ARMS IN THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL MODERNIZATION

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Only a few years ago it was generally assumed that the future of the newly emergent states would be determined largely by the activities of their Westernized intellectuals, their socialistically inclined bureaucrats, their nationalist ruling parties, and possibly their menacing Communist parties. It occurred to few students of the underdeveloped regions that the military might become the critical group in shaping the course of nation-building. Now that in at least eight of the Afro-Asian countries the military has become the key decision-making element, we are confronted with the awkward fact that there has been almost no scholarly research on the role of the military in the political development of the new states.

Lack of Knowledge or Doctrine

The trend of recent years toward increased authoritarian rule and army-dominated governments raises questions which seem only to emphasize the limits
of our knowledge. Is our historic belief that any encroachment of the military into the civilian sphere of government is a blow to liberal government and civil liberties valid for these new states? Or is it possible that military rule can, in fact, establish the necessary basis for the growth of effective representative institutions? Have events reached such a state in parts of Asia that we should welcome army rule as the least odious of possible developments and probably the only effective counter force to Communism? We seem to be caught with two conflicting images of the political character of armies in backward countries: first, there is the early image derived largely from Latin America and the Balkans in which the soldier stands for administrative incompetence and inaction, and authoritarian, if not reactionary values; and second, there is the newer picture of a dynamic and self-sacrificing military leadership committed to progress and to the task of modernizing transitional societies which have been overpowered by the "corrupt practices" of politicians. How is it possible to tell in the particular case whether army rule will lead to sterile authoritarianism or to vigorous development?

To find answers to such questions means exploring where two areas of relative ignorance overlap; for Western scholarship has been peculiarly inattentive to the sociology of armies, on the one hand, and the processes of political development and nation-building, on the other. It has only been in recent years, as Professor William T. R. Fox observed that the Western scholar's bias against the military has been weakened to the point that we are prepared


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to go beyond the field of civil-military relations and recognize the entire range of national security problems as a respectable province for scholarship. Given the hesitation with which we have approached the study of the primary functions of armies it is not surprising that so little systematic thought has been given to the political sociology of armies and the roles that military institutions play in facilitating the processes of industrial and political development. It is hardly necessary to document the fact that we have limited knowledge about the nature of political development and the processes in transitional societies that produce the emerging political institutions. Without greater knowledge about these developments we lack perspective for viewing the rise of authoritarian practices and the emergence of military rule in transitional societies.

It is, of course, not uncommon for people to lack knowledge about important matters; what is significant with respect to this particular problem is that we seem to be lacking also in an appropriate doctrine which might serve to guide our policy actions in place of tested knowledge. To put the matter bluntly, for all our commitment to democratic values, we have no doctrine as to what is required for a society to move from a traditional and authoritarian basis of life to the establishment of democratic institutions and representative institutions.

In the past when this problem arose with respect to colonialism our typical response was an anti-intellectual and anti-rational one: the colonial powers should relinquish their authority, and then an automatic and spontaneous emergence of democratic practices and institutions could be expected. Unfortunately, however, with the ending of colonialism we find we have distressingly little useful advice to give to the leaders of the newly emergent countries who are
struggling to realize democratic ways. We have no doctrine to offer them, no strategies for action nor criteria of priorities, no sense of appropriate programs nor sets of hypotheses for explaining the paths to representative governments. At best we have been able to pull together some concepts and considerations from embryonic theories of economic growth and suggest that they might be treated as the guiding principles of political programs.

In contrast those interested in establishing other types of social and political systems — and most particularly, of course, the Communists — have a clearer sense of design and of priorities to guide their efforts. More often than not we have found that in place of developmental concepts and strategic plans we can offer only statements about the nature of democratic values and our vision of end-goals of political development. By placing stress upon the ideal rather than upon instrumental means we have inadvertently tended to highlight the extent to which the newly emergent states have failed to realize in practice their aspirations. In so doing we have contributed to the growing feeling of insecurity common to most of the leaders of such countries. These are generally men who behind their bold exteriors are plagued with self-doubts and uncertainties about their abilities to run their countries successfully. Without clear notions as to the stages that must be passed through if their transitional societies are to realize free institutions, these leaders are in danger of interpreting the gap between current performance and democratic ideals to mean that their peoples are doomed to failure.

Our lack of doctrine for the building of tolerably free societies is most conspicuous with respect to the proper role of the authoritative organs of government. How should the machinery of state, usually inherited from an essentially authoritarian colonial regime, be employed to ensure political development?
Can these essentially coercive instruments of the state, which in a democratic order are the servants of the popular will, be utilized to guide a tradition-bound people to democratic values and habits of thought? Or is the result of any such efforts, no matter how well intended, likely to be a drift toward an authoritarian order decorated with democratic slogans? It would seem that these questions might serve as an appropriate beginning point for a search for both a doctrine of political tutelage and a better understanding of the role of the military in the process of political modernization. Since some aspects of the political role of the military can be analyzed in general terms while others are highly influenced by the unique conditions of the particular societies, we shall divide our analysis into two parts. In the first part we shall be viewing the position of the military in the process of social change that is common to all the new societies. In the second part we shall examine in greater detail the role of the army in a particular transitional society, that of Burma. A final section will be devoted to some conclusions for American policy.

Part I

An underlying assumption behind much of Western political thought is that political institutions are above all else the products of the dynamic forces peculiar to the particular society and thus they reflect the distinctive values and the styles of action common to that society. It is acknowledged, of course, that once institutions are established they tend to have a dynamic aspect of their own and hence influence the values and the expectations of the population. There is thus an assumption of a circularity of relationships or of a state of equilibrium. However, the fundamental view is still that the dominant dynamics of the system lie in the society as a whole and that it is the institutions
which must be responsive. Governmental institutions can display initiative; but fundamental change originates within the society.

When we turn to the newly emergent countries this model no longer seems appropriate. For in these societies the historical pattern has been the introduction of institutions from outside with a minimum of concession to the values and the informal patterns of behavior of the people. These fundamentally authoritative structures have thus tended to be shaped according to norms and standards established in foreign settings, and rather than responding primarily to indigenous values they have often proved to be the dominant dynamic factor in stimulating further changes throughout the society. These structures are usually among the most modernized organizations in the society. At the same time they generally play a primary role in modernizing other aspects of the society.

These considerations suggest that it might be useful to organize our analysis of the political role of the army around, first, the political implications of the army as a modern-type institution which has been somewhat artificially introduced into disorganized transitional societies; and second, the role that such an army can play in shaping attitudes toward modernity in other spheres of the society. By such an approach we may hope to locate some of the critical factors which may help to explain why the military in some underdeveloped countries have been the impatient champions of progress and development while in others they have been a retarding element. We may also hope to gain a basis for judging the probable effectiveness armies have in promoting national development and eventually democratic practices.

The Army as a Modern Organization

In large measure the story of the underdeveloped countries can be told
along the theme of countless efforts to create organizations in which resources can be effectively mobilized for the purpose of achieving new objectives. This is the problem of establishing organizations which have rationalized structures and which are capable of rationally relating means to ends in seeking their objectives. The history of much of the Western impact on traditional societies fits comfortably within this theme, for the business man, planter, and miner, the colonial administrator, and the missionary and the educator were each in their own ways striving to establish modern-type organizations in tradition-bound societies. Similarly, the story of the nationalists and of the other Westernized leaders can be treated on essentially identical terms, for they too have been endeavoring to change the habits of their people by creating modern organizations.

Needless to say, there have been very few bright spots in the entire history of all of these attempts to develop modern-type organizations in traditional and transitional societies. It is certainly open to question as to who has been the more tragically heroic, or comically futile: the various kinds of Westerners struggling to establish their respective types of organizations in traditional societies, or the nationalist politician and the indigenous administrator endeavoring to build out of confusion and move the semblance of order and organization. However, out of all of these efforts it would seem that on balance the attempts to establish military organizations have been noticeably more successful.

It would be wrong to underestimate the patient care that went into developing and training the various colonial armies, and in the newly independent countries the military have been treated relatively generously in the allocating of scarce resources. However, in comparison to the efforts that have gone into
developing, say, civil administration and political parties, it still seems that inherently modern armies are somewhat easier to create in transitional societies than most other forms of modern social structures. The significant fact for our consideration is that the various armies created by colonial administration and by the newly emergent countries have been consistently among the most modernized institutions in their societies. Viewed historically, some of these armies have been distinguished organizations: the Indian Army, the Malay Regiments, the Philippine Scouts, the Arab Legion, the Gurkha Regiments and the Kings Own African Rifles, to mention only the more celebrated ones.

It would take us too far afield to explore the relative advantages military leaders have in seeking to establish their form of organizations in transitional societies. We need only note that there is a paradoxical relationship between ritualized and rationalized modes of behavior which may account for the ease with which people still close to a traditional order adapt themselves to military life. Viewed from one perspective a military establishment comes as close as any human organization can to the ideal-type for an industrialized and secularized enterprise. Yet, from another point of view, the great stress placed on the sense of professionalism and the extremely explicit standards for individual behavior make the military appear to be a more sacred than secular activity. The demands of discipline from one point of view seem to be functional to the need to minimize random and unpredictable behavior, while from another they seem to be constant with the considerations of custom and ritual common to the most tradition-bound organization.

For these reasons, and for others related to the hierarchical nature of the organization, the division between traditional and rationally oriented
behavior is not very great within armies. Indeed, in any army there is always a struggle going on between a drift toward custom-bound behavior and demands for increased rationality. Historically, whenever there has been little change in the state of military technology the tendency has been for the non-rational characteristics to become dominant. Given this inherent conflict in any military organization the question arises as to why the forces of custom and ritual do not readily dominate the armies of the newly emergent countries, causing them to be essentially conservative elements opposing rapid changes. In societies where traditional habits of mind are still strong one might expect the military to represent a strongly conservative force, and such was largely the case in the West during the pre-industrial period. In contrast, in most of the newly emergent countries their armies have tended to emphasize a rational outlook and champion responsible change and national development.

This state of affairs is largely explained by the extent to which the armies in these countries are shaped by contemporary Western military technology. In particular nearly all of the new countries have taken the World War II type of

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1 It is significant that the most common weaknesses of civil bureaucracies in the new countries - like exaggerating the importance of procedure to the point of ritualizing the routine, and the lack of initiative and of a pragmatic and experimental outlook - are not as serious drawbacks to smooth functioning of military establishments. On the contrary, the very qualities that have hobbled civil administration in these countries have given strength and rigidity to their military establishments.

army as the pattern for their military establishments. In so doing they have committed themselves to create a form of organization which represents historically the peculiar product of the most highly industrialised civilization yet known. In almost every aspect of organization and structure the World War II type of army reflects its origins in highly industrial societies. Indeed, these modern armies are in themselves essential industrial-type entities. Thus, the armies of the new countries have been caught up in the newest spirit of the military which is one geared to rapid technological developments.

The fact that these new armies in essentially pre-industrial societies are modeled after industrial-based organizations has many implications for their political roles. One characteristic of these armies is, however, particularly significant: the high degree of specialization within the organizations is in terms of skills and functions only distantly related to the command of violence. There has generally been a tremendous increase in the number of officers assigned to staff functions as contrasted to line commands. As the armies of the newly emergent countries strive to realize their ideal models they have had to establish all manner of specialized organizations and departments which require skills that are either in short supply or non-existent in their societies. The Burmese army, for example, has in addition to the standard engineers corps and signal corps also special sections on chemical warfare, psychological warfare, and even a historical and archeological section. In all the new armies attempts have been made to introduce specialized training schools and advanced techniques of personnel management and procurement. Consequently, numbers of the more

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1 World War II was in itself a decisive event in the birth of many of these countries and, of course, the availability of large quantities of surplus equipment and arms made it realistic to aspire to a modernized army. American military aid has contributed to making the military the most modernized element in not only recipient countries, but also in neighboring countries which have felt the need to keep up with technological advances.
intelligent and ambitious officers have had to be trained in industrial skills more advanced than those common to the civilian economy.

The high proportion of officers assigned to staff functions means that large numbers of officers are forced to look outside their society to models for their own careers. The fact that army leadership, particularly the younger and more ambitious elements, generally comes from those trained in staff positions means that the intellectual atmosphere they create within their armies is one that is extremely sensitive to the needs of modernization and technological advancement. This form of martial spirit has little relationship to the command of physical violence and tests of human endurance. As a consequence the officer class often finds that it is spiritually in tune with the intellectuals and students and other elements in the society who are most anxious to become a part of the modern world. They may have little in common with the vast majority of the men they must command. In this respect the gap between the officer class and the troops which once was largely reinforced by social and economic class differences, and still is to some degree, has now been reinforced by differences in acculturation to modern life.

It should be noted that these revolutionary changes in the essence of military life have had a significant influence in altering attitudes about the military profession in different societies and hence has had an interesting effect on relative national power. Cultures which looked down on the military at an earlier level of technology have now given high prestige to the same profession as it has raised its technology. For example, when armies depended entirely on human energy and animal power the Chinese placed the soldier near the bottom of the social hierarchy, but with present levels of advanced military
technology the soldier is near the top of the social scale in both Communist and non-Communist China. The change has been more in the nature of the military profession than in basic Chinese cultural values. Conversely, peoples who at one time were considered to have a "martial culture" may show little interest in, or aptitude for, the new kind of soldiering.

Above all else, however, the revolution in military technology has caused the army leaders of the newly emergent countries to be extremely sensitive to the extent to which their countries are economically and technologically underdeveloped. Called upon to perform roles basic to advanced societies, the more politically conscious officers can hardly avoid being aware of the need for substantial changes in their own societies.

It might seem that those occupying positions in other modern-type organizations in underdeveloped societies would also experience much the same feelings for the need of change in their countries. There are, however, three distinctive features of armies which seem to make them somewhat more dynamic centers in demanding changes.

First of all, armies are by nature comparative institutions in the sense that their ultimate function is the test of one against the other. Other modernized organizations all operate within the context of the individual society; and although their initial inspiration may have come from abroad, their primary focus is on internal developments. The civil bureaucracy, for example, can, and indeed has to, deal with its domestic problems with little regard as to what other bureaucracies in other countries are doing. In contrast, the soldier is constantly called upon to look abroad and to compare his organization with foreign ones. There is thus in the military profession a greater sense of international
standards and a greater sensitivity to weaknesses in one’s own society.

Second, armies for all their concern with rationality and becoming highly efficient machines are actually relatively immune to pragmatic tests of efficiency on a day-to-day basis. Armies are created for future contingencies, and in many underdeveloped countries these contingencies have never had to be met. Even in countries where the army has been forced to deal with internal security problems, such as Burma and Indonesia, the effects have been mainly to increase the resources available for building up the army according to the ideal model, with remarkably few concessions being made to practical needs. Other modernized organizations in underdeveloped societies have to cope with more immediate and day-to-day problems; hence they must constantly adjust themselves to local conditions. They can not adhere as rigidly as armies can to the ideal image of their Western counterpart. Thus just as Western armies have often existed in a dream world of planning for types of wars that never occur, so armies of underdeveloped countries can devote themselves to becoming modernized and more "efficient" with little regard to immediate reality. While members of other modern-type organizations may desire to see social change in their society, they are likely to be more conscious of the need to compromise their ambitions and ideals in the light of existing conditions.

Finally, armies always stand at some distance from their civilian societies and are expected to have ways of their own, including attitudes and judgments, that are isolated from civilian currents. Thus again those within the armies of the newly emergent countries can feel somewhat divorced from the realities of a transitional society and focus more on the standards common to the more industrialized world. As a consequence they are often unaware of the difficulties
Inherent in modernizing other segments of their society. Within their tradition all problems can be overcome if the right orders are given.

**Armies as Modernizing Agents**

We may now shift our perspective for viewing the political role of the military from that of seeing the army as one of the more modernized of the authoritative agencies of government in transitional societies to that of picturing the army as a key agency in modernizing the total society. In doing so we shall be moving into a less clearly defined area for the number of relevant considerations becomes much greater and consequently there are likely to be greater differences from country to country. Indeed, we shall only be able to treat at a general level of analysis the social and political aspects of military service and some of the more indirect influences of armies on civilian attitudes. When we arrive at the point of discussing the more explicit political policies of armies and the nature of military rule it will be time to turn to a particular case in its historical setting.

In all societies it is recognized that armies must attempt to remake those who enter them for it is assumed that the recruit has to be made over in the image of the good soldier. In underdeveloped societies there is the added dimension that the good soldier is also to some degree the modernized man. Thus it is that the armies in the newly emergent countries come to play key roles in the acculturative process through which traditional ways give way to more Westernized ideas and practices. The very fact that the recruit must physically break his ties and associations of civilian life and adjust to the more impersonal world of the army tends to emphasize the fundamental nature of this acculturation process which involves the movement out of the particularistic relationships of
traditional life and into the more impersonal and universalistic relationships of an industrialized society.

The pattern of army training is thus consistent with the direction of the basic process of acculturation in traditional societies. Within the army, however, the rate of acculturation is greatly accelerated. This fact contributes to the tendency of army officers to underestimate the difficulties of changing the civilian society.

Probably the most significant feature of the acculturation process as it takes place under the auspices of the army is that it provides a relatively high degree of psychological security. The experience of breaking from the known and relatively sheltered world of tradition and moving into the more unknown modern world is generally an extremely traumatic one. If we contrast the experience of a young recruit from the village with that of the fellow villager who is caught up in the process of being urbanized, it usually seems that it is the former who has the more sheltered, the more gradual introduction into the modern world. It is hardly necessary to point out the disturbing fact that the urbanization process as it has taken place in most Asian and African societies has generally tended to produce a highly restless, insecure population. Those who have been forced off the land or attracted to the cities often find themselves in a psychologically threatened situation. These are the people who tend to turn to extremist politics and to look for some form of social and personal security in political movements that demand their total commitment.

In contrast, those who are exposed to a more technologically advanced way of life in the army find that they must make major adjustments, but that these adjustments are all treated explicitly and openly. In the army one can see
what is likely to happen in terms of one's training and one's future. This is not the case in the city.

It should also be noted that the acculturative process in the army often tends to be more thorough and of a broader scope than the urbanization process. In all the main Asian cities there are those who still follow many of the habits and practices of the village. They may live still within the orbit of their family units and have only limited outside associations and contacts. These people have made some adjustment to the modern world, but they are likely to be faced with even more in the future, and thus they remain potential sources of political tension.

It should also be noted that the acculturative process in the army tends to be focused on the acquiring of technical skills that are of particular value for economic development. Just as the army represents an industrialized organization, so must those who have been trained within it learn skills and habits of mind which would be of value in other industrial organizations. Historically in the West, armies have played a very important role in providing technical training and even direct services in the process of industrial development. The German army trained large numbers of non-commissioned officers who performed important functions as foremen in the German steel mills and in other industries. In America the Corps of Engineers of course played a central role in the whole development of the West; and after the Civil War army veterans provided considerable amounts of the skill and knowledge which, when combined with the influx of immigrants, provided a basis for much of our industrial development. In Asia too, we can see much the same story being enacted now. Before the war the compulsory training in the Japanese army provided the whole
society with increasing reservoirs of man-power which contributed directly to
the development of an industrial society. In India army veterans have played
an important role in not only lower levels of industrial jobs, but also in
management positions. In Malaya and the Philippines the army has been the main
source in training people in operating and maintaining motor vehicles and other
forms of machinery.

Politically the most significant feature of the process of acculturation
within the army is that it usually provides some form of citizenship training.
Recruits with traditional backgrounds must learn about a new world in which
they are identified with a larger political self. They learn that they stand
in some definite relationship to a national community. In this sense the army
experience tends to also be a politicising experience. Even if recruits are
not given explicit training in political matters, they are likely to learn that
events in their society are determined by human decisions and not just by
chance and fate. Within the army the peasant may come to realize that much in
life can be changed and that commands and wishes have consequences. Thus even
aside from any formal training in patriotism the recruit is likely to achieve
some awareness of the political dimensions of his society. It is therefore not
surprising that in many of the newly emergent countries veterans have had ap-
preciable political influence even after only limited military experience.

The armies in the newly emergent countries can thus serve as instruments
for providing a sense of citizenship and an appreciation of political action.
In some cases this can lead to a more responsible sense of nationalism. Indeed,
the recruit may be impressed with the fact that he must make sacrifices to
achieve the goals of nationalism and that the process of nation-building in-
volves more than just the shouting of slogans. At the same time there is always
the potential danger that the armies will become the center of hyper-nationalistic movements, as in the case of pre-war Japan.

This spirit of military-inspired nationalism often encompasses a host of personalized emotions and sentiments about the civilian society which all stems from the fact that the army generally represents one of the most effective channels for upward social mobility. Invariably the men, and sometimes even the officers, come from extremely humble circumstances, and it is only within the army that they are first introduced to the possibility of systematically advancing one's self. In transitional societies, in which people's station in life is still largely determined by birth and by chance opportunities, powerful reactions usually follow from placing people in a position where they can recognize a definite and predictable relationship between effort and reward. The practice of giving advancement on merit can encourage people, first, to see the army as a just organization deserving of their loyalties, and then possibly, to demand that the same form of justice reign throughout their society.

Those who do move up to positions of greater respect and power through the army may often carry with them hostilities toward those with greater advantages and authority in the civilian society. The tendency of the military to question whether the civilian elite achieved their station by merit means an added level of conflict in civil-military relations in most underdeveloped countries. More often than not the military show these feelings by seeking to make the issue of national loyalty and personal sacrifice for the state serve as the crucial test of national leadership.

We have come now to the question of the attitude of the military toward civilian leadership and toward the other agencies of government. This brings
Part II

Before moving all the way from our general analysis to a particular case we may note that there are some intermediary categories that are useful in seeking to understand the relationship of the military to the other modernizing processes. We should outline them in order to indicate the possible relationship of the particular case we will be examining to other examples.

There are first those patterns of development in which the military stand out because in a disrupted society they represent the only effectively organized element capable of competing for political power and formulating public policy. This situation is most likely to exist when the traditional political order, but not necessarily the traditional social order, has been violently disrupted and it has been necessary to set up representative institutions before any of the other modern-type political organizations have been firmly established. The outstanding example of this pattern of development is modern China from the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 to the victory of the Communists. Indeed, it is possible to think of the period as one dominated by a constant struggle to escape from the grim circumstances which emerged when only military organizations survived the fall of the traditional systems. Hence, the military became the only effective political entity. Thereafter nothing could be done without them, and yet the military could do little without effective civilian institutions. Comparable situations seem to exist at present in some Middle Eastern countries where Western influence brought a commitment to republican
institutions, but left the army as the only effective modern political structure in the entire society.

A second category includes those countries where the military, while formally espousing the development of democracy, actually monopolize the political arena and force any emerging civilian elite to concentrate on economic and social activities. In many ways this arrangement is reminiscent of the Belgian variety of colonialism. At present, the most outstanding example of this form of rule is Thailand.

A third major category, which is probably the largest, consists of those countries in which the organization and structures essential to democratic government exist but have not been able to function effectively. The process of modernization has been retarded to such a point that the army, as the most modernized organization in the society, has assumed an administrative role and taken power. In these cases there is a sense of failure in the country and the military are viewed as possible saviors. Burma, the particular case to which we may now turn, falls in this category.

From the General to the Particular: Burma

The casual observer of the Burma scene must have been surprised when on September 26, 1958, it was announced that the army would assume the powers of government. In many respects Burma appeared to be a country that was heroically struggling to realize the ideals of representative government. It is true that possibly no government in history has had as many groups turn against it and employ violence as did the Burmese government shortly after the country gained its independence. However, after a decade of confronting all manner of insurgents, the government did seem to be in a stronger position. There had
been considerable discussion of socialist planning and hope had been held out that
the country's economy might soon be restored to its pre-war levels of per capita
production.

In the spring of 1958 the split in the ruling party, the APFPL, revealed
that all was not well behind the facade of progress and harmony. Within the party
various groupings had built up their relatively autonomous bases of power, and
personal cliques had expanded into personal followings based on patronage. Most
important of all, the falling out among the top leaders of the party led to a
division of every political group and organization in the land. The split which
might have initiated a two-party or possibly even a multi-party system was about
to be carried to the extreme of dividing all the significant institutions in the
land. Only the army had remained united; and even it was undergoing tremendous
internal strains, so that there was good reason to believe that had it not as-
sumed a direct political role it too might have split. The time was appropriate
for the army to show its authority and although there was little rejoicing over
the prospect of military rule, there was no group, except the Communists, who
were prepared to challenge the army's will.

The Officer Class and the Civilian Elites

When we look into the social and educational backgrounds of the key group
of Burmese army officers we find that, except for the fact that they have had
slightly more formal education, they are remarkably similar to the country's
political leaders. Indeed, the majority of the twenty-three colonels who are
now leading the government were at one time either politicians or close associates

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1 The initials originally stood for the Anti-Fascists People's Freedom League
but the words have long since lost their emotional significance while the initials
have become increasingly emotion-laden.
of politicians. Most of these men were involved in the independence movement and were assigned in an almost random fashion to careers in the army once it became necessary to staff all the institutions of government.

The social homogeneity of the military and political leadership of Burma can also be readily traced in the pattern of intermarriage among the families of the two groups. Of the five colonels in the innermost circle, one is married to the sister of one of the four top politicians, while the sister of another of the colonels is married to another of these politicians. One colonel was a former cabinet member who, when he entered the army, had a series of remarkably rapid promotions.

The close association of the officer class with the politicians apparently made the officers feel that they were intimately acquainted with and fully knowledgeable about all aspects of Burmese politics. Indeed, in the light of the intensely personal nature of the inner workings of Burmese politics, it is quite likely that this was so. The extent to which these officers were aware of even the most subtle political developments may have heightened their alarm over events. Also, their sense of acquaintance with the political scene must have made it seem less inappropriate for them to intervene directly.

In spite of the similarity of their earlier backgrounds, the experiences of army training and the responsibilities of command brought many changes in the outlook of the army officers. A decade of frustrations had left the politicians confused and plagued with anxieties and self-doubts. In contrast, during the same period the officer class became increasingly confident of its ability to command and demand respect. Both groups consisted mainly of people who found decision and choice difficult, but for the army officer the range of alternatives
was narrower, their problems were more clearly structured, and thus they came to have belief in their ability to demand decisive action of others.

The constant problem of the insurrectionaries forced the military to assume increased responsibilities, first for law and order, and then for numerous other aspects of government. In the civil war situation the army was forced to take direct authority in many districts. In most of these districts there ensued a three-way struggle for authority between the army command, the civil administration, and the local AFPFL leaders. Lines of authority were constantly being confused and increasingly arbitrary acts were becoming commonplace and decisive. This development occurred in the context of an earlier decline in the standards of local administrations. Briefly, the story before the army entered the picture was one of competition between the civil administrators and the district AFPFL leaders. In the pre-war arrangement the key official in the district was the Deputy Commissioner who had that unique combination of power and responsibility that is found in all British colonies and who usually had the title of District Officer. After independence the AFPFL became the key decision-making group in the country and this meant that at the district level the authority of the Deputy Commissioner was eclipsed. Local representatives of all the departments and ministries had to look increasingly to the AFPFL leaders for direction rather than to the Deputy Commissioners.

Army influence in the districts favored a reconsolidation of authority and a clearer relationship between authority and responsibility. The army preferred to deal with specific officials who had wide authority rather than party leaders of considerable power but undetermined responsibility. In short, the army favored a return to the pre-war type of village headman and deputy commissioner
and thus increasingly the army in the districts clashed with the AFPFL representatives. These party politicians often had considerable power and were not particularly responsive to direction even from the AFPFL leaders in Rangoon.

These developments in the districts had been taking place during the last few years. They suddenly became more significant after the AFPFL split in the spring of 1958. With the falling out of the top leaders the center of Burmese political activity moved out from Rangoon to the districts. Events could no longer be determined entirely by the interplay of personalities in Rangoon. Leaders had to look to the districts for support, and this was particularly the case because of the expectations that there might be national elections. Local party leaders found themselves the centers of intense power struggles as each faction of the divided AFPFL sought to gain or hold their support. As the local political leaders asserted their authority over the civil administrators in the districts and sought to exploit the machinery of government to win an election, they increasingly came into conflict with army authority. Although this issue was never well articulated, for each group had its reasons for not publicizing it, it did convince many army officers that the activities of the politicians were about to destroy the country. This conflict in the districts provides the background for the eagerness and the enthusiasm with which the army turned against the politicians in the fall of 1958.

The Burmese army had several advantages as it assumed an increasingly political role. A decade of difficulties with insurrectionaries had led to substantial military budgets. Compared with other organizations depending upon public funds, the army was by far the most favored group. As a consequence the army was able to modernize itself more rapidly and more completely than most
institutions in the country. Also, the relatively generous way in which the army was treated reduced considerably its internal problems of allocating resources, and hence there was less internal tension within the army than in most public organizations in the country. In this connection it should be noted that the army officers as a group had a conspicuously higher standard of living than any other group that depended upon the public treasury. Army quarters provided them with better housing than all other officials except cabinet ministers, and in general they followed a way of living that made it clear to all that they were a special element within the ruling elite.

With the tension that followed the split in the AFPFL the army increasingly stood out as the only united group in the society. It also appeared to be the only organization capable of carrying on effective action. Under the circumstances of domestic tension increasing numbers of people began to turn to the army for leadership. This attitude stemmed in part from the fact that in modern Burmese history men in uniform have tended to assume authority during times of crises. The image of decisive and effective authority in the form of men in uniform was also implanted in the Burmese mind during the period of British rule.

Although on the surface the army appeared to be a relatively efficient organization, it should be noted that much of its drive for power came from a sense of frustration in realizing its own objectives. The fact remains that in spite of the resources assigned to it, the Burmese army had not succeeded in stamping out the insurrectionaries. Indeed, as a military organization it did not have an impressive record. Many of its weaknesses as a military organization made it more anxious to assume a political role. Among the army officers there was
an increasing feeling that the failures of the army could be attributed primarily to the actions of the politicians. When the army failed in its technical operations it tended to blame the civilian population for lack of aggressive leadership. Thus the frustrations and weaknesses of the Burmese army as a fighting force contributed to its readiness to assume a political role.

The army's distrust of civilian leadership crystallized in the summer of 1958 when U Nu, in his efforts to strengthen his government, indicated a willingness to deal with the Communists and other insurgents. Shock and consternation over the idea of treating with a decade-old foe was enough to unite the army and provide the basis for concerted political action.

The ease with which the Burmese army was able to assume a decisive political role stemmed in large part from the inability of the civilian groups in the society to perform their functions effectively. The failings of the civilian leadership are far too numerous even to be listed here. They included the usual difficulties that have retarded development in most of the newly emergent states. In the case of Burma, most of these difficulties can be summarized as being a failure to develop effective relationships between those in administrative roles and those performing political roles. Indeed, it can be said that the history of Burmese independence has been marked by an inability of the administrator and the politician to work together. In part the difficulties followed from fundamental differences in political orientations which were reinforced by differences in social background and the circumstances under which each was inducted into roles of political action. The politicians, often extremely unsure of themselves, tended to have a profound distrust of the administrator class, while the administrators tended to view with contempt and fear those who were experts.
in popular agitation. The result was a gap between action and articulation. Programs could be announced, but administrative action did not always follow and conversely, the basic requirements for effective administration did not always receive support from those who dominated the channels of political communication.

The failure of the politicians and administrators to coordinate their efforts tended to influence public attitudes and thus set the stage for a popular acceptance of drastic changes. It is extremely difficult to gauge public opinion in Burma because of the lack of autonomous interest groups capable of articulating the diverse interests of the entire community. The AFPFL for over a decade had claimed a monopoly of articulating the legitimate interests of the Burmese society. However, even before the split there was considerable evidence of popular dissatisfaction with the practices of the AFPFL politicians. Among the more politically conscious groups there was an increasing feeling that Burma had not lived up to its expectations and a sense of failure was spreading among the urban elements. Short-run disappointments, reinforced more profound self-doubts and anxieties to produce an ever-sharpening sense of hostility towards politicians as a class.

This sense of hostility was fed by a feeling of fear and distrust evoked by the arbitrary and ruthless acts of middle echelon political leaders. An atmosphere of fear was first created within the ranks of the administrators, particularly after U Nu established the Bureau of Special Investigation, which often followed the procedure of arresting people first and then investigating. Fears of the AFPFL, however, spread beyond the ranks of administrators. The power of the party to control licenses and government employment affected the lives of large numbers of people and when these powers were used arbitrarily
they set in motion chain reactions of fear and hostility. These developments all contributed to a feeling that there was widespread corruption within the ruling circles. U Nu himself, by constantly stressing the need to eliminate all forces of corruption, provided further ammunition for those who saw the Aung San government as an essentially dishonorable enterprise.

Hostility toward the politicians did not develop into hostility toward democratic institutions as such. On the contrary, much of the criticism which was directed against the politician was in terms of his failure to adhere to democratic norms. Thus what has been seen in the West as a possible failure of democratic institutions has not been so interpreted by a more politically sophisticated Burma. Instead the more common attitude has been one of expressing anomosity toward a leadership which is considered to have made the Burmese appear less capable of operating a democratic system than in fact they are.

The extent to which Burmese in all quarters have clung to the democratic ideal is to be seen in the extraordinary stress on legal form that has accompanied the advent of military rule. All elements in Burmese politics except the Communists have united in refusing to use the word coup d'état, and the influence has been felt through legally constituted channels rather than through arbitrary actions.

Prospects of Military Rule

Since the military have assumed a direct political role in Burma they have influenced almost all levels of the society and taken an interest in all the operations of government. Out of all their actions the picture that begins to emerge is that of a concerted attempt to re-establish what is essentially the pre-war pattern of Burmese government. Indeed, the ideals and the goals of the
army seem to be quite explicitly those of the old British Burma. In particular,
the emphasis is on the re-establishment of administrative rule and the restrain-
ing of popular, agitational politics. Law and order and efficient operation of
government have become the guiding principles. Administrative problems as they
emerge are to be handled quickly and efficiently. The government is assumed to
know what is the best interest of the country.

The strength and the weaknesses of the current pattern of government in
Burma are essentially the same as those common to a colonial administration.
There has been a marked improvement in the efficiency in public administration.
Authority has also become far more regulated and predictable. There has been
a considerable reduction in the arbitrary use of political power. The focus
of the government has been on developing essentially non-political activities
which can all be seen as improving the economic lot of the population. Instead
of encouraging people to become involved in political activities the army has
sought to make people more aware of their particular economic and social roles in
a society and how they should improve themselves in performing these roles.

The pattern of army rule in Burma, however, also contains within it the same
seeds of instability as are inherent in any colonial administration. In partic-
ular the army seems to be unavoidably stifling spontaneous political action.
The army can continue to articulate the ideals of nationalism and of patriotism,
but it can not articulate the more particular and the more conflicting interests
of all elements within the society. Communication between the ruler and the
ruled is no longer that of the political market place; it has become dependant
upon the informer and the agent. Above all else, army rule in Burma lacks any
mechanism for handling conflicting interests within the society. The means for
adjusting and accommodating the demands of various interests is missing for it is assumed that the administrative programs of government are in fact in the best interest of all.

In looking to the future, it is hard to predict what pattern of government is likely to follow the current phase of military rule. The army itself, but even more anxiously the politicians, proclaim that it will all end with popular elections and a return to civilian government. As the months have passed, however, the army has in its actions become increasingly involved in government.

The problem of what is likely to come next is indeed an extremely difficult one. The British, like all colonial rulers, could always go home, but there is no such withdrawal for the army. For the army to return to its barracks is not at all the same as the termination of colonial rule. For even if the army were to withdraw from the center of the political stage, everyone would be aware that it could do again what it has just done. This fact is bound to color political developments in the future.

At best we can only outline what seem to be the more likely alternative patterns for the future. There is first of all the possibility that the army will become increasingly involved in all phases of public life to the point that it can not easily extract itself, even if it chose to. With this development no doubt would come a general decline in the status of the army. It would no longer be seen as an essentially non-political institution which at great sacrifice was trying to preserve the society. Rather the army would come to occupy a position in Burmese society somewhat comparable to that which the AFPFL has occupied during the last decade. This is to say that the army would give a degree of unity to the whole society while dominating almost all aspects of
of public life.

A second possibility is that the army leadership will become increasingly frustrated in its attempts to direct the civilian machines of government and this may lead to divisions within the army itself. Faced with the prospect of the army splitting, there might be strong pressures within the army to take a less active political role.

A third and probably the most likely pattern is the emergence of a mixed political system in Burma in which the army will continue to assert considerable authority in many spheres of public life, but there will also be certain areas where civilian politicians will be relatively free to act. The result would be a combination form of government in which the army would screen all potential politicians and those who receive approval will be given a substantial degree of power.

This pattern would in effect be a form of political tutelage and in a sense the Burmese society would again be faced with a problem of how to move out of a state of essentially administrative rule and into an era where an open political process could be established as a guide and a restraint to the machinery of government. The ideal might be that in time the role of the administrator and the role of the politician would be so defined in Burmese society that democratic government can be established.

For this development to take place would require considerable political skill. At present the prospects are not particularly encouraging. It is true that the army has been able to improve considerably many areas of public administration. However, the army has shown itself remarkably insensitive to the essential features of a democratic political process. Indeed, the army more than
most colonial governments has shown hostility toward political criticism. There has also been some decline in the respect for law and a greater willingness to utilize arbitrary acts of authority. Although in the last analysis the future of Burma will be determined by the Burmese, the kind of assistance they receive from abroad can become a critical factor in determining the pace and direction of developments.

Part III

There has been a tendency in some quarters to interpret the trend toward military rule as being favorable to American policy interests. In particular, army rule has been welcomed as promising greater political stability and firmer policies against communism. Unfortunately in the past we have generally been poor judges of leadership in the new countries. In fact, we have been so anxious to wish the new countries well that we have not been particularly objective or realistic in appraising their national leadership, and consequently we have often placed faith in, and indeed lionized, men who are mediocre by any standard of measurement. The fault is more serious than just a misplaced sense of charitableness for by refusing to employ realistic standards of judgment we contribute to the lack of realism and the prevalence of buncombe in the political life of many of these countries.

In seeking a realistic estimate of the potential role of the military in the political development of particular countries it is also necessary to avoid being excessively influenced by ideological considerations which may be only of relevance in advanced societies. We have in mind, in particular, the Western stereotype of the military as a foe of liberal values. This bias, for example, tends
at present to take the form of seeing "military aid" as a threat to economic and political development and assuming that only "economic aid" can make a positive contribution to such form of development. In some cases "military aid" has in fact made substantial contributions to road building, health facilities, communications networks and the like, all of which have directly facilitated economic growth. In other cases it has been equally clear that our military aid has seriously retarded economic development by diverting an excessive amount of the nation's energies into unproductive channels. The point is only that possibly more than elsewhere, it is necessary in the newly emergent countries to avoid stereotype and to expect many paradoxes.

If we are able to do so we will be less surprised when, for example, it turns out that it is through the military field that we have best been able to establish effective relations with the most strongly neutralist nations in Southeast Asia. With respect to both Burma and Indonesia we have had considerable difficulties in almost every dimension of our relationships. Recently, however, it has appeared that we have been able to develop more genuine and straightforward relations with their military than with any other political element. Out of these relations have come further possibilities for cooperation. Thus, rather ironically, after the Burmese terminated our program of economic assistance to them, it was only possible to re-establish such assistance by first providing them with military aid. In this way confidence was re-established and the stage set for their reacceptance of economic aid.

This particular example may, in fact, point up the most important considerations for our policy toward the army in the new countries. For the various reasons which we have pointed out the army is often the most modernized public
organization in an underdeveloped country and as a consequence its leaders often feel more self-confident and are more able to deal frankly and cordially with representatives of industrialized countries. Often the military leaders are far less suspicious of the West than civilian leaders because they themselves are more emotionally secure. This sense of security makes it possible for army leaders to adopt a more realistic outlook about conditions within their countries. All of these considerations make it easier for the military leaders to accept the fact that their countries are weak and the West is strong without becoming emotionally disturbed or hostile toward the West. Since these leaders seem to have less need to avoid realities they are in fact for us easier people with whom to deal and carry on straightforward relations.

It is also, however, important to note from the example that it is possible, and indeed it is essential, to expand a narrow relationship with the military into a much broader one. Satisfactory relations with the military can become a dead end, just as military rule itself can become sterile, if it does not lead to an interest in total national development.

This is only to say that while it may be possible to find in the armies of underdeveloped countries an element of stability, we should not confuse this with political stability for the entire society. The military may provide an opportunity and a basis for cooperation, but the objective must remain the development of stable representative institutions and practices. In planning for this objective it is essential to conceive of it as involving far more than just the efficient administration of public policies. It is necessary to keep in mind that in the past the West has come to these societies largely through the role of administrators. This was the nature of colonialism, and we have tended to
step into this role with our emphasis upon economic aid. In cooperating with the military we again are essentially strengthening this role of the administrator.

Now, in most underdeveloped countries there is a genuine need to improve the standards of public administration, and, in fact, unless such improvements take place they will be able to realise few of their national goals. However, there is a deeper problem, and this is the problem of developing effective relations between the administrators and the politicians. As we have seen, it was the inability of these two groups to work together that brought a time of trouble to Burma.

The disturbing fact is that we can with relative ease help people perform administrative roles, but we have not been particularly successful in devising ways of training people to the role of the democratic politician. In many respects this difficulty is the heart of the problem in our relations with the new countries.

This leads us to the conclusion that the military in the underdeveloped countries can make a major contribution to strengthening essentially administrative functions. In the past the technologically advanced West has dealt with traditional and transitional societies largely through the role of administrators, and if the new countries are to become modern nation-states they will have to have a class of competent administrators. They will also, however, have to have responsible and skilled politicians. Therefore, in cooperating with the military in these countries we should recognize that they can contribute to only a limited part of national development. In particular, in assisting them to raise standards in the realm of public administration we should also make certain
that our assistance does not lead to a stifling of an even more basic aspect of political development: the growth of responsible and representative politicians.