a few Western European countries which developed democratic institutions after centuries of autocracy.

Outside Western Europe and the English-speaking world, social revolutions and economic break-throughs have invariably occurred under autocrats. Japan, the Soviet Union, Turkey and various Latin American states provide examples of this phenomenon. Should India succeed on its present course, it will provide an exception and example which will have tremendous repercussions throughout Asia. Yet we must remember that India possesses certain trappings of both political and economic authoritarianism.

Our alternatives, therefore, are not between democracy and Communist but between the more benevolent forms of authoritarianism and Communism.

About the best we can do at the present stage of Asian development is to work as closely as possible with autocracies in efforts to encourage them to preserve human rights and thus preserve a base from which democratic values can emerge as a literate middle class develops and the masses gain more of a stake in their future.

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Thus we must resist trends toward authoritarian extremes, whether to the left toward Communism or to the right toward models established earlier in the century by Hitler and the Japanese war lords. Both these extremes jeopardize our interests and our purposes.

### III

It appears to be an historic phenomenon that during the modernization crisis of a society, the military are either at the apex of power or constitute the major institution-in-being which supports, or is in a position to overthrow, the government in power. We have witnessed this throughout the history of Latin America and it is repeating itself as a fact of life in Free Asia today.

The paper enumerates other reasons why we can expect more military takeovers in Free Asia during its modernization crisis and there is no need to elaborate. But the footnote to paragraph 11 deserves attention.

It reveals that of the 25 countries considered within the study area, only nine -- Turkey, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Cambodia and Malaya -- can be excepted from these three tests: Is the government -

- 1) A military autocracy?
- 2) An authoritarian government deeply dependent on military support?
- 3) A likely candidate for a military takeover within two years?

Of these nine exceptions at least four -- Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan and Nepal -- are really feudal rather than modern states.

This inventory and forecast eloquently reenforce a conclusion that our long-range interests in Asia depend on the extent to which we can influence the Asian military toward sound statecraft.

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IV

Study of the political and economic development of Latin America -- which in general has attained considerable higher planes in both fields than has Free Asia -- reveals a number of do's and don't's which can profit us in Asia. There are substantial differences between Latin America and Free Asia which are detailed in the paper. Yet there also appear to be relevant parallels of developmental experience which furnish useful guides to action.

At least three appear to be warranted:

1. Our Latin American experience indicates the difficulties of making over backward societies in our own image and argues in favor of allowing Free Asia to develop its own indigenous modernized developmental systems, including reliance on military regimes in time of crisis.

2. Because of Communist competition, comparable levels of development in Free Asia must be accomplished more rapidly than they were in Latin America and against the backdrop of a real security threat. This security threat demands a greater allocation of available resources to the military than is necessary or warranted in Latin America. The necessity of maintaining security and development in balance becomes of vital importance under such circumstances, especially when the military are in power.

3. We should do the possible to avoid in Free Asia a repetition of the role which irresponsible demagogic and corrupt military dictators have played in Latin America -- whether they be leftists like Peron or rightists of the Gomez variety.

We should bear in mind, nevertheless, that in Mexico as in Turkey, social revolutions conducted by military dictators paved the way for greater stability, an acceptance of representative institutions, and a transfer of power to civilians without resort to costly "second stage revolutions". The widest possible repetition of this sequence should be our objective in Asia in conducting relations with military regimes.

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V

I shall conclude with a few remarks on the problem which "second stage revolutions" pose to military autocracies, especially those which become alienated from the intelligentsia and the masses and which are overthrown usually only at great cost and by violence.

These revolts often come from within the military. Nasser's takeover and Ayub's takeover in Pakistan are examples. General Abboud in the Sudan has put down two such revolts and Kassim one. Sometimes, as in Pakistan, they represent mere shifts of power within the ruling oligarchy. Sometimes, as in the case of Peron, Nasser and Kassim they represent alignments with what are conceived to be mass aspirations and a shift in political and economic orientation designed to build a mass following.

These revolutions appear to be phenomena of any developing society. They reinforce the necessity of a military regime's keeping security and developmental progress in balance for, if this is not done, there appears always to come that time when the dissident intelligentsia, or the dissident younger officer group -- often in combination -- will give expression to mass dissatisfaction and seek to overthrow the regime, usually by violence.

In backward societies all disciplined and literate human resources are required and these revolutions represent a tragic dissipation of resources. Latin American history repeatedly testifies how such revolts can retard the developmental process and perpetuate instability.

The civilian and military arms of US policy should, therefore, seek to cushion developing societies from such shocks. This would appear to require at least three courses of action: (1) Our influencing military regimes susceptible of influence or leverage on our part to keep the modernization process in balance, (2) our encouraging them to "civilianize" as deeply as possible, and (3) our encouraging them to point toward a return to representative and responsible civilian power.

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A principal reason why a sturdy two party system adds stability to a society is that the failure of one party can pave the way for the other party to take remedial action by orderly processes and without the costs and shocks of revolutions. In a developing society governed by a military regime, the best insurance against revolutions and the emergence of a counter-elite would appear to be benevolent authoritarianism which imparts a sense of national unity, gives a role of national participation to the intelligentsia, and holds power in trust for civilians and more representative institutions.

Unless this is done, and unless the intelligentsia can influence the regime somewhat as an opposition party influences the governing party in representative government, history seems to prove that rifts between the military autocracy and the counter-elite will widen into revolution, except where, as the Turkish and Mexican revolutions indicate, the military autocrats understand fully the demands of the modernization crisis and are, therefore, authentic political leaders.

## VI

This completes my presentation. This is a large subject and one which should be kept under constant review. It presents problems with which we must live for decades and our experience with Latin America proves they would be serious problems even if the Communists were not competing with us for control of the Asian revolution.

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