

Department of State 1987
Speaking Notes

Speech on Transitions from Autocratic Regimes

- Not USG policy
- View from 1980, transitions lead to defeat for US foreign policy, Soviet gains, and tragedy for those involved. (1973 Haile Selassie & Derg, 1979 Shah in Iran, 1979 Samosa in Nicaragua, 1978-9 Daoud ousted in Afghanistan; Spain, Portugal and Greece in mid 1970s and forgotten)
- The impression was of choice between Totalitarian & Authoritarian rule
- Today the picture looks much different (1980s Latin America 10 democracies, Argentina, Brazil, 4 democracies in Cent Am incl. El Salvador, Turkish military out, Philippines, Haiti. Held in Spain, Portugal, Greece).
- New challenges in Chile, Paraguay, South Korea, Pakistan, searching through historical record for answers: why do they fall, Warning signs, different types, why democracies, Soviet & US role).
- Center program 50 speakers incl Kirkpatrick & Carlucci, 11 cases
- No general theory but patterns emerge.
- Period of Decline, 4 stages, long period of unrest, loss of legitimacy & rapid decline, transition, post-transition. (see-saw analogy, inevitability once swing begins)
- Period of unrest can be long: 5-10 years or more, look back at trigger (Iran & Shah westernizing in early 1970s, Haiti in 1980 with marriage of J-C Duvalier to Michelle Bennett, 1972 when Duarte was denied office, early 1970s when Somoza defrauded

earthquake loans, mid-1970 & Dirty War in Argentina)

--Demise of autocrat not inevitable during this period.

--Loss of legitimacy with power centers, 3-18 months

--Pinpoint loss of legitimacy, when seesaw turns, Shah's indecisiveness in 1978, Nicaragua 1978 assassination of Chamorro and Eden Pastora capture of Nat. Palace, loss of Falkland /Malvenis War in Argentina, Michelle Bennet's shopping trip, Marcos rigging murder trial and snap election.

--Warning of loss of legitimacy

1. Leaders health: Franco and Salazar, Somoza's heart attack, Marcos kidneys, Haile Selassie senile and Crown Prince's stroke, Daoud senile, Shah's cancer effected behavior.

2. Military defeats: legitimacy based on nat security; Argentina in Falklands/Malvenis; Greek colonels in Cyprus; Portuguese in 3 colonial wars, Ethiopia in Eritria, Philippines vs New Peoples Army (Fabian Ver)

3. Economic Problems: Ethiopian famine; all transitions neg or near negative GDP, usually 2nd year and inflation, Iran from plus 10.7% growth in 1976 to minus 5.3% in 1978, Argentina 100 to 350% inflation, Rising expectations dashed.

4. Deep social tensions: divide autocrat from people, Shah and bookstores in Teheran in 1974 70% on religious subjects as he was moving in secular direction, Duvalier's marriage wealthy mulatto vs black poor population.

5. Abuse of Power: Corruption (Marcos, Duvalier, Somoza), torture and disappearances (Iran, Argentina); more important

assassination of strong political figure to create martyr
(Ayatollah Reza Saidi, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, Benigno Aquino.

6. Widespread resistance and coalition building vs dictator;
pattern in Iran, Philippines, Argentina. Businessmen and Church
involvement key sign.

7. Military disposition: will act to protect themselves, but in
different ways, Portugal and Ethiopia coup, Brazil in 1985 to
give up power, Argentina a military adventure, Philippines and
Haiti to abandon autocrat; if they fail the military can be
crushed as happened in Argentina, Iran and Nicaragua.

--Types of Transitions-- 4 types, outcome affected, can be guided

1. Uncontrolled revolutionally collapse- institutions of old
society collapse in violent revolution, new ideological
leadership, interim govt short time, eventually moderates purged,
Iran and Nicaragua are current examples--Cuba, Sov Union

2. Revolutionary Restructuring- members of old institutions help
in transition, institutions emerge in tact, can be massive
demonstrations but generally not much violence, autocrat flees to
safe haven, old leaders re-emerge, (Argentina, Philippines,
Haiti), fairly new model.

3. Coup d'etat- underdeveloped societies, military dominant,
only way to change, coups and counter-coups, individual groupings
key (Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Portugal.

4. Managed transitions- autcratic leaders themselves want to get
out of power for one reason or another or to become more
democratic, Brazil in 1970s slow liberalization abertura or

opening, insurgency defeated and econ prospered so no rationale, Spain where middle class grew and transition managed by King Juan Carlos, El Salvador where US and esp Congress put pressure on right and Duarte could begin transformation to democracy

--US and Western interests fare best with managed transition and then with revolutionary restructuring. Try not to let process get out of hand. Revolutionary collapse and coup in cases, only one ended happily (Portugal)

--Determinants of the outcome- Why one way or the other, first is the transition itself, all can be ready and destroyed by revolution.

--History of democratic values: Argentina, Brazil, Philippines each reverted to past

--Democratic values can be reinforced by a supportive role model, SPD in West Germany did this for Spain and Portugal, each in turn did this for Argentina and Brazil, one builds on the next, also the US played this role in Philippines and somewhat in Haiti

--Then need foundation within society- centrist institutions, political parties, church groups, free press, business groups, if they coexist with autocrat as in Philippines and Argentina, you have a better chance for Democracy

--If institutions do not exist, they can be built upon a strong middle class, Spain and Portugal political institutions were built on the strength of a new emerging middle class

--Where autocrats do not allow institutions to survive, will be rocky transition, particular problem with hereditary leaders in

developed world -- Shah, Somosa, Haile Selassie-- they have divine rights, no need for transfer mechanism other than heirs, political scene becomes highly polarized, center is small and isolated, Dynasties are a problem

--Strong personal leadership is final ingredient, building democracies generally takes time and can be dangerous, Spain's King Juan Carlos and PM Adolfo Suarez carefully planned Spain's transition when social dynamics were generally conducive and still had attempted coup in Feb 1981, Duarte constant threat of assassination, Pres Raul Alfonsin had political skill to punish guilty military officers thus far without dangerous backlash.

--The Superpowers Seldom controlled events, most they can do is establish relationships & react to events, try to stabilize after, but there are key moments (Haiti, Philippines)

--The Soviets - Have advantages over the US, esp in time of revolution, no close ties, ideology that emphasizes destruction of old system, ruthless and brutal

--Soviets are selective when committing to overt support. Do have covert action to promote transitions.

--Soviet criteria for heavy involvement: strategic value and ease of resupply, US lack of interest, closed societies where they can manipulate, strong encouragement by local Marxist leaders.

--Ethiopia and Afghanistan meet all these criteria

--Nicaragua does not fit exactly- has strategic value but distance problem, Sandinistas ask for help, but not risk free

--Conclude, Soviets make heavy commitment overtly only after

transition. Ehtiopia, Afghanistan's 1978 coup vs Daoud, and 1979 in Nicaragua were not Soviet run, but they took advantage.

--Once committed, it is large and not easily abandoned- 100,000 troops in Afghanistan, \$4 billion and Cuban troops to Ethiopia, half a billion \$ to Sandinistas and more with recent visit.

--One price Soviets have paid is detente

--US Disadvantages in dealing with transitions- ties with autocrat and sometimes loyalty to him, inadequate intelligence, inability to reach policy concensus- Especially true in late 1970s. Iran and Nicaragua. Iran example - ties to Shah, reliance on SAVAK for info, 3 policies.

--But are other patterns for US-

In Brazil supported managed transition from sidelines

In Argentina distanced itself from brutal regime- Congress

In Portugal, didn't give up, sent military aid

In Spain, maintained close contacts with opposition 1975-6

In El Salvador, Congressional pressure for reform

In Philippines, new model of activism behind scenes, constant pressure for reforms and ties with all

..In Haiti, readiness to remove Duvalier

--Recent times, better intelligence (Philippines) and united US policy

--The US can overcome disadvantages and play a constructive role

--LESSONS

1. Internal factors dominate but is a critical time when US can influence

2. Democracy is best served when transition is managed by senior elements of old govt and autocrat has graceful exit

3. Democracy is in trouble when middle class institutions are destroyed or are non-existent

4. US should develop ties with moderate opposition for several reasons, incl knowing what is going on and knowing future leaders

5. Need to recognize when transition is inevitable--7 warning signs

6. Democracy can prevail, we need not tie US interests to an autocrats fate