

SOUTHEAST ASIA DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP

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of Remarks

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AMBASSADOR: (REPRESENTATIVE OF INDONESIA)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am afraid that I am a little tongue-stricken, firstly because of the rather excessive words of appreciation that have been addressed to me, by both Lionel and by Fred Hawkins. Firstly also because of the awe which I feel in this illustrious company. However, I am here, and so I might as well go ahead with it. It was really a moment of rashness in Hawaii, which made me make a number of (unclear) statements, and criticisms, with regard to the American research effort into Southeast Asian development problems.

One of the statements was, that economic development is really, essentially a political process, that if we only study the usual indices, by which we measure economic progress, that we are only studying the externals of that process. It does not explain anything about the dynamics and the sources of dynamics that are involved in that process. I - I stated then that in order to understand the process of economic development, we should concern ourselves with questions of goals, with motivations, of values on the part of the people concerned, and in the final analysis with their political <sup>goal?</sup> view. To what extent there is such a goal, to bend the political potential of the



country to economic development goals, to what extent there is the acceptance of economic development as a legitimate goal, and because in this context we are concerned with political leadership, I said you cannot study the process of economic development, without going into the dynamics of power and the structure and the nature of power in that particular country, and so I said that the element of power stands central in the economic development process.

After all, the economic development's goals cannot be seen in isolation. They should be seen in relation to the ultimate goals, often unspoken, often barely existing at the level of consciousness in - among the people concerned, but very much present and very much influencing the direction of social life, both on an individual as well as on a collective level. So when we speak about economic development goals, we are really speaking about the problems that really relate to the meaning of life, that is <sup>important??</sup> afforded to life and to society, and to the state. We are really speaking about concepts of the state, concepts of man, concepts of power, and authority.

And, that is why I urged the meeting in Hawaii to address itself in guiding American research to what I then called "the interior view", the problems that become visible when we look at the goals and of the economic process itself from the perspective of the people concerned, rather than from the outside, looking at the externals of the economic process.



I also made another point, namely that it is a fallacy to think that economic development only becomes possible after a certain degree of stabilization has been reached. The need for economic development, is at the same time the force of political instability, so it is not that economic development should wait for political stability to be achieved, but political stability only becomes possible after a certain amount of economic development has taken place, and so our problem really then is how to get economic development going, without political stability, under conditions of political instability.

As I said, it was in a moment of rashness, looking back on this - in a moment of rashness when I made these statements, and now the chickens have come home to roost, and I have now to show up or to put up. Now I have some doubts about my qualifications to do this, and after all I am not a trained social scientist, I am not a trained anything in fact, and also one of the disadvantages of this job I hold now, is that it leaves one very little time to think and even less to write. Still, I would like to, even at the risk of making a fool of myself, I would like to present some thoughts here in the hope that even if my ignorance is shown up, I can go home as a slightly wiser man, thanks to the illumination which you could bring to this discussion.

As this is a Seadag Meeting, I will then try to



discuss the problem of political power in underdeveloped countries, and use some examples from the Indonesian experience, in its relation to economic development.

First, we should I think address ourselves to the question, why is political power a central problem? If you look at the Indonesian experience, I think it becomes quite clear that there are different kinds, different types of political power. There is a kind of political power which is conducive to economic development. There is a type of political power which is less conducive or non-conductive to economic development, and I would imagine that one could also establish a third category of political power that is neutral in its impact on economic development.

Looking at the - at the Sukarno Period, I've often wondered whether the way in which power is found, the way in which power is welded, the kind of appeal that is used, as well as the social groups to which the appeal is made, actually seems to predetermine the kind of problems that that power once shaped can handle, and the kinds of problems that power cannot. It was very clear that the way Sukarno built his power, made it possible for him to get (unclear), but it made - but it was impossible, and I'm saying the kind of power made it impossible for him, the power - the kind of power he welded made it impossible for him to deal and to cope with the economic problems, and this led him into this growing radicalism in the



face - in relation to the outside world, which in my opinion is due in a considerable extent to this incapacity to deal with the internal problems of the country.

The component elements, the social groups on the basis of which political power is built, also determine, have an impact on the economic development strategies that one might consider, when one is in power. It makes a great deal of difference I think whether - in thinking about economic development strategies on the village level for instance, if political power is based on the existence of a strong political organization from - of landless labor in the villages, or like the situation is in Indonesia now, where the BTI (phonetic), the communist-dominated present organization has been destroyed.

Here we see an instance of the fact that the kind of political power actually predetermines or limits the options that are open to someone in power, in his choice of development strategies. Now, given the right kind of power, in terms of its conducive effect on economic development, there is also the question of the amount of power available to the power-holder, the degree, or the amount of power.

I think to anyone that has had some experience in administration, it is clear or it should be clear that the choice of one's economic policy, is not only determined by the problems that have to be faced, but are very much also determined by the amount of power that is available to you. Certain policies which



theoretically should be required in a given condition, will become - it may be impossible to implement them, because you don't have the right amount of power.

And so, questions of development strategies cannot be solved, or cannot be decided in isolation from this question, the question of the amount of power that is available to the ruler. Now of course, there's also another side to it, and that is that power is not a constant - is not constant. Power increases or decreases, among other things as the result of the economic policies one adopts, and I think it is the instinctive reaction often of someone holding power to choose those economic policies which will lead to an increment of power, and to avoid those policies which are bound to increase the amount of power he holds.

And so, if we want to judge the relevance, or the correctness or incorrectness of a given economic policy in a given situation, I think the economic considerations alone are not enough. One should also take into account the power considerations that went into making the decision, and which - the validity of which one should not question, because after all the responsibility of someone holding power is to prevent the destruction and the dissolution and the decrease of power.

And, for anyone, an economist whether he comes from inside of the country or from the outside, the question of how to bring about social change cannot be decided in terms of techniques alone, but should be looked at and judged in connection with the centrality, the central character of the



power problem. In a slightly - in carrying this a little further, one might say that the problems and the weaknesses that exist in any underdeveloped country, in relation to their capacity to implement certain economic development policies, and to impose certain changes on the society, is a result of the low level of power. In many ways the political system, it seems to me, when faced with the magnitude of the many problems of economic development, and under power (unclear), and therefore the question whether a regime is democratic in the Western liberal sense, yes or no, actually becomes irrelevant, because democracy a relevant, an important question once the political system has generated and developed enough power to become an effective system.

Then, as democracy is concerned with the taming and the regulating of power, and not with the generation of power, it is only then that the problem of democracy comes up. Now in the research that has been going on in the last few years insofar as my quite haphazard reading I must confess, gives me the impression - the last part of this research has turned around the search for identification and the isolation of the social changes that are strategic to the economic development process, but it would seem to me that unless these strategic social changes are related to the power structure and to the dynamics of power, the whole analysis remains very much up in the air, and retains a sense of incompleteness.



For instance, one of the increasingly fashionable ways of looking at the development process is in terms of institution building. Of course, it is a very important element in the development process, and the - and it is of course true, that the institutions, the strength of an institution depends on the strength and cohesion with which the attitudes are held within the institution. It also depends on the acceptance of the institution and its operation by the environment in which it has to operate, and so very rightly, one looks into the interaction between the institution and the environment, but I would suggest that it makes a great deal of difference whether the institution with its interaction with the environment, operates within a power situation which is favorably conditioned toward the operation of the institution, yes or no.

Even, even if the immediate environment of the institution is favorable, and even if the conviction of the people who - who together constitute the institution is a strong one. If the powers that be are not favorably inclined towards the existence and the operation of the institution, you are nowhere. Another perspective on the problem of development is opened by research into the elements and the structure of the innovational personality. That too is a very important line of inquiry, but apart from that, we should not forget to look into the question of the place which these innovational personalities shape or occupy in the power structure, and the attitudes of the powerholder towards this type of personality.



Because, these two factors have strong bearing on the effectiveness of such an innovational personality and on the chances of such an innovational personality to multiply in different societies and communities, and then people have looked into the elites, the elite attitudes and of course, that is a very important - that is a very important line of inquiry also. But, just as important as the description of the elite attitudes is, is the question of how is the capacity of that elite to relate to the broader masses, to involve the broader masses. Its capacity to build a consensus that will make these elite attitudes of operational significance, and so here we have to deal with the matter of a question of political communication.

How do they communicate, how do they build a consensus, with what symbols, what kinds of appeals and what kinds of techniques are being used? And, this bring us then once again into the central problem of power, structure of power, the modes of exercise of power. And, as you all know, in the underdeveloped countries, the capacity to build bridges between the values of the modernizing elite and the traditional values of the broader masses is the central problem.

And so, these various considerations of the central position that power inevitably takes in the economic development process, brings us automatically to a look at the interior view, at the traditional as well as the transitional values and motivations and goals and concepts of power, state, and authority. Now as you look at a country like Indonesia, one of the most



striking things is the large variety of concepts of power that exist there. You have secular and modern concepts of power co-existing and fusing in a variety of mixes, with religious, traditional concepts of power.

I think it's possible to subdivide the secular concepts of power and concepts like power comes out of the barrel of a gun, with concepts like power is the capacity to move masses, which therefore deals with organized civilian power. In the traditional field there are the religio-political concepts of power, and I would say micro-concepts of power, magical political concepts that are of importance in looking at small communities or groups. Now as I said in Indonesia, these concepts of power exist, co-exist, they fuse in a variety of mixes, and it would be not impossible and quite interesting I think, to see how the mixes change geographically.

One of the most important concepts of traditional power is present in the Islamic cultural stream in Indonesia, in? and this concept, I think that one of the most characteristic elements is the difficulty - is the lack of separation of state, of the state from the (unclear). There is the built-in obedience and compliance to the law in both its moral precepts as well as in the structuring of society which is inherent part of Islam.

But, while on the one hand there is this obedience to the law, there is also an inherent right of the people to (unclear word). It is part of - it is part of the concept of legitimacy of power in the Moslem tradition. Then, the moral-the inclination to look at social problems in moral terms.



In terms of adherence of deviation from the code of law, which has consequences for the style of politics and for the order of priority for the problems and ills of society which the Moslems discern, and the perspective on all of these problems, and the awareness of the problems, of the underdeveloped nations is quite different from the view of those who do not share the Moslem concept of power, and one of the great difficulties not only in Indonesia but for Islam the world over, which is part of the world-wide crisis that Islam is going through, is the problem of how to relate to secular power, to a secular state.

It is at the moment I think, in Indonesia, the greatest of the - the greatest underlying problem, that the incapacity of the Moslem part of Indonesia, to adjust, to accept and to adjust to secular power, underlies the continuing political tension that has very little to do with the varying views on economic development, but effectively paralyzes an important part of the national potential in relation to its use for economic development purposes.

Then, there is the Javanese concept of power, which looks at power in terms of - as a divine mandate, the (unclear foreign term) that descends upon the person who is going to rule. It is a concept that is very much alive in Indonesia now. It is based on the identification of superior spiritual qualities and inner perfection, with the right to hold power, and the



opportunity to hold political power, and out of this flows the duty for obedience and compliance to power.

The interesting thing is that there is one problem which the Javanese concept of power has been unable to solve, one of the central precepts in this problem for a Javanese gentleman or nobleman has been complete obedience to the king and to the guru. That is, the secular the spiritual leader. Nothing as far as I know in Javanese traditional literature gives us any clues as to what to do when king and guru disagree. In that respect, the Christian precept of giving unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God what is God's, is not of the same quality. I think because Christianity grew up in a power structure which was alien to its own growth and development.

Whereas, the-in the Javanese and also in the Moslem culture, power and the spiritual orientation are very identical or have identical roots. In any case, these - this concept of power resulting from a divine mandate also determines the forms of protest that are permissible within that culture. Now these differences in the concepts of power lead automatically to different views of history, on different view on the nature of the political process, on the dynamics of politics, why certain things happen, and why certain other things do not happen.

They lead to different views on the role of the state. To different views on the responsibility, or rather the limits of responsibility of the ruler, as long as the condition of the



state, the condition of the realm, is a function of the inner perfection of the ruler, and the moral integrity of the ruler, politics gets quite a different character, than the kind of politics that assigns clear responsibilities to the ruler.

And so, these differences in the concepts of power lead to different views on the legitimacy of regimes, or of a ruler. While the elite in Indonesia may look at the question of legitimacy in terms of constitutional factors, the masses look at the same problem in terms of their traditional ideas on legitimacy. You also then get these differences on the qualifications for leadership. The qualifications for leadership especially in the Javanese, but also in the Moslem cultural sphere, has little to do with intellectual capacity, or drive, or ambition.

On the contrary, their proven willingness for sacrifice, to make sacrifices, the moral (unclear) qualities, the lack of ambition, is a qualification for leadership. Ambitiousness is a contraindication for any claim to leadership in Indonesian culture, and there should be a proven desire, a proven lack of interest in money. In my own case for instance, although I cannot say that I have been very successful in the manipulation for power, of power, I - during the time when I was director of a publishing house, I made it a point not to become too successful, because it would destroy whatever opportunities in the political field were open to me.

(LAUGHTER)



And, all of this affects the style of politics, the manner in which one can gain power, and in which one destroys the chances of gaining power. It is - one cannot gain power. This is something the Communist Party of Indonesia found out. One cannot gain power in Indonesia by throwing one's weight around too long, because it upsets certain internal structural balances, and will invoke or release counter mechanisms of great strength and potential violence. And, these different concepts on - on political power lead to different ideas on opposition, what are the limits of permissible dissent? What are the limits of permissible nonconformity in society? Also, on questions of modes, on forms of public resolution and decision making.

Now the question of course is, alright - let it be so, but what does it mean to us? I submit that all of this does affect the way a political system works, and the projections of the direction of growth of political systems, and especially in a plural society like Indonesia, and in a very real sense, it affects the capacity of the political system to deal with economic development problems, in a sense because it affects the - it affects the legitimacy of the goals of economic development within the general context of the purposes of the - purposes of life, and it determines the limits of the legitimate exercise of power.

And, these two things, I think do have a bearing on



the choice of policies or strategies for economic development. So whether we want to or not, once we open ourselves to the desirability of looking at the problems of economic development through the interior view, then these questions as to the ultimate meaning of life, the ultimate meaning of society, and the proper role of the state become very important and central.

Now there are of course, another set of problems which for (unclear) - I should mention here, which are not so much embedded in the cultural, what is it -- cultural substratum, but are the result rather of a lack of experience in the exercise of power, as a result of the colonial experience. One of the very interesting things for instance, is you find it both on the national level as well as on the village level, that the inexperience in relating itself to power, in dealing with power, in handling power, has been one of the main reasons I think for the incapacity of the Indonesian civilian political forces to develop trans-communal organization, and on the village level, it was very interesting to watch how in the pre-Sukarno period, prior to our first general election, how the political parties moved into a village, but because they looked at power in terms of its attributes, and I would say in - more interested in the consumptive (unclear) aspects of power, rather in the productive or generated aspects of power - you could see a struggle for power for the wrong reasons, this a dissolution



of power in terms of the capacity of the community to deal with some very concrete problems like taking care of the irrigation channels and so forth.

Of course, time teaches people how to handle power, and I would say a generation is now growing up in Indonesia who is very conscious of power, what power can do, and how to generate power, how to exercise power. What effects that will have on the capacity of the nation to deal with economic development problems remains to be seen. I just don't know. In any case it seems to me - oh, then there is another aspect, an aspect that should be looked into, and that is the ways in which modern ideas are absorbed and digested within older structure of meaning. Because, that too has a bearing on the political dynamics, and on the capacity of the political system to deal with economic problems.

Now I've talked a long time now. These - the - what I have given you is not much more than disconnected ruminations in the nature of questions and reference to vaguely perceived notions. Certainly I have not presented any ideas in a systematic fashion, but this is the direction of my own search for answers, which I have not found in the present literature, at least not much. Now this may very well be the result of my very haphazard reading. If so, I would be glad to be told where to look for answers to these questions. It may very well be that what many political scientists seem to feel is true,



that the concept of power is an elusive concept, and cannot easily be used in the model-building that is going on now.

I don't know. Still, whatever the difficulties in defining the concept of power, and I agree that it is a very difficult concept to define and to use, it seems to me that it is a reality in the situation, in the underdeveloped countries, and it is a pressure which no one can escape and no economist can ignore, and no government following advice of economists can ignore with impunity, and therefore we should before dismissing it as a valid concept, in any case look at it.

Certainly to me, the search is not an idle intellectual exercise, because I think in Indonesia the basic problem that we face is not only the determination of the right economic policy, but the question of how to organize the nation for - to increase its capacity to deal with the problems of economic development, and this leads us to questions as to how, on what basis should political power be built. What social elements should be drawn into, should be involved into the political power structure? And, what effect will this have on the capacity to deal with other problems, rather than the economic development problems alone? So, even though in talking with you I may have - I may not have done anything more than to show my ignorance, to me the problems are real and the answers that have to be given will have a bearing on the prospect of stability in Indonesia.

And, that is why I have had the temerity to speak to you now, and I want to thank you for your interest.