

# Triologue

## *The Governability Debate Continued*

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*In May 1975, the Trilateral Task Force on the Governability of Democracies presented its report to the Kyoto Plenary Meeting of the Trilateral Commission. The authors of the report were Samuel P. Huntington, Professor of Government at Harvard University, Joji Watanuki, Professor of Sociology at Sophia University (Tokyo), and Michel Crozier, Director of the Centre de Sociologie des Organisations (Paris). Following the Kyoto discussions, the final report of the Task Force was published in book form as The Crisis of Democracy (New York University Press, 1975); it has since then attracted continued attention and stirred controversy in all three areas. The book itself has an appendix summarizing the discussion in Kyoto, including the opening speech by Ralf Dahrendorf. Another appendix summarizes a discussion of the report organized by the Canadian group in the Commission.*

*As part of the continuing debate, "Triologue" presents in this issue articles from North America, Europe and Japan. Peter Jenkins concentrates on Britain, contrasting his analysis with Huntington's analysis of the United States. Jenkins' diagnosis of Britain's troubles attributes the country's political problems primarily to its economic failures.*

*He argues for an "extension" of democracy to seek a new consensus on the central problem of the allocation of monetary rewards. Walter Dean Burnham, on the basis of his analysis of the evolution of the democratic process in the United States, also challenges some of the conclusions of the report. Finally, expanding the examination of the Japanese situation contained in the report, Yonosuke Nagai reveals deep traditional roots of Japanese politics which help to explain both the stability of the Japanese system over the years and Japan's current problems.*

*Just as the task force on the governability of democracies was the sole responsibility of the three rapporteurs, the views expressed in this issue only commit their authors. They are presented in continuation of a stimulating debate.*

*The final article continues a series of brief "Looking Forward" views begun in the Spring 1976 issue. Speaking to the trilateral countries in their effort to cooperate in the North-South dialogue, Umberto Colombo—the European rapporteur of a newly-created Task Force on Food Production in Asia — examines the potential contribution of science and technology to development.*

# Britain's Troubles

PETER JENKINS

THE GUARDIAN, London

I want to speak chiefly about Britain because the ungovernability thesis has been hung heavily around our necks. Michel Crozier singled out Britain as "the most dramatic example" of a general Western European malaise.\* I will argue, as does Crozier, that Britain's political problems are chiefly attributable to her economic failures. In contrast, economic problems play a relatively small part in Samuel Huntington's analysis of the United States. From the issues around which, he says, American politics became more polarized in the 'sixties he specifically excludes basic economic issues. These different diagnoses lead to different prescriptions. The problem in Britain, I will argue, is not democracy threatening itself. In fact, only through an extension of democracy is a stable new consensus likely to be achieved on the central problem of allocation of monetary rewards.

## *Similar Symptoms, Different Diagnoses*

It is striking that so many of the symptoms of the malaise Huntington describes are common among Trilateral countries. There is a tendency all round, for example, for governments to have greatness thrust upon them. What he calls a "tremendous expansion" of governmental spending in the United States is modest by British standards. According to his figures, government expenditure in the United States (including transfers) increased from 27 to 33 per cent of GNP between 1965 and 1975. In Britain, the growth was from 40 per cent in 1964 to 60 per cent today, with three-quarters of that increase due to transfers. This, as in the United States, produced budgetary deficits and intensified wages pressures (especially in the public sector), and led to sharp increases in taxation — all of which was inflationary on a grander scale in Britain than in the U.S.

Many of the political symptoms are also similar. Confidence in institutions has declined in Britain. The volatility rate among voters has risen sharply. Support for

the two-party system has declined; and in 1974, Labor Governments were formed twice on the strength of less than 40 per cent of the votes cast. Industrial disputes grew in number and severity, although they have declined again recently. Lawlessness increased. Indeed, as a description of democracy's tribulations, a great part of Huntington's U.S. chapter applies to Britain and more generally to other Western European democracies, with the notable exception — I would suggest — of the Federal Republic of Germany. Huntington concludes that "Democracy is more of a threat to itself in the United States than it is in either Europe or Japan . . ." One might add, however, that nevertheless, democracy is more threatened in Europe — or at least in some parts of it — than in the United States.

It is hardly surprising that the stresses which have become apparent in the Trilateral countries should be similar in that what those countries have in common are democratic systems of government — and not much else. But there is a danger — although Huntington seeks to avert it with his disclaimers — that the similarity of symptoms may lead to an incorrect common diagnosis. Certainly there is no reason, on the strength of Huntington's analysis, for Britain or any other European nation to accept his prescriptive conclusion which — as I understand it — is that, following Marx (Groucho, not Karl) "too much is enough."

## *Economic Failure and Consequent Ills*

The chief source of Britain's troubles is economic and, more specifically, industrial. The measure of Britain's industrial decline is staggering and the wonder is that the country has remained as governable as it is under such unfavorable circumstances. There are justified fears that this may not be the case forever.

Between 1961 and 1974, there was in Britain — according to the Oxford economists Bacon and Eltis — a 40 per cent shift from industrial to non-industrial employment. The comparable figures are 18.6 per cent for France and 14 per cent for the U.S. and West Germany. The great bulk of this shift was into public employment. The dwindling manufacturing sector, both public and private, is increasingly unable to support the service sector, both private and public.

Living standards have been maintained — or were until 1973 — at the expense chiefly of the balance of payments

\*Michel Crozier is the author of the chapter on Western Europe in *The Crisis of Democracy*. "The vague and persistent feeling that democracies have become ungovernable," he writes in his opening paragraph, "has been growing steadily in Western Europe. The case of Britain has become the most dramatic example of this malaise, not because it is the worst example but because Britain . . . had always been considered everywhere as the mother and model of democratic processes. Its contemporary troubles seem to announce the collapse of these democratic processes or at least their incapacity to answer the challenges of modern times."

and investment. Growth during this period, as everybody knows, was slow — about half the average rate for the other members of the European Community — but, contrary to popular belief, productivity improved quite markedly. This improving productivity was not matched by new productive investment, however, and thus structural unemployment increased. Partly this was because the squeeze of higher taxation and rising labor costs penalized profits to the point at which investment lost its charms. Investors were also deterred by industrial disputes and by restrictive practices affecting delivery dates and quality. One cause of the rising curve of disputes was, perhaps, the intensification of competition in the manufacturing sector for dwindling shares of the resources it was required to produce on behalf of an increasingly “top-heavy society.”

This is a necessarily oversimplified diagnosis of our economic problems, but I don't think there is much doubt that most of the social and political tensions in Britain flow from the persistence of economic failure. We may be experiencing what might be called “a counter-revolution of diminishing expectations,” that is to say a mounting disbelief in steady and continuous material improvement which is undermining the patience and restraint necessary in a mixed-economy democracy.

Let me mention two examples which have been in the headlines. The near breakdown of the National Health Service is the result of a conflict for diminishing resources, relative to need, and belated aspirations among those who work in the Service, especially the ancillary workers. These workers, through the discovery of the strength of their bargaining power, have thoroughly upset differentials with the medical profession. It was a sign of the times when a BBC newscaster referred to “militant consultants.” Another example is Scotland, where a growing sense of the United Kingdom's failure has given rise to the belief among Scots that with the aid of North Sea oil they could do better on their own or with a substantial measure of economic independence.

Are these, and the other ills which pose a question mark against the future of democracy, merely the consequence of dismal economic performance over a long period of years? Or is democracy in part, and if so what part, to blame for the economic problems which threaten its continuance?

In common with most other western democracies, Britain has experienced, indeed experienced acutely, the conflict between expectations and the system's capacity to meet them. But given the poor outputs of the British system I hesitate to condemn the expectations as excessive. In fact, the British have put up with an average increase in real living standards of no more than 1.6 per cent per annum since 1963 and have accepted some decline since 1973. Many of the defensive attitudes shown by workers

— or as some would put it, the national reluctance to work — are consistent with unduly low expectations.

But one of our troubles in Britain is that we are dreadfully old-fashioned. The institutional structure of trade unions makes them in many regards a profoundly conservative force. One of the expectations is that change will not be too rapid. If by expectations we mean something more than material expectations, whether of private or public consumption, then I think it is true that the British are more habituated than some other peoples to look to the State to perform functions which may be beyond its competence or its proper realm. For example, when a holiday firm went bankrupt in 1974 there were demands that the State should compensate for the lost holidays. When there was a sugar shortage in the same year the government was blamed and called upon to act although the importing and refining of sugar was the business entirely of the private sector. Such demands may be indicative of an overloading of the system, and it is true that the growth of bureaucracy in the last decade has been phenomenal. But all of these tendencies can just as well be seen as the consequence of economic failure as of a case of democracy threatening itself.

#### *The Allocation of Monetary Rewards*

When the ungovernability thesis is advanced in the case of Britain it focusses particularly on collective bargaining. When Huntington discusses the conditions necessary for governability in the United States and asks the question “who governs?”, he does not find it necessary to mention the role of organized labor. That is a very big difference from Britain.

In Britain these days the problem of government is usually stated as how to obtain the consent of organized labor, or as Edward Heath rashly asked in 1974 “who governs Britain?”. Huntington does make some mention of the growth of white collar trade unionism in the United States as part of his “democratic surge.” In Britain, as a consequence of the power exercised (or believed to be exercised) by traditionally organized groups, not only have white collar workers become more organized and adopted more militant tactics, but professional groups and even some managerial grades have followed suit. But we should not confuse this rising tide of militancy with a growing enthusiasm for socialism. And by no means all the demands made upon the system, or pressed at the expense of other groups, originate in a desire for equality. At the center of the British wages problem is the problem of differentials, and the thrust for equality is equally matched by a resistance on behalf of inequality.

Perhaps it is a peculiarly British perception but it does seem to me that one of the central problems of modern democracy has become the allocation of rewards. Inequalities of wealth cause far less resentment than inequalities

of pay which are deemed, as they nearly always are, to be unfair. This is an area where, disagreeing with Mr. Huntington, I suspect that the answer lies in an extension of democracy.

A free labor market economy is no longer a realistic political option. Government has become responsible — not least because it is itself such a large employer — for an allocation of rewards which it is as yet incompetent to carry out, but for the arbitrariness of which it is nonetheless blamed. There is no subject, with the possible exception of sex, which preoccupies British people to the extent that does pay. A recent survey in Britain obtained the response that 80 per cent would prefer to receive an increase of four pounds a week in common with everybody else than to receive five pounds if everybody else received six pounds. The success of the present policy, which indeed limits everybody to a flat six pounds a week increase, is in large part due to the suspension of all arguments about differentials. It is all too likely that, as in the past, the policy will break down in subsequent phases as more complex guidelines are drawn to allow the establishment of new differentials or some restoration of old ones.

#### *New Consensus Through Extension of Democracy*

Nevertheless, I can see no alternative to the continuing pursuit of some new consensus which will embrace the allocation of resources, and especially of monetary rewards. That is what chiefly I mean by further extending, rather than imposing limits on, democracy. When taking this route one is open to the accusation of corporate statism. But surely it is possible to conceive of a democratic corporate state if the responsible institutions are themselves representative bodies. This is the direction in which we are now heading in Britain. Government is finding that it can govern only by sharing power with other representative institutions, notably the Trades Union Congress. For wages and prices policy to be effective, it will be necessary in the end for the trade unions themselves, acting as representative and democratic bodies, to legislate rules and to enforce them. This they remain exceedingly reluctant to do, but I shall be surprised if in due course they do not come to the conclusion that regulation on some rational and agreed basis is preferable to the restraint of wages through monetarism and the fear of unemployment. As Ralf Dahrendorf said in Kyoto,\* free collective bargaining is not necessarily an indispensable element of a free and democratic society. At the same time, I agree with him that the sharing of power, at the expense of constitutional assemblies, must be among adequately representative institutions.

\*Ralf Dahrendorf opened discussion of the democracies report at the Kyoto meeting of the Trilateral Commission in 1975. His remarks are reprinted in the Appendices of *The Crisis of Democracy*, pages 188-95.

If it is said that by this means industrial society would become even more contentious and thereby less governable, I can only reply that I see no alternative to trying. I am still not entirely clear as to what Mr. Huntington means when he writes at the end of his chapter that "some of the problems of governance in the United States today stem from an excess of democracy." Does he mean that democracy is approaching its limits? Does he mean that it has already exceeded them? How is what he calls "the indefinite extension of political democracy" to be prevented if he is referring to the exertion by citizens, in a free context, of what they take to be their rights? If he is talking about imposing authority, then he is talking about restricting freedoms. If the proposition is that people must learn a greater restraint in the exercise of their democratic rights, then that can only be achieved by their own democratic decision to do so. But in the European context, and especially in the British one, where the democratic habit remains very strong, I don't see that there is a half-way house. Democratic consent is the precondition for tackling the economic and social problems which make European societies more difficult to govern. A society which may seem to be becoming ungovernable on present policies may become more governable on other policies. In the British case a shift of power in favor of the working class is as likely to make the country more governable as to make it less governable. Democracy, after all, is a system of government responsive to people's wants and needs, and among their wants or needs are the freedoms afforded by political democracy. There is a potential trade-off between democratic power and social responsibility and it has to be tried.

The British economic situation has become so intractable that it may not prove possible to make the large-sized shift required, whether in the direction of a Scandinavian-style, consensual social democracy or in the direction of a more American-style open and free-enterprise system. To put it another way, the system will have to be either unloaded to some extent or the allocation of resources, and the redistributive functions (through transfers) which have aggregated in the hands of the state, will have to become the subject of more widely-shared democratic control. Although dutifully finishing on this note of pessimism, I repeat that the challenge in Britain, and in Western Europe generally, is to contrive means of extending democratic control into the areas, chiefly socio-economic, which are the sources of instability. This is more useful than gloomily pondering means of curbing the aspirations of the people by vesting greater authority in those whose aspirations have already been met. ■

Note: This article is based on a presentation made by Peter Jenkins at a small conference sponsored by the Trilateral Commission in April, 1976.

# Reflections on the Crisis of Democracy in the United States

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## I

Professor Huntington's work has been enormously stimulating both to me and to others in the profession. It is at the same time splendidly wrong-headed in a number of important particulars. Of these, two seem of special importance. Firstly, Professor Huntington systematically inflates the claims of authority as against the claims of liberty in any situation — and there have been many! — where these claims come into conflict with each other. There is, I think it is fair to say, a visible pro-authority bias to his work, a bias which has been present from the concluding chapter of his *The Soldier and the State* to his most recent writings for this volume and for the tenth anniversary volume of *The Public Interest*.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, his writings on the United States appear rather frequently to confuse symptoms of disorder with causes of disorder and, in particular, to slight the extent to which our established elites have borne major responsibility for compromising their own legitimacy. This, I take it, is linked to his implicit progovernment-elite bias. But it also arises from his failure to deal with the fact that — as Jurgen Habermas has argued — there are specific problems of political legitimacy which are associated with a "late-capitalist" political economy.

It is quite natural, therefore, that his contribution to this volume has been the particular subject of controversy within the Trilateral Commission itself. He is a brilliant advocate for a particular point of view. Other Americans, whose perspectives on our politics are shared by a different mixture of values derived from the ambiguous American political culture, would be virtually certain to react with disquiet to this point of view.

There is no question that the United States is suffering from a "crisis of governability" of major proportions. It is also plain that the political parties are in a disarray verging on dissolution. This has profound implications for the "governing problem" of executive elites—how to accumulate enough power to sustain some coherence in policy? — and for the legitimate channeling of political protest among non-elites. Finally, it is obvious that the mass public's respect for and trust of the leading institutions of the society are at the lowest points recorded since the emergence of sample surveys forty years ago. The symptoms are not in dispute; the causes, and the chains or links among causes, are.

<sup>1</sup>An abbreviated version of Samuel P. Huntington's chapter on The United States in *The Crisis of Democracy* appeared as "The Democratic Distemper" in *The Public Interest* 41 (Fall 1975), pp. 9-38.

## II

In the paragraphs to follow, I very briefly sketch an alternative mode of analysis.<sup>2</sup>

Every state exists to promote and to legitimate the dominant mode of production. Under modern conditions of complexity, and under conditions of political democracy, the state's primary functions are twofold: (a) To promote the domestic and international well-being of the dominant mode of production, and to ward off attacks which threaten either the national well-being or the international well-being of the dominant economic system; and (b) To maintain social harmony within the territory controlled by the state.

So far as the United States is concerned, the promotion of "free enterprise" and of social harmony has been relatively easily achieved historically, in large part because of the dominance of values, norms and expectations (including non-expectations of government by the population!) associated with a dominant *Grundnorm*. This *Grundnorm* may be described as *self-regulation* by and of individuals, solidary collective groups, local towns and neighborhoods, business enterprises, labor unions and other units of political society. Its growth to dominance in the United States was uniquely favored by a wide range of factors — frontiers, demographics, isolation from credible external threats, and others — about each of which a voluminous literature exists.

For the traditional American political system to work—*i.e.*, for it to promote both capitalism and democracy with some chance of success — three conditions have been implicitly necessary:

The political system must function in a context in which no sustained, detailed public-sector regulation of, or intervention into, the autonomously functioning self-regulators of economy or society is required; it must function in a context in which no sustained pressure toward sovereignty arises from credible external military threat; finally, it must be possible to recast the current version of the dominant self-regulation axiom to bring it up to date with the current level of development in the political economy, while at the same time not abandoning or hopelessly compromising the axiom itself. One of the most important aspects of historical critical realignments is that they have provided the operational structure for this recasting of dominant value-symbolism in each long generation.

<sup>2</sup>A fuller treatment can be found in my article, "Decay and Revitalization," in *The Journal of Politics*, August, 1976.

There is abundant reason to suppose that the traditional mechanism has irretrievably broken down in our time because all three of these "boundary conditions" have been destroyed.

Non-intervention by the state into the autonomies of economy and society was destroyed, so far as the economy is concerned, by the collapse of laissez-faire in 1929-33. It has been increasingly subverted elsewhere by the thrust and bias of policies fashioned by activist elites to restore social harmony in the face of steeply increased demands for equality and access to opportunity by blacks and others affected by structural discrimination.

Since at the latest 1941, the United States has vaulted into an imperial role in the international system. This role involves a permanent semi-militarization, the existence of a permanent and highly credible external military threat, the involvement by this government in the subversion of unfriendly but vulnerable regimes elsewhere, the support (by military force if deemed necessary) of friendly governments whatever their character or wherever they are located around the globe, and permanent activism in managing the international capitalist economy.

Under these conditions, the viability of the self-regulation axiom tends to collapse and, with it, the generalized legitimacy of decisions by elites.

### III

In every modern, complex political system based upon democratic consent principles, tensions exist between the two basic functions of the state, *i.e.*, the promotion externally and internally of the basic interests of the dominant mode of production and the need to maintain social harmony. Very often, the nature of these basic interests is by no means fully agreed upon even by elites; and still less are "solutions" to the problem of social harmony self-evident. From these realities, politics takes concrete form: political conflicts within elites, within mass publics, and through the transmission mechanisms (especially the parties) which link the two.

Out of the need to amass popular support, elites in charge of the state machinery need to develop three envaluated formulas:

— Electoral perspectives, which rationalize the primary requirements of state-management (what Whitehall bureaucrats like to call "ongoing reality") with the politically organizable demands of the mass public at large;

— Electoral ideologies, which provide the rationale which energizes rank-and-file party workers and activists to support the elites in power or the alternative elites of the "outs" who are seeking power;

— Political settlements, the structure of symbolic and material payoffs and priorities in any given era for which the elites in charge of the state are largely responsible.

It should be obvious that all of these three formulas must

be worked out and maintained in concrete policy decisions by democratic elites in accordance with current fact situations as these are perceived and acted on by those elites. They are, therefore, always problematic and not to be dogmatically deduced from "objective" conditions in the domestic or international political economy. But clearly such conditions play a major role in the viability of envaluated formulas in channeling human action. It is also evident that electoral perspectives and electoral ideologies can collide to create tremendous strains on governments: thus the collapse of the Johnson administration in 1967-68, or the current situation in the British Labour party, where Chancellor Healey's welfare cuts and promotion of the profitability of private enterprise have collided with the leftist ideology supported by many of the party organization's activists.

In the post-1945 United States, and until recent upheavals, the primary electoral perspective of the two parties has tended to converge on two elements: promotion of domestic prosperity and sustained growth in GNP and in per capita real income; and international anti-communism and consensus on the need for strong defense and foreign policy, with the corollary that foreign-policy defense issues are to be removed from the arena of competitive party politics and, hence, from the possibility of organizable non-elite interventions.

The electoral ideologies of the two parties have involved conflicts at the margins of an electoral perspective which has been broadly shared by elites of both parties when in office. In the domestic arena, the differentiation has tended to be as between a greater Republican emphasis upon using public policy to promote the profitability of business enterprise, and a greater Democratic emphasis on using public policy in an activist way to overcome problems of maintaining social harmony through varying kinds of social-welfare initiatives and expenditures. In the arena of foreign policy, despite the rhetoric of such unsuccessful candidates as Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan, it is broadly correct to say that Democrats in office have pursued a more activist, "forward" imperial policy against Communist powers, while Republicans have been more passive and more oriented toward the use of foreign policy in promoting the trade and profit opportunities for multinational corporations. There is, in short, something very broadly accurate in the long-term public judgments (found in American Institute of Public Opinion surveys and elsewhere) that the Republicans are the "party of depression" and the Democrats are the "party of war." But the distinctions here are not very large and, in the current international context, may well be declining.

The post-1945 political settlement may be described briefly as the "welfare-warfare state." Granted the absolutism of American belief in Lockean-liberal, self-regulation values, the welfare component of this settlement has been attacked much more heavily and consistently by the

political Right in this country than in many others. More recently, as a direct consequence of the Vietnam War, the political Left — relying on the democratic-humane elements in the American political tradition — mounted with some success an assault on the Warfare component of this political settlement. In the process, they may have actually set some outer limits to the future use of American military force for pursuit of basic state goals; this remains to be seen.

#### IV

The “crisis of governability” in the contemporary United States must primarily be seen as a crisis in the postwar political settlement and in the latest and probably last temporal variant of the self-regulation *Grundnorm*, “interest-group liberalism.”<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, this crisis may well rest on an even more primordial contradiction. The growth of global interpenetrations in the political economy, the serious instability in the dominant domestic mode of production, and the “ongoing realities” of empire require the development of a “hard state” in the United States. Such a state must, to a greater or lesser extent, have capacities enabling its leaders to plan rationally and to take timely and effective decisions. Yet the traditional — and tenacious — adherence of Americans both to the libertarian and to the proprietarian-possessive strands in the self-regulation axioms stands squarely in the way. So, of course, does the traditional diffuseness, the oncesatisfactory policy anarchy, of the American political structure. Indeed, the decomposition of key instrumentalities for controlling the mass public — most especially the political parties — makes the system more complex, more diffuse, and more chaotic than ever. To the extent that this is so, and to the extent that the basic issues cannot be fudged or muddled through, there is real potential for the worst kind of troubles in the political system: implicit is the collision of irresistible forces with immovable objects on a scale not seen since the Civil War.

What is involved in all this is a complex crisis of political values: not only is authority compromised, but so is democracy, and each has been working to subvert the other. Professor Huntington and his intellectual colleagues, I think it is accurate to say, have opted for an image of the political state which makes a clear choice in favor of elites and their claims to authority. The end which they appear to have in view is the creation of a “hard” state centered in authoritative decisions made by executive elites, working in tandem with technocrats inside and outside the official bureaucracy, and with effective insulation from the demands of an unruly and ungrateful public. There is nothing at all new in this vision in its fundamentals: such, under much less exigent circum-

<sup>3</sup>See Theodore J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism - Ideology, Policy and the Crisis of Public Authority* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1969).



### Hanns Maull Named Commission's European Secretary

In August 1976, Hanns Maull became the European Secretary of the Trilateral Commission. The European group in the Commission, under the Chairmanship of Georges Berthoin, has its administrative center in Paris.

Dr. Maull was a Research Fellow with the Centre for Contemporary European Studies of the University of Sussex (1975-76) and a Research Associate with the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London (1973-74). Born in 1947 in Goegginken (Germany), Dr. Maull was educated in Munich and London and holds a Ph.D. “Summa cum Laude” from Munich University, with a thesis on the Israeli-Arab conflict. He is the author of *Oil and Influence: The Oil Weapon Examined* (Adelphi Papers No. 117, IISS, London, 1975), and of a forthcoming book entitled *Europe and International Energy Politics*. Hanns Maull has contributed articles on international problems to a number of English and German periodicals.

stances, was the state for which the Progressives contended in the early years of this century, and with considerable success. What is new since then, and since the times of the intellectual technocrats of the 1920s and 1930s, is the revolutionary and permanent change in the international context. This lends a peculiar air of inevitability to the ascendant President, that fully imperial sovereign, sketched by Professor Huntington in his earlier essay, “Congressional Responses to the Twentieth Century.”<sup>4</sup> Such a view appears to correspond to many of the facts; it closely reflects the preoccupations of technocratic planners in government and academia all around the Western world; it also represents a line of thought which, if it could form the shank of a new political settlement under remotely democratic auspices, would open the way for a restoration of authority and the possibility that the American state mechanism's basic functions could be adequately performed. The only problem seems to be that it was precisely this kind of state which went to smash in the late 1960s. To say the least, that experience makes any possible legitimation of such a regime very unlikely this side of dictatorship.

<sup>4</sup>In David B. Truman (Ed.), *The Congress and America's Future*, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1965, pp. 5-31.

## V

There appear to be four broad possibilities for the evolution of American politics in the near term.

- Maintenance of the *status quo*, coupled with a systematic scaling down of “unwanted” non-elite demands on the policy elite. This would be likely to succeed only on condition that a new variant of a liberal political formula could somehow be found, operationalized and converted into a revitalized political settlement. As “interest-group liberalism” systematically voided democracy of substantive content, leaving only electoral politics and negotiations among peak groups behind, such a “revitalization” would have to void democracy of still more content, reducing it and the influence of non-elites over their own lives to the derisory level wrongly claimed for it in the past by Marxists. There is, of course, no guarantee that — were elites to be given such freedom under “democratic” auspices — they would use it any less abusively than did the elites of the past decade. This point always seems to elude Professor Huntington, but it is absolutely central to understanding the crisis which he deplors. It may also be pointed out that preserving anything like the *status quo* still leaves the underlying contradiction unresolved; if it were satisfactory for the realization of either of the major tasks of the political state, the Trilateral Commission would never have become concerned with these issues at all.

- A reactionary shift to the far right, with a reassertion of an earlier variant of the liberal political formula: neo-laissez-faire and the negation of the competence of the political machinery to carry out any positive domestic objectives. There has been much drift in this direction, since any variant of activist liberal public policy (including, perhaps especially, interest-group liberalism) is inherently biased in such manner as to stultify itself. But such a shift could not be sustainable politically, barring a context in which more or less unlimited expansion of military spending could win widespread public backing. In all probability, such a “solution” would require some form of authoritarian rationale and practice by political elites. Very probably, only a crisis far graver than the present one could give them the leverage to carry it off.

- A reactivation of “welfare-warfare liberalism,” identified with massive military mobilization and expenditure on one hand and social-welfare expenditures on the other. This also appears to be returning to vogue, particularly within the Democratic party as it proceeds through the electoral process in 1976. Of course, it is obvious that war is not only a great stimulus to nation-building (if it is the “right” kind of war, that is), it is also a well-known way of coping with economic stagnation and slump without basically disturbing the power structures of the dominant mode of production. But if going back to the

political formulas of 1929 has its problems, returning to those of 1965 would seem if anything less likely to resolve the impasse short of the use of one or another kind of coercive force.

- Perhaps the least likely, but in my view the most desirable, way out of the morass would be to stimulate and encourage mass participation in politics, and the emergence of mass demands on policy elites and machinery, as much as possible, with the end in view of relegitimizing the political system by giving people an authentic share in shaping their own lives and destinies. This of course would require yet more “disorder” in the short term at least. Revitalization of political parties, including the creation of some new ones, would be part of this process. So, at some point, would be the recasting of the political structure itself; the curbing of the power of “technetronic” elites — both official and “private” — to overwhelm the lives of non-elites; and, at some point, coming to terms with the need to remold the political economy along more genuinely participatory lines at levels extending from workplace decisions to boardroom decisions.

Simply to suggest any such thing, with what we know about the “ongoing realities” of the contemporary political economy and state, is perhaps to condemn oneself as a hopeless romantic, a member of a loose group of neo-Populist or neo-Socialist *Schwärmer*. Perhaps one should accept the probable (if it is probable) manifest destiny sketched for us by Professor Huntington’s works, and say with the cold conciseness of Lucretius, *concede: necessesit*. But before doing so, it is well to close with a statement and a prediction. The statement: the “crisis of governability” and its associated “democratic distemper” are in very large part the natural outgrowth of decisions made by activist elites in domestic and international arenas, and not by predatory publics. The kinds of decisions these leaders made under the spell of interest-group liberalism both at home and abroad systematically violated major parts of the American value code, values held very deeply by large numbers of Americans. At best, it will take some time for the impact of these traumas to recede and for the legitimacy of political leadership to rise again from its present abysmal level. The prediction: the larger post-Vietnam issues of “governability” can only be resolved without the use of force at some point in one of two ways. Either Americans in the mass will be converted whole-heartedly to the values appropriate to running an empire and slough off those discordant, older democratic-humane values associated with such men as Jefferson and Lincoln; or these latter values will continue to have effect, leaven the lump, and stand as barriers to the arrogance and self-will of our rulers. That this latter course is not without international risks is clear to everyone. But the risks of becoming just another imperial power where liberty is only a memory — or a mockery — are, in my view, far larger. ■

# The Traditional Roots of Governability in Japan

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Japan's high level of governability is outstanding among the nations where the Western system of democracy is in operation. Professor Watanuki's chapter on Japan in the report to the Trilateral Commission on the governability of democracies successfully outlines the political and social context which has made it possible for Japan to maintain a relatively high level of political stability during the post-war period. In this commentary, I would like to offer some suggestions on the connection between traditional cultural roots and stability in Japanese politics, particularly traditional concepts of space and time underlying the political order.\* In my view, today's crisis of democracy stems from confusion about these concepts, confusion undermining the public philosophy which could support wholesome and mature democracy.

## *A Different Conception of Political Space*

The political order of Western Europe in modern times was realized on the premise of a civilized order at its core (the *jus publicum Europaeum*), with great "uncivilized" areas beyond, outside the bounds of law and order. The political order of Western European civilization thus resolved the conflict between social energy and entropy by evolving a twofold domain consisting of the "inner" and the "outer." It was a system whereby the inner order was consolidated by emanating energy outward through the never-ending discovery of "free land" and "new frontiers."

In contrast to this, Japan shut itself off from the outside in a more or less "closed system" through the feudal Tokugawa period (1603-1869) under the so-called exclusionist policy. In spite of this, Japan was able to keep the rise in entropy to a minimum, and was able to maintain a constant population, productive capacity, food supply, and information level without many occurrences of periodic mass hysteria like witch-hunting. Japan thus has the experience of achieving long-term stability of social order, of consolidating an inner order without the necessity of continually emanating energy outward. With regard to the creation of order, Japanese culture does not attach importance to a spatial demarcation between "inner" and "outer." It has succeeded, rather, in translating the interior of one and the same space into an "inner space" consisting of *ura* (back) and *omote* (front). The terms *omote* and *ura*

originally denoted the front (*omote*) and back (*ura*) of the human body, and hence neither can exist without the other.

This cultural background serves Japanese stability well in the current highly-organized world society. Western societies, in contrast, are somewhat confused by the absence of "free land" and "new frontiers" to discover. Great progress in the technology of communication has brought about a spatial revolution, extending the boundaries of informational space to the very limits of the universe, and blurring the "inner"- "outer" distinction.

## *Time: A Greater Degree of Political Patience*

The stable continuation of democracy requires a politically mature public capable of carrying on democratic processes. Such a public must have a concept of unity and harmony between short-term self interest and long-term public interest. In the "era of success" of American history there was a creed, aptly described by Robert L. Heilbroner as "economic patriotism," which harmoniously blended the two types of interest. Most Western societies today, however, are characterized by a divorce on the time horizon between short-term and "short-sighted" concepts of self-interest and a very long-term concept of public interest, unrelated to the former and subscribed to by only a few. There is no framework which blends or mediates between the short-range and long-range perspectives.

The traditional Protestant ethic of "delaying gratification" encouraged patience with regard to the "time" between the means and the long-term goal. This fundamental attitude of "instrumental rationality" is lacking in today's younger generation. In fact, an "anti-instrumental" or "consummatory" attitude is becoming increasingly common — that is, an "atemporal" attitude which does not recognize a "temporal gap" between "desire" and "gratification" but insists on immediate satisfaction. This change in value attitudes and the increase in political impatience do not seem to be unrelated, and may help explain the "democratic surge" and "excesses of democracy" described by Huntington.

This change is closely connected with the fact that, as a result of the development of modern technology of communication and the expansion of information space, the boundaries between the *ura* and *omote* of political order\*

\*This article draws on a paper I presented at the August 1976 World Congress in Edinburgh of the International Political Science Association.

\*It is suggested that every political order is divided into an *omote* (front) and *ura* (back) — its public face (normative rules) and its private wisdom (pragmatic rules), its public domain and private domain.

have been broken down. In other words, the information explosion and the expansion of informational space has made it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the traditional distance and "temporal laxity" deemed necessary to govern. There is a breakdown of informal self-regulating sub-systems and pragmatic rules of behavior. Michel Crozier argues along similar lines in the chapter on Europe in the governability study. "This traditional European model of screening and government by distance," he writes, "has gradually broken down to the point that the necessary regulations have all but disappeared. . . . The information explosion has made it difficult if not impossible to maintain the traditional distance that was deemed necessary to govern. . . ."

In Japan, traditional self-regulating sub-systems are still relatively strong. Despite rapid economic growth and social change (e.g., urbanization, the advent of the information age, and internationalization), Japan has been able to maintain the highest level of governability among the Trilateral regions. As Professor Watanuki astutely points out, this relates to the strong sense of respect for traditional authority among the common people, the strength of informal social control exerted by the small rural and familistic community which still extends itself over the large urban areas.

Traditional Japanese economic attitudes remain strong, as exemplified by high rates of savings. The surprisingly high rate of savings is not unrelated to the distinctly Japanese image of time-horizon. This high propensity for savings comes out of a curious combination of a short-run lack of confidence in the government's welfare policy (savings go for educational expenses, for a reserve for illness and other exigencies, or for old age), and a long-term confidence in the government. The Tokugawa military government maintained three hundred years of stable rule, and despite the Meiji Restoration Japan's political society continued to exhibit a high degree of continuity in subsequent generations. For these reasons the Japanese people are confident that there will be no drastic change in Japan such as revolution; hence they place strong trust in the financial institutions, including the banks. The distinctive feature of the American or European image of the time horizon is quite the opposite of the Japanese, for in the short run they place great expectations on the government and its welfare policy, but they lack the high degree of confidence in government over the long run.

#### *iki and hara*

There is respect in traditional Japanese culture for the combined qualities of *iki* (sophistication) and *hara* (literally, "stomach"), a sort of "detached attachment" to the desires of the temporal world. The ordinary Japanese conforms to the "powers that be" in the hope of being able to indulge his reliance (*amae*) on the leadership. The

elite, however, must be in possession of *iki* and *hara*. Particularly in Japan, real decision making always requires behind-the-scenes maneuvering by those with influence, i.e., adjustment and accommodation between opinions and actions of intra-organizational groups and factions. The "men of influence" charged with the duty of carrying out this long and time-consuming process must be free from the desire for outward fame, and must in the long run be disinterested in political power, resigned, and detached to an almost cynical degree. This attitude was nurtured in the Japanese mentality under the influence of Buddhism.

It is a well-known fact that with the coming of rapid economic growth after the war, many politicians appeared who had only an excessive attachment to such secular goals as political power, money, and sex, but little in the way of long-term detachment. They are described by the epithet *yabo*, the opposite of *iki*. We must not lose the virtues of *iki* and *hara*, which embody the basic perspective of "detached attachment" to be found in Japan's traditional culture. These will remain essential qualities for leaders of the coming age. ■

### COMMISSIONERS IN THE NEWS

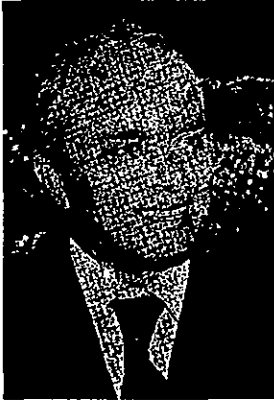
*President-elect Jimmy Carter*  
*Vice President-elect Walter Mondale*

One of the original members of the Trilateral Commission, President-elect Jimmy Carter participated in four major meetings of the Commission since its creation in 1973, culminating in the May 1975 plenary meeting in Kyoto. The need for increased cooperation between Japan, Western Europe, and North America was a foreign policy theme of his campaign and at the heart of his New York speech to the Foreign Policy Association in June 1976. In his autobiography, *Why Not The Best?*, he referred to the Trilateral Commission as having provided him with a splendid learning opportunity, adding that many of the other members have helped him in his study of foreign affairs. Walter Mondale, the Vice President-elect, was also an original member of the Commission.

*and French Premier Raymond Barre*

Among the Commissioners now serving in high government positions in the Trilateral countries is Raymond Barre, named Prime Minister of France in August 1976. A professor of economics at the University of Paris and a former Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities, Raymond Barre was also an original member of the Trilateral Commission. In addition to heading the new French government, Monsieur Barre also serves as Minister of Economic and Financial Affairs.

## Looking Forward



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### Science and Technology: Key North-South Issue

The dramatic changes taking place in international relationships and the balance of power must not be allowed to lead the world in a direction not compatible with the basic ethical need to orient the future progress of advanced industrial societies in harmony with that of the less developed countries.

The proposal for establishment of a "New International Economic Order," put forward by the less developed countries at the Sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in the spring of 1974, has been made in response to the need for reducing the inequality of wealth existing among the different parts of the world. The present economic system, which is largely structured for the benefit of the rich countries and of the tiny elites in the poor countries, creates conditions of instability in the long run which are dangerous to all, given the increasing degree of interdependence among the constituent nations.

Policy-makers need better insight into medium — and long-term — problems and opportunities related to the evolution of the international economic system, in order to get a clearer idea of the consequences of their decisions. It is necessary to identify a number of problem areas of longer-term importance, to study their interactions and consequences, and to understand their implications for current policy.

Science and technology is such a problem area. Technology, resulting from scientific progress, is an essential part of the process of economic growth. It has, therefore, had a primary role in shaping present society, with all its benefits, disadvantages and contradictions. If properly used, however, technology has the potential to make the world evolve towards a more balanced economic and social structure.

In the context of the "North-South" negotiations, scientific and technological policy should be given adequate attention, as it is a necessary ingredient in managing complexity and change. The Trilateral countries (that basically form the "North") possess more than two-thirds of the world's scientific and technological potential, and this is indeed one of their major points of strength. They should strive to formulate a global and persuasive program of technology transfer and R&D cooperation with the less developed countries. The main function of this technical cooperation from Trilateral countries should be that of supporting and strengthening the internal scientific and technological efforts of LDC's, rather than pretending to transplant in these countries technologies that were conceived and developed under different socio-economic conditions and constraints.

For example, large-scale, modern technologies, while perhaps suitable for some oil producing countries with very ambitious industrialization programs, are not the best choice for the less rich, more populated countries of the Third World. These technologies, in fact, tend to accentuate the social and economic differences between the small local minority which benefits from them as consumers or producers, and the vast majority of the population living at subsistence levels in rural and sub-urban areas. "Appropriate technologies" may be seen, however, as indispensable for the survival of the hundreds of million people who otherwise would be completely left out of the development process.

The main function of appropriate, low-cost technologies would be that of helping initiate a process of development by stimulating the innovative forces that exist in any community, and that would be penalized by an industrialization process based on capital-intensive, large-scale technologies which, in a narrow market-economy sense, have a higher productivity than the more labor-intensive, smaller-scale technologies suitable for decentralized economies.

The problem of identifying and putting into practice the right "technologies for development" is most pressing and important, as we are approaching a time of substantial geographic reallocation of productive structures, with a massive transfer of labor-intensive activities to the less-developed countries, several of which are also endowed with abundant natural resources.

The subject of technology transfer is of fundamental importance when considering North-South relationships. It would be a serious mistake if it were treated in a "laissez-faire" way and left to the initiative of market forces alone. The way Trilateral countries approach this matter at governmental and intergovernmental levels will be an indicator of the real will of the industrialized countries to proceed towards a more just and equitable new international economic order.