

GC Address to Iran America Society

As transcribed from a

recording?

11.9.1967

20 Thank you, thank you Mr. Allan

Ladies and Gentlemen

Well my first visit to Iran was early last year when I spent several happy weeks exploring Teheran and Esfahan and then I was an urbanist on holiday. I was astonished to discover Esfahan which I regard as second only to Peking in capital city urban design and I think that this is one of the most wonderful achievements of the human race the city of Shah Abbas in this matter of imperial capital city, architecture and urban design in urban form and urban structure. Now, I don't really wish to speak about the architecture of Esfahan, or the art, mosaic works or any of those things which are normally spoken about and for which the tourists come. But I want to speak about the urban form and the urban structure of Esfahan, the the Maidan-e-Shah, the Royal Bazar which leads through and links with the medieval bazar, right through to the Masjed-i-Jami, is a lineal city, it is a pedestrian city, it is a human city it is a city at human scale which provides wonderfully well for people. It is a highly organised system of pedestrian ways and spaces, of economic activities and of course, imperial majesty. It is an imperial city at the same time as it is a human city and there in the Esfahan, the Shah Abbas urban scale, urban form combining Imperial qualities and intimate human qualities has been achieved and this is something which people all over the world have found ~~very difficult~~, very difficult, if not impossible to do particularly in capital cities.

In my own capital city of Canberra, in Washington, in New Delhi in Brazilia in so many of these capital cities the horizontal scale dominates the vertical scale and vertical elements are very small and horizontal distances very big, but in Esfahan the horizontal and vertical in the Maidan-e-Shah are beautifully proportioned. This is a human space an intimate

space~~xxx~~ and well it is, well perhaps not intimate, but it is to human scale and it is at the same time imperial. And this is something which is very difficult to achieve and is not achieved. The other thing is that the elements of and the Bazar run right through the city and unify the city. They integrate the city into a coherent structure. The Bazar is an integrated system, it is a economic system for the wholesaling and retailing, the selling of goods in shops, it is a distribution system, it is a social system because it provides a place where people can meet, where people can shop in comfort, it is a socially desirable system, it is a comfortable system, it is a human system and it is a highly organised materials handling system. It is ~~an~~ a technical system, it is an architectural system. It is modula, each bay is a repetition of the next, it is a materials handling system because you have goods coming in originally by camel into the court yards at the back of the Bazar. Harbours where the camels come in, there are loading docks where the raw materials and semi finished goods are unloaded into works shops, into warehouses and gradually these goods ~~are~~ are transformed and brought forward to the shops in the Bazar. And so it is a materials handling system, it is an economic system, it is a social system and it is a system which runs right through the city and links the Masjed-e-Shah right through to the Masjed-e-Jomeh. And it is therefore at urban scale, it is at city scale, it is at a grand scale, but at the same time every part of it is at human scale and so it is exactly the kind of urban system that we are now trying all over the world to recreate to build new, And so I came here to learn from Iranians in the matter of city planning in the matter of Shar Sazy and I found that there are many similar, many similar problems in Iran and Australia. We have a dead heart , we have the same problems of size of the country and distance, we suffer from the tyranny of distance, having to

move across very large barren spaces to get from one city to another. We also have a few cities, and these few cities tend to be large ones, just as you here tend to have people concentrated very much in Teheran, Esfahan, Meshed and Tabriz. You have four large cities and you ~~have~~ don't have so much close settlement, such high density of agricultural population and so there is another similarity in that our system of city planning and of local government, of municipal government, Shah of Dari is also very young and our system of local government is a creation of the state, our government comes from the top down. The central government came first and the local municipal government came last and we don't have the European or American tradition of local government being created first before national government. And so we have had terrible problems of developing municipal competence, developing municipal local government strength and staff and ability to manage our cities and towns and we have only been able to tackle this problem in very relatively recent years so we ~~are~~ are not that far ahead of Iran in terms of local government. Now in view of the fact that ~~many~~ I think the rest of the world has such a great deal to learn from Persian city building, I think it is somewhat ironic that there should be any need for technical assistance in Shahr Sazy in this country. In fact, I think in many respects Iranians should be advising others and should be sending technical assistance and advice to other countries. It is ironic to think that the best and leading architects and urbanists all over the world are trying to recreate to design new, Bazars and coochies, pedestrian networks in residential areas, whereas you here in Iran are often trying to get away from these things and to copy European ~~city~~ city forms of the 19th Century. I refer particularly to some of the boulevards which do not really cope at all with the motor age, and they don't provide decent shopping facilities

and they don't provide an efficient materials handling system or a social system or a technical system anything like as good as the traditional Bazar system, and all over the highly developed world, people are building regional shopping centres which are nothing more or less than an adaptation of some of the essential elements of the Bazar, and I particularly, personally am very fascinated by the Bazar system. I have studied it, visited it, in Istanbul and Damascus and many other places, but I find the Bazar at Esfahan one of the most interesting particularly because it is at a city scale and it goes from one end of the city to the other.

So really it is important I think for Iranians to rediscover their past in this matter of urban form and structure, in this matter of understanding that a city is a system just like a family system or the economic system or the social system. There is a complex of activities in a city that in order to function properly must be thought of as a system. Now, Iranians already have much to teach the rest of the world, and not only the developing world. I think the Iranian Sazeman Barnomeh, the Plan Organisation ranks with the French as possibly the best in the world in terms of National economic planning. And of course, we would have to pay tribute here to the Japanese National economic planning and also to the good work that the Pakistan National Planning Commission does, although of course it doesn't have anything like the money, the resources to deploy, to play with that your Sazeman Barnomeh has. I have also been tremendously impressed since I have been here with the calibre of the young, competent serious and realistic men I have met in the high positions, in Ministeries here and in various organisations and the young engineers who are at the top of the various Technical Bureaus. I think that many of these, all of these men in high positions here are equal to, or better than, those in almost any other country.

And so we have in this country a relatively good number of top economists and political craftsmen, administrators, engineers. Perhaps in this country as in Australia, we have too many architects and practically no or very few urbanists or city planners, who in fact must be a mixture of all of these, politician, administrator, economists, architect and so forth.

The absence I think, the critical lack in Iranian development, the critical shortage is that of the middle and junior ranks of technical assistance in municipalities development control offices. Surveyors, valuers, technicians of all sorts, cartographers for example, the absence of these middle and junior technicians is the weakest feature of Iranian development and in this context I can only imagine that the mobilization of various youth, womens and other corps, the illiterary corp, and the health corp, these sorts of things, this seems to me to be a brilliant stop gap measure to provide field workers in many directions. But, of course, you can't sent amateurs to help the men in the Technical Bureaus of the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Development and Housing in the Austans and you can't send amateurs to run municipal offices. You need in fact only a very few urbanists in a country, you need only a few leaders of planning teams, but you need scores of specialists of one kind and another to work in urban planning teams and you need hundreds of technicians including, of course, all sorts of people to control traffic on the roads.

Now the second lack I think, in this country, which is not perhaps really a lack because Iran is ahead of most other countries in this field, but before it achieves full success in National Planning, the second lack is that of the full integration of social and urban planning, that is social and physical planning zaheri, social planning for health and welfare and education and culture and so forth. Social planning and physical planning which involves the planning of cities and new cities and mass transport system in Teheran and new suburbs and so forth and so on. This kind of social and physical planning needs to be integrated with the economic planning and that I think, is the second greatest weakness in Iranian development. And this social and physical planning needs to be integrated with economic planning at all three levels of Government. At the National or central level, at the Ostan or regional level and at the local or municipal level and in order that this integration of social planning with physical urban planning with economic planning to come about and to be understood and to be practised there is really a need for a new concept of development planning, and here we come across the communications problem. The problem of understanding the problem of changing attitudes and ways of thought, ways of thinking about development.

This need for a change in the attitude to urban planning is typified, is shown by the words which are used in English here by the Iranians to describe what they are doing. They say "We are preparing master plans for our cities and these plans are being prepared by engineers or architects". And yet a master plan is a shimmerer a myth, it is unrealistic, it is a legend because plans must be flexible they must be implemented gradually over time and it is unrealistic to talk about master plans.

We must talk instead about a comprehensive planning process about planning and development procedures, we must talk about the continuous process of planning and development control for our cities and regions and these plans must not be prepared by engineers or architects acting alone, or by anyone else, economists or administrators. They must be prepared by urban planning and development teams and in this respect only. A very good example of this is the Calcutta team. A team set up under the auspicious of the Ford Foundation to carry out regional and metropolitan planning for Calcutta. And this is a team which comprises men of many different specialities, of many different professions, and these men cover a very wide range of specialities, but all of their work is integrated into economic and social and physical plans and programmes. And at the same time they are training administrators and technicians to carry on the work of implementing the plan over the decades, the many years to come. And so it is not a criticism of the Iranian Sazeman Barnomeh to say that they have not yet succeeded in integrating urban and regional, physical and social plans with other economic plans, because in fact, nobody in the world has yet succeeded in doing it fully. I would say that France perhaps, Japan perhaps, Pakistan perhaps, a number of other countries,

Great Britian has in fact been working on this problem since 1945. So you have attempts at this in Great Britian, France, Germany, Sweden, Japan, but it is an evolving theory, and evolving procedure. What it means is that we must first of all set goals for social development, we must know that economic development is not an end in itself. Iran can now be proud of the fact that the gross annual product is growing at 6½% p.a and it can be proud that this percentage is likely to increase.

For a people as ancient ~~ad~~ and as realistic and with such a strong family system and such a strong cultural tradition, with people such as those in Iran they would not lose sight of the fact that economic growth is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end and that in fact, the goals of the development of Iran will in fact be basically social goals, that wealth is to be used for the benefit of people and that wealth is to be created for the purpose of providing a civilised, joyful environment for people. Then of course, you come to the notion and the fact that all over the world people are living in cities and cities are growing and so although now today 60% of Iranians live in villages, it won't be very long before 60% live in the cities and it won't be very long before Teheran has 5½ million people and of course without effective national, economic social and physical planning Teheran might grow to the great metropolis of 10 million in the lifetime of people here tonight. Of course it must be seriously investigated, it must be thought of whether it would be good for Teheran to grow to 10 to 12 million people and if it is not good, if it puts too great a strain on resources, if it in effect creates the kind of urban situation that you got in Calcutta, then it is a situation to be avoided, and avoiding it is going to take an enormously greater effort in social and physical, urban and regional planning than any country has so far managed to take. So in this process of

National planning I think we do need first of all a clear establishment of goals, that is, some concept of what we are trying to achieve, what kind of society, what kind of life, what kind of housing, what kind of journey to work, what kind of public space, what kind of family life, what kind of community life, what economic strength do we need to support this.

This of course, as well as analysing the complexities of economic systems of how money flows through the economy and how wealth is created and consumed . We have already sophisticated techniques for analysing those sorts of needs. We have a great deal of study of course of sociological and anthropological subjects of family systems, of all kinds of social relationships, of class structures, but what we need to strengthen now is our competence in analysing urban systems and regional ~~xxx~~ systems. We want to be as clever at analysing how traffic flows through the land use pattern of cities as we are clever at understanding how ~~many~~ money flows through our economic system or how disease flows through the body system. So we need goals and we need systems analysis applied to our urban and regional problems and then we need deliberate control, self conscious control and guidance ~~and~~ of how our cities and regions develop, and this is a revolutionary notion because Teheran has grown like Topsy and it has been disciplined. It has been disciplined by poverty, it has been disciplined by climate, it has been disciplined by all kinds of economic limitations, by the absence of motor cars and by poverty, relative poverty. And this has at least kept it compact in its early years, but now our economic planners are so successful that the gross annual product is growing at better than 6½% per annum, and motor cars are being bought, and you have oil and petrol is cheap, and already your city is like a bomb which <sup>has</sup> ~~is~~ just begun to explode



and the first pieces of shrapnel from this explosion are to be seen in ~~x~~ Shemiran. But this bomb is going to explode inexorably it is going to explode all the way to Karachi and so here is a problem that Iran has never faced before, ~~xx~~ but it is the same problem that cities all over the world are facing. And so a new concept of deliberate control and guidance of every piece of land use in this region, is a concept that has to be understood and acted upon so there is a need for enormous increase in the number of technical people who will work on these problems in valuing land in making maps, in studying the way in which people behave in cities, in studying the way in which every shop and office building ~~x~~ generates traffic and it is going to require an enormous reorientation on the part of administrators and economists. I think it is going to occupy much more of the time of politicians in the future and the only question is of course, whether this explosion is going to be recognised now and controlled now, or in fact whether the explosion is going to be over and all the damage done before anyone tries to cope with this problem. It may be left as it is in most places of the world, it may be left too late. So, anyway, this new attitude must change, this emphasis on master plans prepared by engineers and architects, to comprehensive planning processes, of goal formation, systems analysis and control and guidance and to the Architects items, the things which the architects seek to control, length, breadth and height. We must add the economists perhaps, concepts of time and money, we must also add the dimensions of politics and administration ~~xx~~ So planning in urban planning, it must be conceived on matters not only of length, breadth and height as time and money, <sup>not</sup> politics and administration so that it is ~~xx~~ a three dimensional thing we play with but six or seven dimensions.

Just to try and convince you that I am not ~~xxxx~~ being an alarmist I just wish to read something from a United Nations report of a seminar conference held in November last year which summarises the new consensus of opinion which is developing among administrators, economists and planners all over the world. It says here in this paragraph that urban policies and planning~~xxxxdxxxx~~ hardly exist in most developed countries (like Iran). There is a need for their formulation for the formulation of urban policies and planning as an integral and integrated and explicit part of National and Regional plan reflecting the nations economic and social development and goals. So conversely there is a need for the adaptation of sector orientated National plans which is basically what the National economic plan here is not integrated toward. the sector of the economy that produces heavy industry and this sort of transport and so forth and so on. Not only must we have these breakdowns in National plans of transportation and steel mills and so forth and so on, we must also include regional and urban planning objectives, recognised urbanisation, the process of urbanisation of people coming from the villages to the Ostan capitals and then to the central capital. To recognise urbanisation as an essential element in the development process, something which changes the way people live and behave and makes them more productive. This implies a necessity for establishing an integrated institutional machinery at National and Regional level. Now you already have in Iran National institution Sazeman Barnomeh for National economic planning and this body has recognised and is intending to carry on the initial emergency work of the 3rd plan, the emergency work of asphaltting and electric supply and water supply which came in the 3rd plan. It is proposing in the fourth plan to become much more concerned with urbanisation and housing and this is a

## skills

a process of developing ideas and ~~xxxxxx~~ and techniques for integrating this urban and regional planning with economic planning but it is being done here and it is more hopeful and although there were no Iranians at this United Nations seminar possibly the reason was that they did not need to go, that in fact they were already getting on with the job that this publication describes. Well now this publication talks about the development strategy, and I think that is what is needed here, a strategy a overall master strategy if you like, but not a plan for urbanisation in this country and this will mean what is already been done for the fourth plan as I understand it.

Building up of selected growth polls or growth points ~~xx~~ that is a concentration of investment for certain cities and certain regions to attract population there and keep them away from Teheran. So this selection of some growth points the establishment of steel mill at Esfahan, the encouragement for industry not to settle in Teheran, the giving of tax concessions for industry ~~xxxxxx~~ to go away from Teheran, these things are embryo here. These techniques are ~~xxx~~ beginning and I therefore feel we can expect to see them develop far more in the future and therefore it seems that if this process is continuous here in Iran then the Iranian example will be one for other nations to attempt to follow and I am ~~xx~~ particularly grateful for the opportunity to have to participate in the discussions of this matter with Mr. Rahimi here and with Mr. Sharifi, and the Kamesh people and the people of the Sazeman Barnomeh. Now time is getting on and I want to say that once you think in terms of integrating the social and physical, the urban and regional components with the economic components and you put all these together into a development strategy you then have to

have a development strategy for the nation, you have to have some physical plans for the nation and this is something you can do in Iran with a centralised system. I have had some discussions in the United States in recent weeks of this sort of policy and of course the United States people point out that with 48 states or 50 states now, at least, 48 on the mainland, it is impossible to talk about any national plan which will make New York grow quicker than Chicago or vice versa, but there are very special political and economic and social influences and traditions in the United States which of course, are totally different to those of Iran and therefore this kind of development strategy here is possible whereas it is not possible ~~is~~ not necessary and not desirable in a country like the United States. But once you develop this strategy, these physical plans at a national scale you then have some guidance to give the people in the Ostan capitals and the smaller towns and villages, and it would seem to me, I don't know, but it would seem to me at the moment that there is some weakness in this. That the size for which Teheran should be planned, the number of people for which the Teheran administration must be prepared to cope with in the future, in 20 years from now, this number is at the moment rather an arbitrary number, it has not been subjected to sufficient analysis and sufficient thought and it is no use preparing it.

It is useless to prepare plans which are swamped by the inrush of people, it is useless to prepare plans for individual cities in a dynamic situation unless you have some control and guidance at the top which will ~~keep~~ keep the growth rate of these cities for some kind of plan. And so then you must get down to regional scale and the other interesting consensus that is coming out of discussions among people all over the world who have now had since 1945, since the last great upheaval, now being about 20 years

of experience, perhaps only the last ten years of that have been really useful. It is now being recognised that the element of planning for the future must be a regional scale. Once you have set some national plan, national policy, some national development strategy, regarding the size of the cities and towns, the transportation systems, the migration policies, what you are going to do, how you are going to keep under some sort of guidance and control, the greatest migration, one of the greatest migrations that the world has ever seen, the rural urban migration, the migration of people from the villages to the cities. Once you have some national policy on that, then you must give to regional administrations their targets. The regions need to be told what they have to do, what they must expect and then the regional plans and development strategies must be prepared and the regional administration and regional government is needed in order to keep under some sort of control ~~of~~ the development, the changes in land use that are going to occur as Teheran explodes between here and the mountains to the North and the West and from here to Karachi and beyond, perhaps in the West. And so you need regional government and I think this is a matter which is very serious. And then of course you need municipal government which is in Iran the weakest of all.

Now the title of my talk tonight was that I was going to talk about planning in Asian cities and regions, but there is nothing much I can say and there is nothing much that would be useful to say here tonight because in fact, in Manila and Bangkok and so many other cities of Asia, there is nothing for the Iranians to learn. There ~~x~~ is good work being done in Singapore in a comprehensive planning and development for the city region, there are some good things about the development of Hong Kong and there is this very good team working in Calcutta, which is made up of all those people from the social sciences as well as from the professions

but there is good work being done by the Pakistan national planning commission, but there is really nothing in these places, nothing more that I think Iranians need to study. So to recapitulate I could now say a few words about planning processes and the need for Iranians to change their concepts and their attitudes to this business of urban planning processes. The plan is a model of the intended future situation and that is how it should be conceived, not as a master plan, but as a model of the intended situation towards which we are all going to work. It should be a model of a specific economic and social activities, the pattern of economic and social activities that we see. In the Teheran region you need to have a concept of the economic activities that will carry on here and the social ways which these activities will be carried on. You need to have a model of the location of these activities within a specific geographic area, so you need some sort of locational planning at the national scale as well as the municipal scale and you need to have some concept of land requirements and of course the structures, and landscape which have to provide the physical environment for these activities, but this planning process must be activity orientated, it must be orientated towards systems of activity and not so much towards architectural and engineering concepts of master plans. Secondly the planning process is equally a programme of action and predetermined co-ordination and control of legislative, fiscal, monetary financial and administrative measures formulated with a view to achieving a situation that is represented by the model or goal. So the plan really is a model or goal statement and we need a great deal of action programming, we need a great deal of local and administrative and financial control in order to bring about the model that we have set for ourselves. And this is a most difficult part and this is where Iran's great need is for administrative and technical systems, particularly at the municipal levels. The administrative system that is capable of taking a plan, taking a model of an intended

future situation and bringing it about.

This is relatively easy, in fact it is terribly easy, too simple to make a marvellous model of a wonderful Teheran of the future, but what is difficult is to do all that dirty dull, tedious, day by day work which will make sure that sub divisions of land is ~~is~~ controlled, that sub divisions of land is stopped where it ought not to be. That land use is controlled and that shops and offices and houses are not all built in the wrong place so that they generate too much traffic and create chaos. So that for instance, land speculation is controlled, so that in fact the municipality and the public are not made bankrupt by the fortunes made by ~~men~~ land speculators which of course is ~~one~~ wonderful in very affluent societies, you know you can afford not to have so much control, it is not necessary to have a great deal of these controls and I am speaking of in the United States where the dynamic process of development is so spontaneous. We in fact know that there is so much affluence that one can afford not to plan and one can afford to operate under a far freer market economy than ~~one~~ one can here. At least in the ten or 20 years we all hope that one day Iran will be so rich that it won't need to plan either. But this is the difficult need, this is a terrible problem and I would simply say that this is a problem which I hope to be able to make a few suggestions, I certainly think it is a problem in which Iran is going to need some advice and assistance for the next few years particularly in the formulation of detailed legislation regulations, ordinances, administrative systems in municipalities and in the training of the Junior and Middle rank technicians who have to make this system work. ~~Not only~~ I think now the problem is very much in urban and regional development to provide the middle and junior rank technicians. I think also there is going to be some difficulty, Iran and Teheran are going to face in the near future the same sort of difficult problems that everyone else in the world faces.

The problem for instance of whether they should follow the Swedes, the Swedish people in Stockholm and expropriate large tracts around Teheran of agricultural value so as to provide the land basis for the future expansion of Teheran so as to recoup development value created by public investment in facilities in Teheran. How to achieve regional government for example. Municipal Government is not enough, there must be this regional government. The municipality of Teheran is already swamped by urban development which is relatively small in area and urban development has gone way beyond it and it is going to go much further, so how in the context of Iranian organisation do you provide some administrative or government at this regional level, at the Ostan level and how of course then, do you enforce it. What are the plans of functions and powers and responsibility and duties between municipal government and regional or Ostan government and National government. These of course are problems which the Iranians will face, they are certainly not new problems, they are problems that everyone in the world is dealing with and I have some faith that the Iranians might cope with these problems of inter governmental relations, ~~xx~~ perhaps they will do it much better than we in Australia and our friends in the United States and various other countries of the world have done, I certainly hope so.