“The Huntington Legacy in Political Development”
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TRANSCRIPT of Event – Edited for Clarity

GRAHAM ALLISON: Good evening. I'm Graham Allison, the Director of the Belfer Center. And it’s my great pleasure and honor to welcome home Frank Fukuyama, the 2014 Godkin Lecturer. So Frank was a student of Sam Huntington, our late great colleague. And indeed, if you asked about whom I'm sure you’ll hear more from Frank tonight, but if you ask of his many remarkable students, which one comes closest to kind of walking in his shoes, I would say it’s Frank.

From his celebrated 1992 book, the bestseller called The End of History, to his newest book, Political Order and Political Decay, which is a hefty tome (but I told him I couldn’t figure out which chapter I would leave out, because it’s so interesting and so much fun), he’s a serious thinker who asks very big questions. And, like Sam Huntington, he follows the evidence and the analysis wherever they lead, often to conclusions that people find quite uncomfortable.

The Economist, in its review of this book, Political Order and Political Decay, had a line which made me somewhat uncomfortable, but which I think any of us would wish that, at least for our mothers, were written about us, in which they say, “A basic rule of intellectual life is that celebrity destroys quality. The more famous an author becomes, the more likely he is to produce hot air.” That, of course, would never happen at Harvard. But he goes on to say, “Frank Fukuyama is a glorious exception to that rule.” And that's certainly the case.
So, in a two-volume undertaking that he’s been about for some time, starting with this *Origins of Political Order*, which was published in 2011, Frank begins with Ancient China and marches through the centuries to the French Revolution. And, in the second volume, the one that’s just now published, he marches from Napoleon to today and the current state of American democracy, which is a particular topic under the heading “Political Decay.”

He’s a hardcore believer in democracy. So he finds some of his conclusions uncomfortable, especially to him. But he is trying to explore the conditions under which market-based democracies succeed. As he puts it in a single phrase, “Why do some nations behave like Denmark, and most don’t?” And he argues that successful rights in market-based democracies combine three essential elements: the state itself, the rule of law, and accountability of government. And he goes on to try to explain why those three don’t necessarily go together in every case.

Particularly relevant for this School of Government, where our Dean, David Elwood, has a major project that involves many members of the faculty on trying to make democracy work, Frank has become a trenchant critic of the dysfunctions of Democratic institutions and practices, especially those on display in Washington today. So he talks about the decay of political institutions, which includes a devastating analysis that goes from vetocracy — that is, the excessive vetoes over positive action, to interest group capture or oligarchy, and the legislative and judicial strangleholds, all grounded in what one of the reviewers called “the complacent worship of a dysfunctional system.”

So, that should be enough to stir us up a little bit. The Godkin lectures are Harvard’s most distinguished endowed series. Former Godkin lecturers include C.P. Snowe, James Wilson, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and most recently MIT’s recently retired President Susan Hockfield. So, in that tradition, we are fortunate tonight to have Frank Fukuyama.

[applause]
FRANCIS FUKUYAMA: Well thanks very much, Graham and Dean Elwood for giving me the honor of delivering the Godkin Lecture and being here at the Kennedy School. I know a lot of people in this institution. And it’s really terrific to be with you tonight. And it’s also particularly, for me, a pleasure to be able to talk a little bit about Sam Huntington. I actually wasn’t a student of Sam’s. He was in the Carter administration for most of the time that I was a graduate student in the Gov. Department. But he did come back my last year. And he gave me a fellowship at the Center for International Affairs. And his students met every summer for the next 15-20 years at the Wianno Club in Cape Cod. And so, you know, we actually developed a relationship that extended way beyond – way beyond Harvard.

And I should just explain a little bit the origins of the project that Graham referred to – these two books on political order – because it really did come directly from Sam. So, in 2005, his 1968 book *Political Order in Changing Societies*, which I still believe was, in many ways, the best book he ever wrote – the first of his major books – had been out of print. But Yale University Press decided to bring it back in print. And Sam did the great honor of asking me to write a new forward. And so I used that book a lot in my teaching. And I thought about it at some length. I wrote the foreword.

But, in the course of writing it, I thought, “Well this book is foundational. But it also needs to be extended and updated.” Because since 1968, a lot happened. There's this famous line that many people remember, the first line in the book, which says, “The Soviet Union and the United States were both equally developed political orders.” And I think after 1989 or 1991, nobody would have said that any longer.

So this is really what began the project. And, as I’ll explain, there are many areas in which I think Sam was profoundly right and in which I regard my own two volumes as extending that tradition. And there are some areas, I think, where he was wrong or where
subsequent events developed differently. So, let me talk a little bit about this. I’ll begin just with the background of the 1968 book that he wrote.

The background was really modernization theory, because the dominant social science paradigm in American Academy, and particularly here at Harvard and MIT and among social scientists in Cambridge, was a theory that was imported from social theory in Europe. It kind of came over with a lot of refugees in the 1930s from Hitler’s Europe. And it basically, I think, can be summarized in a simple phrase that, “All good things go together.”

But the different aspects of modernization, economic growth, social mobilization, changes in culture towards greater individualism, and democracy, were all part of a seamless single modernization process. They were mutually supportive. And they went together as a package. And I think that Sam’s book was really critical in undermining this, because you can summarize his work as saying, “All things do not go together.” That, in fact, some aspects of modernization and modernity tend to undermine other aspects. And therefore, you can't have all things at the same time.

And in particular, he argued that, “If the rate of social mobilization caused by economic growth, urbanization, education and so forth outpaced the degree to which political institutions could accommodate participation, then you would have a phenomenon” he labeled “political decay.” And in 1968, the United States was right in the middle of the Vietnam War. There was a tremendous amount of coups, civil wars, uprisings in developing countries, in the colonial/ex-colonial world that had just become independent. And Huntington argued that it was actually the rising middle class in these countries, the fact that they had higher expectations that was causing that instability. And therefore, all good things did not go together. And particularly, that democracy and this kind of social mobilization had a very uneasy relationship because you really needed authority.
And this is actually the second important point or bottom line of his book. He has a phrase very early on that says, “Americans like to think about constraining power. But, before you can constrain power, you have to generate it.” And that, “Therefore, order was more foundational than democracy.” And this led him to theorize about something he called “the authoritarian transition,” which is actually what South Korea, Taiwan, a number of Asian countries did, where they modernized under the purview of an authoritarian government, and only democratized later.

His student, Fareed Zakaria, wrote a book called Illiberal Democracy, in which he kind of elaborated that particular development strategy. And Huntington was actually devastating. And there was no more modernization theory after that book came out. It was also attacked from the left as being Euro-centric, and taking as paradigmatic the development of England and other European, Western European countries. And I think it was a kind of pincer movement, with Sam on the right and people on the left, which basically put paid to this approach to development.

Now, there are many areas of continuity where I believe that he was absolutely right, and in which my current book tries to extend many of these findings. And the most important of them is this notion that, “All good things do not go together.” So, in my view, the fundamental model that he had of a middle class with rising expectations, higher levels of education being profoundly destabilizing, have actually been proven to be the case in a lot of recent events that have gone on, beginning with the Arab Spring. Because, if you look at who powered the Arab Spring in the early days, it was precisely educated, urbanized young people that used Twitter and technology to communicate, to mobilize, and whose expectations had been cut off by the kind of crony capitalist regime that existed in places like Tunisia and Egypt. And that was really the source of the social unrest that led to the downfall of those dictatorships.

But, even in Democratic countries, and Brazil and Turkey last year, you had major social protests. And I think you saw very much that same phenomenon that Sam talked about, in
terms of middle classes who are much more politically active than poor people. Poor people, as Sam argued, do not make revolutions. It’s really people whose expectations have outstripped the ability of their societies to fulfill them.

So, in that sense, I think you're still seeing this Huntington phenomenon. In my book, I talk about other aspects in which the different components of modernization are incompatible – or they're not incompatible, but their intention with each other, and in which you really have to make some choices at certain points. One has to do with, I think, a tension between state capacity and democracy, which is something that Sam alluded to but did not really develop more fully.

So, as Graham noted, I have this very simple tripartite way of understanding political order, that you have a state which, in Max Weber’s terms, is a legitimate monopoly of force. So it’s really about the ability to concentrate and use power to enforce laws and deliver services to protect the community. You have the rule of law, which, if it is really the rule of law, has to constrain the most powerful actors in the society. So if the king or the prime minister can make up the rules as they go along, then it’s not the rule of law. So law is fundamentally a constraint on power.

And then you have Democratic accountability, which we understand these days to be free and fair multi-party elections. So in that very structure, there's a tension. The state is about gathering and using power. Whereas the rule of law and democracy are both means of constraining power and making sure that power is used only in ways that the community approves. And so therefore, there is already a tension. And I would say it goes further than that, because you know, the other really important transition is within the nature of the state itself, between what Weber called a patrimonial state, and what he labeled a modern state.

A modern state is a state that treats its citizens impersonally, where it does not matter whether you have a personal relationship. You know, you're the cousin of the Prime
Minister and therefore, you get special access to the state. A modern state treats citizens on an equal basis. A patrimonial state is one in which the state is regarded as a species of private property. So, in the old days, the king literally, you know, would say, “I own this province. And I can give it away to my daughter as a wedding present.”

Today, nobody dares to actually say they own the countries that they rule over. So therefore, we have this phenomenon known as neo-patrimonialism, in which you have states that have all the outward trappings of a modern and personal state, but they're basically run as insider rackets for the self-enrichment of the people running the state. And therefore – and people go into politics, really for the purpose of self-enrichment. You cannot have a modern uncorrupt state if you do not have a clear dividing line between public and private. And that dividing line, in very many countries today, is severely eroded.

And I guess this is probably the most central conclusion of the book that I've just written, which is that we have spent a tremendous amount of time thinking about democracy and democratic transitions in all of the institutions that constrain the state, the rule of law. There's many programs to establish elections and build legal institutions. But we have spent much, much less time figuring out how you make that transition from a neo-patrimonial state to a modern state.

And I would argue that that is actually a much harder transition to make. It is pretty easy to organize elections. It is really hard to get rid of pervasive corruption in a state. And I think our most recent experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq underline that, that we actually help pretty successful, multiparty elections in both of those countries. But the core of the state, the legitimate monopoly of force that people would be willing to fight and die for, that is something that does not exist in either of those places.

And I would say many of the conflicts that are taking place in the world are actually not conflicts between authoritarian government and democratic government, so much as
between kind of a neo-patrimonial, kleptocratic regime and a regime that tries to be modern. This is really what the fight in Ukraine is all about right now. The protestors in Maidan Square would all accept the fact that Viktor Yanukovych was democratically elected in a pretty fair election back in 2010.

What they did not want was to live in this kind of kleptocracy, where he could siphon off billions of dollars into a bank account, or into this palace that he was building outside of Kiev, you know. And I think, if you, again, think about what our fight is with Vladimir Putin, it’s not over democracy. If there was an election held in Russia today, he would be elected by 70-80 percent. So that’s not the question. The question is, that he is running this insider racket in which the elite in Russia divides up the resources of the state and shares it among themselves and provides relatively little in terms of impersonal public goods. And I would say that, even for countries that are democracies and are not nearly as corrupt, that is really one of the central issues.

The reason that I think that there is a tension between good governance, in the sense of building that kind of modern and personal state and democracy, really comes from the experience of this country of the United States. I have several chapters on the origins of what we call the patronage or the spoil system. So this starts in the 1828 election, where you had John Quincy Adams, who went to Harvard University, spoke several foreign languages. His father was the second President of the United States. Typical Boston Brahmin, running against Andrew Jackson, who was really the first populist President.

Many states, by this point, had opened up the franchise to all white male voters. And political parties got started initially because they had to figure out how to get people to the polls. And the easiest way to get people to the polls in a country with low levels of income and education is not by offering them impersonal public policies, it’s by bribing them individually, by giving them a job in the post office or on the police force.
And Jackson won the election. He said, “I won fair and square. So I get to pick who runs the U.S. government. And, in any event, it doesn’t take a genius to run the American government. So I'm going to fill the government with my supporters.” And this begins a 100-year period in American history where virtually every public official, from top to bottom, from the federal government down to Tammany Hall in New York, or the machines in Chicago and Boston, every single official is appointed by a politician as a payoff for political support in some election.

And this is why I think that, first of all, we misunderstand what's going on in a lot of developing countries today. So we look at Mexico or Brazil or India, in which this kind of patronage is rampant. I mean basically, the politics of these countries revolves around this individualized distribution of state resources. And we say to ourselves, “Oh, look at these people. They just don’t understand what good government is. You know, they are very corrupt. And they're just not with the program.”

And we do not understand that we went through exactly this phase at a certain point in our own national history. And, in fact, I would argue that this kind of patronage is actually not – it should not be regarded as a species of corruption. It ought to be more properly regarded as an early form of democracy, that this is simply the easiest way to get people to the polls to mobilize them in relatively poor countries. And that’s why it’s going on in all of the Mexicos and Brazils and places like that.

And so that indicates the tension. And actually, one unfortunate fact is that, if you bring democracy to a country before you’ve consolidated a modern state, you're going to get in trouble. It is very, very hard to build a modern state once you’ve – you know, once you’ve expanded the franchise and get everybody into the habit of voting.

The case that I talk at some length about in the book is Greece, because Greece was one of the first European countries to extend the franchise to all males, which they did in the mid-1860s. The Greek state was always weak. It was always illegitimate, because it –
you know, it was originally an Ottoman state. So it wasn’t even a Greek state. But then, it was constantly being manipulated by foreigners, a practice that goes on to the present moment with Angela Merkel and the IMF, you know, hovering in the background.

And therefore, the legitimacy of the Greek state was always very weak. And Greek politicians, the moment democracy came, basically competed to stuff the public sector with their own political supporters. And that is a problem that continued after the Colonel stepped down in 1974, and so on, up to the present, and explains a lot about the Greek problem.

The way that the United States got out of this is also a story that I think is instructive, because essentially, democracy was the source of the problem in the United States, but it was also the solution that, beginning in the progressive era, you had a popular civil society mobilization against corrupt government. So all these grandmothers were really, really upset that their fourth class postmaster was a political hack. You had good leadership from people like Gifford Pinchot or Theodore Roosevelt, one of the first Commissioners of the Civil Service Commission.

And you had a triggering event, which was the assassination of Garfield by a would-be office seeker in 1882, which then led to the passage of the Pendleton Act, because Congress was just too embarrassed to continue to support the patronage system at that point. And I think that that’s basically the story that will have to play out in places like India or Brazil if they are going to get past this particular stage in political development.

Now, I want to conclude by talking about a couple of areas where I actually – I either disagree with Sam or where I think that he left some important things out. One has to do with that famous authoritarian transition, because he really did argue that it would be better, as a general rule, for countries to live under authoritarian rulers that were developmentally minded. You’d have a generation of economic growth. And then you could democratize later.
I think that’s worked in certain countries, and it has absolutely not worked in other countries. And the basic problem, you know, the people that like this scenario always point to Singapore. And I think the basic problem with this strategy is it requires a continuing supply of Lee Kuan Yews. And the big problem with authoritarian government is that there is no way to guarantee that supply. And this is a real problem, you know, in a country like China, which I grant has been pretty well governed since 1978. But where are they going to keep getting good emperors that will keep leading a positive reform process as opposed to outright tyrants? And without checks and balances, they can’t guarantee that.

And furthermore, there’s nobody in an Olympian position to say, “Okay, democracy you wait 20 years. You know, all you hundreds of thousands of protestors in the main square of the city, you go home. You know, grow up. Wait 20 years. And come back. And then we’ll democratize.” The world just doesn’t – it doesn’t work that way. And so, this is not really a viable strategy.

The final issue has to do with political decay. Sam’s view of political decay was that that was something that was going on in modernizing societies. But he didn’t really contemplate the fact that it could happen in a modernized country, in a consolidated democracy, least of all in a place like the United States. My view is that all systems are subject to political decay. Political decay, in my view, has a couple of different sources. One is just simple intellectual and institutional rigidity, where we worship a certain set of institutions created for certain purposes. But then, conditions change, and we’re not willing to change the institutions.

But the other big problem is basically insider capture that, over time, you develop well organized interest groups. Because of their privilege, they have better access to the state. And they try to multiply their privileges by seeking political power. And I think both of these phenomena are evident in the United States today. And I think we have this
particular problem where the basic institutions that the founding fathers created have overlapped with the current degree of political polarization to create a situation that’s actually quite, quite deadly.

So the United States Constitution is built around checks and balances because the founding fathers worried about tyranny. They wanted to preserve individual liberty. They created a political system of enormous complexity, where power is checked in very, very many ways.

And it works. It worked for much of the 20th century because the two political parties actually overlapped quite considerably. But now, that’s no longer true. The most liberal Republican is now considerably more conservative than the most conservative Democrat. And under those conditions, I argue that the checks and balances system becomes what I call a vetocracy, in which well organized interest groups can use their access to the system, and use the checks and balances that the system gives them, to first protect their narrow interests, and then secondly, to really block larger initiatives that are in the broader public interest. And so we can talk about whether that’s true or not, and give some examples of that in the Q & A.

But in any event, I think that Sam’s legacy is a really important one. He always asked really big questions. He didn’t, in my view, always give the right answer. But I think that in, you know, many, many subfields of political science, he really wrote the foundational book. And that’s really what was kind of remarkable about him as an intellect. And I was very proud to have been associated with him. There’s a number of people in the audience that were as well. And so I’d like to thank you for your attention. And I look forward to any questions that you have. Thank you very much.

[applause]
GRAHAM ALLISON: So, great. The way the rules work, there are microphones, two here on the floor and two at the loge and maybe beyond. In any case, as David often reminds us, introduce yourself. Tell us who you are. Make your point, but succinctly. And questions end with a question mark. So the microphones are open. But I'm going to ask the first question if I can.

So Frank, great argument and a great book, as I said. I think that to locate it in the context of the other debates that are going on here about modernization, development, economic development, political development, let me get you to say, how are you similar, or, in particular, how are you different from, for example, the Acemoglu-Robinson book on *Why Nations Fail*, or the similar volume by North, Wallis, and Weingast, who were also trying to operate at that same level?

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA Sure. So it’s actually a great time for Graham theorizing, because there's actually been a lot of it looking at, you know, large periods of history, and then why institutions emerged. And I think the economists now have finally woken up to the fact that institutions matter. Institutions are important. And so they’ve been trying to incorporate institutions – really, this is Doug North’s life work – into their own models. And I think both of those books, *Violence in Social Orders* and *Why Nations Fail* provide a very good taxonomy and vocabulary for talking about what kinds of institutions are important for economic growth.

However, I feel that they're missing something important that Sam Huntington actually had in his 1968 book. There's actually – you know, I think those books are very useful in talking about limited access orders and open access orders or extractive versus inclusive systems. They're good at describing essentially the same transition that I've been talking about, from a patrimonial to a modern state. But they don’t actually have a dynamic mechanism that explains how you get from one stage to another.
And Sam had this. The mechanism was that of social mobilization. That’s not original to Sam. I mean, in a way, that's Karl Marx, right, that you have economic change that creates capitalism, which then creates the bourgeoisie, which then creates the proletariat. And so all of these new social groups arise as a result of economic change. And for Sam, that was absolutely central in explaining either why political systems evolve, or why they decayed. And I think that that’s somehow gone missing in some of the more rational choice accounts of political development.

**QUESTION:** Thank you very much for your speech. My name is John Solo. I'm a senior at the college. I briefly want to synthesize your idea of, you know, End of History and the Clash of Civilizations, and ask you a question with regards to neo-patrimonial states. If it’s possible to think of this idea of democratic accountability as like the final forum of governance that we will ultimately get to, which doesn’t mean there won't be conflict in getting there, but that’s the ultimate forum, how can we think about these neo-patrimonial states who have their own sort of claims to ontological truth? And this is not just Putin and his authoritarianism, or ISIS with their interesting world view. But how is that going to go together? And how definitively can we really say that you know, that that democratic accountability is really the end of history?

**FRANCIS FUKUYAMA** Yeah. No, it’s a reasonable point. So you know, Russia or Nigeria or a lot of other neo-patrimonial countries don’t have an alternative system that — well, I guess Putin is trying to tout an alternative system. But you know, a lot of them are not systematic alternatives that set themselves up as something that you can do if you don’t want to be a liberal democracy. They're just — you know, they're pretty stable systems in which rents are shared and nobody can do anything about it.

And I guess I would say that that’s one area where my thinking has been revised, because these places actually can be stable. I think the reason that Nigeria has this level of rent distribution is, that’s the easiest way to maintain control violence in that country, that if
anyone causes trouble, you just buy them off by paying them some oil rents. And that’s actually worked since the end of the Nigerian civil war in the 1960s.

And I guess this is why I now realize that there is just a lot more contingency in history in getting to Denmark, that if there's not just a natural driver, I think to the extent there is a driver, it does have to do with economic growth producing a middle class, producing a social basis for democracy, as Barrington Moore once argued. But there are many other things that have to happen along the way. And nobody can guarantee that that will happen in all societies.

**QUESTION:** I'm a doctoral student at the School of Public Health. So 25 years after the public debate, I'm wondering, do you feel we’re heading towards Huntington’s vision about the clash of civilization or your own vision? Do you think we’ve learned anything over the last 25 years that have told us anything about who was right? And do you think there's anything policymakers can do today to affect whether we end up in a clash of civilizations or in the end of history?

**FRANCIS FUKUYAMA:** Well, I wrote a critical review of *The Clash of Civilizations* when it first came out. And Sam was mad at me for about a year because of that. But I still believe a lot of the things I said in that review, that he is completely right that, you know, there are deep cultural differences between different parts of the world that will mean that you're not going to have any kind of easy convergence. But I think that he underestimated, first of all, whether civilizations are the proper unit of account. I think the only part of the world that regards itself as a civilization rather than a nation is the world of Islam. But that, in East Asia, you know, they don’t think in civilization terms. It’s China, Korea, Japan, you know, very traditional national identities.

But the other thing is that he didn’t take sufficient account of the integrative forces in global development, the fact that communications, transportation, migration is so much easier. And ideas travel much more easily. And therefore, the cultural borrowings and the
kinds of alternative models that can come from outside your society are much, much greater. And so, I do think that there is still this integrative force that actually needs to converge.

So, if you back up, if you look at the whole 40,000 year history that I cover, what's very interesting is there are several big transitions that occur across all societies regardless of culture. So the first one is a transition from band-level societies to tribal societies. Tribal societies didn’t exist prior to about 10,000 years ago. And then, all of a sudden, they appear in many different parts of the world.

And then you have the development of state level societies, maybe 2-3,000 years later. And then, at a later point, you know, transitioned to more modern states, and so forth. And this is a process. So specific evolution is where people diverge or species diverge. General evolution is where you develop common responses to the same sets of environmental conditions. And that you’ll also see in human history.

So the state is an answer to the limitations of kinship as a form of social organization. The Chinese, the Indians, the Arabs, the Europeans all invent different versions of this thing, because they're trying to solve, you know, a similar problem. So for me, the big question is, is democracy or our particular institutional – the forums that I have described, is that actually solving a general human problem in human societies that then will lead to a point of convergence? Or are these specific, you know, environmental conditions so overpowering that everybody is going to develop differently? And I would still say that the jury is out on that.

**QUESTION**: Hello. My name is Mel Malendez. And I'm also a senior at the college. One of your claims is that it’s not always a good idea to democratize when states are still patrimonial. Yet another one of your claims is that, in the United States for example, democratization is one of the things that helped the transition from patrimonial states to modern states.
Two questions. Is there a tension between these two claims? And number two, at any rate, do you agree with Huntington that the main impetus for modernization is social movements, or do you have other ideas about where that comes from?

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA: I don’t think that those two claims are inconsistent. What matters, I think, actually is social mobilization in the overall level of development, because I said that, you know, patronage and clientelism are actually quite rational responses to political requirements in low income societies, which is why you see it so commonly in the developing world, and why it was common in the United States in the 19th century.

As you get richer, the social conditions change. And so middle class people with more education, more assets and the like, can't be bribed. I mean it was interesting. In Taiwan, the last election in which clientelism was a major problem was like in 1991. And, at that point, it just became too expensive to bribe voters, because they were too rich. And so the parties then had to compete on the basis of public policies, the way they're supposed to.

And that’s why what's appropriate for one I think stage of development is not appropriate for another stage. I don’t have a different theory from Huntington in terms of social mobilization. Like him, I think that this is an essential dimension of development that does actually give dynamism to the system. I think if you want to construct an argument why China may one day become a democracy, it really has to do with the fact that you got a middle class with three-four hundred million members, and that that’s just going to grow larger over time. And the way that middle classes, in many, many societies, regardless of culture, react to political powers, they want more of it. Or they want some form of participation. And so, you know, I think that would be the scenario for a gradual change in the Chinese political system. But it does depend on the level of development.
QUESTION: Hi. My name is Rafael Rivera. I am from the first year of the MPIV Program. So one of your main theories of political development is explain the need of the rise of middle-income classes for the process of democratization. However, there are many international examples where middle-income classes support authoritarian governments or dictators, like in Germany or Italy in the Second World War.

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA Or Latin America.

QUESTION: Or Latin America, exactly. So it seems like middle-income classes don’t necessarily lead to a more democratic society. So how can you explain that apparent contradiction?

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA Well, you could explain it because life is complicated. So [laughter] I think that, you know, middle classes follow their own self-interest. And they can see that differently in different circumstances. In particular, when the middle class remains still a minority of the whole population, and you have a lot of poor people that, a lot of times, middle class voters actually favor authoritarian government because they don’t want to have one man/one vote, where there's going to be a populace politician that will then demand a lot of redistributions, exactly what’s gone on in Thailand, right.

And in the 1990s, Thailand, the Thai middle classes were in favor of opening up the military system. And, in the last ten years, they have completely turned against democracy, because they don’t like Thaksin. And they don’t like the fact that he was supporting all these redistributionists’ policies. I think that’s actually what's holding the Chinese back, because I think a lot of the Chinese middle classes have benefited from economic growth. They know that there's a lot of poor people in China. And if there's one man/one vote in China any time soon, there's going to be huge demands for – I mean not just instability, but also big demands for redistribution. And that may kill the goose that’s laying the golden egg.
So that’s why I think that actually, democracy really only becomes safe when you get a middle class society, meaning that a majority of people are middle class, where, you know, you don’t have this big overhang of extremely poor people that are going to make demands that the system can't handle. And you know, so that’s why I think life is complicated. It says there's basically – you know, Barrington Moore was right about that relationship. But it also depends on other conditions being true as well.

**QUESTION:** Rivan Royono, MPAID, first year. Mr. Fukuyama, today’s established democracies, their democratic evolution was absent from international pressure to become a democracy, which is the exact opposite of today’s transitional democracy. Do you think that international pressure is doing harm or good?

**FRANCIS FUKUYAMA:** I think that it is probably doing good. I think that it is no longer the case-- So, you know, Edward Luttwak wrote this article a couple of decades ago called “Give War a Chance,” where he said, “Well, you know, in order to get to modern states in Europe, you had to fight wars for several hundred years. And that's the problem with Africa, that they need to fight a lot of wars, you know. And that’s what's going to give them strong modern institutions.”

And, aside from the fact that that’s not a very attractive option for the people that live there, I think that it’s really not necessary, because you don’t have to reinvent the wheel, in terms of, you know, the functioning of many institutions. And there's an international community that actually provides a fair amount of help. Now, what I think the problem is, is that the political basis for this kind of modernization has to come from within the society. It’s very context-specific. And, when outsiders try to accelerate the process, not by simply providing alternative models, but you know, actually forcing the process along, they almost always fail, because they don’t understand those societies. They don’t get enough buy-in from the locals. And that’s why I think our nation-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan didn’t work all that well.
But, if you look at the modernization of, say, of East Asia, or what the Chinese or the
Japanese or Koreans did, you know, they took you. You know, the Japanese basically –
in fact, both China and Japan imported the German civil code almost verbatim. They
didn’t need to invent it a second time, because you know, it was there already. So I do
think on balance, you know, the outside – maybe not the pressure but the outside
text and learning do help the process of political institutionalization.

**QUESTION:** Hello. My name is Ellie Rostum. I graduated last year. I have two short
questions. The first is, within the next generation, where do you see the Chinese political
system going? And what are the factors that are pushing it one way or the other? My
other question is, with regards to the role and value of religion in culture, in political
governance, where do you see that going, particularly in the Middle East? And would you
just eliminate it? Or do you see value in using it?

**FRANCIS FUKUYAMA:** Well, with regard to the first –

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Two small questions.

**FRANCIS FUKUYAMA** Yeah. With regard to the first question, it seems to me that the
current Chinese political system and economic system is not sustainable in many
respects. That you know, you do have this internal pressure coming from a growing
middle class with much greater expectations for the level of services and so forth. The
economic model needs to shift very dramatically to domestic consumption. You know,
they're moving along pretty well with that. But there's still a lot of liabilities, in terms of
environment, in terms of corruption, in terms of the perception of many people in the
fundamental illegitimacy of a lot of the things that the government does. I mean, there are
several thousand violent social protests in China every single year that, you know, we
don't hear that much about. But, that indicates a degree of social unrest that is quite
substantial.
So the two largest liabilities are, first, the fact that there is no governing moral system to legitimate the whole thing. That it’s a mishmash of you know, Marxism, Leninism, and traditional Confucianism. And then, just outright kind of self-interest. And they have not resolved on what basis they're going to be regarded as legitimate, other than performance.

And then, with regard to the performance, they have not solved this fundamental issue that all authoritarian regimes need to solve, which is the bad emperor problem. You know, authoritarian systems are great when you’ve got a good emperor like Lee Kuan Yew or Deng Xiaoping. If you get a bad emperor you're really in trouble, because there's no checks and balances.

And right now, what’s going on in China, Xi Jinping has undertaken this massive purge. He is said to be the most powerful leader in China since Deng, or maybe even since Mao Tse Tung. We have no idea whether he’s going to be a good emperor or bad emperor, you know. And people will present both scenarios. They're equally plausible right now. We just don’t know. And, if he turns out to be a bad emperor, it’s you know, it’s bad.

In terms of the Middle East and religion, I mean I think – you know, this is an area where I agree, actually with Sam much more than people think. That culture is – you know, it is, in fact, important. One little element in my book that I didn’t really highlight, because it’s kind of an embarrassing fact, but if you look at the countries that really invented good, clean, modern government, very many of them were actually run by Calvinists. So the great electorate in Prussia was a Calvinist in a Lutheran society. He brought in all these Huguenots and Dutch bureaucrats, because he didn’t trust the local elites. In England and in the Dutch Republic itself, you know, the Puritans that modernized the English state were all Calvinists. And then, you know, Calvinism was important in the progressive era in the United States and in the reform of the British system in the 19th – so that’s just a little footnote. That I'm not saying everybody needs Calvinists. There may be functional equivalents of Calvinism in other traditions.
You know, I guess with regard to Islam, it’s always seemed to me that any complex cultural system can be interpreted in many, many different ways. So, if you asked, in the 1930s, is Catholicism compatible with democracy, many people would quite reasonably have said no, because, you know, they're supporting Franco. And they're on the wrong side of all these big conflicts.

But something happened, you know, to reinterpret the doctrine, especially after Vatican II. In fact, that was one of Sam’s big points in the third wave, is that the third wave of democratization happened because of Christianity, basically because Catholicism shifted positions.

And so I guess my feeling is that the reason that people sign up for ISIS and other radical movements has to be explained more sociologically or psychologically, rather than in terms of, you know, the necessary outcome of a particular religious doctrine. That if you're unemployed, not that well educated, you don’t fit into your society, you don’t have a girlfriend, then yeah, you go fight in Syria, because you get community unity, you know, comradeship, risk, which a lot of people really like, that your society isn't providing for you. And so that’s kind of got to play itself out. But it’s not necessarily tied, you know, specifically to Islam.

So I hope that’s right. And we’ll have to see.

**QUESTION:** Thank you for being here today, Professor Fukuyama. I am a joint grad student of the Business and the Kennedy School. My question is to follow up on the class of civilizations comment, the class of civilizations comment that you just made. Where do you foresee the main source of conflict in the coming years, between nations, within nations? What are your thoughts on that side?

**FRANCIS FUKUYAMA:** You know, I don’t know. So let me answer it in a different way. Let me tell you the things that worry me, okay. So I am right now, in 2014, very
worried about nationalism. I think in the long run, you know, we've shown that we can get beyond it. But I think that, in East Asia, for example, the level of nationalism is really frightening, you know, in China, Japan, Korea and so forth. I think that Putin has set off a very, very dangerous dynamic by upsetting the territorial agreement that ended the Soviet Union, where basically, Russians outside of Russia would be content to live in those countries. And now he’s basically told them you know, “We’re going to come and help you.”

And so I think that’s going to be tremendously destabilizing at both ends of East Asia. I worry about not just income inequality, but the underlying dynamic behind that, that has been eroding middle class employment in developed countries. And that’s one where I really don’t see an obvious solution, because it does seem to me that a lot of that is really due to the progress of technology, which is, you know, you can slow it down, and you can compensate the losers, to some extent, that you fundamentally can't do much about that.

And, in terms of the stability of established democracies, I think that’s going to be very dangerous. And I think you are already seeing the political manifestations of the reaction to that, in terms of the rise of populace parties, both in the United States and in Europe. And in the long run, I think that seems to me that could easily get worse rather than better.

And, you know, I think we’re facing probably a 30-year Sunni-Shiite war, civil war in the Middle East. My personal opinion is, we the United States ought to stay out of this, because we’re not wise enough to figure out how to end it. And we need to contain it and manage it rather than try to solve it. But, you know, that region is going to go through a lot of turmoil. So that’s how I would answer the question. That’s what I worry about right now.
QUESTION: Hi. Good evening. Thank you so much for being here today. I'm a sophomore at the college. I was just wondering, in your view, how does the concept of a liberal democracy that relies on institutions that is power-based, deal with or come to terms with the idea of informal institutions and the problems that it brings, especially since democracy has just boiled down to this concept of elites swapping in and out of power amongst themselves?

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA: Well, you know, all workable social systems depend on some combination of formal and informal institutions. And many informal institutions are actually very helpful to the working of the system. So classic example of that is American civil society. You know, this is a tradition that goes back to Tocqueville, where he said, “The American art of association is critical to the success of American democracy, because it allows people – gives them an avenue towards participation.” This is something that Bob Putnam argued very strongly. I mean he said that it was in decline. But he accepted the importance of civil society.

I think religion, if you regard religion as a kind of informal social institution, the impact of that is different in different societies. And, by and large, I think the nature of sectarian Protestantism in the United States actually was helpful. You know, the Civil Rights movement in the United States came out of deeply Christian tradition. And so yes, there are many informal bad institutions. The mafia is one of them, and elite cliques, and you know, all this stuff happened as well. But I think any complete social system simply cannot be governed by formal rules. And it meets this matrix of social organizations that support it.

QUESTION: Hi, I'm Argin Kapour. I'm a junior in the college. So you talk a lot about how advanced societies experience political decay. So I wondered, how can those societies escape from that decay? And can you think of any examples of societies that have?
FRANCIS FUKUYAMA: Yeah. Well, so the story I told about the progressive era was one, you know, that in a certain sense, the American government was captured by various elites in the 19th century. And the way we got out of it was by political mobilization and political action. So, in this country right now, if you're worried about interest groups, and you're worried about money in politics and so forth, what's the solution to it? You know, it's exactly the same. There has to be a grassroots civil society-based movement that wants change. You have to have leaders.

You have to have, I think, policy intellectuals that formulate the problem properly, so that people mobilize around the right solutions. And then, it probably takes a triggering event, some exogenous shock to the system that – like the Garfield assassin, I mean you don’t want another assassination. But something, a crisis or something that brings everything together. I think that’s the way that political reform has always happened. And I think that’s the way we’ll get out of the current problem that we have.

QUESTION: My question follows upon that one. I'm Martha Bayless. I teach at Boston College. It has to do with your remarks you just made, but remarks you make earlier, about political decay in the United States. And to me, there's three ways to understand that. One is the particularities of our institutions, our history, and our current environment. The second is that somehow, democratic systems are, because of current conditions in the world, more in decay. And there you would have to talk about Europe and other democratic societies. And then the third is that somehow, democracy has had its day, that it was tried and it has been shown to be dysfunctional, which is, of course, a different end of history than the one that you’ve written about in the past.

Do you talk about all three of those in the end of Volume 2?

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA Yes.

QUESTION: Which is most salient to you right now?
FRANCIS FUKUYAMA: Yeah. So I really do not believe number three. I mean, I don’t think that there's any kind of general decay. And I actually, number two, I don’t really believe either. I think there's a lot of democracies in the world that are working pretty well. You know, all the Commonwealth countries, Germany, Netherlands, Scandinavia, their systems, they’ve all got problems if you look at them up close. But they're functioning pretty well.

So I think the decay problems are, you know, I would say Italy, Japan, United States have all, in certain way, had similar – I put also India in this category, where because of the checks and balances, it’s been very hard to come up with sufficiently decisive government to solve important questions. And again, the whole issue is, is democracy self-correcting? The theory says it should be, because people will mobilize to solve the problem and then do it. But I just don’t think there's any necessary reason to think that this will always and necessarily happen. And I don’t see the foundations for it right now in the United States.

QUESTION: I’m Kay. And I'm a freshman at the college. I'm from China. So I am asking a question about China. So you mentioned that China has lots of social protests. And you believe that China’s development is not sustainable. But it seems that, although we have lots of small protests, there is never a large-scale national protest. And China’s regime pretty stable. So do you think that recent protests in Hong Kong will have actual influence in pushing China’s transformation? Or will it just be an insignificant accident? Will the student protestors have actual bargaining chips?

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA: Yeah, I don’t think that the protests are going to spread to China. First of all, I don’t think that the conditions are right for any kind of generalized protest in China, because the country is doing too well. So I think that, you know, in my view, the future state of China that you need to look to is one in which economic growth has slowed down, or even gone into reverse very substantially. It’s going to happen,
sooner or later. I mean no country maintains the kind of rate of growth that China has experienced in the last three decades, you know, when they're trying to become a high-income country.

So that’s the kind of background condition where I think the social mix will get a little bit more combustible. But, you know, you have to say that the Chinese government is also very good at dealing with protests, because they don’t simply repress it. You know, they actually respond to citizen demands in a way that many authoritarian countries do not do. And so that mix of repression and accommodation is really, I think, part of the secret of what's kept them going.

But I just think that there will become – China will get to a point where that formula, you know, stops working. And that's the point where I think politically, you're going to have the possibility for more serious kinds of instability.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Well, on that note, it’s my unhappy responsibility to say that the evening is over. Let me remind you of this book, if you want very good follow-up in terms of the discussion. I thought very good questions and terrific answers. Let’s say thanks very much to Frank.

[applause]

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