

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: THE COMMON MISSION FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Abstract: This paper holds that an anti-corruption campaign in the process of modernization in developing countries must be sustained and systematic, and conformed, and geared to the whole modernization drive and be reconciled with economic development, social stability, improvement of efficiency and perfection of the legal system, with safeguarding and promoting the overall development of modernization as its purpose. Based on analysis of the characteristics of corruption among government officials, the present paper puts forward five measures to fight it.

Anti-corruption program in a political campaign is of so great importance that proper measures should be taken. The success of this campaign lies largely in the balance between the evil forces behind corruption and the combined force of all the good people in and outside the government, who are behind the anti-corruption campaign. With the spread of corruption, the campaign should not be confined to the government itself; the participation and support of non-governmental democratic institutions and organizations should be sought.

Key words: anti-corruption, public power, supervision, democracy.

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INTRODUCTION

The progress of modernization in developing countries is often seriously impeded by a common phenomenon—corruption among government officials. As observed facts prove, if the government cannot eliminate corruption among its officials in the process of modernization, the economic prosperity and political democracy brought about by modernization is short-lived. Corruption can lead to political turmoil and even stop modernization itself, so the developing countries must take effective measures to stop the spread of corruption, ensure the honesty and moral integrity of government officials, maintain that people will willingly submit to their government authority and thus create a favorable social atmosphere for modernization.

ANTI-CORRUPTION: A PROGRAM OF SYSTEMS ENGINEERING

Corruption coexists with public power. The growth of corruption and bribery in developing countries is closely connected with the conflicts in politics, economy, culture, and values that

are caused by social changes at large. Undoubtedly an anti-corruption campaign is not an isolated political campaign. But is a complicated and arduous task involving efforts in almost every aspect of social life. It aims to solve the various problems brought about by modernization. The ultimate aim of this struggle is to eradicate the social roots of corruption. Moreover, an anti-corruption program must be regarded as an internal part of the whole process of modernization. We must handle well such interrelationships as those between economic development and social stability, administrative efficiency and legal construction, etc., and maintain and promote the overall development of modernization by punishing corrupt official.

1. Anti-corruption campaigns must be conducive to the development of economy.

The basic task of modernization in developing countries is to accelerate economic development. All efforts must be made to serve this purpose. Anti-corruption programs cannot stand outside economic construction. On the contrary, it should clear the way for economic development and create better economic environment. On the

whole, corruption has already seriously affected and reduced the functioning of the market system. So, anti-corruption measures are in principle conducive to economic development. However, the negative impact of corruption on economic development takes on different forms in different periods under different economic conditions. Anti-corruption measures must focus on the most important and urgent problems so as to push forward economic development; but must not interfere with the normal economic order and work.

2. Anti-corruption campaigns should contribute to the making of a stable society.

In the process of modernization in developing countries, changing patterns of economic interests and re-adjustment of social forces will lead to the increase of political instability. Corruption among government officials destroys the basis of the government's legitimacy. It destroys the unity of the nation and brings about inequality in society, and as a result, jeopardizes the country's political stability. Therefore, the campaign to combat corruption should always be planned with a view to maintaining political stability. The political "malignant tumor" which has caused the greatest popular indignation should be removed promptly. In doing so, the civil service must be purified, and social equality and justice maintained. With the establishment of the government's good social image and political authority, the basis of its legitimacy will be strengthened.

An anti-corruption campaign is a test of strength between various political forces. This political struggle not only occurs within the political institutions, but also gives rise to the possibility of intervention by social forces and the military. In some developing countries, the military often gets involved in politics in the name of fighting against corruption. But, as history often shows, intervention of the military often led to great social and political upheavals, further complicating the existing problems. Thus, unless as a last resort, it is important to prevent the military from intervening directly in the anti-corruption efforts. The democratic forces in the society is important in combating corruption, but must be properly organized and guided. This will prevent political movements from disturbing the social order and destroying the existing political system.

3. Anti-corruption measures should improve administrative efficiency.

Honesty and high efficiency are two basic principles of modern government. They complement each other and are reciprocal. Honesty is the 'basis of efficiency whereas efficiency is the necessary development of honesty. So clean government should take efficiency into account. The effective anti-corruption measures should not affect the proper operating mechanism and administrative efficiency of the government. Hence the anti-corruption campaign should always be planned and considered comprehensively with a view to increasing efficiency. These two problems should be viewed as an organic whole and deserve systematic study. That is to say, only the measures proposed on the double value of honesty and efficiency may prove to be effective. While in practice, anti-corruption measures often neglect the interdependence of honesty and efficiency, which results, in over elaborate administrative procedures and unnecessary formalities. While these measures do reduce abuse of public power, they seriously hamper administrative efficiency and bring about the bureaucratic practice of wrangling and shirking responsibility. As a result, these measures are eventually abolished.

4. Anti-corruption measures should be beneficial to the construction of the legal system.

The purpose of fighting against corruption is not only to punish and clear out the corrupt government officials who abuse their power, more importantly it is to maintain law and government regulations to guarantee the implementation of policies. This will enable government officials to exercise their public power in accordance with the law. Thus abuse of public power can be prevented.

To sum up, the fight against corruption should be aimed to strengthen the legal system, and increase the deterrent force of law. This will help to promote a political atmosphere under which everybody should act according to law and anyone that breaks the law should be punished. In the process of the anti-corruption campaign, any shortcomings in legal regulations that may lead to crime should be promptly discovered and stopped. The achievements made in the campaign will be consolidated through the perfection

of the legal system.

BASIC MEASURES OF ANTI-CORRUPTION

Being regarded as a stubborn disease in the political body, corruption of government officials is a phenomenon resulting from abuse of power. Because the anti-corruption campaign is always taken as an everlasting mission in political life, all kinds of measures have been taken to punish the corrupt government officials. Thus corruption is put under check. During the long course of fighting corruption, lots of experiences have been accumulated. A large number of evidences have proved the effectiveness of the following measures, which should be taken as the common solution to the problem of corruption (Chen, 1995).

1. Increasing the openness of the political procedures and supervision function to the public.

To increase the transparency of the political procedures, and to make the public comprehend and supervise political activities are of great importance for controlling the spread of corruption. Sunlight is the best medicine to get rid of pernicious habits. The same is true in the political system. In developing countries, political activities are often conducted secretly without public supervision. So places without sunlight have provided the opportunity and evil environment for proliferation of corruption.

The supervising function in the political system should be strengthened. Public power has the authority to distribute production. To government officials, though power is not equal to property, it offers an opportunity for them to grab property illegally. Power has the potential function of corrupting people. If a person in power is not equipped with the trait of unselfishness, he is likely to abuse power and become corrupt. Montesquieu asserts: It is an everlasting experience that all people in power tend to abuse the power (Montesquieu, 1982). But if public power does have this character, yet with the development of the society, it is the demand of the society to increase public power to coordinate and handle the extensive public affairs. No society can avoid this contradiction. Many solutions to this problem have been found, among which, the most basic is use of power to check power.

Actually the setting up and coordination of the two kinds of power have become the main content of political democracy and modernization. In developing countries where people cannot fully enjoy political democracy and modernization, administrative power is usually over-growing and the supervision mechanism kept at a low level. In these circumstances, abuse of public power occurs more easily, and is more difficult to restrain.

2. Introducing competition into the selection and promotion system, so as to come to a healthy process of metabolism in the political system.

Metabolism is a general rule of the world. Any system may keep energetic and expand only when it keeps the normal metabolism and eliminates the negative and decayed in time and takes an active attitude to absorb healthy new blood. It is the same with the political system. If the metabolism mechanism declines, deterioration occurs; if mediocre and corrupt officials are not weeded out and talented people are not duly introduced, the political system will fail to keep energetic and corruption becomes inevitable. To maintain proper political metabolism, it is vital to introduce the mechanism of selecting the capable through competition. This mechanism is not only a selection system but also an elimination system. Based on justice and equity, this system functions to select the good, to eliminate the bad, to maintain the metabolism of the political system, guarantee the moral purity and professional quality of government employees.

The widespread corruption in developing countries is closely linked with the personnel hiring system that lacks competition. In these countries, one's connection with people in high position and "petticoat" influence plays a considerable part in one's appointment. The selection and promotion of government officials are not based on their talent, capability and achievement in their political career, but on their friendly connections to people in high position. Therefore it provides an opportunity for some inferior people to take power. Once these persons grasped power, it is likely that they will make use of the power to pursue private ends. It can be concluded that to prevent abuse of power, besides setting up the restraining supervision system, the setting up of the personnel system of

selecting the capable through competition should be paid great attention to. In this way public power can then maintain authority with both capability and political integrity rather than fall into the hands of villainous people.

3. Limiting the administrative power and distributing the rare resources through the way of open competition.

Corruption is always connected with the power of the public officials, and results from abuse of power. So, where there is no public official power, corruption does not exist. But a society without government and officials without power over the public is unthinkable. The important point lies in the fixing of the scope of public officials' power. In some developing countries, the administrative system is set up not according to the objective demand but for private purposes and personal gain. This condition paves the way for corruption. Hence, to limit the scope of administrative power, elimination of administrative monopoly will contribute to the elimination of corruption. However, the market is not everything, for not all resources can be properly distributed through the market. Nowadays, when economic activities are increasingly engaged in by the public, it is necessary to impose active administrative monitoring on the distribution of some rare resources. Of course, the main purpose is to ensure fair and proper distribution of the rare resources. The realization of this goal depends not only on the quality of the administrative controls, but also on the system itself. To guarantee proper distribution of the resources in short supply, it is of key importance to introduce a proper competition mechanism, that is to say, to make the distribution to production units and individuals on the basis of free and fair competition.

4. Establishing proper interest and frame of mind to strengthen the political system's internal impetus to combat corruption.

Corruption is an immoral way to obtain profits by abuse of public power. To reap profits is the original motive of corruption. The more the profits are, the stronger the internal motive of corruption is. The widespread corruption in developing countries reflects the hidden motive of reaping profits.

It is the obligation and responsibility of gov-

ernment officials to fight against corruption, the implementation of which, to a large extent, depends on the subjective initiative of the government officials. Psychologically speaking, this subjective initiative consists of two aspects, one is moral responsibility, the other is the proper pursuit of profit. However, in many developing countries, usually only the moral responsibility of the government officials against corruption is strengthened. They are only keen on the political mobilization against corruption. Actually, as Marx pointed out, "All that man struggles to obtain is connected with his profit" (On the complete works of Marx and Engels, vol. I p. 82), the continuous carrying out of any work should be based on the reasonable demand for profits. In most circumstances, it is difficult to carry out the task further only by means of political mobilization and moral responsibility. The only proper profit mechanism is the internal long-lasting motivating force.

5. Intensifying moral education to strengthen self-discipline among government officials to comply with the laws and regulations.

The disciplinary force on government officials' behavior comes from two sources: the external restraining force based on the system of the laws and regulations and the internal restraining force of conscience based on moral belief. The law will punish anyone who violates the law. But the forcefulness of the law and the regulations lies only in the special field of moral standards. Furthermore, it is by means of legal sanctions that the law and the regulations awe the people, forcing them to comply with the law and the regulations, and to behave properly. Obviously the law and the regulations have their limitations and passive effect, while moral disciplines have their extensiveness and strong influence. A man's downfall to committing crimes results from the loss of his internal moral standards. This is to say, the moral standard is the first line of defense to prevent people from violating the law. Officials will suppress the urge to commit crimes to attain their ends if they keep the sacred moral standards in their minds. They will voluntarily behave properly and perform their official duties. It can be concluded from the above discussion that if the moral standards based on sacred moral principles are kept by all the government offi-

cials, then the anti-corruption campaign will be carried out more efficiently.

DEMOCRACY: THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

This paper suggests several countermeasures to combat corruption in the course of modernization in developing countries. It is a moral struggle of paramount importance to fight corruption. Undoubtedly the application of correct countermeasures is very important. But countermeasures are not the crucial factor in this struggle. Whether the campaign against corruption will succeed or not depends on which political force will get the upper hand. In some developing countries, there is little progress in this struggle, not because the legal system is not perfect or the measures are not correct, but because the forces against corruptive are still weak. As we have already seen, "Democratic structures can promote reform under some, but not all, conditions" (Susan, 1999). Obviously it is crucial to form strong political forces in order to win this anti-corruption campaign.

In any society, the political force of individuals is usually not as powerful as that of groups. The practice of democracy in politics has shown that only when the participation of citizens in the anti-corruption campaign is organized then the powerful anti-corruption forces can be formed. The failure of the campaign against corruption in some developing countries resulted from the exclusion of social democratic forces from it.

Actually the countermeasures suggested in this paper are all dependent on the support of social democratic forces. Whether or not the mechanism of selecting the capable through fair competition can be set up depends on whether the citizens have the right to elect and recall. The absence of these two rights will lead to the con-

sequence that qualified public officials cannot be selected through fair play, and corrupt officials cannot be weeded out. The openness of politics is also dependent upon the citizens' entitlement to democratic rights. They cannot contain corruption if they cannot influence political activities, even if they have knowledge of the officials' corruption. The most important requirement of a democratic supervision system is involvement of the citizenry, the press and the legislature. The legislature functions as the macro-control of corruption; it complements and reinforces judicial supervision and the self-supervision of the government. If the legislative body does not fully enjoy democratic rights, then the whole supervision system cannot function well in fighting corruption. The press has proved to be a very effective means of supervision. In fact press supervision only functions as a media, the real source of the forces stems from democratic rights.

To sum up, in the developing countries where corruption is very serious and wide spread, it is difficult to eliminate corruption if one only depends on the righteous forces of the political system. Only with the forces of democracy and scientific measures can we thoroughly contain corruption and prevent it from spreading.

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