

































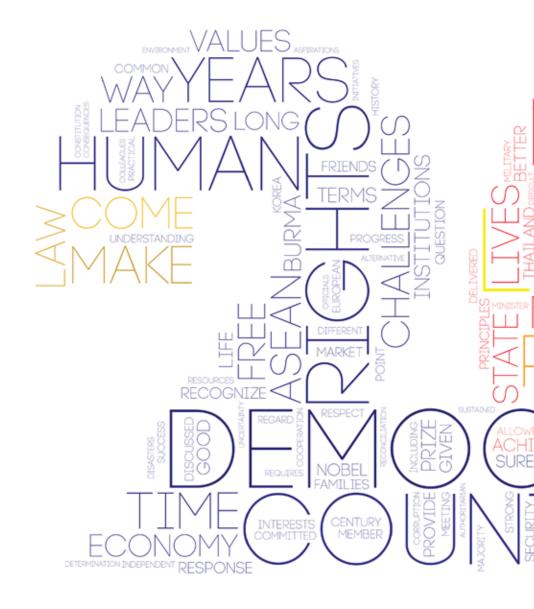


SPEECHES

THAT DEFINE

ASIAN

LIBERALISM & DEMOCRACY





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Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

Unit 410, 4/F La Fuerza Plaza 2, 2241 Don Chino Roces Avenue 1231 Makati City, Philippines T: +632 819 6071

F: +632 810 1431

info@cald.org www.cald.org

In association with the

Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Southeast and East Asia Regional Office 29 BBC Tower, 25/F, Sukhumvit 63 Road, 10110 Bangkok, Thailand

T: +662 365 0570 T: +662 365 0567

F: +662 714 8384

contact@fnst.org

www.fnfasia.org

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CONTENTS

- 1 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
- 2 FOREWORD
- 4 INTRODUCTION
- THEORY AND PRACTICE
- 12 **Democracy and the Rule of Law** by Martin Lee
- 18 The Sunshine That Is Democracy by Kim Dae Jung
- 26 The Challenge of Applied Liberalism by Graham Watson
- 32 Consultation & Compassion in the Midst of Turmoil by Abhisit Vejjajiva
- 40 Being a Liberal Today by Benigno Simeon Aquino III

PEOPLE & PROFIT

- 46 Democracy and the Freedom to Make Choices by Franklin Drilon
- 50 **The Boon & Bane of Labor Migration** by Corazon Aquino
- 56 Human Rights & Free Trade by J.R. Nereus Acosta
- 62 **The Chinese Conundrum** by Tsai Ing-wen
- UNFINISHED DEMOCRACIES
- 70 When a Democracy Is Not a Democracy by Sam Rainsy
- 74 Freedom and Wealth by Chee Soon Juan
- **Democracy and Human Rights in Burma: The Struggle Continues** by Aung San Suu Kyi
- WINDS OF CHANGE
- 94 Can a Liberal Agenda Include Climate Change? by J.R. Nereus Acosta
- 100 The Uncertainties of Climate Change and Democratic Transitions by Abhisit Vejjajiva



108 **Bringing Up ASEAN** by Surin Pitsuwan

- UPHEAVALS AND TRANSITIONS
- 114 Ground Rules for Freedom by Wolfgang Gerhardt
- **New Populism: A Threat or a Corrective to Democracy** by Selyna Peiris
- **The Road from Autocracy to Democracy** by Rajiva Wijesinha
- NURTURING NETWORKS, CELEBRATING CALD
- 140 Seeing Success amid Setbacks by Su Tseng-Chang
- 146 CALD as the Tapestry of Our Collective Struggles by Florencio Abad

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To all fellow CALD travellers, this book is for you. Thank you for walking the path of democracy and freedom with us in the past two decades. We hope that you continue to join us in the next twenty years.

1

SPEAKING OUT LOUD

"CAN WE defend this at Plaza Miranda?"

The above is a popular quote from Philippine politics before the nation came under the grip of dictatorship in September 1972. First stated by the late President Ramon Magsaysay after whom the Asian counterpart of the Nobel Prize was named, the quote acknowledges that a crowded public square at the heart of Manila as the foremost venue for Philippine political rallies and mass protest movements from the 1950s to the 1970s.

For Filipino Liberals especially, Plaza Miranda has become hallowed ground. On 21 August 1971, the senatorial candidates of the opposition Liberal Party (LP) held its main rally prior to the November polls that year. Given the wide discontent of the general populace with the administration of then President Ferdinand Marcos, the rally was packed with hundreds. Two grenades were hurled into the stage, killing eight people and severely injuring eight senatorial candidates and several LP supporters. Ironically, the incident was used by Marcos as a justification for the curtailment of civil liberties. Thirteen months later, he declared Martial Law. Exactly 15 years after the Plaza Miranda bombing, LP Secretary General and former Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., returning from exile in the United States, was shot at the Manila International Airport.

Plaza Miranda as a space of democracy exemplifies the love-hate relationship between the politician and his constituency. And yet, in Plaza Mirada, there is a symbiosis between the speaker and the audience. Though politicians are often scorned for their propensity to give empty promises, Plaza Miranda and similar venues around the world are capable, or at least have the potential, to subject incumbent or would-be government officials to public scrutiny.

In 2013, CALD celebrated its 20th foundation anniversary in Manila. After two decades, the first and foremost ideologically-based organization of political parties in Asia continues to be a dynamic forum where ideas, experiences, best practices, and proposals are discussed and debated. As former CALD Chair and LP President Florencio "Butch" Abad—now Philippine Budget Secretary—once asserted, CALD conferences are not just talk shops since the discussions and learnings from CALD events

richly contribute to the formulation of government policies, legislative agendas, and party platforms.

Our conferences, events, and seminars are predominantly attended by Liberals. To many, these may seem as gatherings of people who agree with each other or of preaching to the choir, and therefore amount to little. But such assumptions are far from accurate. Quite the contrary; these events are among the reasons for CALD's success and strength.

Though the values of freedom, democracy, human rights, social justice, and the rule of law are shared by Democrats of various persuasions, Liberals give primacy to individual freedom and choice. Thus, a greater diversity of views and open dialogue are given premium.

I have personally attended the events wherein many of these speeches were delivered and I remember the high level of energy and quality of the intellectual discourse that followed afterward. Indeed, they have helped define the Asian liberal thought and agenda for the last two decades. They can definitely be defended in Plaza Miranda or any democratic space.

As we celebrate this hallmark collection of 20 great speeches, we remember that in many parts of the world, the freedom to express one's opinion continues to be met by imprisonment, forced exile, bankruptcy, or even death. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, Sam Rainsy of Cambodia and Dr. Chee Soon Juan of Singapore—three Asian democratic pillars who are some of the most prominent members of CALD—are all featured in this book. These three and the rest of the contributors to this collection are the embodiment of Plaza Miranda, of free speech that can never be silenced, and the unyielding human spirit of change.

For as long as there is one person unable to speak freely, for as long as repression holds sway in whatever form, the work of CALD remains unfinished.

J.R. Nereus Acosta CALD Secretary General

TALKING THROUGH HISTORY

An introduction by Sam Rainsy, CALD Chairperson

CALD's history in the past twenty years is closely interwoven with the history of the Asian region. This shared history is one of triumphs and travails, of victories and defeats, of successes and struggles.

In Asia, the twin processes of democratic development and decay, of economic growth and crises, of societal unity and upheavals, appear to have characterized the region's landscape in the past two decades.

Similarly, CALD member-parties have gone through their own share of milestones and setbacks during the network's twenty-year existence. CALD member-parties have won elections, have become part of governing coalitions, or have made significant headways in their political struggles. Alternatively, they have also experienced intra-party squabbles, electoral defeats, and even continued and intensified political persecution by the ruling regime.

This intersecting history of CALD and Asia has been imprinted in the conferences that the Council has organized in the last twenty years. These events have become important venues for sharing of ideas, for networking with fellow Liberals and Democrats, and for forging collective positions or solutions to common regional problems. It is through these gatherings, in fact, that CALD takes an active role in the shaping of Asian discourse on the most important issues confronting the region.

From these momentous occasions, we have chosen most of the 20 memorable speeches that define CALD's history, and that of Asia as well, to celebrate CALD's 20th founding anniversary. That task was not easy, considering the number of outstanding speeches delivered in CALD events, or delivered by CALD personalities in other notable gatherings. It took us a while to come up with a shortlist, and, understandably, much longer to finalize what would make up this collection.

It is for this reason that we present with great pride this compilation of speeches as a fitting tribute to CALD's first two decades. More than just representing the evolution of CALD, this collection also captures the development of liberalism and democracy in the Asian region.

THE PRAXTS OF ASTAN DEMOCRACY AND LIBERALISM.

Democracy and liberalism in Asia has been a recurring theme in many of CALD events. To a large extent, this has been due to the so-called "Asian values" debate, which became prominent in the 1990s but has been revived recently by the rise of China. At the center of the debate is the belief in the incompatibility of democracy, human rights, and liberalism, which are claimed to be Western values, in the Asian context.

This claim about the "uniqueness" of Asian values and their dissonance with democracy and liberalism were front and center of the five speeches included in *Theme I: Theory and Practice*. In his 2000 speech, CALD Individual Member and Democratic Party of Hong Kong (DPHK) Founder Martin Lee described the Asian values debate as pure "nonsense." In particular, he argued that the debate has been used by some Asian leaders to justify "rule by law" instead of "rule of law." In the end, Lee said, the institution of the rule of law is the best way to protect human rights.

CALD Founding Member and Former South Korean President, the late Kim Dae Jung, went further in debunking the Asian values debate. In his Nobel lecture, he asserted that democracy is firmly grounded in Asia's intellectual and institutional traditions. He also said that democracy "is the absolute value that makes for human dignity, as well as the only road to sustained economic development and social justice."

Democracy as a system of government is one of the institutional backbones of the liberal ideology. Liberalism, as what the leader of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Graham Watson said, is based on the "consistent and unwavering defense of the irreducible liberty of the individual in the face of power of all kinds." From this fundamental belief, liberalism can be translated to a practical political program that addresses the key challenges of the time.

Liberalism applied in the world of practical politics can be clearly seen in the speeches of then Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and Philippine President Benigno Aquino III. Having been active politicians themselves, these Liberal leaders were in the best

position to draw the connections between the theory and practice of liberalism. Speaking at the height of the most recent global financial crisis, Abhisit pointed out that his government's response to the economic downturn was based on "the importance of recognizing human rights and people's participation."

Similarly, Aquino emphasized how under his administration, liberal values guide every aspect of governance. These values, he said, bind Liberals even in this so-called post-ideological century: "the respect for the individual rights and freedoms; the commitment to make growth inclusive and equitable, so that every man and woman may have the means to fulfill their fullest potential; and the unwavering compassion for those with little means to pursue their dreams."

Liberal values, however, are not free from criticisms. For one, liberalism's concept of freedom, especially in the context of the global economy, has been a subject of debate not only between Liberals and non-Liberals, but also among Liberals themselves.

FREEDOM IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

The exercise of freedom in a globalized world is the common thread that binds the four speeches under *Theme II: People and Profit.* Globalization, simply defined as the process of increasing integration of peoples and markets, has profound implications in various spheres – political, economic, and socio-cultural. The economic repercussions of globalization, however, have been most controversial. Two issues of paramount importance are trade and labor migration.

Global trade was the main topic addressed by Philippine Senate President Franklin Drilon in his speech on the sidelines of the 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly. While he acknowledged that globalization brings vast opportunities to create wealth, he maintained that it also presents enormous challenges and risks. One of these, he argued, is on setting free and fair trade rules. Drilon pointed out, "(T)here is utter hypocrisy in wealthy countries that profess undying love for democracy but circumvent global trade rules at the expense of poor and underdeveloped countries."

The North-South divide can be observed not only in global trade, but also on the issue of labor migration. In her 2006 CALD speech, former Philippine President Corazon Aquino pointed out the responsibility of both countries of origin and countries of destination in ensuring the welfare of migrant workers. The sad reality, however, is

that migrant workers still experience harassment, racial discrimination, xenophobia, cruelty, and even death in the hands of foreign employers.

That various human-rights violations persist in the midst of a globalizing economy appears to be a continuing trend to this day. It was for this reason that Liberal International chose the theme "human rights and free trade" for its 57th Congress in Manila, Philippines. In that global gathering, CALD Secretary General J.R. Nereus Acosta and then Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Taiwan Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen spoke on the interplay between rights and profit.

Acosta raised the most fundamental question: "Are Liberals by principle responsible to uphold free trade even if it means the erosion of a basic respect for human rights?" In the end, he was also unequivocal in his response. Free trade, he said, "must serve the ends of human rights – or stated differently, development and democracy are inextricably linked."

The link between development and democracy, however, seems to be less clear in the case of China. In her speech, Tsai drew attention to the fact that the economic rise of China has not been accompanied by developments in the democratic front. She remarked, "The rise of China that is authoritarian impacts not only Taiwan's international survival; it has far-reaching consequences around the world. Therefore it is important for us to work with the rest of the world, especially those concerned about the future of democracy, to engage constructively with China, to ensure that China's rise is peaceful, stable and consistent with the responsibilities we would all expect of a great power."

The "rise of the Middle Kingdom" certainly has profound implications for the future of democracy. Without a doubt, this makes the task of transforming the authoritarian holdovers in Asia more difficult.

FACADE DEMOCRACIES AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

While democracy and liberalism have already been embedded in Asia's political landscape, it cannot be denied that Asia's democratic progress remains incomplete. Under *Theme III: Unfinished Democracies*, three Southeast Asian countries with presence of CALD member-parties were analyzed: Cambodia, Singapore, and Burma. In the speech I delivered when I received Liberal International's (LI) Prize for Freedom in 2006, I described Cambodia as a "false democracy" because the ruling regime, which has been

in power for more than three decades, has been hiding behind supposedly "democratic" institutions and processes in order to perpetuate its hold to power. Even a cursory look at the so-called Cambodian "democracy" would reveal that it is democracy without substance.

In that speech, I also drew parallelisms between Cambodia and Singapore. Although with the benefit of hindsight, I have to say that the democratic cause in Singapore faces more daunting challenges because the authoritarian regime can hide behind the cloak of phenomenal economic development. Interestingly, this very issue was addressed by Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) Secretary General Chee Soon Juan when it was his turn to receive LI's coveted award in 2011. It that speech, he destroyed the city-state's myth of equitable economic growth, noting, "In terms of wealth disparity among the more complex economies, ours is the most hideous."

The continuing quest for a democratic polity and equitable economy also characterizes Burma's recent reforms – the subject of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Nobel lecture. In that speech, the Honorary CALD Individual Member shared her thoughts on Burma's political and economic reforms – that "...democratic institutions and practices are necessary for the guarantee of human rights" and that "development and humanitarian aid, bilateral agreements and investments should be coordinated and calibrated to ensure...social, political, and economic growth that is balanced and sustainable."

While the current political and economic state of Cambodia, Singapore, and Burma leave much to be desired, the electoral or political gains of opposition political parties in these countries give reason for (cautious) optimism. The winds of change are clearly blowing in the liberal-democratic direction.

CLIMATE OF CHANGE

The changes in Asia's political climate are accompanied by changes in the region's physical climate. Asia is one of the most vulnerable regions to the impact of climate change, and the immense loss of lives and livelihood resulting from powerful typhoons in recent years is a testament to that. Fortunately, climate change is beginning to bring about changes in political thinking.

Proofs of this change can be clearly seen in the two speeches included in *Theme IV: Winds of Change*. In speeches he delivered in the network's various climate change events, CALD

Secretary General J.R. Nereus Acosta had consistently made a convincing argument that the environmental agenda is a liberal agenda. Using the elemental (liberal) principles of freedom, rights, and the rule of law, Acosta summed up his thoughts on the subject by saying that "the more democratic, free, well-governed – and yes, liberal – a society, the more resilient it becomes in the face of physical risks and hazards that come with the unsettling vagaries of climate change."

Climate change, like democratic transitions, is fraught with uncertainties. This was the main point raised by former Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva in his speech under this theme. To address these climate uncertainties, Khun Abhisit emphasized the role of public information as well as of regional cooperation. The uncertainties emanating from democratic transition, meanwhile, could be better managed by looking into the following elements: political pacts, institution-building, societal peace, and sustainable growth. He concluded by saying that the key to addressing the uncertainties of climate change and democratic transitions is adaptability: "Adaptability is best served when we encourage people to exercise their freedoms and rights and we provide the environment for those freedoms and rights to be exercised fully."

We can also add: Adaptation is best served when the change in mindset is accompanied by change in institutions.

ASEAN: ADAPTING TO CHANGE

In Southeast Asia, one of the best examples of institutional change would be the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). A creation of the Cold War, ASEAN, for most of its history, had been resistant to change, particularly on matters that impinge on state sovereignty and non-intervention. In recent years, however, the regional grouping, alarmed by its decreasing relevance in a post-Cold War world, embarked on a giant (by ASEAN standards) "leap of faith" with the adoption of the ASEAN Charter.

The ASEAN Charter is the main topic in *Theme V: Strengthening Southeast Asia*. In his visit to Manila in 2008, then ASEAN Secretary General and CALD Founding Chair Surin Pitsuwan made the case for the adoption of the Charter, which, he believes, would pave the way for the realization of ASEAN Community of three pillars by 2015. He said: "The ASEAN Charter is not perfect, but it is a beginning, and we can improve on it. Don't make the best the enemy of the good. Let us begin here, let us ratify it,

and let us move forward so that a better ASEAN can be improved upon by the people of ASEAN, by the next generation of leaders of the ASEAN."

ASEAN is changing, but in many part of Asia, the forces of authoritarianism, populism, and patronage politics persist in various forms. To make change real and permanent, democracy needs to be consolidated, and even reformed.

CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY, ADDRESSING POPULISM

Democracy, according to noted U.S. political scientist Larry Diamond, is a perpetual work-in-progress. They can always become more democratic— more liberal, constitutional, competitive, accountable, inclusive, and participatory. Alternatively, they can also become less democratic—more illiberal, abusive, corrupt, exclusive, narrow, unresponsive, and unaccountable.

The three speeches under *Theme VII: Upheavals and Transitions* reflect on the reforms that need to be undertaken to expand and deepen the spaces of freedom and democracy in the region.

Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) Chairman of the Board Wolfgang Gerhardt, for instance, encouraged a return to fundamental liberal values and principles as a basis of societal interactions. Liberal values, according to Gerhardt, should be the foundation of societal ground rules, especially in a world marked by wealth disparity, dictatorships, religious fundamentalism, and international conflicts. But it should be emphasized that it should be freedom with responsibility, as "an overextension of freedom in the name of freedom is not liberal; it is destructive. A liberal order cannot function without a fixed line."

A return to such fundamental principles values is called for especially in a world witnessing the emergence and persistence of populist leaders and movements. For one, the rise of populism can be seen as an indication of liberal democracy's tendency to move too far from its foundations in popular sovereignty. As noted by then CALD Youth Chair Selyna Peiris, populism can be "a useful 'wake-up call' to elites and public officials who have grown too cozy with their privileges and too remote from the concerns of public opinion." Liberal Party of Sri Lanka leader Rajiva Wijesinha also aptly pointed out, "Democracy is not about governments; it is rather about the governed. Political

parties therefore must, in promoting transitions to greater and greater democracy, also enhance the power of the individuals to make decisions."

Amid the political upheavals and ongoing democratic transitions, it must not be forgotten that Asia today is a better place for democracy and freedom than it was twenty years ago. While much more needs to be done, this should not prevent democracy activists and freedom fighters from celebrating their hard-earned successes.

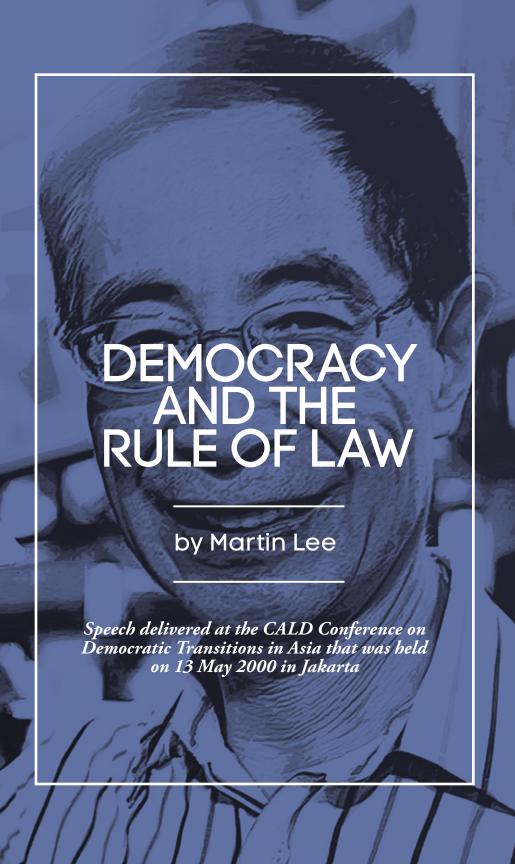
CELEBRATING DEMOCRACY, CELEBRATING CALD

When CALD was founded in 1993, Asia was still in the grip of many authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes that used cultural values and economic growth as justifications to suppress fundamental political and civil rights. To this day, there are still questions about the relevance of a political party network in a region reeling from a culture of authoritarianism, patronage, and populism. In the midst all these, CALD, without a doubt, has emerged as one of the region's success stories. The success of CALD is a triumph of democracy and freedom.

The two speeches under *Theme VII: Nurturing Networks, Celebrating CALD* were delivered during CALD's 20th anniversary celebrations in Manila. In his speech, DPP Chair Su Tseng-chang pointed out the contributions of CALD in shaping a more liberal and democratic region. "I am very pleased to see that CALD has become the most important party alliance in Asia," he said. "As we look back, we did not foresee how far we could go when we started this network. But we have come a long way, and we should be proud of ourselves."

Similarly, Philippine Secretary (Minister) of Budget and Management and former CALD Chair Florencio Abad described CALD as a "tapestry of our collective struggles to establish democracy and make it work in our respective countries." The struggles have not been easy, he said, and CALD members have faced numerous defeats along the way. "Yet despite incarceration, humiliation, and our own, once in a while, self-doubts, we prevail, and we are still here, fighting for liberalism and democracy."

CALD's history is a history of democracy and freedom in Asia. Through the speeches in this compilation, we hope you join us in reliving that history so that together, we can chart our next steps toward a more democratic and progressive region.



During the heyday of the so-called 'Asian tigers' in the early 1990s, the notion of 'Asian values'—of rights being dependent on cultures—was put forth by some of the region's leaders and thinkers. The most prominent among these were then Malaysian Premier Mahathir Mohamad and Singapore's Minister Mentor and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. It was also no secret that Beijing was yet another major proponent of the thought.

The first part of the argument was the supposed high regard of Asians for community that was in contrast for the West's focus on the individual. More notably, the second part of the 'Asian values' theory asserted that the curtailment of certain freedoms was necessary for development and stability. That the 1997 Asian economic crash belied this claim did not deter the theory's supporters to continue putting it in practice and trying to propagate it. Fortunately, many countries in Asia chose not to heed their calls and began implementing democratic reforms.

It must have been with envy and frustration then that Hong Kong legislator and Democratic Party founder Martin Lee gave this speech. Lee, after all, had grown up in postwar British-territory Hong Kong where freedoms, for the most part, were respected. In 1989, he had led street protests in Hong Kong against the oppression of demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square—resulting in his being banned from setting foot in the mainland. In 1997, however, the British handed back Hong Kong to Beijing; despite the much-touted 'one country, two systems,' Democrats like Lee immediately picked up on the differences before and after the handover.

A lawyer by training, Lee makes a distinction between the 'rule of law' and a 'rule by law' in this speech. He also reiterates the universality of human rights, and the responsibility of—as well as the necessity for—everyone to speak up and defend those those who are being deprived of these rights. "Because if you don't do anything about it," he says, "before long it will spread."



WE ARE all concerned about human rights. But are Asian human rights any different? Because not so long ago, remember, there was a Bangkok Declaration, where the Asian leaders put their heads together to say that somehow human values in Asia are different. I always lose my temper when I hear that. My

typical response is: Give me an American, European, and Asian. Now put all three of them into Britain and they all yearn to be free. Now you break an arm of each of them and they all feel the same pain. Now you put a bullet into the head of each one of them and they all die. So what's this nonsense about Asian values being different when it comes to basic human rights?

The way to protect human rights is of course to have the rule of law. But some Asian leaders equate the rule of law with the rule by law. So if you look at China, dissidents are now given a trial. And when the Americans try to intervene and say that these persons have not committed any offense, they say that they have already given these guys a trial and this is a decision of the court and we cannot intervene.

But of course the rule by law is not the same as the rule of law. The rule of law means that we are all equal before the law. If a government official can do something without being challenged in the courts, so can any individual. In many cases, however, there is the rule by law, which treats the legal system as an instrument of suppression at the hands of some of our Asian leaders.

To make the rule of law work, we need an independent judiciary—judges who would give judgments according to the facts of the case, according to law, not whether the government wins in the courts. Now I was told by my friends from Singapore, Dr. Chee Soon Juan and also Mr. J.B. Jeyaretnam, that in Singapore whenever the government sues any member of the opposition in a libel suit the government always wins. If anybody sues a government servant, the government servant always wins. So in Singapore we know the result before the trial. And I suppose it is the same in Malaysia. Our friend, Dr. Anwar Ibrahim, is coming to the end of the second trial. Will anybody bet with me that he won't be convicted? I wish the court will show me wrong and acquit him.

But judges alone—even if they are fully independent—cannot defend the rule of law. The German judges by and large were delivering justice to the people. When Hitler gained power, he had the laws changed because he controlled the

Bundestag. But he kept the same judges and suddenly the poor judges were under pressure. Some refused to administer the law and were executed; the others applied the law as they read it and they became instruments of injustice.

Hong Kong is unique indeed in two ways. First while the British were in Hong Kong, Hong Kong did not have a democracy; it still has no democracy and it may take many years before we ever have genuine democracy. And yet under British rule, we enjoyed the fruits of democracy—we had the rule of law, human rights were protected, and we had a level playing field. Why? Only because we were a colony, our human rights were protected eight thousand miles to the west of us by a British government and the British Parliament, which were both democratically elected. So Hong Kong people were able to enjoy the fruits of democracy without finding the tree of democracy in Hong Kong.

The other thing that is unique about Hong Kong is that while Asian countries are trying to develop democracy and hopefully the rule of law, Hong Kong is going in the opposite direction. We had a chief executive chosen by Beijing and he deems it his duty to do things to please Beijing. So he's not really implementing the so-called policy of "one country, two systems." He has been leading Hong Kong backward in terms of democracy and the rule of law.

The rule of law is certainly being eroded under Chinese rule. How do we stop it? Not easy. We need democracy. Democracy will ensure that people are able to control who will represent them in parliament—and if parliament were to produce laws to take away their rights, rather than to defend them, then they will make sure that they would not elect the same people again at the next election.

But then a lot of people in Asia will tell you, "Well, some Asian countries are not ready." I've heard that myself. They still say that in China: China is not ready. When the Chinese people are prosperous, then and only then should we have democracy. This is another myth, another fallacy. Think of the poorest country in the world, if you will, ladies and gentlemen, a country so poor that it requires foreign aid. But when it comes in, you know where it disappears—into the pockets of the tyrant. He will share some of that with the generals because he needs the generals to suppress the people. Very little aid, if at all, will find its way to the people. But if this poorest country in the world has democracy, can the leader do that? If he does that, he won't be re-elected in the next election.

So, again, it is another excuse for tyrants not to give power to their people—to say, "We are not ready." By that argument they will never be ready, because they would never let go of power. A question was asked this morning: which should come first, democracy or the rule of law? Now if you look at a country without either, I suppose I would agree the rule of law is first because at least that means people's rights would be protected by law. But the question is: Can it last long without democratic institutions? Because sooner or later those in power will be tempted. They would be tempted to interfere because human nature being what it is, even elected leaders would be tempted. Sometimes when I'd said something stupid to a journalist, and realized it only after the interview was over, I've wished I could tell the editor to stop that going to press. Tempted—of course, it's so easy. And when you are in government and the government is sued, I suppose you could say "Well, now what happens if the government loses? Terrible. It may even bring down my government and the next party in opposition would come in, and they will be much worse for my government." So what would you do? You may try to interfere. You would try to speak to the judge and get a favorable judgment and thereby prolong your stay in power or enable your party to win the next year elections. You might justify all these by saying, "Well, if my party's in power, at least it's much better than the party in opposition."

So we cannot just trust a benign dictator or even a democratically elected leader. Because unless the people want the rule of law and they want their freedoms to be protected by the law, sooner of or later you can go the other way, too. There are examples such as in Indonesia. Look at Pakistan going the other way. And to a certain extent, perhaps you can see Malaysia going the other way. Hong Kong is going the other way. You must have people who are convinced themselves of the importance of the rule of law. They must be prepared to make sacrifices and face inconvenience in order to protect the rights of those who are unwanted in society. Because when it comes to human rights, it's not just the human rights of the majority; human rights include the rights of even those who are not wanted by a particular community.

We must all be vigilant: if the human rights of somebody thousands of miles away from us are being infringed by his or her government, it becomes our business. If somebody is deprived of his or her human rights many, many thousands of miles from us, we are actually injured, because if you don't do anything about it, before long it will spread. And before you know it, it will

get to your country too. So we must all stick together to protect one another's human rights, not just in Asia, but all over the world. We must remember that we are in this global village when it comes to human rights as well as when it comes to the Internet. We need one another's protection.

Let me sign off by saying one thing. I'm actually optimistic about democracy and the rule of law coming to China—not in the short term, but I'm sure it will come. This is the world trend and I don't believe that the leaders in China can stop this world tide for long.

Another thing that gives me courage is this: people come to this CALD conference year after year, they come and participate, make their contributions, go home, come next year and suddenly, they find themselves being the ruling party as in Taiwan. So just keep coming and things will be all right.

THE SUNSHINE THAT IS DEMOCRACY

by Kim Dae Jung

Nobel Lecture given at Oslo on 10 December 2000 Today's South Korea is a prosperous, democratic nation that has become famous for its innovations in information technology. Yet just a little less than twenty years ago, it was under an authoritarian regime; what many thought to be a resilient and robust economy was also not spared in the 1997 Asian crisis. Instead of brooding over their misfortunes, however, South Koreans elected a Democrat into office in 1998. By 2000, the exdissident that they had voted into the presidency had also become a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Kim Dae Jung and his "Government of the People" guided South Korea toward democracy, as well as back to economic stability. In this lecture that he gave as a Nobel laureate, Kim notes that a market economy can blossom only with democracy; he also asserts that without a market economy, "economic competitiveness and growth cannot be achieved." He says as well that contrary to some claims, Asia is no stranger to democracy and that "long before the West," Asian writings already contained teachings that stressed human dignity and that put people before the state.

Kim is best known for his government's "sunshine policy" toward North Korea, which he details in this speech and that briefly had the two atwar Koreas engaging peacefully in various activities. But even the Nobel Committee that chose him to receive the Peace Prize in 2000 knew that while he deserved it for promoting "peace and reconciliation with North Korea in particular," Kim should also be recognized "for his work for democracy and human rights in South Korea and in East Asia in general."



HUMAN RIGHTS and peace have a sacred ground in Norway. The Nobel Peace Prize is a solemn message that inspires all humanity to dedicate ourselves to peace. I am infinitely grateful to be given the honor. But I think of the countless people and colleagues in Korea, who have given themselves willingly to

democracy and human rights and the dream of national unification. And I must conclude that the honor should go to them.

I also think of the many countries and friends around the world, who have given generous support to the efforts of my people to achieve democratization and inter-Korean reconciliation. I thank them very sincerely.

I know that the first South-North Korean summit meeting in June and the start of inter-Korean reconciliation is one of the reasons for which I am given the Nobel Peace Prize.

Distinguished guests, I would like to speak to you about the breakthrough in South-North Korean relations that the Nobel Committee has judged worthy of its commendation. In mid-June, I traveled to Pyongyang for the historic meeting with Chairman Kim Jong II of the North Korean National Defense Commission. I went with a heavy heart not knowing what to expect, but convinced that I must go for the reconciliation of my people and peace on the Korean peninsula. There was no guarantee that the summit meeting would go well. Divided for half a century after a three-year war, South and North Korea have lived in mutual distrust and enmity across the barbed-wire fence of the demilitarized zone.

To replace the dangerous stand-off with peace and cooperation, I proclaimed my sunshine policy upon becoming President in February 1998, and have consistently promoted its message of reconciliation with the North: first, we will never accept unification through communization; second, neither would we attempt to achieve unification by absorbing the North; and third, South and North Korea should seek peaceful coexistence and cooperation. Unification, I believe, can wait until such a time when both sides feel comfortable enough in becoming one again, no matter how long it takes. At first, North Korea resisted, suspecting that the sunshine policy was a deceitful plot to bring it down. But our genuine intent and consistency, together with the broad support for the sunshine policy from around the world, including its moral leaders such as

Norway, convinced North Korea that it should respond in kind. Thus, the South-North summit could be held.

I had expected the talks with the North Korean leader to be extremely tough, and they were. However, starting from the shared desire to promote the safety, reconciliation, and cooperation of our people, the Chairman and I were able to obtain some important agreements.

First, we agreed that unification must be achieved independently and peacefully, that unification should not be hurried along and for now the two sides should work together to expand peaceful exchanges and cooperation and build peaceful coexistence.

Second, we succeeded in bridging the unification formulas of the two sides, which had remained widely divergent. By proposing a "loose form of federation" this time, North Korea has come closer to our call for a confederation of "one people, two systems, two independent governments" as the pre-unification stage. For the first time in the half-century division, the two sides have found a point of convergence on which the process toward unification can be drawn out.

Third, the two sides concurred that the U.S. military presence on the Korean peninsula should continue for stability on the peninsula and Northeast Asia.

During the past 50 years, North Korea had made the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from the Korean peninsula its primary point of contention. I said to Chairman Kim: "The Korean peninsula is surrounded by the four powers of the United States, Japan, China, and Russia. Given the unique geopolitical location not to be found in any other time or place, the continued U.S. military presence on the Korean peninsula is indispensable to our security and peace, not just for now but even after unification. Look at Europe. NATO had been created and American troops stationed in Europe so as to deter the Soviet Union and the East European bloc. But now, after the fall of the communist bloc, NATO and U.S. troops are still there in Europe, because they continue to be needed for peace and stability in Europe."

To this explanation of mine, Chairman Kim, to my surprise, had a very positive response. It was a bold switch from North Korea's long-standing demand, and a very significant move for peace on the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia.

We also agreed that the humanitarian issue of the separated families should be promptly addressed. Thus, since the summit, the two sides have been taking steps to alleviate their pain. The Chairman and I also agreed to promote economic cooperation. Thus, the two sides have signed an agreement to work out four key legal instruments that would facilitate the expansion of inter-Korean economic cooperation, such as investment protection and double-taxation avoidance agreements. Meanwhile, we have continued with the humanitarian assistance to the North, with 300,000 tons of fertilizer and 500,000 tons of food. Sports, culture and arts, and tourism exchanges have also been activated in the follow-up to the summit.

Furthermore, for tension reduction and the establishment of durable peace, the defense ministers of the two sides have met, pledging never to wage another war against each other. They also agreed to the needed military cooperation in the work to relink the severed railway and road between South and North Korea.

Convinced that improved inter-Korean relations is not enough for peace to fully settle on the Korean peninsula, I have strongly encouraged Chairman Kim to build better ties with the United States and Japan as well as other Western countries. After returning from Pyongyang, I urged President Clinton of the United States and Prime Minister Mori of Japan to improve relations with North Korea.

At the 3rd ASEM Leaders' Meeting in Seoul in late October, I advised our friends in Europe to do the same. Indeed, many advances have recently been made between North Korea and the United States, as well as between North Korea and many countries of Europe. I am confident that these developments will have a decisive influence in the advancement of peace on the Korean peninsula.

Ladies and gentlemen: In the decades of my struggle for democracy, I was constantly faced with the refutation that Western-style democracy was not suitable for Asia, that Asia lacked the roots. This is far from true. In Asia, long before the West, the respect for human dignity was written into systems of thought, and intellectual traditions upholding the concept of *demos* took root. "The people are heaven. The will of the people is the will of heaven. Revere the people, as you would heaven." This was the central tenet in the political thoughts of China and Korea as early as three thousand years ago. Five centuries later in

India, Buddhism rose to preach the supreme importance of one's dignity and rights as a human being.

There were also ruling ideologies and institutions that placed the people first. Mencius, disciple of Confucius, said: "The king is son of heaven. Heaven sent him to serve the people with just rule. If he fails and oppresses the people, the people have the right, on behalf of heaven, to dispose of him." And this, 2,000 years before John Locke expounded the theory of the social contract and civic sovereignty.

In China and Korea, feudalism was brought down and replaced with counties and prefectures before the birth of Christ, and civil-service exams to recruit government officials are a thousand years old. The exercise of power by the king and high officials were monitored by robust systems of auditing. In sum, Asia was rich in the intellectual and institutional traditions that would provide fertile grounds for democracy. What Asia did not have was the organizations of representative democracy. The genius of the West was to create the organizations, a remarkable accomplishment that has greatly advanced the history of humankind.

Brought into Asian countries with deep roots in the respect for *demos*, Western democratic institutions have adapted and functioned admirably, as can be seen in the cases of Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. In East Timor, the people went to the polling stations to vote for their independence, despite the threat to their lives from the savage militias. In Myanmar, Madam Aung San Suu Kyi is still leading the struggle for democracy. She retains wide support of the people. I have every confidence that there, too, democracy will prevail and a representative government will be restored.

Distinguished guests, I believe that democracy is the absolute value that makes for human dignity, as well as the only road to sustained economic development and social justice.

Without democracy the market economy cannot blossom, and without market economics, economic competitiveness and growth cannot be achieved.

A national economy lacking a democratic foundation is a castle built on sand. Therefore, as President of the Republic of Korea, I have made the parallel development of democracy and market economics, supplemented with a system of productive welfare, the basic mission of my government.

To achieve the mission, during the past two and a half years, we have taken steps to actively guarantee the democratic rights of our citizens. We have also been steadfast in implementing bold reforms in the financial, corporate, public, and labor sectors. Furthermore, the efforts to promote productive welfare, focusing on human resources development for all citizens, including the low-income classes, have made much headway.

The reforms will continue in Korea. We are committed to the early completion of the current reform measures, as well as to reform as an ongoing process of transformation into a first-rate economy of the 21st century. This we hope to achieve by combining the strength of our traditional industries with the endless possibilities that lie in the information and biotech fields.

The knowledge and information age of the 21st century promises to be an age of enormous wealth. But it also presents the danger of hugely growing wealth gaps between and within countries. The problem presents itself as a serious threat to human rights and peace. In the new century, we must continue the fight against the forces that suppress democracy and resort to violence. We must also strive to deal with the new challenge to human rights and peace with steps to alleviate the information gap, to help the developing countries and the marginalized sectors of society to catch up with the new age.

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to say a few words on a personal note. Five times I faced near death at the hands of dictators, six years I spent in prison, and forty years I lived under house arrest or in exile and under constant surveillance. I could not have endured the hardship without the support of my people and the encouragement of fellow democrats around the world. The strength also came from deep personal beliefs.

I have lived, and continue to live, in the belief that God is always with me. I know this from experience. In August of 1973, while exiled in Japan, I was kidnapped from my hotel room in Tokyo by intelligence agents of the then military government of South Korea. The news of the incident startled the world. The agents took me to their boat at anchor along the seashore. They tied me up, blinded me, and stuffed my mouth. Just when they were about to

throw me overboard, Jesus Christ appeared before me with such clarity. I clung to him and begged him to save me. At that very moment, an airplane came down from the sky to rescue me from the moment of death.

Another faith is my belief in the justice of history. In 1980, I was sentenced to death by the military regime. For six months in prison, I awaited the execution day. Often, I shuddered with fear of death. But I would find calm in the fact of history that justice ultimately prevails. I was then, and am still, an avid reader of history. And I knew that in all ages, in all places, he who lives a righteous life dedicated to his people and humanity may not be victorious, may meet a gruesome end in his lifetime, but will be triumphant and honored in history; he who wins by injustice may dominate the present day, but history will always judge him to be a shameful loser. There can be no exception.

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, ladies and gentlemen, accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, the honoree is committed to an endless duty. I humbly pledge before you that, as the great heroes of history have taught us, as Alfred Nobel would expect of us, I shall give the rest of my life to human rights and peace in my country and the world, and to the reconciliation and cooperation of my people. I ask for your encouragement and the abiding support of all who are committed to advancing democracy and peace around the world.

Thank you.



by Graham Watson

Abridged version of speech delivered on 27 August 2004 at the CALD Vision Mission Workshop in Penang UK Liberal Democrat MEP Graham Watson was then the leader of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe group when he was asked to share his thoughts on liberalism at the CALD workshop in Malaysia in 2004. CALD had just marked its 10th anniversary the year before, and it had deemed the time ripe for a reassessment of its objectives and direction.

Indeed, the world had changed greatly since CALD was founded in 1993. The 11 September 2001, for instance, had governments ready to trample on individual freedoms and violate territories in their pursuit of a stateless enemy. Global warming had also begun to be recognized and felt even if Al Gore had yet to bare "An Inconvenient Truth." In the meantime, increasing economic and political turmoil in many countries had more and more people seeking refuge in other lands. In discussing all these, however, Watson points out something that had managed to remain the same: the tyranny of the rich and powerful and the oppression of the weak.

The first British Liberal Democrat to be elected to the European Parliament, Watson says that while Liberals should always strive to see people, not states, they should also make sure to help strengthen laws and institutions and not individuals in power. And while local solutions may be best for local problems, Watson hints that Liberals know when to seek aid, and when to offer it. He argues that when it comes to addressing global problems such as climate change, terrorism, labor migration, and trade imbalances, alliances and cooperation among governments make more sense than going at it alone or forcing others to take most or all of the burden. This can also be applied on the regional level without necessarily compromising local interests.



I SEE the political challenge for liberalism everywhere as being one of what we might call "applied liberalism." This morning we returned to a set of broad ideas that would be echoed by the freedom of the individual, civil, and political rights protected by law, open markets, tolerance of diversity, secular

government protection for the weak and the dispossessed. Applied liberalism means transforming these ideals into workable politics.

Toward the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, liberalism became a concrete political program in Europe and elsewhere. Its ideals of human freedom were reshaped by the real world. Liberalism came to understand that where human potential is denied, through poverty or poor education, or fear, there is only a caricature of freedom. Applied liberalism quickly came to see freedom—as Amartya Sen would put it—as development. As the freeing of human potential.

One of the lessons I have learnt from working alongside Liberal colleagues is that liberalism is a formula, not a blueprint. Liberals are always trying to balance freedom and fairness, emancipation and empowerment, to achieve the greatest measure of freedom and opportunity for each individual. This can mean different things in different places. Liberals everywhere are trying to work out the best way to make government tolerant of social or religious diversity, but there is no one single way of achieving that.

Liberalism began in the defense of the individual from the power of the state or the majority, or simply other powerful individuals. Liberalism has always tried to make power accountable, first by ensuring that power rests in laws and constitutions, not individual people. Then, in the 20th century, by making those institutions subject to democratic control.

A world of law and common values and multilateral institutions is the only effective way of ensuring that power respects the weak. It is easy to mock the failures of the United Nations—until you consider the alternatives. Whatever you think of current U.S policy in the Middle East, the snub dealt to the United Nations by two of the world's most powerful democracies undermined not just the UN, but also the idea that we live in a world of rulers at all.

This applies as well in areas like free trade. Rich states often speak as if free trade were a deeply held principle. But they do so in one breath and defend their agricultural subsidies and tariff barriers in the next, and we are left with the same sense that the rules are for the weak, but not for the strong. The fact that the Doha Round has now been re-launched on the back of serious European and U.S commitments to end this hypocrisy is to be welcomed. But the poor need action, not words.

Containing and influencing the large and powerful is a challenge for Liberals everywhere. While strategies may not be the same in every case, Liberals know that success depends on vigilance, courage, and peer pressure. On the global level, maintaining these networks of common values and common expectations is a crucial challenge for Liberals.

Everywhere where power is exercised there need to be clear limits to its reach, and it is Liberals who should be defining them. The war against terror has given governments a new and dangerous rationale for encroaching on civil liberties and limiting personal privacy—often in the name of our own safety. If these (security measures) make us marginally safer—and there is not a lot of evidence that they do—they do so at real cost in reduced privacy and liberty.

The war against terror leaves us afraid, and fearful people will listen to governments who tell them they can only be safer when government is more powerful. Benjamin Franklin said that the man who would surrender liberty for a little safety deserves neither. As Liberals we need to be on our guard against claims that we can be more secure by being less free.

Even in our daily political lives, Liberals should always be asking if institutions could be more open and more accountable. I am a firm believer in the European Union, but I have spent my entire European political career working to make the institution of the European Union more open and more democratic.

The second insight of applied liberalism relates to people and states. Liberals do not accept that individuals in one country are fundamentally different from individuals in another. One of the consequences of seeing the world as a planet of individuals and families and local political communities is that national states begin to look very different. Our national identities seem a lot more arbitrary.

This is why Liberals are both committed localists and instinctive internationalists. The state is still the key administrative unit in human affairs, but the time has come to detach it once and for all from the politics of identity. Liberals are right to be deeply suspicious of the conservative language of "civilizations" or "cultures." Liberals believe strongly in self-determination, but they know their history to know that the language of nationalism and self-determination can be abused by national groups to justify aggression. We know that open and pluralistic societies are historically richer and more pacific. We know that economic nationalism is a gamble that can have terrible consequences for prosperity and peace.

The challenge for Liberal politics is to see—as much as possible—people rather that states. We need a mature attitude to international migration that recognizes the values that economic migrants bring rather than flattering the fears and prejudices of those who will not welcome them. We need to accept and shoulder our responsibilities to the global poor by investing aid and development.

We need to build regional, and ultimately, international partnerships in the war against terror, because there is no more safety in national sovereignty. We cannot offer a state's defense against a stateless enemy like al-Qaeda.

Every bit as important, we need to build similar alliances in the desperate struggle to reduce and reverse the damage we are doing to our shared natural environment. States can be a tool in this work, but they can also be an obstacle to it. National governments still tend to look inward rather than outward. The success of the European Union can be attributed to the simple fact that it allows European states to reclaim some of their power over the forces of global change. It enables them to do together what they could not do alone. When the EU leaves local government to local people and concentrates on serving their "aggregate interests" at the European level, it is probably the most practical vision of effective international government in the world. It can and should be a model for Liberals everywhere.

Testing our Liberal principles in the world of practical politics shows us that there are many ways to a Liberal society—as many as there are free people in charge of their own political futures. This applied liberalism may not have the abstract simplicity of a treatise by Locke or a pamphlet by Mill, but it is a program for a practical and truly democratic policies.

There are a number of threads that should run through our work. The first is a consistent and unwavering defense of the irreducible liberty of the individual in the face of power of all kinds. Liberals have always believed that power is dangerous, and must be contained by systems of shared values. Liberals designed and built the United Nations and European Union to do just that. When power invokes the war against terror to remove our freedoms, it will be Liberals who will stand in its way.

The second thread is the need to see people and the political challenges that bring them together, rather than the states that keep them apart. I have named global warming, international terrorism, and the global gap between the rich and the poor, but there are many others.

Liberals in Asia face challenges of their own: societies and communities in which liberal solutions must be built for local problems. Here in Malaysia, the challenges of a pluralistic and racially diverse society and a rapidly developing open economy call for a liberal and secular government, but the Liberal formula will produce a Malaysian liberalism subtly shaped to this unique culture and society.

This is a time of renewal for the Council of Asia Liberals and Democrats. By setting objectives here you will be giving impetus and direction to the work of Liberal Democrats throughout the region.

CONSULTATION & COMPASSION IN THE MIDST OF ECONOMIC TURMOIL

by Abhisit Vejjajiva

Abridged version of keynote speech delivered at the CALD 15th Anniversary Conference in Bangkok in March 2009 When the global financial crisis struck in 2008, Asian countries were supposed to be in a better spot than the rest of the world, having learned a lesson or two from a similar regional economic meltdown 11 years earlier. Yet it soon became apparent that Asia would also feel some pain from the crisis, although perhaps not as deep as that suffered by the West. The booming export and tourism sectors of Thailand, for example, began seeing declining revenues as a result. It did not help that the Southeast Asian country was then also undergoing political unrest.

It was Thailand's political troubles, in fact, which had led to a delay in the holding of CALD's 15th anniversary conference in Bangkok. Indeed, even when the conference — which has as theme "Liberal Responses to the Global Crisis" — finally got underway in March 2009, the Democrat Party government led by then Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva remained in precarious position, having taken power only after the Constitutional Court banned its rival party from continuing to govern because it had indulged in electoral fraud. Not surprisingly, supporters of the DP's rival party, which was allied with ousted populist Premier Thaksin Shinawatra, were not taking the Court's ruling very well. Cracks in Thai society, which had first appeared a few years before, seemed to be just getting bigger and bigger.

Yet Thailand's Oxford-educated premier was unfazed when he took to the podium at the CALD Conference at a Bangkok hotel and delivered his keynote address. Then just 44 years old — the youngest prime minister in Thai modern history — Abhisit had ascended to the premiership a mere three months prior. It was with confidence, however, that he laid out before an international audience his government's road map out of Thailand's multilayered crisis. Instead of the "traditional" infrastructure-spending-heavy stimulus package, for instance, his administration would be putting people first, pumping money into the rural areas, as well as consulting the public how the funds should be spend. At the same time, however, Abhisit emphasizes the need for coordination on a global scale and warns countries not to be tempted to turn to protectionist policies in response to the crisis.



FIRST OF all, let me welcome you to Thailand. I know that we were supposed to have hosted this event back in December of last year, but as you all know, the political situation then meant that we could not host this event. And I said to our partner and organizers that maybe we should think of it as the

longest celebration of our 15th anniversary. Now I welcome you here as the head of the head of the Democrat Party and now head of the government of Kingdom of Thailand.

We are facing a challenge that many people are saying is unprecedented—not just for Thailand, but also for other countries in the world. The huge challenge presented by the financial meltdown on a global scale is taking place as our political challenges continue at home. You would have learned of this late, that over the last two to three years, Thailand has been struggling to find the right balance so that our liberal democracy can mature despite the huge differences among the beliefs of our people.

My foreign minister has already said that over the last three months: The number one priority of my government has been to bring the state of Thailand back to normal. And I think we have come a long way to achieve that, certainly with the hosting of the ASEAN Summit in the beginning of the month. Our ability to push through a number of significant measures and policies throughout is testament to the fact that the Thai government is back in business, functioning and swiftly moving to respond to the global financial crisis. In many ways, we are again back on familiar ground, just like the last time the Democrat Party in Thailand was in power. We will face it and take chances, just as we responded to the 1997 financial crisis, and also at the same time try to grasp one of the best constitutions Thailand has ever had.

For many of you here, this is also familiar turf, where our society continues to find the right balance between how to make sure that the market economy can continue to function when there is instability both in economic and political realm, and how we can still continue to apply the very principles and ideology that we all believe in, which is the right and freedom of our people to choose. So I hope that over the course of today we can come up again with a common agenda as to how we can move forward to protect our democracy, to make sure that the market system functions better, and how we can achieve peace and prosperity for our people.

For us here in Thailand, and for the Democrat Party of Thailand, what this crisis means in terms of the need to response is that we should at least set two immediate tactics. The first is that the economic crisis must not be allowed to lead to a social crisis or a political crisis. We know how social tension and disruptions can follow an economic crisis of this scale. Secondly, as has been mentioned more than once this morning, in every crisis there is enough opportunity. Some of the restructuring, some of the reforms, and some of the changes that have been long overdue in our region should also be implemented to make sure that we emerge out of this stronger. That is the key guiding principle; that is why I ask my government to address this concern.

So the first thing that we do when we assumed office, in terms of coming up with an economic package for the immediate term, is to make sure that we protect our least fortunate people and our most vulnerable. We do this in the belief that it is the only way to prevent social tension and disruptions. And we do this with the thought that often when times are good or when the economy is booming, governments tend to overlook the need to create an appropriate and a comprehensive welfare system that protects the people who most deserve such protection.

One of the messages that I would be certainly be taking to the London Summit is that the developed economies must be aware that the impact of this global downturn will be felt hardest by the poorest in the world—because in South societies and many countries in this region, there is simply not an adequate social protection system in place. And if there has been so much anger and a feeling of injustice on Main Street in the United States—that through no fault of their own, ordinary people are suffering from the sins of Wall Street—well, just imagine how we should feel on the other side of the globe. Most countries in this region, through no fault of their own, had already undergone very painful adjustment only a decade ago to make sure that their financial institutions and system returned to good health. And yet, we are probably now suffering more than the Western economies where the financial crisis originated.

Over the last couple of months, many of our economies—very open economies—have been suffering a bit of contraction in exports and tourism. A decline of 20 to 30 percent is now expected monthly. The effect of that contraction is clearly felt in our factories where there are layoffs and unemployment. That is

why we need to make sure that the immediate response is to protect the people who have been affected by this crisis.

Whether we can call ourselves Liberals or Democrats, or Liberal Democrats, the crisis brings challenges to the way we see and do things: first, in our belief of the market system — because it is based on the right of our people to choose, we have to make sure that such system does not lead to chaos, volatility, and instability. How do we reconcile the principles of intervention or regulation with our basic belief that people will make the right choices? Secondly, with the impact having socio-political dimensions, we have to make sure that in our response to the crisis and in carrying out the reforms, we do not forget to make further advances as far as liberal democracy is concerned. That means all responsive policies and reforms must take into account and recognize the importance of recognizing human rights and the people's participation.

For the Thai government, as far as the response for the financial crisis is concerned domestically, the following steps are being taken: first, we need to inject money from the public sector to do as much as we can, to compensate for the losses following the contraction in exports and tourism. And the way to do that is to try put money in the hands of our people, our consumers—typically the lowest income—as soon as possible.

Much of the money of the first stimulus package is being spent to make sure there is price support for key agricultural goods so that our farmers do not suffer from the severe drop in prices of commodities and agricultural products. We are also spending money to make sure that rural funds are set up, whereby we encourage the people in the villages to decide for themselves how best to invest that money. Particularly, we encourage them to invest in a model of sustainable development... to enhance agricultural productivity, or for projects that either protect the environment or conserve energy. We're also providing money for the poor in urban areas, the people with the lowest income. Over the last two days, we have been handing out cash or checks worth two thousand baht to make sure that these people can get through difficult times.

But that's only the first step. We decided to do this because if we had engaged in traditional stimulus packages—trying to invest in mega projects or some big investment in infrastructure—the money would not be dispersed during

the first half of this year simply because of bureaucratic red tape. Before any construction or real economic transaction could take place, it would be too late.

We are also paving the way for setting up a more concrete and at the same time sustainable welfare system. Included in the stimulus package is the free education program — free basic education for 15 years. We also now pay income support for people over the age of 60. While the money we provide would surely not be enough for them to solely rely on, we are at least stressing the principle that these are deserving people and it is their right to receive support from our government. We must show the people that the role of the government must continue to include the protection of the most vulnerable, that we must show compassion when markets turn cruel. All these will be followed with second and third stimulus packages that would then move on to infrastructure investment.

We hope to create hundreds, thousands of projects in rural areas because my country wants to base its future economy on the strong ability to produce food and alternative fuel in agriculture. We would also be investing to improve our competitiveness—investing in the education and health services, since we believe improving human resources is the best value of money for any country. Of course, while we are doing this, we have to be mindful of physical and monetary discipline.

Over the next couple of years I expect the debt-GDP ratio of most countries to go up by at least 10 or 20 percent; in many cases it might even be higher. We need to make sure that there is discipline so that we do not overspend. Otherwise the markets could react in ways that could lead to further destabilization of our economies.

This is the challenge that we face, for which we have now crafted out this approach, which I believe is in line with our basic belief in liberalism. I should add also that in all these processes, we are inviting participation of our people. I've already mentioned the case of the rural village fund; the local people will be deciding how the money is used. At the national level, we are opening a special website on all stimulus package money, where it is going, and we're inviting participation so that people can continue to monitor it and make suggestions. And given the changing provisions in our constitution, even though we seek loans from external sources, we now have to table the negotiating framework, as well as the contract for parliamentary approval.

We invite such participation and consultation not just from the parliamentarians, but also from the local people. But the most important thing that we must recognize is that there is no way that we can get out of this crisis without coordinating action on an international or global scale.

I appreciate Prime Minister Gordon Brown's attempt to make sure that the G-20 will be more inclusive. I've been invited as chair of ASEAN along with the heads of other regional groupings in the hope that we will provide voice for developing and emerging economies. Let me just briefly take you through the four key points that we will be presenting.

First, all the countries now undertaking fiscal and monetary policies in the hope to stimulate their domestic economies—that is greatly needed, but what matters is not just the size of these countries but how they are implemented, the timing and the allocation of resources within package. I know that later on today, we will have a session on how the money should be spent. Significantly, we hope to see concrete coordination in terms of setting common targets for the global economy, for various regions, or even requiring some kind of minimum targets for individual countries. That's the only way to make sure that the money that is being spent by the various countries will actually lead to a global target. And we will also make the observation that sometimes spending that is part of the stimulus package is not helping on the global scale, particularly when money is pouring into specific industries as subsidies.

The second message that we will be taking is that we must all fight protectionism because if individual countries slip into protectionist mode, everybody will lose in a global scale. Actually, we should learn from the 1930s, we should learn from various instances in the past, where protectionism led to worldwide recession or even depression.

The third message is that we now need to rethink the role of the various global financial institutions. Facilities must be available for a number of countries when there is inadequate protection to have access to counter cyclical policies, so that they can be financed without conditionality. In particular, while there are still a number of countries, especially in Asia, with services reserves, we should look for ways and means by which these reserves could be used to help the world get out of this global recession — perhaps with the IMF or the World Bank acting as providing guarantees when such reserves are being used.

Finally, we cannot overlook the very important challenge of facing up to what has caused this latest round of crisis, which is the instability that follows financial deals—how to strike the right balance between making sure that future financial transactions, particularly international transactions, are better regulated without being overregulated and how we can reconcile the fact that we now live in a single global economy, but without a global authority with the power to make sure that such regulations can really be enforced.

I repeat, these are very challenging times and we are being tested severely. Yet I hope we can rise up to this challenge and pull through. And when we emerge from this crisis, not only will our economies be stronger, but a foundation would have also been set for stronger liberal democracy across the globe.

Thank you very much.



by Benigno Simeon Aquino III

Speech given at the Presidential Palace in Manila on 18 June 2011 on the occasion of the 57th Congress of Liberal International He is the son of a slain senator and a former president. He had also spent more than a decade crafting laws in the Philippine Congress. Yet many still considered Benigno Simeon 'Noynoy' C. Aquino III as an "accidental candidate" when he announced that he was joining the 2010 Philippine presidential elections.

The public clamor for him to run for president came shortly after his mother Corazon 'Cory' Aquino passed away in August 2009. Unable to let go of one of the most powerful figures and symbols of the 1986 EDSA Revolution, Filipinos turned to her son. In him many saw a possible—and decidedly different—successor to the then incumbent whose administration had gone through one corruption scandal after another. Many Filipinos pinned their hopes on Noynoy Aquino to bring about change; many, however, also had to admit that their reason for doing so was based largely on his last name.

Noynoy Aquino had yet to complete his first year as president when he gave this speech. It shows, however, how the unassuming Aquino—the fourth Philippine president to come from the Liberal Party—puts weight on work based on planning and principles. It describes his administration's efforts to translate abstract values into nuts-and-bolts processes and policies that promote efficiency and equality. He admits that being a Liberal today poses difficulties. Aquino, however, argues—and demonstrates—that Liberal values remain relevant and applicable in the modern world.



THE CURRENT global milieu has been described by some thinkers as "post-ideological," and one would find it hard to argue with such a description. Schools of thought have come and gone; ideological frameworks meant to describe the world we live in—and to prescribe the best way to survive and flourish—have

gained popularity, then fallen by the wayside. While it cannot be denied that advances in human knowledge have provided us with comforts and allowed us to address some of the greater, more complex problems that humankind has had to face, I think we can all—as Liberal thinkers—agree that by the moment, more and more questions arise, and answers cannot always be at hand.

It is this context that we find ourselves gathering as Liberals in a world that gives greater value to a certain ideological dexterity; a nimbleness of thought that allows governments to respond quickly to crises, to foresee trends, and to utilize these trends for the benefit of the people. This of course requires the clarity of vision to recognize what is happening on the ground, and the humility to adjust accordingly.

The lines that have traditionally defined us, at least politically, have become blurred. While in some corners of the globe Liberals have for generations been a small but staunch opposition, in others they have banded with other parties in order to pursue their agenda. While on one hand we may have pushed for greater deregulation of industries, on the other we have called for governments to step in, in order to save an ailing economy. And so the question persists: What does it mean to be a Liberal today? Our governments have all had to operate within different environments, and we've all had to adapt in order to face the challenges of our individual nations. Perhaps the question I must first answer then is, "How am I as a Liberal?

My candidacy was organized along two tracks: there was the hard work and organization required of the Liberal Party, and there was the cooperation without undue integration of the many other groups and associations that wanted to help campaign so that the people's mandate might be obtained.

As we have seen, there is plenty of room for both, whether in a campaign or in governance.

And when in the past the ruling party in its quest to perpetuate itself in power recognized no limits and no other voice but its own, we now choose to be as consultative and inclusive as possible. When before the law was used to harass and silence those who brooked opposition, today we choose to consider the law as a means to engage others in discourse. When before authority was used to quell hope, today we use it to realize hope.

In other words, in power, we choose to be different from those who were replaced.

This is what we have constantly communicated to our people. Our blueprint for governance—our Social Contracts with Filipino people—acknowledges the dissatisfaction with the status quo that got us elected in the first place. Our policies have been on the basis of firm lines of principle.

When I announced my candidacy for the presidency, I said my job is about the efficient allocation of resources. We made zero-based budgeting the basis of all our public spending. We refused to accept previous assumptions and went back to basics.

We also felt that only through a thorough reexamination of contracts and expenditures could we achieve the fiscal prudence that has allowed us, in April, to record our highest monthly surplus in 25 years. In turn, this has allowed us to ensure that we will have adequate resources for the administration of justice, as well as programs such as conditional cash transfers for the poor.

And while these policies of my government are in response to the needs of our people here and now, they are also firmly in keeping with principles first laid down by our party when it was organized in 1946.

In essence, these are what have called our people to rally along the "tuwid na daan"—the straight and righteous path. It is also what binds us as Liberals, even in this so-called post-ideological century of ours: the respect for the individual's rights and freedoms; the commitment to make growth inclusive and equitable, so that every man and woman may have the means to fulfill their fullest potential; and the unwavering compassion for those with little means to pursue their dreams.

We continue to be guided by these principles in every aspect of governance. Whether it was in my appeal to the Supreme Court to permit the Maguindanao Massacre trial to be televised, so our people may have an opportunity to witness justice served and to understand the cause of impunity in our country; or whether it was in my pursuing a pocket open-skies policy as part of our liberalization and deregulation efforts; or even in my recent signing of Executive Order 45, which allows our Department of Justice to take legal action in the case of monopolies and cartels—what we are pursuing are these broad things, unbound by narrow-minded dogma, but consistent with our obligation to pursue the greater good.

This is also why this Congress has chosen to locate Human Rights as parallel to Free Trade in the articulation of our theme: Because we believe that the latter must be pursued to ensure that the former is upheld. As I have mentioned once before, governments must ensure direction, so that the market might be used as a plow to cultivate the fields of social justice. In rhetorical terms: How can an individual enjoy the rights he has on paper, when from birth he has been denied the tools to take his destiny into his own hands?

Such a question continues to persist in my country, and in many of yours. Some of us have already obtained a mandate to address this, and as my people pray—and work—so that my nation may overcome its own set of challenges, so do I pray and pledge my support to the ultimate flourishing and concretization of our principles as Liberals around the globe.

The Liberal Party of the Philippines joined the Liberal International 23 years ago, the first to do so in Asia. In the span of a generation we have grown from a small band of believers to a multitude capable of passing laws and implementing them consistent with our agenda of equal opportunity, human dignity, and individual freedom. While in 1989 a mere handful of our stalwarts journeyed to Paris to reiterate our beliefs and gain entry into this global Liberal family, today we host this Congress as the party that our people deemed worthy to lead them. And while this indicates that part of our journey has come full circle, by no means has it achieved its full potential.

And is that not what we gather here for — the achievements of our potentials as leaders, as parties, and as nations? This is the challenge that lies before all of us committed party members and committed Liberals - the same challenge that has been posed to the first people to bear the Liberal mandate.

May we continue to rise to the challenge. Thank you for honoring my party and my country by coming to Manila to hold this Congress.

Mabuhay.



by Franklin Drilon

Abridged version of the speech delivered during the dinner reception for Liberal Parliamentarians attending the 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union General Assembly in Manila on 2 April 2005 It was an opportune moment: The Inter-Parliamentary Union was to hold its General Assembly in Manila, and two of CALD's member organizations were in a crisis. Both happened to be the major opposition parties in their respective countries and both were being subjected to various kinds of oppression. And so when members of the IPU gathered in Manila in April 2005, CALD made sure that the plight of the members and supporters of the Sam Rainsy Party in Cambodia and the National Council of the Union of Burma would not go unnoticed. And while the speech given by then Liberal Party of the Philippines President and Senator Franklin Drilon at a dinner for Liberal IPU members does not mention these organizations, it nevertheless asserts that democracy is still "the best for Asia" and argues that it is "essential in the fight against corruption, terrorism, and poverty." Certainly, too, says Drilon, these ills cannot be made into excuses for the curtailment of basic freedoms.

But Drilon, then also the Philippine Senate President, does not let non-Asians off the hook that easy as well in his speech. A prominent labor lawyer before he entered politics in the 1980s, he says that it is sheer hypocrisy for Northern countries to profess being champions of democracy when they circumvent global trade rules at the expense of the poor countries of the South. At the very least, this limits the economic choices that people in the impoverished South can make, which could only ensure that efforts to promote democracy there would flounder.



INDEED I am proud of the fact the Liberal Party of the Philippines—the oldest and second biggest political party in our country—is one of the founders of CALD and the Asian member of Liberal International.

We Liberals are proud of the fact that the Party was the forefront in the arduous struggle for the restoration of democratic institutions during the country's dark years. Under the dictatorship some Party members were even killed, jailed, and maimed in our fight for democracy that culminated in the bloodless revolution on EDSA in 1986.

The EDSA Revolution, which inspired similar peaceful revolutions in Germany and other central European countries, succeeded in affirming that power resides in the people. More than anything, it was a testament to the Filipinos' profound love for democracy.

The new global order brings vast opportunities to create wealth. It also presents enormous challenges and risks. Now more than ever democracy is imperative. It is essential in the fight against corruption, terrorism, and poverty—global scourges that have corrosive effects on our society and people.

I submit: Only in a democracy will the fight against these global scourges be more effective and meaningful. Because it is only in a democracy where accountability is required of public officials and institutions. It is only in a democracy where we can have a strong independent judiciary and a resolute and vigilant media.

Some may passionately argue that democracy is not an antidote to these ills and that curtailing some basic freedoms will help in curing these social infirmities. But I beg you to disagree.

I submit that democracy is not a panacea to the world's ills, much less Asia's. But despite its institutional flaws, I firmly believe that democracy is still the best for Asia and the rest of the world.

There is no universal model for democracy. However, we must pursue a democracy that is compatible not only with our cultural and social landscape, but also with our collective aspirations for peace and development.

Moreover, we must constantly seek a balance between promoting peace and development and protecting individual rights and civil liberties. We must have a democracy that balances individualism and sense of community; a democracy where the will of the governed is the bedrock of a strong government.

However, it is sad to note that even if the past century was marked by the triumph of democracy when the Cold War ended, it failed to emancipate the poor and developing countries of the South from the economic and political greed of the wealthy countries of the North.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is utter hypocrisy in wealthy countries that profess undying love for democracy by circumvent global trade rules at the expense of poor and underdeveloped counties.

Friends, economic stability, global peace, and security will be difficult to attain in the 21st century if the clique of rich nations will continue to rig the trade game.

The essence of democracy is the freedom to make economic, political, and social choices. But we see today nations mired in violence and ethnic conflicts, miserably trapped in in the economic and social quagmires. Efforts to promote democracy in these countries will fail if they are continuously subjected to trade-distorting farm subsidies and tariffs by the club of rich countries.

Dismantling trade barriers is a thousand times better than giving them aid, which most of the time will only end up in corrupt hands.

As democracy-loving legislators, we are together on this road to global peace and development. International cooperation is crucial in the fight against economic and social maladies that rob our children and the generations yet unborn of a bright future and deprive people of choices and opportunities.

We must speak in one voice. We must act now.

THE BOON & BANE OF LABOR MIGRATION

by Corazon Aquino

Keynote address delivered during the CALD-ALDE-LI Meeting held on 22 June 2006 in Manila

Asia is probably the world's biggest source of migrant workers. According to the International Labor Organization, 25 million Asian workers are currently employed outside their home countries. Each year, about 2.6 million Asians leave their homeland to seek work elsewhere. It used to be that their search would take them far away from the region. But in the last 20 years, the destination of many has been a prosperous country next door.

Such proximity, however, has not meant improved conditions for labor migrants. And while the maltreatment of illegal workers has become far too common even in Asian countries, those with proper papers are also at risk of discrimination, if not abuse.

Democracy icon and the first female President of the Philippines Corazon 'Cory' Aquino reminds her audience in this speech that when workers leave their homeland, many of them do so to escape hardship. It does not make sense then, she argues, that they suffer even more overseas, especially when most of the money they earn supports not only their families, but also the economy of their home country. It also does not make sense, she says, to maltreat and discriminate against workers who provide needed services in their host nations.

Aquino's own country is among the major sources of migrant labor. Labor migration had been meant as a palliative labor policy during the Marcos dictatorship to help a faltering economy and ease unemployment. The People Power Revolution in 1986 toppled the Marcos regime—and put Aquino in the Presidential Palace—but it failed to change the conditions that had driven millions of Filipinos to work abroad. By 2005, at least seven million Filipinos were working in foreign lands. Yet even though the Philippines has implemented several laws aimed at protecting the citizens it sends to work abroad, Filipinos and other foreign workers remain at the mercy of their employers and authorities in their host countries. Thus, while Aquino asks policy makers in both host and source countries to maximize the contribution of migrant workers to the global economy, she also urges them to protect these laborers, as well as and limit "the grim economic and social consequences" of labor migration.



LET ME thank the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats for this pleasant task to speak before you this morning. It is gratifying to note that leaders from Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America are gathered in this room bound by a common passion—promotion of democracy and freedom—and political

beliefs rooted in the liberal values and traditions of liberalism.

My late husband Ninoy Aquino was a dyed-in-the-wool Liberal. More importantly, he suffered imprisonment under the Marcos dictatorship and offered his very life for the restoration of democracy. Our only son Noynoy Aquino follows the family's political footsteps. He also hews steadfastly to the vision of the Liberal Party of the Philippines as an active Party member.

Our involvement and ties with the Liberal Party are a source of pride for our family. The forebears of the Liberal Party of the Philippines left us with a legacy of principled politics, uncommon valor, and fierce loyalty to our country. These are Liberal values that have been constantly tested by a numerous political storms that have wreaked havoc upon our country's democratic institutions and just as constantly have prevailed.

Ladies and gentlemen, the constant changes in the world today driven by the awesome technological achievements never fail to amaze me. However, I am also concerned about the economic and security changes we are facing in the 21st century. Despite the end of the Cold War, the world remains divided, this time between those who are economically prosperous and those who are not, between those who are free to chart their lives because they live in a democratic society and those who need and pay for documents just to be able to gain entry and employment in high-income countries. Some of them even end up woefully with smugglers or big crime syndicates.

Both the country of origin and the country of destination feel the impact of this worldwide phenomenon. There is always the argument that migrant workers steal employment from the native workers and drive down wages. However, the UN report asserts that migrants complement native workers and contribute substantially to the economy of the destination country.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said, and I quote: "The report makes a strong case that international migration supported by the right policies can be

highly beneficial for the developments both of the countries they come from and those where they arrive."

In the meantime, countries that are big sources of migrant workers are grappling with brain drain. For instance, in the Philippines we pride ourselves in being a world supplier of medical and health care professionals. However, years down the road, this will pose a big problem in our health sector. The dearth of medical and other professionals will certainly impact negatively on a country's economic health like other social costs such as broken families brought about by distance and the long years of separation and children raised by extended families.

Recognizing the great sacrifices and the risk that overseas Filipino workers take, our government offers a comprehensive package of incentives such as training on social and working conditions and foreign land, special life insurance and pension plans, medical insurance and tuition assistance, eligibility for predeparture and emergency loans. Moreover, we encourage our workers to return through a comprehensive "Balikbayan" program, which exempts them from a wide range of taxes. In addition, our Congress enacted two laws—the Absentee Voting Law and Dual Citizenship Act—to encourage Filipinos abroad to actively participate in our country's economic and political life.

I am certain that those of you who come from countries with extensive shares of migrant workers also believe that social safety net programs must be accessible and available to migrants in both their country of origin and destination. Yet while we must not forget that countries of origin carry half of the burden of responsibility in terms of the welfare of migrant workers, host nations who benefit from the labor provided by these workers should also provide them access to basic services—aside from seeing to it that they do not live in constant fear and trepidation.

Poverty and the fear for one's safety drive people worldwide to leave the land of their birth and seek economic relief, comfort, and security in another country. A recent United Nations report revealed that 191 million people are living outside their own country. Migration affects almost all countries in the world. And quite often, people from the developing world move to developed countries in search of better economic opportunities through legal or even illegal means.

Advancement in technology and open borders make it easier for potential migrants to learn and avail of opportunities abroad. With electronic transfers, it has become very easy for them to send money to their families event getting in touch and reuniting with their families thousands of miles away have become easier and less costly because of the Internet, cheaper telephone rates, and lower airfares.

It is no secret that migrant workers substantially contribute to their country's economy through the remittances that they regularly send. The UN report further revealed that of the 10 billion dollars that migrants sent home to their families in 2005, seven billion went to developing countries. The amount is more than all international aid combined that could be extended to these developing countries.

In the Philippines, our overseas Filipino workers are the new heroes because their remittances have kept the economy afloat amid economic difficulties and uncertainties. Thousands of families in dire poverty have a chance to improve their lives through remittance money.

Countries can also reap non-monetary benefits from international migration. There is transfer of knowledge when migrant works return to the country and apply the knowledge and ideas they have acquired abroad.

There is so much potential for migrant workers to contribute to nation-building. For instance, exposure to democratic ideals and systems, foreign political culture, and governance will inspire initiatives that will improve the political framework and governance back home.

However, the saga of migrant workers has two sides. One side shows economic opportunity and a brighter future for their families. The other side tells the sad and gripping stories of harassment, racial discrimination, xenophobia, cruelty, and even death in the hands of the foreign employers. In some societies where there are cultural and religious tensions, migrant workers risk life and limb just to earn precious dollars, euros, and pounds to send home. Some migrant workers from low and middle-income countries take huge risks. Governments must look into the recruitment and deployment process to avoid driving migrant workers into the hands of crime syndicates and cruel employers.

In my country, we have an anti-trafficking law, we mete stiff penalties on illegal recruiters, and we provide free legal assistance and witness protection to victims of illegal recruitment.

As countries see closer economic integration, and as bilateral and regional agreements are being forged, migration barriers are also falling down fast. It is in the economic interest of destination countries if they open their doors to migrant labor and accord fair and good treatment to migrant workers.

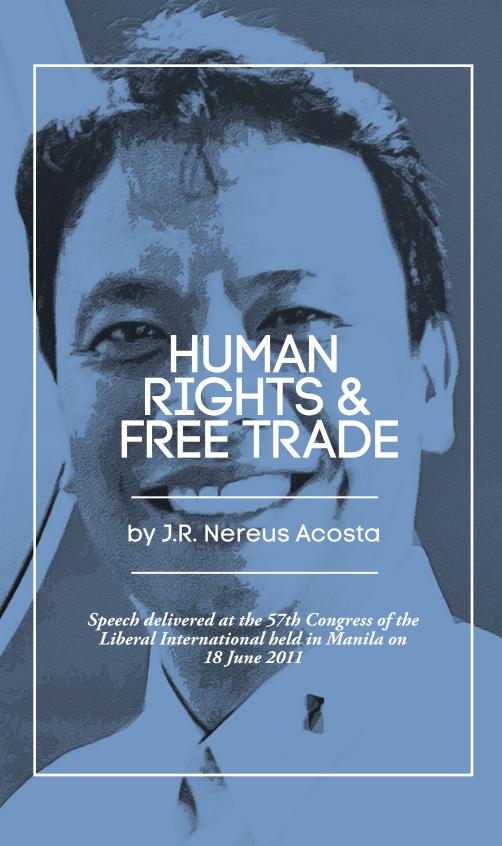
In a world that is globalizing fast, nations need to recognize that labor migration can be a force for convergence and stability.

Ladies and gentlemen, this conference is an auspicious occasion to discuss among you who are the movers and the shakers in your respective countries. How do we address the problems associated with labor migration, how do we prevent the grim economic and social consequences of deploying our professionals abroad, and how can we maximize the contribution of migrant workers to the global economy?

I trust the liberal values of fairness, respect for basic rights, freedom, and equality will serve as your compass in crafting policies on labor migration in your own countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was really a pleasure to meet you and share my thoughts with you. I wish you all a wonderful stay in my country.

Mabuhay!



To many, human rights and free trade travel on different tracks, with one having little to do with the other. In this age of globalization, however, they pose a disturbing dilemma for Liberals. Or as CALD Secretary General J.R. Nereus Acosta puts it early on in this speech: "Are Liberals by principle responsible to uphold free trade even if it means the erosion of a basic respect for human rights?"

A PhD in political science and a former associate professor at the Asian Institute of Management in Manila, Acosta at first uses tricks from the academic world to challenge his audience. The examples he uses to drive home his point, however, are far from hypothetical—and forces people to question the decisions they or their government may have made. In the end, he argues that human rights and free trade are "essentially complementary," and that development without democracy or respect for rights would not make sense to a true Liberal.



LET ME begin with something out of the box, as it were. I lift from the *Herald Tribune* yesterday, particularly of the column of Tom Friedman (of *Flat, Hot and Crowded* fame), naming "the most influential foreign figure of the year in China" — not Obama or Bill Gates or Warren Buffet. He is seen as a rock star

in China, Japan, and South Korea: Michael Sandel, Harvard University political philosopher and author of the best-selling book *Justice: What is the Right Thing to Do?*, who uses real-life examples in his highly popular classes to illustrate the philosophies of the likes of Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill. Sandel tosses out questions to students and varied audiences like: "Is it fair that David Beckham makes seven hundred or one thousand times more than a school teacher?" "Are we morally responsible for righting the wrongs of our grandparents' generation?"

So in the manner of Sandel let me begin by posing these questions as a way of proposing a thematic debate that we hope will move us away from just the abstract and academic and focus what provokes thought, sharpen reasoned argument, and even deepen moral understanding:

Are Liberals by principle responsible to uphold free trade even if it means the erosion of a basic respect for human rights?

Specifically: Should consumerism (of widely affordable and accessible manufactured goods) in Canada be sustained by sweatshops with child labor in Calcutta?

Should the appetite for finely-crafted luxury items in New York or London be sated by the nimble hands of children trapped in hovels in congested favelas of Rio de Janeiro?

Do the sumptuous sushi and tuna or other seafood delicacies in Tokyo restaurants justify overfishing and coral-reef destruction in Philippine and Indonesian waters that further impoverish coastal communities or trample on the rights of indigenous people?

Should mineral resources extracted from critical ecosystems in Africa to fuel industrial growth in the Eastern seaboard of China or urbanization in India or elsewhere be auctioned to the highest bidder?

Can Liberals justify food miles or a carbon footprint if the tropical fruits we buy in, say, European supermarkets, are transported across oceans and produced with cheap, labor union-busting practices in agrarian regions of Central America?

Should the free flow of labor, a key pillar of free trade—as with the phenomenon of the over ten million overseas Filipino workers in over one hundred countries—include or justify the adverse social costs on families?

Even more pointedly, is the so-called emancipation of career women in highly developed city-states like Singapore and Hong Kong attained on the backs of the Filipina domestic helper or nanny who cares for the children and homes of these women?

Do OFW remittances that keep an entire economy like that of the Philippines afloat with 15 billion pesos a year or rough 12 percent of GNP—three times higher than FDI—justify a three-generation export labor policy to date that is based on the separation of parents or elders from their children?

Should Liberal governments in power continue to impose economic sanctions on the Burmese junta and insist on Suu Kyi's release and the Burma's democratization, or if because of Burma's rich resources, which we may need for our own economic growth, tolerate continued repression?

With the rise of the global economic powerhouse like China, should Liberal governments or Liberal leaders or policy-makers set aside their core human rights and democratic values in favor of benefitting as a trading partner or investment destination?

These are the more visceral representations of the thematic resolution before us today, that we as Liberals seek to grapple with and address—not only simply from the vantage policy or implications for law, but more importantly, from the moral standpoint of justice and the common good.

As schools of thought go, there are three tracks we can take in the deliberation on free trade vis-à-vis human rights.

One lens with which to view this would be what we would call the divergent or mutually exclusive frame. Simply put, if we were to pursue the ends of free trade, we must be prepared to overlook or to trade these off with human rights protection. Yet if human rights were to be paramount, free trade is necessarily impeded, recognizing that there would be high opportunity costs to trade because competitiveness, as told, is enfeebled or reduced.

The second frame is what we call sequential — that is, one is the antecedent to the other. Human rights will have to come before free trade — or in broader terms, democracy before development. Or free trade before human rights in this case, development first before democracy. We call to mind Singapore's experience and like development models driving the so-called 'Asian Values' debates.

The third lens would be what we call convergent or parallel — that human rights and free trade are mutually reinforcing or essentially complementary. Simply put, both have to be pursued in parallel terms or trajectories. As President Aquino said this morning, free trade must serve the ends of human rights — or stated differently, development and democracy are inextricably linked.

Increasing the spaces of democracy and human rights is not only about more open institutions but even more so, the reduction of what Nobel laureate Amartya Sen would call "unfreedoms." Democracy, after all, in regions especially like Latin America, Africa, and Asia, cannot be removed from or understood independent of the discourses on development. Sen argues that beyond free elections, a free press, and an independent judiciary, democratization requires the removal of major sources of "unfreedoms" — poverty, corruption, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, system deprivation and injustice, neglect of public facilities, intolerance, and repression.

It should be clear that the latter framework is the Liberal path. The manner by which we grapple with and deliberate—and yes, vigorously debate—will allow us to further refine and define the kind of choices we make, the values that inform those decisions and choices, and, simply put, answer and question, who we are essentially as Liberals.

If we were to metaphorically depict this, we can use the visual of a staircase. The top of the staircase is the perfect marriage as it were of human rights and free trade. The choices and decisions we make as we answer such questions determine the quality and integrity of our choices as Liberals; or how we move from the real to the ideal, and the real and ideal become one and the same.

As case in point, with our Burmese friends here, it should be clear to us as Liberals that while we all want Burma to have an open economy and trade with the world with its vast comparative advantages in natural and human resources, we cannot turn a blind eye to the continued repression of Aung San Suu Kyi and the Burmese people. So for nothing less than the freedom of Suu Kyi and all Burmese do we work toward the integration of Burma's economy into the orbit of free regional and global trade.

As we begin our debates, we call to mind a quote from Vaclav Havel—the Czech head of state who rose to power after being a long-time prisoner of conscience during the long years of harsh communist rule—who said that when what we say or do becomes dissonant with what we truly feel or believe in, that is the beginning of moral damage.

As Liberals, we must only be true to ourselves—in the discourse on human rights and free trade as in all other tenets that give us our raison d'être—not just in terms of being intellectually honest, but also in the fundamental sense of being grounded on moral principle.

So let the debates begin here—yet still make convergence happen!



by Tsai Ing-wen

Speech delivered at the 57th Congress of Liberal International held 16 - 19 June 2011 in Manila What was supposed to be the 'Pacific Century' has turned into a largely Chinese one. Once deep in slumber, the Asian giant finally woke up some three decades ago and freed its economy from its socialist shackles. Today China has become one of world's most formidable economic powerhouses; not only is it the world's factory, it is also a major investor in several countries within and outside Asia. Far from becoming a responsible and cooperative global force, however, China has increasingly become belligerent toward neighbors and continues to deny its own people the political and social freedoms they deserve. It also has no qualms over literally using the stick to silence local critics while dangling trade and investment carrots for outsiders to look the other way.

But instead of sanctions against China, Taiwan's first female presidential candidate suggests constructive engagement toward Beijing to encourage it to act in ways appropriate to its growing role in the global arena. Interestingly, the diminutive Tsai Ing-wen gave this speech as she prepared to take on at the 2012 polls the tall and charismatic incumbent President Ma Ying-jeou of the Kuomintang.

Then the chairperson of Taiwan's opposition Democratic Progressive Party, Tsai in this speech also points out that other countries should share the burden of seeing to it that China becomes a responsible global citizen. This includes in large part doing business with it without compromising democratic principles and human rights. After all, notes Tsai, the consequences—social, political, and environmental—of a misbehaving China are far reaching and go beyond its borders.



LIBERAL FRIENDS and colleagues, it is my honor and pleasure to be among fellow Liberals, particularly in such a session with political leaders from Africa, Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Although I am a relative newcomer to the circle of political leaders, I feel like I am among family. The warmth and support

that Liberal International has shared with the Democratic Progressive Party over the past year, tied together by our common past years, tied together by our common values and beliefs, are exhibited today. My party and I are proud to be a part of this global network, and we will continue to seek a proactive role in promoting a liberal and democratic global agenda through Liberal International.

I am especially pleased to be able to take part in my first Liberal International Congress here in the Philippines, Taiwan's closest neighbor. Like the Philippines, over the last few centuries, Taiwan has been through periods of colonialism, war, and rule by authoritarian regimes. Yet our peoples have diligently worked to lift our nations through a period of rapid economic development and into the modern industrial age. And in the mid—to late-eighties, our peoples staged peaceful revolutions that inaugurated era of modern democracy in the region.

Yesterday evening several hundred Taiwanese living in the Philippines hosted a political rally for me at Club Filipino, a site that also commemorates the 1986 People Power revolution. That was the same year that we broke the ban on opposition parties under Martial Law and established the Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan. And although we continue to cope with challenges in our political systems, our two nations were indeed part of a wave of democratization that demonstrates to the world: Contrary to the claims of a few Asian leaders, we Asians are perfectly capable of building systems and institutions of democracy in which the people are empowered to make decisions about their future.

While we celebrate the political achievements of our fellow member parties who lead their nations toward democratic progress, we must bear in mind that there are others who are in much more difficult conditions, and it is our duty as fellow Liberals and Democrats to extend our concern and support toward the freedom fighters and democracy activists who continue to struggle in tremendous hardship. Among CALD members, for example, is Sam Rainsy, who is here today but has been deprived of his parliamentary immunity and has no choice but to campaign in exile. The LI Prize for Freedom recipient Chee Soon Juan of Singapore is banned from leaving his country and thus

cannot be with us here today. Another member party, the Burmese National League for Democracy, had been struggling under conditions where the basic freedoms of many of their leaders and members were restrained. Even though some rudimentary progress is now happening in Burma, there is a long way to go before free and fair elections can become a reality.

The even greater challenge for those of us interested in promoting democracy in Asia is China. The rise of China that is authoritarian impacts not only Taiwan's international survival; it has far—reaching consequences around the world. Therefore it is important for us to work with the rest of the world, especially those concerned about the future of democracy, to engage constructively with China, to ensure that China's rise is peaceful, stable, and consistent with responsibilities we would all expect of a great power.

The theme of this Congress, Human Rights and Trade, is particularly pertinent as we deal with China. The Congress concept paper asks the question: How do we balance basic human rights with economic interests? All too often, in the current state of the global political economy, economic leverage is applied to silence critics on human rights; economic strength is also utilized as a base for expanding political and military influence. I don't think we would be so uncomfortable with China's economic rise if it weren't for the fact that it is an authoritarian government. Recent moves by the Chinese government to intensify its Internet censorship and control, the arrests of more bloggers, lawyers, and activists, and even artists such as Ai Weiwei, are worrisome. This added to more aggressive international behavior, most notably in the South China Sea, and creates challenges that we as Liberals must jointly face.

We are operating in an extremely complex environment where there is a shift in global power on a system level. The United States, which has dominated global politics since the end of the Cold War, is over-extended overseas and limited in capacity by rising domestic economic and social troubles. In the meantime, China is rapidly growing in a complex web of global interdependencies, both positive and negative: advances in technologies, transportation, and communication on the one hand, with degradation of the environment, the spread of nuclear weapons, growing income disparities, and social unrest on the other. We are all relevant parties to China's growth, and yes, we must all bear together the environmental, security, and social consequences.

The international debate around how to deal with China surrounds two main arguments. Some optimists believe that more engagement with China will give the outside world an opportunity to have an influence on changing China, integrating China into conformity with international rules, norms, and standards of behavior. Others see China continuing on the same path, liberalizing economically but maintaining an authoritarian system that is also capable of modernizing and adapting to changes. The pessimists worry that a rising China that is authoritarian will attempt to develop an alternative world order, and that a balance-of-power strategy is needed to contain such a scenario.

We in the DPP believe that both integration and balance are needed. Integration generates opportunities for business and travel, and it will give more and more Chinese people a chance to witness and experience alternative political systems. At the same time, we must balance and hedge against risks, managing the relationship in a way that would safeguard our values and interests.

From a Taiwan perspective, we believe it is in our best interest to deal with China in a multilateral framework, where international rules and regulations help to balance China's growingly asymmetrical leverage and influence. We must be practical as our business community takes advantage of the growing economic opportunities in China, but at the same time we must be vigilant in guarding our most cherished values, mainly democracy and human rights.

The reality is that over a century apart, the two sides across the Taiwan Strait have evolved distinctly. Our politics and societies have evolved in different paths, and we in the DPP are particularly committed to preserving the free choice of the Taiwanese people to determine their own future. Yet at the same time, we also recognize that there are commonalities and shared interests, and that is in the joint pursuit of peaceful development. Therefore the DPP is also committed—for we see it as a part in preserving peace and stability in the region—in establishing a peaceful and stable mechanism for interacting with China without compromising our values.

Our doors are open to Chinese visitors who are sincerely interested in understanding the DPP. At our party headquarters and through our think tank, we have engaged in dialogue with some visiting Chinese delegations. We have also taken initiative to invite Chinese dissidents and activists, some of the exiled overseas, to organize election observation trips. Hopefully through

such exchanges we can enhance understanding to minimize the chances of miscalculations, and we can also help the Chinese people and government better understand the functioning of the democratic system that we have worked so hard to build.

In dealing with China and other countries, one of the multilateral frameworks for raising human-rights questions and promoting in democracy is through party-to-party networks such as Liberal International. As political parties representing Liberal values, we are not constrained by traditional state-to-state diplomacy that needs to take into account varying sectors of domestic interests and calculations of international power.

Of course, whether in and out of government, we must always have a realistic grasp of international circumstances and the conditions under which we operate. But as a political network we also stand for values, and it is our values and policies that distinguish our existence from the other political parties. The benefit of having a network to act, instead of leaving the pressure to individual political parties to bear, is that collective voice of principle, a voice of ideas, and a voice of belief in democracy and human rights. That is why we, the Democratic Progressive Party, have chosen to be a proactive member of Liberal International, doing what we can to help strengthen the network's presence in Asia and with a particular emphasis on human rights.

Although my party has been through a very difficult period since our electoral defeats in 2008, our commitment to the promotion of democracy and human rights unwavering. In April my party decided to nominate me as its presidential candidate for the next election in January. We have been through a difficult three years in our domestic politics, but I believe my party's selection of me not only as leader of the party but also presidential candidate illustrates a collective desire for our country to move forward. We must build on past achievements, but we must also constantly reflect and renew, so that we can enhance our competence and refine our capacity to govern, and hopefully we will win back the mandate next year.

It is our hope that as we move forward in upholding our values and pursing our public policies, we will continue to have the support of our Liberal friends around the world. There is much to learn from each other, whether we are in or out of government. And from our part, the DPP is proud to continue our active

participation through this international network of political parties committed to freedom, liberty, democracy, and responsible government.

As we are here enjoying the hospitality of the organizers, I also hope that in the near future we will have an opportunity to host all of you in Taiwan, as the governing party, too. But before that we have tough election campaigns for the presidency and the legislature. The blessing and concern of LI member campaigns are memorable and much appreciated. You are all more than welcome to come to Taiwan again to observe our upcoming elections in January, and we hope we can count on your continuing support for Taiwan's democracy as we celebrate a new era in Taiwan's democratic progress.





by Sam Rainsy

Acceptance speech delivered during the LI Prize for Freedom awarding ceremony in Marrakech on 9 November 2006. By his own count, Cambodian opposition leader Sam Rainsy has been stripped of parliamentary immunity three times and sentenced to prison twice. He has also escaped several assassination attempts. The Frencheducated accountant-turned-politician, however, continues to push on, challenging the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen and standing in parliamentary elections that have consistently seen him winning.

Sam Rainsy has twice gone into self-exile to escape what he says were false charges raised against him by the Hun Sen government. On both occasions, however, an official pardon from King Norodom Sihamoni, enabled him to return to Cambodia. When he received the LI Freedom Prize in 2006, he had already been able to come home from exile (the first one) without fear of being forced to serve 18 months in prison and pay \$14,000 in fines and compensation for accusing Cambodia's two ruling parties of corruption.

Still, his acceptance speech makes it evident that he was not about to hold his tongue just to please Cambodian authorities. Indeed, he describes Cambodia as having a "false democracy" in which dissent is not tolerated, corruption is rampant, and rights are abused. He then points to a parallel situation in Singapore, where the government's consistent economic success seems to have made it feel justified in repressing opposition. Leniency or complacency, Sam Rainsy says, should not be granted to "dictators wearing non-democratic clothes."



I AM most grateful for your decision to present me this evening with the Liberal International Prize for Freedom. It is a genuine honor to be associated with great names such as Corazon Aquino, Vaclav Havel, Martin Lee, and Aung San Suu Kyi, all past recipients of LI's Prize for Freedom.

This award has been handed to me, and it is my name that will be printed in future Liberal International and other magazines next to the number "2006." But it should go without saying that I accept the award only behalf of my colleagues who struggle every day—and who sometimes are brutally killed—in their pursuit for human dignity and a more decent life.

Our political party was founded in 1995. Over the last eleven years, about seventy of my colleagues have been assassinated for their political commitment.

I have attended too many funerals in my political life. In the meantime I have received a few prizes and awards such as the Heritage foundation Prize in the United States, the Passport for Freedom for the European Parliament, and now the LI's Prize for Freedom I would have preferred not to receive any prize at all if there had been no unnecessary funerals to attend. My standing before you this evening, in this beautiful city of Marrakesh, is the result of the sacrifice and suffering of thousands of unknown people who risk their lives every day seeking the very ideal that serves as the raison d'être of Liberal International.

Cambodia is not a democracy. It is a false democracy. False democracy is more difficult to deal with than outright dictatorship. We have the façade of democracy but no democratic substance in our institutions. We have a parliament but it is a rubber-stamp parliament. We have a judiciary but it takes orders from the ruling party, which uses it as a political tool to crack down on opponents. We have elections whose results are made before Voting Day. We have officially abolished capital punishment but extra-judicial executions take place every day in the street. Cambodia is one of the world's most corrupt countries according to Transparency International and, as a result, one of the world's poorest countries according to the World Bank. Independent observers rightly depict Cambodia as a mafia state and a banana kingdom. Many things must therefore be addressed and redressed.

My party is the first opposition party in post-communist Cambodia. It is the only opposition party represented in a parliament dominated by former communists. Our

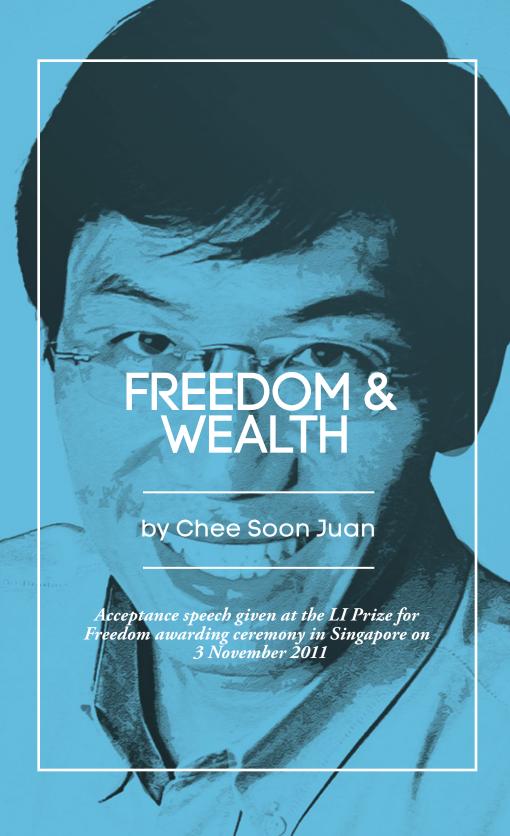
party launched the first opposition newspaper, led the first public demonstrations against corruption and human rights abuses, organized the first industrial strike, and helped to form the first free trade union of workers. Through heavy sacrifices in terms of human lives, we have become the country's second largest political party, supported mainly by factory workers, landless farmers, victims of all sorts of injustices, the unemployed and disgruntled youth and the new generation who aspire for freedom, social justice, and a decent future. Our party is the only serious challenger to the current regime led by Mr. Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge officer and the world's longest serving prime minister.

The Liberal International Prize for Freedom is a great encouragement to my colleagues, and it can offer substantive support as we continue to intensify our uphill battle, with determination on our part and with support of all our Liberal friends around the world. I have no doubt that we will achieve victory in the near future.

Before and after victory, we are most eager to lend our unwavering support and to show our active solidarity to all those who fight for the same liberal and progressive ideals in Asia and other parts of the world. In Singapore for instance, courageous freedom fighters are facing unjustifiable political repression. Dr. Chee Soon Juan, Secretary General of the Singapore Democratic Party, which is a member of LI sister CALD, was recently taken to trial for holding a public political speech without a permit. A verdict will be delivered later this month, and he is expecting to face a heavy fine. He has refused to pay as a matter of principle, and will thus be sent to jail. This will be the fifth time he has been imprisoned, simply for his unwavering commitment to the defense of fundamentals freedoms in his country.

The case in Singapore parallels the case in Cambodia and many other nations around the world. Let us all remember that the legitimacy of rulers is granted not only by the peoples within a nation, but also by the international community. This is why I appeal to our friends in true democracies to look beyond the façade of democracy, and not to remain lenient or complacent with dictators wearing democratic clothes.

Thank you again for your encouragement and your solidarity. Long live the Liberal Family!



In 1993, just a few months after he joined the Singapore Democratic Party, Chee Soon Juan was fired from his job as psychology lecturer at the National University of Singapore. According to Chee, his firing was politically motivated. If that is true, then the move seems to have worked against Singapore's leaders all the more since it only gave Chee more time to spend on politics.

Chee became head of the SDP in 1996 and increased his sharing of his views regarding the ills of rich, successful Singapore. He also challenged laws that limited free speech and the right of people to gather in public places. As a result, Chee has been thrown in jail several times, as well as slapped with several defamation lawsuits filed by Singapore's most prominent officials. He has not won a single of these lawsuits that have led to heavy fines being meted on him. Refusing to pay the sums, Chee has been declared bankrupt by the government, which means he cannot stand in elections. Neither can he leave Singapore without written permission from authorities. This is why, in 2011, the awarding ceremony for that year's LI Prize for Freedom was held in Singapore instead of the customary site in London.

In his speech, Chee clarifies that he is against wealth inequality and not wealth per se. But he laments over what he says is the price Singapore's leaders had been all too willing to pay to bring prosperity to the city state: a society that is morally bankrupt and a government that is intolerant of voices that are not its own.



I WANT to express my deep gratitude to the Liberal International for this award, which is a recognition of that most profound of human aspirations that is the desire to live in freedom and dignity. When one receives an award as prestigious as this, the natural feeling is one of celebration. But I must confess that the

feeling I had when I learned of the award given to me was not one of joy, but humility. Because when you think of the many luminaries that have received this prize in years past—people like Aung San Suu Kyi, Vaclav Havel, and Helen Suzman, all of whom struggled so valiantly and gave so geatly for freedom's cause—one cannot but feel humbled.

Then there are the Chia Thye Pohs, Said Zaharis, and Lim Hock Siews of this world who endured the long dark years of political imprisonment and emerged taller than ever. I am but a political dwarf standing on shoulders of these giants. Their deeds and courage have inspired me and paved the way for many of us to continue this noble struggle for freedom in Singapore.

To them as well as to Vincent Cheng, Teo Soh Lung, and others who were so unjustly detained and are now beginning to speak up; to Gandhi Ambalam, my sister Siok Chin, John Tan, and others who faced repeated prosecution all because they stood up for their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and assembly. To all of them: I accept this award not for myself but on their behalf.

For every one of us whose name is mentioned, there are many others who suffer quietly in the background but whose unwavering support has made the task much more bearable. I'd like to mention two of them tonight.

First I'd like to introduce to you my mother, Low Non Neo, who I love dearly. Twenty years ago, when I first told her the crazy idea that I was going to join the opposition, she like most Singaporean mothers went ballistic. But deep down she knew I was doing the right thing and since then she has stoically endured the pain and the worries as only mothers can, and she has always there with me and for me.

There is this other lady who many of you know as my better half. When she said "I do" at the altar, I don't think she knew quite what she was getting into. It has certainly been much more than she had bargained for. And yet she has never complained, suffering with quiet resolve the years of difficulty that I've put her

though. In fact Mei is the strong one in our family and without her support, I would not have been able to do the work that I do. I don't want to say thank you to her because those are mere words that cannot express adequately how I feel. It would demean all that she has contributed to both our lives.

I want to spend the next few moments to address the challenges that confront our nation. For years, we have been deprived of an opposition and because if this we have had a government that has been left unscrutinized. As a result we have to build—especially, in recent years—an economy based on high finance. Beneath the façade, however, lies a society bankrupt in morality. Our government apes the worst that the West offers in terms of greed and exploitation but rejects the good that it espouses in the values of human rights and democracy.

Instead of engaging in productive activity, we learn to get rich by trading bits of paper that Wall Street issues. We engage in vice to raise our GDP and we change our banking laws that attract wealthy tax evaders and illicit funds.

If the 2008 financial meltdown in the United States has taught us anything, it is that Wall Street bankers' appetite for lucre is insatiable and that scruples count for nothing when it comes to generating profit. The toxic instruments conjured up by Lehman Brothers and the other banks are but a stark reminder of greed that Western banks indulge in. The instability and chaos that they wreak in the global financial system, not to mention the utter misery they cause to the average citizen, is great.

Yet this system is what our government has copied — lock, stock, and barrel — and Wall Street's values are the ones we have chosen to adopt. Based on such a setup, we have styled ourselves as a financial center.

Today we find such system in danger of imploding as these banking institutions cannibalize the very economy upon which they are built so much so that they have stirred outrage across the world.

We have imitated the crass consumerism in the West, deriving pleasure in accumulating things—and not just things, but expensive things. We are thrilled that Orchard Road is line up with glitterati like Prada, Gucci, and Versace and we are one of the biggest consumers of the latest gadgets and gizmos that technology has to offer.

The lust for material has blinded us to the value of human decency. We think nothing of allowing Robert Mugabe to come here on a shopping spree even as he maims and kills his own people to hold on to power. We don't bat an eye when Burmese generals come here for rest and recreation even as their soldiers torture dissidents, exploit child labor, and rape womenfolk.

As long as there is money to be made, nothing else quite matters, does it? We build gated communities with security guards to keep out the have-nots, condominiums for mistresses that promise ever greater exclusivity and opulence.

But outside these high walls, we see the number of poor growing in our midst. We see the lines for free meals lengthening at churches and temples. We see our elderly dragging their aching bodies to work so that they can earn a few dollars to feed themselves.

We become callous and immune to all this. We shrug our shoulders and sigh a sigh of resignation. After a while it even ceases to bother us. We have lost the ability to feel outrage at life's injustices.

Our workers hold down two, sometimes three, jobs just to earn enough to pay the bills. The younger ones are unable to find jobs that pay enough, their dreams of buying a flat and starting a family made exceedingly difficult to realize.

The inequality begins even before one enters the labor market. Our school system is designed such that the well-heeled get to send their children to elite schools located in the richer enclaves while the rest of the population have to contend with neighborhood schools with inferior resources.

Social and economic inequality in Singapore is striking. In terms of wealth disparity among the more complex economies, ours is the most hideous.

Many years ago, when the ministers upped their salaries — and believe me they were modest compared to today's levels — we criticized the move. We accused them of engaging politics of greed.

The People's Action Party countered saying that we were engaging in the politics of envy. Why, they argued, were we happy that others were working hard and making more money? The same can be said of our criticism of the super-rich

in this country. Do they have a point? Are we not casting an envious eye on the wealthy even as we rail against their riches?

If all we offer is a call to make the rich among us poorer and the poor among us richer so that all can consume even more greedily the earth's limited resources, then we have not moved the moral needle. We are, in fact, merely engaging in the politics of envy.

This is why it is important to state clearly our case: We are not opposed to wealth, but to wealth inequality. We must demonstrate how the widening income gap harms the common good.

More than just indignation, we need to offer a platform of why we see egalitarianism as a moral and more effective way. We must ensure that an alternative be heard and recognized, one that ultimately replaces the status quo.

That alternative is to ensure that even as we narrow wealth disparity, we create a community that is less polarized and more cohesive, one where shared public space between the haves and the have-nots increases rather than decreases. When the wealthy and the needy live in two worlds, it is hard, if not impossible, to create one society.

If the rich continue to buy car after car no matter how expensive COEs get while the MRT trains run over capacity, what incentive is there for the rich to want to take public transport?

If our missionary and government-aided schools continue to cater to children from affluent families and the neighborhood schools are fed everyone else, how are children from different backgrounds going to mingle?

If our condominiums continue to retreat more and more into exclusive havens while HDB dwellers are crammed into smaller and smaller areas, how are the two communities going to co-exist?

Such polarization brutalizes societies and erodes cohesiveness; it corrodes values that foster societal togetherness; it fuels resentment and ultimately, instability.

So the problem is clear: the socio-economic inequality that exists today cannot continue—not if we are to achieve a stable and progressive society.

The remedy is equally obvious and, I might add, compelling. The case for a more egalitarian system where the laws are not stacked in favor of the rich and where society is less economically polarized must be vigorously advocated.

The question is: Who is going to do it? Who among us is willing to come forward to lead the cause? Sadly political leadership does not come naturally to Singaporeans. We have been ingrained with the notion that only the PAP has the smarts to lead this country.

My friends, politics is only as good as the people who practice it and justice is only as alive as the people who are willing to defend it.

Singapore will not change if those of us who wish to see democratic politics established in our country remain pusillanimous in mind and parsimonious in energy.

Let us not continue to allow fear to dominate us, to freeze us into inaction. Because fear destroys ideals, it blurs moral clarity.

In life we are confronted with choices. We can choose to live passionately and for what we believe in, or we can continue on this path of timidity and fearful silence.

Of course, when we speak out without fearing those who rule over us, we are labeled as confrontational and, worse, destructive. And the power-that-be do everything they can do marginalize us. We must recognize that this is another form of intimidation.

The danger is that if we fear such intimidation and retreat from political engagement in order to appear acceptable and "moderate," then we will not have the courage to offer an alternative vision and, more important, work to achieve it.

Let us have the confidence to see that we have the ability to change the system, not yield to it; that we can win over public opinion, not pander to it. In other

words, let us be leaders, not just politicians. For leaders point the way and persuade the people to come along. Politicians seek merely to win votes even if it means imitating those that hold power. We have enough politicians in Singapore. What we need are leaders.

We can—and will—succeed, but only if we stop spending our time doubting our own ability and losing our focus of doing the hard work of organizing ourselves and planning our strategies.

The parents of changer are persistence and perseverance. There is no shortcut.

Again, I want to thank Liberal International for this award. But, what I long for, more than anything else, is to win that ultimate prize of freedom for the people of Singapore.

The journey has been long, but along the way I have had the honor of working with some of the most patriotic Singaporeans on this island, and I have been enriched by the experience.

Years ago, after picking up our kinds from a friend's birthday party—and it was a nice, big house—when we got home, my eldest turned to me and asked: "Papa, are we rich?" It was one of those questions that are as simple and innocent as they are complicated.

It took me a while as I searched for and answered and finally I said to her, "Yes, we are. Mum and I may not be able to send you to school in a big car, or we may not be able to live in a big house where you can have your own room, and we may not be able to take you on expensive holidays. But we have you."

I may be bankrupt and I may not be able to afford many things in this world, but when I am home with my loved ones, I feel like the richest man on earth.

And when I survey this room and look at all you this evening, how can I not feel rich? If I had remained an academic at the National University of Singapore, I would have not have had the joy and privilege of knowing you. I may have lost the one thing that I loved, which is doing research and teaching. But whatever I have lost, I have more than gained in my serving with you in this great cause

of freedom. You have enriched me and touched me more than you know, and I for that thank you.

I feel a sense of kindred spirits with you because I know that we share the same ideals and we measure our success not by the type of car that we drive or the size of house that we live in but by the number of young lives that we give hope to and the number of the poor whom we empower.

To accumulate this kind of wealth, the kind that matters most, let us contribute on this journey together and press on with what we have started.

For that old grandmother in her 80s whose bent and gnarled figure struggles with the sun and the rain just to collect cardboard to sell so that she can feed herself, we press on.

For the breadwinner who cannot find a job that pays a decent wages so that he can scrape together enough money to send his children to school, we press on.

For the child who wants to learn and excel but who is constantly told that she is not good enough because of the school she goes to, we press on.

We press on because the fire of hope and justice still burns brightly in this the Singapore Democratic Party. The harder the oppression, the brighter that fire burns. And that fire can only be doused by the waters of freedom and democracy.

And so my friends let us continue to fight the fight that so many across the world have fought, so that we too may know the exhilaration that comes with freedom, the compassion that comes with justice, and the wisdom that comes with an open democratic society.

Thank you, God bless, and good night.



DEMOCRACY & HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA: THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

by Aung San Suu Kyi

Nobel Peace Prize lecture delivered in Oslo on 16 June 2012 In 1991, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Aung San Suu Kyi for her "non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights." She was, however, unable to receive her award in person. Instead, her husband and two teenaged sons went to Oslo, and her then 18-year-old firstborn, Alexander, spoke on her behalf.

The daughter of the late Burmese national hero Gen. Aung San, Suu Kyi had returned to Burma in 1988, after years of living abroad, to tend to her dying mother. But she would also be asked to help the people of her ailing homeland, which was in the grips of a military dictatorship. She spoke out against the brutal regime and soon became the head of the then newly formed National League for Democracy. In 1990, the NLD won the parliamentary elections by a landslide, but the military junta refused to recognize the results and engineered a coup.

Daw Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest for the first time in 1989. She would spend 15 of the next 25 years in detention, and it became almost impossible for her husband and sons to visit her. She remained in Burma when her husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and even after he died in the United Kingdom in 1999.

Burma, in the meantime, remained under the generals' boots. By 2010, another round of general polls was called, but not before fresh election laws were drawn up that essentially disqualified Daw Suu Kyi from running for any post. Not long after the polls closed, Suu Kyi was released from house arrest. But just when most people were about to dismiss the new government led by President Thein Sein as yet another of the military's shams, it began a campaign to persuade the Burmese—and the rest of the world—that it was on its way to implementing reforms.

By 2011, Daw Suu Kyi was announcing that she would be running the 2012 parliamentary elections, and that the NLD was re-registering as a political party. And while the military and parties affiliated with it still ended up dominating parliament, Suu Kyi and her party were able to

secure several seats. She has since been serving as an MP and the NLD has announced that it will stand in the 2015 elections. Daw Suu Kyi, however, makes clear in her Nobel lecture—which she was finally able to give 21 years after she was awarded the Peace Prize—that their fight is far from over. While she expresses willingness to cooperate to work toward national reconciliation, she emphasizes that there will be no compromises in the goals of having sustainable political, social, and economic growth in Burma and for her people to live in a society that is not only prosperous, but also harmonious and democratic.

She also reflects on her years in detention, and recalls how she drew strength from the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She hopes that just as she was not forgotten when she was cut off from the rest of the world, people may strive to remember and help those whose rights are being trampled upon.



LONG YEARS ago—sometimes it seems many lives ago—I was at Oxford listening to the radio program Desert Island Discs with my young son Alexander. It was a well-known program (for all I know it still continues) on which famous people from all walks of life were invited to talk about the eight discs, the

one book beside the Bible and the complete works of Shakespeare, and the one luxury item they would wish to have with them were they to be marooned on a desert island. At the end of the program, which we had both enjoyed, Alexander asked me if I thought I might ever be invited to speak on Desert Island Discs. "Why not?" I responded lightly. Since he knew that in general only celebrities took part in the program he proceeded to ask, with genuine interest, for what reason I thought I might be invited. I considered this for a moment and then answered: "Perhaps because I'd have won the Nobel Prize for literature," and we both laughed. The prospect seemed pleasant but hardly probable.

(I cannot now remember why I gave that answer, perhaps because I had recently read a book by a Nobel Laureate or perhaps because the Desert Island celebrity of that day had been a famous writer.)

In 1989, when my late husband Michael Aris came to see me during my first term of house arrest, he told me that a friend, John Finnis, had nominated me for the Nobel Peace Prize. This time also, I laughed. For an instant Michael looked amazed, then he realized why I was amused. The Nobel Peace Prize? A pleasant prospect, but quite improbable! So how did I feel when I was actually awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace? The question has been put to me many times and this is surely the most appropriate occasion on which to examine what the Nobel Prize means to me and what peace means to me.

As I have said repeatedly in many an interview, I heard the news that I had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on the radio one evening. It did not altogether come as a surprise because I had been mentioned as one of the frontrunners for the prize in a number of broadcasts during the previous week. While drafting this lecture, I have tried very hard to remember what my immediate reaction to the announcement of the award had been. I think, I can no longer be sure, it was something like: "Oh, so they've decided to give it to me." It did not seem quite real because in a sense I did not feel myself to be quite real at that time.

Often during my days of house arrest it felt as though I were no longer a part of the real world. There was the house, which was my world, there was the world of others who also were not free but who were together in prison as a community, and there was the world of the free; each was a different planet pursuing its own separate course in an indifferent universe. What the Nobel Peace Prize did was to draw me once again into the world of other human beings outside the isolated area in which I lived, to restore a sense of reality to me. This did not happen instantly, of course, but as the days and months went by and news of reactions to the award came over the airwaves, I began to understand the significance of the Nobel Prize. It had made me real once again; it had drawn me back into the wider human community. And what was more important, the Nobel Prize had drawn the attention of the world to the struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma. We were not going to be forgotten.

To be forgotten. The French say that to part is to die a little. To be forgotten too is to die a little. It is to lose some of the links that anchor us to the rest of humanity. When I met Burmese migrant workers and refugees during my recent visit to Thailand, many cried out: "Don't forget us!" They meant: "Don't forget our plight, don't forget to do what you can to help us, don't forget we also belong to your world." When the Nobel Committee awarded the Peace Prize to me they were recognizing that the oppressed and the isolated in Burma were also a part of the world, they were recognizing the oneness of humanity. So for me receiving the Nobel Peace Prize means personally extending my concerns for democracy and human rights beyond national borders. The Nobel Peace Prize opened up a door in my heart.

The Burmese concept of peace can be explained as the happiness arising from the cessation of factors that militate against the harmonious and the wholesome. The word *nyein-chan* translates literally as the beneficial coolness that comes when a fire is extinguished. Fires of suffering and strife are raging around the world. In my own country, hostilities have not ceased in the far north; to the west, communal violence resulting in arson and murder were taking place just several days before I started out on the journey that has brought me here today. News of atrocities in other reaches of the earth abound. Reports of hunger, disease, displacement, joblessness, poverty, injustice, discrimination, prejudice, bigotry—these are our daily fare. Everywhere there are negative forces eating away at the foundations of peace. Everywhere can be found thoughtless dissipation

of material and human resources that are necessary for the conservation of harmony and happiness in our world.

The First World War represented a terrifying waste of youth and potential, a cruel squandering of the positive forces of our planet. The poetry of that era has a special significance for me because I first read it at a time when I was the same age as many of those young men who had to face the prospect of withering before they had barely blossomed. A young American fighting with the French Foreign Legion wrote before he was killed in action in 1916 that he would meet his death: "at some disputed barricade;" "on some scarred slope of battered hill;" "at midnight in some flaming town." Youth and love and life perishing forever in senseless attempts to capture nameless, unremembered places. And for what? Nearly a century on, we have yet to find a satisfactory answer.

Are we not still guilty, if to a less violent degree, of recklessness, of improvidence with regard to our future and our humanity? War is not the only arena where peace is done to death. Wherever suffering is ignored, there will be the seeds of conflict, for suffering degrades and embitters and enrages.

A positive aspect of living in isolation was that I had ample time in which to ruminate over the meaning of words and precepts that I had known and accepted all my life. As a Buddhist, I had heard about dukha, generally translated as suffering, since I was a small child. Almost on a daily basis elderly—and sometimes not so elderly—people around me would murmur "dukha, dukha" when they suffered from aches and pains or when they met with some small, annoying mishaps. However, it was only during my years of house arrest that I got around to investigating the nature of the six great dukha. These are: to be conceived, to age, to sicken, to die, to be parted from those one loves, to be forced to live in propinquity with those one does not love. I examined each of the six great sufferings, not in a religious context but in the context of our ordinary, everyday lives. If suffering were an unavoidable part of our existence, we should try to alleviate it as far as possible in practical, earthly ways. I mulled over the effectiveness of ante-and post-natal programs and mother and childcare; of adequate facilities for the aging population; of comprehensive health services; of compassionate nursing and hospices. I was particularly intrigued by the last two kinds of suffering: to be parted from those one loves and to be forced to live in propinquity with those one does not love. What experiences might our Lord Buddha have undergone in his own life that he had included these

two states among the great sufferings? I thought of prisoners and refugees, of migrant workers and victims of human trafficking, of that great mass of the uprooted of the earth who have been torn away from their homes, parted from families and friends, forced to live out their lives among strangers who are not always welcoming.

We are fortunate to be living in an age when social welfare and humanitarian assistance are recognized not only as desirable but necessary. I am fortunate to be living in an age when the fate of prisoners of conscience anywhere has become the concern of peoples everywhere, an age when democracy and human rights are widely, even if not universally, accepted as the birthright of all. How often during my years under house arrest have I drawn strength from my favorite passages in the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspirations of the common people, it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.

If I am asked why I am fighting for human rights in Burma the above passages will provide the answer. If I am asked why I am fighting for democracy in Burma, it is because I believe that democratic institutions and practices are necessary for the guarantee of human rights.

Over the past year there have been signs that the endeavors of those who believe in democracy and human rights are beginning to bear fruit in Burma. There have been changes in a positive direction; steps toward democratization have been taken. If I advocate cautious optimism it is not because I do not have faith in the future but because I do not want to encourage blind faith. Without faith in the future, without the conviction that democratic values and fundamental human rights are not only necessary but possible for our society, our movement could not have been sustained throughout the destroying years. Some of our warriors fell at their post, some deserted us, but a dedicated core remained strong and committed. At times when I think of the years that have passed, I am amazed that so many remained staunch under the most trying circumstances. Their faith in our cause is not blind; it is based on a clear-eyed

assessment of their own powers of endurance and a profound respect for the aspirations of our people.

It is because of recent changes in my country that I am with you today; and these changes have come about because of you and other lovers of freedom and justice who contributed toward a global awareness of our situation. Before continuing to speak of my country, may I speak out for our prisoners of conscience. There still remain such prisoners in Burma. It is to be feared that because the best known detainees have been released, the remainder, the unknown ones, will be forgotten. I am standing here because I was once a prisoner of conscience. As you look at me and listen to me, please remember the often repeated truth that one prisoner of conscience is one too many. Those who have not yet been freed, those who have not yet been given access to the benefits of justice in my country number much more than one. Please remember them and do whatever is possible to effect their earliest, unconditional release.

Burma is a country of many ethnic nationalities and faith in its future can be founded only on a true spirit of union. Since we achieved independence in 1948, there never has been a time when we could claim the whole country was at peace. We have not been able to develop the trust and understanding necessary to remove causes of conflict. Hopes were raised by ceasefires that were maintained from the early 1990s until 2010, when these broke down over the course of a few months. One unconsidered move can be enough to remove long-standing ceasefires. In recent months, negotiations between the government and ethnic nationality forces have been making progress. We hope that ceasefire agreements will lead to political settlements founded on the aspirations of the peoples, and the spirit of union.

My party the National League for Democracy and I stand ready and willing to play any role in the process of national reconciliation. The reform measures that were put into motion by President U Thein Sein's government can be sustained only with the intelligent cooperation of all internal forces: the military, our ethnic nationalities, political parties, the media, civil society organizations, the business community and, most important of all, the general public. We can say that reform is effective only if the lives of the people are improved and in this regard, the international community has a vital role to play. Development and humanitarian aid, bilateral agreements and investments should be coordinated and calibrated to ensure that these will promote social, political, and economic

growth that is balanced and sustainable. The potential of our country is enormous. This should be nurtured and developed to create not just a more prosperous, but also a more harmonious, democratic society where our people can live in peace, security, and freedom.

The peace of our world is indivisible. As long as negative forces are getting the better of positive forces anywhere, we are all at risk. It may be questioned whether all negative forces could ever be removed. The simple answer is: "No!" It is in human nature to contain both the positive and the negative. However, it is also within human capability to work to reinforce the positive and to minimize or neutralize the negative. Absolute peace in our world is an unattainable goal. But it is one toward which we must continue to journey, our eyes fixed on it as a traveller in a desert fixes his eyes on the one guiding star that will lead him to salvation. Even if we do not achieve perfect peace on earth, because perfect peace is not of this earth, common endeavors to gain peace will unite individuals and nations in trust and friendship and help to make our human community safer and kinder.

I used the word 'kinder' after careful deliberation; I might say the careful deliberation of many years. Of the sweets of adversity—and let me say that these are not numerous—I have found the sweetest, the most precious of all, is the lesson I learnt on the value of kindness. Every kindness I received, small or big, convinced me that there could never be enough of it in our world. To be kind is to respond with sensitivity and human warmth to the hopes and needs of others. Even the briefest touch of kindness can lighten a heavy heart. Kindness can change the lives of people. Norway has shown exemplary kindness in providing a home for the displaced of the earth, offering sanctuary to those who have been cut loose from the moorings of security and freedom in their native lands.

There are refugees in all parts of the world. When I was at the Maela refugee camp in Thailand recently, I met dedicated people who were striving daily to make the lives of the inmates as free from hardship as possible. They spoke of their concern over 'donor fatigue,' which could also translate as 'compassion fatigue.' 'Donor fatigue' expresses itself precisely in the reduction of funding. 'Compassion fatigue' expresses itself less obviously in the reduction of concern. One is the consequence of the other. Can we afford to indulge in compassion fatigue? Is the cost of meeting the needs of refugees greater than the cost that

would be consequent on turning an indifferent, if not a blind, eye on their suffering? I appeal to donors the world over to fulfill the needs of these people who are in search—often it must seem to them a vain search—of refuge.

At Maela, I had valuable discussions with Thai officials responsible for the administration of Tak province where this and several other camps are situated. They acquainted me with some of the more serious problems related to refugee camps: violation of forestry laws, illegal drug use, home-brewed spirits, the problems of controlling malaria, tuberculosis, dengue fever, and cholera. The concerns of the administration are as legitimate as the concerns of the refugees. Host countries also deserve consideration and practical help in coping with the difficulties related to their responsibilities.

Ultimately our aim should be to create a world free from the displaced, the homeless, and the hopeless, a world in which each and every corner is a true sanctuary where the inhabitants will have the freedom and the capacity to live in peace. Every thought, every word, and every action that adds to the positive and the wholesome is a contribution to peace. Each and every one of us is capable of making such a contribution. Let us join hands to try to create a peaceful world where we can sleep in security and wake in happiness.

The Nobel Committee concluded its statement of 14 October 1991 with the words: "In awarding the Nobel Peace Prize ... to Aung San Suu Kyi, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes to honour this woman for her unflagging efforts and to show its support for the many people throughout the world who are striving to attain democracy, human rights and ethnic conciliation by peaceful means." When I joined the democracy movement in Burma it never occurred to me that I might ever be the recipient of any prize or honor. The prize we were working for was a free, secure, and just society where our people might be able to realize their full potential. The honor lay in our endeavor. History had given us the opportunity to give of our best for a cause in which we believed. When the Nobel Committee chose to honor me, the road I had chosen of my own free will became a less lonely path to follow. For this I thank the Committee, the people of Norway and peoples all over the world whose support has strengthened my faith in the common quest for peace.

Thank you.



by J.R. Nereus Acosta

Consolidated version of speeches given at various climate-change conferences and workshops held by CALD in 2012

A green advocacy may seem like a matter of reflex for Liberals, but some liberal principles have the potential of becoming obstacles in the efforts to respond to climate change. This could cause some Liberals to pause, yet in an era of rising sea levels, as well as catastrophic floods and droughts, any hesitation to take action could mean the loss of thousands of lives.

Since 2011, CALD has been holding conferences and workshops on climate-change adaptation and mitigation. It is no accident of position that CALD Secretary General J.R. Nereus Acosta has been front and center at these events. During his nine-year stint at the Philippine House of Representatives, Acosta authored bills on clean water, solid-waste management, and biodiversity protection. He was also the principal author of the groundbreaking Clean Air Act of 1999. Today he serves as environmental protection adviser of Philippine President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III, and is also the general manager of the Laguna Lake Development Authority.

Acosta prepared this piece for CALD's 2012 annual report by putting together the highlights of his many talks on climate change. In it, he notes that while state-instigated climate-change adaptation measures may seem to go against the liberal principles of individual freedom and enterprise, the problem remains a human-rights concern that can be tackled effectively only in an open and democratic society. This entails in large part having an informed citizenry, an accountable government, and a free press.



THOSE OF in the environmental advocacy front and also affiliated with liberal networks are asked time and again if addressing climate change can really be a part of a 'liberal agenda.' The working premise or assumption being that the narrative of climate change and the official, government-led responses to

such militate against the tenets of individual freedom and enterprise.

The extreme position on this would be one of outright denial of climate change, or at the very least, a disputing of the science behind the entire discourse on a warming planet gravely altering climatic patterns across continents. Al Gore's "Inconvenient Truth" is a hoax, they say, and anything that has to do with the discussions on climate change necessarily points to bigger government spending and state interventions on private business and economic activity. The 'green front' is all about being alarmist and its proponents nothing more than doomsday-scenario criers, they point out, with reason to get the powers of the state breathing down the necks of private enterprise, as it were.

The latter—such as it is manifested in terms of higher taxes on carbon emissions and fossil fuels—is seen as downright interventionist and a curtailment of economic freedom. Capping emissions based on inter-governmental targets are disincentives to business. This, all told, becomes a thoroughly anti-liberal stance.

The less extreme view, but one more agnostic, would point to climate change and its impact as imminent reality, but perhaps not as bad as it is made out to be. In this case, the apocalyptic scenarios of rising sea levels and severe weather disturbances are not entirely something to fear. In this respect, money used for climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies—from shifting to renewable sources of energy to increasing disaster-preparedness and risk management—can be used in arguably more cost-efficient and higher value-for-money ways or best cost-benefit analyses.

Bjor Lomborg, renowned economist and author of the widely-popular 2001 book *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, is one such prominent voice in this school of thought. Why spend for long — term, amorphous mitigation programs when such resources will go a long way toward addressing poverty and malnutrition in the developing world, or curbing malaria and other pervasive but rehabilitative diseases, or reforesting denuded mountains?

This is no doubt about the valid issues of cost effectiveness, various externalities, and resource use to raise here. But if economies are derailed and political and social dislocation happen because of climate events that occur with increasing ferocity and frequency—typhoons, flooding, landslides, excessive rainfall, droughts—then we need to ask about not just the cost of climate change programs and interventions, but also about the higher cost of inaction and the lack of overall preparedness. If infrastructure and property are damaged extensively because of one super storm like Hurricane Sandy in New York and the U.S. East Coast, or if industry and manufacturing grind to a halt because of months-long flooding in Bangkok and outlying provinces, or if agricultural productivity is lost because of a protracted drought in Australia, or if 'climate refugees' multiply and face health epidemics in congested evacuation centers or camps such as those in the Philippines, then climate-change programs become simply, inarguably, a matter of economic survival.

If one were to take the perspective of all this being a planetary emergency, climate change can be regarded from the prism of three elemental principles: freedom, rights, and the rule of law. Freedom in the form of information and the access to all available data and the scientific research on meteorology and climate is key in understanding the realities of a climate change. It is also about freedom in terms of human security, especially those who are poor and have less access to income and opportunity—to be free from fear of losing homes and lives because of the increasing and widespread impacts of natural disasters and calamities.

The flip side of this coin of freedom is about rights. The right of every citizen and household and community to information and all available knowledge about risks and vulnerabilities that attend climate change realities, and the right to be free from forms of danger and risk to life and livelihood. These are rights that are inalienable for every individual.

When Typhoon Sendong (international name: Washi) tore through Northern Mindanao in the Philippines in December 2011, the local government of the region's premier city (where devastation included a staggering over 3,000 deaths and untold damage to property) was caught woefully unprepared. It was soon revealed that the city did not have a comprehensive land-use plan and geo-hazard zones were not clearly defined to have a risk of reduction and management plan in place for highly vulnerable and poor communities. Worse,

populist programs initiated by local politicians allowed landless families to build makeshift dwellings on hazardous riverbanks and riverbeds over time, irresponsibly putting thousands of lives in harm's way when the rivers swelled and countless logs from denuded forests upstream were violently swept to sea. Humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts were largely mismanaged in the wake of the disaster, and to this day, charges of corruption hound fuller rehabilitation and resettlement programs.

This leads us to the fundamental requisites of good governance and the rule of law in addressing climate change and its impacts. In an age of increasing uncertainty and mounting vulnerabilities, ill governance and the absence of transparency could prove nothing short of fatal. To effectively adapt to climate change impacts and increase the resilience of communities, an accountable government, an informed citizenry, and a vigilant, free press become unassailably critical.

The answer to the question raised at the outset is clear. Climate change is and should be in the liberal agenda or platform. This is, all told, the kind of political climate that needs to change: that the more democratic, free, well-governed—and yes, liberal—a society, the more resilient it becomes in the face of physical risks and hazards that come with the unsettling vagaries of climate change.





by Abhisit Vejjajiva

Abridged version of speech delivered at the CALD Democratic Transitions Conference held in Bangkok on 12 November 2012

Change is inevitable with the passage of time, but Asia can be said to have had more than its fair share of political (mostly good) and environmental (mostly bad) upheavals in the last decade. For one, the reality that is climate change had the region suffering from one natural disaster after another, and with ever increasing frequency and devastation. For another, many countries across Asia have been undergoing changes in their respective political systems, with most transitioning into democracy.

Abhisit Vejjajiva is more than familiar with both political and environmental turmoil. When he gave this speech in Bangkok, the Thai capital and its neighboring regions were still recovering from the impact of the worst floods to hit the country in five decades. Khun Abhisit, meanwhile, was once more back in the role of opposition leader, having relinquished his post as prime minister nearly a year before. And so he had no trouble boiling down the two seemingly disparate topics of climate change and democratic transitions into one word: uncertainty. He also says in his speech that the key in taking on the challenges of political and environmental uncertainties is nothing less than adaptability.

Abhisit, however, breaks down the approaches to the twin challenges more specifically, with improved communications and regional cooperation as the major elements in his suggested responses to climate change. Turning his attention to Burma, which was actually the focus of the conference, Abhisit notes that institutions that nurture and respect the rule of law, transparency, and accountability, as well as encourages participation from the people, need to be built and sustained as the country moves toward democracy. He also touches on the need for a thriving private sector if Burma is to transition from a controlled economy to a market economy.

FIRST OF all allow me to extend a very warm welcome to all participants of this seminar and also the subsequent meeting and conference that will take place here.

In true Liberal Democratic fashion I am slightly confused about the topic that I am going to speak on because I was originally approached to speak on Burma—only to discover that the seminar today is on Climate Change. But both topics are really about **uncertainty**. And uncertainty, whether we like it or not, is just part of our lives and increasingly so, whether it is a natural phenomenon (of course with human contributions such as the climate change and its effects), as well as political uncertainties—democratic transitions being the focus here, which surprisingly in a world of rapid changes is likely to arise not just in countries that are moving toward democracies, but even in established democracies that find themselves, their institutions, and their political culture also in need to adopt to the changes happening in the world.

So after getting clarification that I am not expected to speak on both topics, I will begin with climate change. The points that I would like to emphasize follow very much from the experience that we have had in this region. Asia and the Asia Pacific have been exposed to a number of natural disasters that have taken place in recent years. This is probably one region that bore the brunt of such a phenomenon. Regrettably, there have been so many losses of lives and property. We have also had disruptions to our lives to our economies and societies during these events.

We have to face up to the fact that a lot of our countries, societies, and economies are not yet well prepared to deal with these natural disasters, which are becoming more common, more frequent, and often more severe in their impact. I am talking here about flood, storms, droughts, and earthquakes that have hit many countries in the region. Thailand as you know has been no exception. If you think back about this time last year, a sizeable part of the capital was under—and indeed almost half the country was—under water for a long period of time. One of the most important lessons that we found and learned from the event last year was that the losses could have been avoided. We may not be able to control the amount of rainfall. We may not be able to control the weather. But with better management, with better preparations, and with a number of changes or even reforms to some of our systems, many of the losses could have been avoided.

One of the most important things that I think needs a lot of attention but is often not discussed is this issue of communications. I know that there will be a lot of focus on the need to build infrastructure to deal with some of these phenomena. I know that there has to be emphasis, too, on the financial and economic side in terms of preparedness, insurance, and instruments that will help countries and economies get through these disasters. But what we learned was that the people and the society as a whole could cope with these phenomena far better if there is good and strong communication—from early warnings to dealing with the actual disasters as they happen. Evacuation plans, relief efforts, coordination—these we have seen over the last year in Thailand could all be improved. But to improve depends, of course, on the way national government officials and local officials deal with informing the people.

Raising the awareness of people about the risk of natural disasters, though, is a major challenge. What we learned especially last year was that in several areas where there has never been flooding, people were simply not aware of the risks. Worse, even when they received warnings, they didn't believe the warnings. They would argue that they had lived there for decades and no flooding had ever occurred.

So the challenge countrywide in Thailand—and I am sure this same in other countries—is in raising the awareness of people about the very real changes in climate patterns and the risk they will face because of these. Unless you can convince people that these are real risks, it would be extremely difficult to organize and manage the way people act once these events occur. I am not taking away from any discussion that will follow today on the issues of the infrastructure and the needs for better financial instruments. But I would just like to draw your attention particularly to this issue of public communication and the ability to coordinate in terms of issuing warnings and also to relief efforts and evacuation plans. If there is marked improvement in the management of these operations, we are confident that the losses that we have seen in the past could very much be avoided.

The only other issue that I will touch upon in terms of climate change is the need to focus on regional efforts. I say that because often we are looking at problems in either national terms or from a global perspective. One thing that is clear is that the global effort to deal with the problems of climate change has been a long drawn-out process that is making very, very slow progress. This is

not surprising. We see similar problems when we talk about security and the role of the United Nations. We see similar problems in trade when we look at the WTO negotiations. To expect some kind of global initiative, to expect any global mechanism that will help all of countries deal with the problems of climate change, would not be realistic. At the same time, despite a number of good international initiatives or progress that are made in number of countries, we have to concede that when a major disaster strikes, the capacity of each nation would be limited. This is why we also need to look for regional solutions and initiatives. I would urge that whether it is the ASEAN or ASEAN-plus framework, this grouping or this cooperation must really expand upon initiatives to deal with problems of disaster reliefs and preparedness for climate change.

ASEAN has already made some initiatives. For instance, on the food security problem, there is the emergency rice reserve agreement with the Plus-Three countries. During my time as chair, we very much urged the defense minister to coordinate and cooperate as far as disaster-relief efforts were concerned. But more needs to be done, particularly on the need for some kind of regional plans in terms of what facilities could be offered within the region as far as relief operations are concerned. These are just my thoughts that I will add to what are bound to be very substantive discussion on dealing with climate change.

Now for democratic transition, another form of uncertainty or risk: As I said earlier, we should not be afraid of the uncertainties we face when it comes to political transitions. I also said that even for the established democracies, there would still be a need for institutional changes, and cultural changes to deal with the changing world. But for countries still making that transition to democracy, the challenge is even more difficult. We have all been pleasantly surprised by the speed by which reforms have taken place in Burma, but we should also recognize that there is a long, hard road ahead.

I am very much impressed by the concept paper for this conference and the sessions that will be run. I think you have already identified the four important steps for a successful democratic transition. So just let me add a few more thoughts on these. First, I think we can all recognize that the democratic transition in Burma cannot happen without some kind of political pact. Clearly, the interests of the military and the interests of political parties need somehow to be aligned. For so long they have been involved in conflict — it's never going to be easy to reconcile those differences and take things forward. The remarkable progress

that has been made in the last two years or so can be credited to the leaders: the President on one hand and Aung San Suu Kyi on the other. The reforms or changes clearly could not happen if could not happen if the President did not have that political will and courage to carry them out. At the same time, the reforms that have never been orderly had Aung San Suu Kyi not been graceful and so retrained in her pursuit of the ideology in all her life.

But the political pact needs to go beyond leaders. And as the transition moves ahead, it is extremely important that the two sides understand what this pact is. We cannot expect everybody to just follow their leaders as we go through this transition. But somehow, matters have to become more transparent so that each side is comfortable with the moving ahead of this transition to democracy. This is something that clearly Burma needs to get to grips with itself. I would be extremely hesitant and reluctant to suggest that any outsider make recommendations about what kind of pact should be reached between the parties. While we all want to contribute to the progress and transition in Burma, we have to be careful that any outside contribution will not upset the balance of this political pact that will sustain this transition to democracy.

Secondly—and I think this is a point that is well understood by all of us here as Liberals and Democrats—one cannot overemphasize the importance of institution building, as well as political and cultural developments to sustain democracy. You may have basically a framework or some kind of a roadmap to democracy. But in the end, to achieve democracy—particularly liberal democracy—you need the institutions, the cultures, and political behavior to sustain that. We are talking here about rule of law, transparency, and all the facets of good governance, concepts of accountability, concepts of participation, and so on.

The challenge in Burma is how to build up these institutions as quickly as possible. As we all know, the speed of this success of such institution-building will also depend upon the public, to understand and to be well aware of what is required in a democratic society. Here I think many of us can contribute in terms of our experiences, in terms of looking at best practices and past episodes in a number of countries. For example, countries like Indonesia, which has gone through a very successful transition over a decade now, could provide some insights.

The third element that is in the concept paper and will be discussed later is the issue of dealing with ethnic groups and minorities in Burma, because democratic transition will also depend upon the need to achieve peace and end the conflicts with such groups. Again, I would be very wary of outside contributions regarding what kind of solutions should be reached. Clearly, there has to be more decentralization, a certain degree of autonomy, but exactly how much and what exactly is acceptable in the society is very much for the stakeholders to decide for themselves. Maybe the Philippines could talk about the progress they are making in Mindanao, with of course contributions from Malaysia, among others. The situation that we face in southern Thailand makes us all aware of the sensitivities and difficulty of finding for a political solution to the problem. But it has to be an essential part of this transition.

The final point — again this is in the concept paper, which talks about the need to encourage democratically friendly and environmentally friendly investments: I would maybe expand the focus to include the need to create a market system in Burma. It is my belief that liberal democracy and the market system feed on each other and that political freedom and economic freedom go hand in hand. I have yet to find a successful and sustained instance of having one without the other. If we go by past experience, a transition from a controlled economy to a market economy is not easy. That process of liberalization, of deregulation itself, has a number of technical difficulties. Politically, the process would also run up against vested interests that will provide strong resistance to that change. The transition to the market economy is not just about laws and regulations on the economy; it is also about the fostering of a vibrant private sector that would have to take over from the controlled economy.

Now when you talk about democracy-friendly investments, I believe we are thinking about the possibility of foreign investment that would be pouring to Burma given the opportunities that she offers. My point that I would like to emphasize most is whether the economic structure that will emerge from this transition will help the democratic transition or not will very much depend on the competitive environment that emerges. There will be real risks if the opening up of the Burmese economy leads to basically a transfer of military or government monopolies to new private monopolies. Whether they are local or foreign, these new monopolies will not help democratic progress, as we have seen from the European countries. A transition to a market economy that is tainted with corruption and that in the end basically just transfers economic

power from one small group to another can have very damaging effects on political developments, and could lead to fresh conflicts.

These are the key elements that I think Burma would have to face up to. The discussion that you will have tomorrow on these issues would be very important, and I hope they will provide insights for Burma and also other countries that are still undergoing democratic transitions.

I began by saying that the two issues are about uncertainty and this is a fact of life, so we should face up to this uncertainties, face up to these challenges, without fear. The key to all this is adaptability. Adaptability is best served when we encourage people to exercise their freedoms and rights and we provide the environment for those freedoms and rights to be exercised fully.

That's basically the beliefs of all of us here—Liberals and Democrats. Let's move ahead together, let's provide whatever knowledge, experience that we haven't shared with each other and make sure the whole region can deal with natural disasters and also challenges like democratic transitions successfully.

I wish the conference and seminar every success. Thank you very much.



by Surin Pitsuwan

Abridged version of extemporaneous keynote address at a meeting organized by CALD and the Liberal Party of the Philippines in Makati City on7 July 2008

Dr. Surin Pitsuwan was no newcomer to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations when he assumed the post of ASEAN Secretary General in 2008. Years before, he had served as Chair of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and the Chair of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Being the Thai Foreign Minister during the Chuan Leekpai administration also meant that the former MP and Democrat Party stalwart would be immersed in ASEAN affairs. It is thus not surprising that in his address to CALD and the LP in 2008, he would express a desire to see ASEAN becoming a household word, an entity whose relevance is acknowledged and felt not only by government officials, but also by the general public.

Khun Surin makes a call for help in the quick ratification of the ASEAN Charter, which he says would give the four-decade-old grouping a legal personality. This in turn would enable it to consolidate and strengthen as a community, he argues. Noting that three of its founding members had yet to ratify the Charter, Surin acknowledges that it is far from perfect. Yet even then, he says, the Charter remains vital if the regional grouping is to move forward. At the very least, the Charter would serve as the foundation for ASEAN to achieve set targets, and would provide its members with a set of norms, rules, and values that could only result in a diverse yet united peoples of Southeast Asia.



THE ASSOCIATION of Southeast Asian Nations has been in existence for the last 40 years. We have given birth to many other architectures and organizations in the region—not only in Southeast Asia, but also in East Asia and the Asia Pacific. Because of our continuous growth in the '80s and '90s, Australia,

under Prime Minister Paul Keating, thought that it, too, wanted to be part of the growth of East Asia, of Southeast Asia. Soon after that, the European Union also wanted to have some connectivity with us, so they came up with the Asia-Europe Meeting, or ASEM.

The first APEC meeting was in '89, the second in '96. In 1997, the financial crisis hit, and we were all in a slump. The external architectures that we inspired became rather reluctant about us. They thought it was the end of ASEAN. It was probably the end of the idea of the Pacific Century, but by 2003 we were growing together at a rate higher than before the crisis. Rather than disintegrate or diminish our aspiration for a stronger community in East Asia, that crisis emboldened us, and that's when the East Asian community idea came into fruition. A sense of community was sealed; we realized that our fates were more connected that our future was more intertwined than we had thought.

We bounced back and continued to grow, and continued to be the fulcrum of power plays in the region. We welcomed all and we threatened none, including powers far away that were interested in our region and joined us in our meetings to protect and promote their own interests.

By 2003 or 2005, these powers had become comfortable with each other. Even Beijing and Delhi found out that they did not have to come through ASEAN anymore because they now had their own direct connections with the rest of the world. Tokyo and Seoul made the same discovery, and ASEAN was being left by the wayside.

These days, much of the West's attention, interest, and investment have been diverted to China and India. For the past three decades, we were the center, we were in the driver's seat. Now we need to revalidate our driver's license.

That's exactly what the ASEAN Charter is going to give ASEAN: its legal personality. For the first time, it's going to consolidate us as an organization. For the first time, ASEAN is going to be built as a community based on three

pillars: political security, economic integration, and socio-cultural solidarity. This document gives us hope, confidence, and a roadmap into our future as a community.

So far, six members have ratified this document. Four have yet to do so, among them Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia—all founding members of ASEAN. On 8 August 1967, these countries' representatives met in Bangkok, along with those from Malaysia and Singapore. They had a big dream. They had a big, big vision for Southeast-Asia—the vision of peace, the vision of prosperity, the vision of stability, the vision of security. We are inheriting and achieving these may lie in the strategy of consolidation presented in the ASEAN Charter.

So why are the three founding members of ASEAN taking their time to ratify it? Perhaps it's because all of us expect it to be better than it is, because we want it to be a document that opens up to a fuller and wider participation, because we want it expressed more clearly that people's rights and liberty should be better protected. Because we expect more out of ASEAN. But the counterargument is, we are a region of tremendous diversity. The poorest among us has a per capita than \$400, the richest over \$50,000 per capita. How do we bridge that gap and how do we bridge all the gaps among 10 nations of 567 million people? The EU does not have this challenge. The diversity among us is much, much bigger than the EU.

So I go around the world, telling them about the aspiration of ours and telling people within ASEAN that when its member-nations' leaders assemble again in Thailand in December, we will have full ratification and they will celebrate on that table where six men signed that document called the Bangkok Declaration on the 8th of August 1967. But then my job is as the salesman of ASEAN, so whatever I say please take it with a grain of salt. I may be overenthusiastic.

But really, if ASEAN didn't exist, it would have to be invented because we need each other to team up and bargain together in the global arena. As individual nations, we have very little bargaining power, by banding together we have resources, we have the market, we have the potential, and we have the ability to deal, negotiate and bargain. And that's why we are successful in attracting the attention of the international community to what we are doing.

Just a few months ago, ASEAN was asked to go into Myanmar, provide the international community with what we call a "diplomatic umbrella," so that the international community could rally behind us and come into that country, which had been struck by Cyclone Nargis. The cyclone had claimed 140,000 lives, and hundreds of thousands more were now homeless and in need of aid.

Because of ASEAN, Myanmar eventually opened up to international assistance. For the first time, all UN agencies were admitted, as were international NGOs.

When I had to help out over East Timor in 1999, I had to be very careful to say that I was a foreign minister of a neighboring country who also happened to be the chair of ASEAN at the same time. I stressed that I was not there as ASEAN chair because we had to be extremely careful not to involved ASEAN in internal affairs of member states. But this time with Myanmar, we were asked to go in as ASEAN. It's unfortunate that we had to come on the heels of a major tragedy, but there is a silver lining and that is we've been able to help open Myanmar, increase its level of comfort so that it would allow the international community to come in. The Myanmese authorities felt confident engaging the international community and the UN.

Because of what happened in Myanmar, a lot of international organizations and dialogue partners—and even non-dialogue partners who also would like to promote freedom and liberty and democracy—are now asking us, "What can we do to help ASEAN and ASEAN secretariat to do your job better?" International financial and aid institutions and countries like the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia, and Norway have apparently decided that a strengthened ASEAN is for the best and would only contribute to the service of freedom and liberty and democracy in the region.

I think it was the U.S. President Bill Clinton who once said, "When you go into a crisis are, your hope is to build back better"—BBB. Our ASEAN hope in Myanmar is Build Back Better, for both Myanmar and ASEAN. ASEAN has to come out of this stronger and more confident, and with new hope that the members of ASEAN in the Mekong Delta—Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam—may now have a better opportunity through ASEAN to help all of us bridge the gaps in the region.

My hope is that we can have a master plan of ASEAN development that covers areas in dire need of assistance. That is the only way that we can build a strong ASEAN, a more inclusive ASEAN, a more equitable ASEAN. Only when ASEAN is confident of itself can it win the trust and the confidence of its people.

My hope during the next five years is much simpler: for ASEAN to be a household word in our 10 countries.

In the past 40 years, ASEAN has only been familiar to world leaders and diplomats like myself. But from now on, ASEAN will be a word people associate with their own lives: "If ASEAN doesn't act, our life is poorer. If ASEAN acts, our life is enriched."

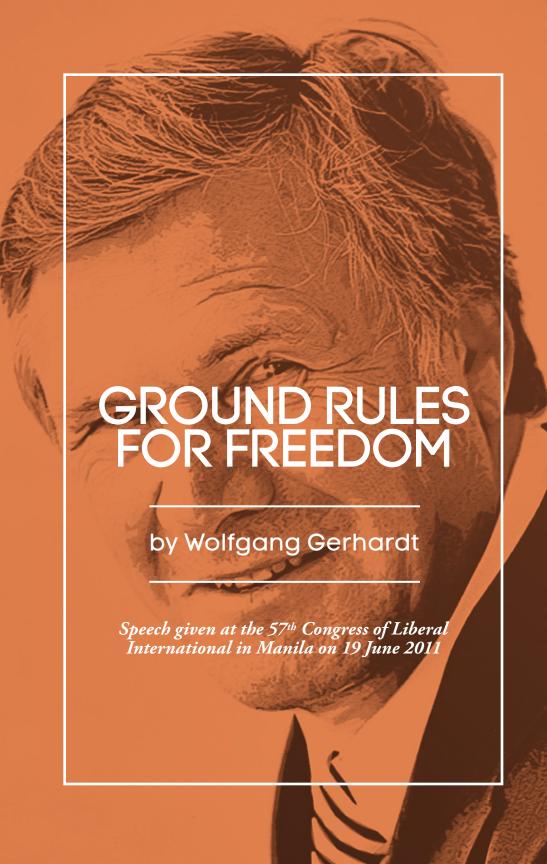
I want us to be relevant. And if we can do that, ASEAN will be stronger. ASEAN will be able to deliver on the kind of issues that CALD is concerned about, that CALD values: individual freedom, liberty, democracy, participation, the rule of law, good governance. Only a strong ASEAN can deliver on these things to a diverse ASEAN. Only a relevant ASEAN can respond to the challenges to which we Liberals and Democrats are committed to respond.

The ASEAN Charter is not perfect, but it is a beginning, and we can improve on it. Don't make the best the enemy of the good. Let us begin here, let us ratify it and let us move forward so that a better ASEAN can be improved upon by the people of ASEAN, by the next generation of leaders of the ASEAN.

We all have to be vigilant in order to protect our values, our liberty and our freedom. Thomas Jefferson said; "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." I am submitting to you for consideration the price of democratic and liberal values in ASEAN: eternal vigilance in support of an architecture that we already have. Expand it. Make it stronger so that it can serve those values that we cherish most together as Liberals and as Democrats.

I count on your support. You know what's the alternative? If you don't ratify, I lose my job.

Thank you very much.



The Liberal International event where this speech was given was supposed to have human rights and free trade as focus. By the time Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom Chair and former German MP Wolfgang Gerhardt stood before the podium at the LI 57th Congress, however, what is now called the 'Arab Spring' was in full swing, with the strongmen of Tunisia and Egypt already out of power while protests in other Arab states were threatening long-time rulers there. This seemingly unstoppable call for change left many people across the globe giddy with hope for the oppressed, including those in non-Arab states.

Gerhardt in this speech, though, reminds his multinational audience of other important trends with similarly profound worldwide impact, such as the rise of religious fundamentalism and climate change. He notes as well that once revolutions end, the real hard work begins.

The former leader of the German Free Democrat Party says that even in liberal societies, freedom comes with responsibilities and limits, with each citizen having a role to play in ensuring the state's stability and growth. In turn, he adds, states that enjoy freedom have a "special responsibility" to help others become free.



LIBERAL SOCIETIES must once again become clearly aware of the prerequisites for – but also the threats to – their free and liberal existence. We have to distil a value-based consensus about a new international order and how to bring people to play by the rules is the main question in the concert.

Some societies are virtually in freefall. Religious fundamentalism is on the rise worldwide; in many places the patterns of tribe and religion hinder an orientation toward the future. Whole states are run as family businesses, so to speak, and fail to develop any truly independent institution. Some conflicts have roots reaching deep into the past. In some places, very old maps are coming back into use. There and elsewhere, historical rubble has not been tidily cleared away.

Dictatorships still rule large numbers of peoples across the globe. There is racism, as well as press censorship and suppression of free speech. In extensive parts of the world, poverty and hopelessness still prevent many people from enjoying freedom and opportunities. Political repression and torture are the order of the day in many areas. In certain cultures women are oppressed, while children are all too often not sent to school – if there is even a school at all.

Crises also do not follow each other in neat and orderly succession. International conflicts over the distribution of energy and water, flows of refugees, environmental degradation, and the destruction of whole societies by diseases can and have already reached epic proportions. Many ingredients can combine to yield a highly hazardous brew.

Globalization makes the problems of others our problems as well. It affords opportunities, but also harbors risks. It forces societies to open up, and it necessitates responsible political participation. How a country approaches international relations also says something about the character of its society and its political leadership. But responsible political leadership is not to be found everywhere, while mature, enlightened societies have not yet developed in large scale. For sure, enlightenment and human rights do not prevail on their own. Respect for the principles of good governance must still be instilled in many places.

At the same time, we see that there are no longer reserved positions in the world. There are the upwardly and downwardly mobile. In global competition,

the societies that will prevail are those which display flexibility and an ability to adjust quickly to structural change. Competence in change is the hallmark of successful societies.

Countries that rise to meet the challenges of globalization can better use their resources and develop skills in coping with change. Those that close themselves off achieve less social equitability, become less competitive, and generally become politically and socially unstable. Among the closed economies, by the way, are also the greatest violators of human rights. It is not the global spread of the market economy but instead precisely the lack of a market-economy orientation that is the cause of many countries' problems. It is precisely where no market economy exists that uncontrollable economic and political power reign. Market economy is a disempowering tool. Pseudo-intellectual rejection of the market is narrow-mindedness cloaked in highly condensed morality.

Today we have a broader knowledge and better understanding of what drives development. Most of what is needed is well known. We know that sustained growth is necessary. But many of the drivers of that growth are not measurable in numbers. They include factors such as leadership, civil society, private enterprise, rule of law, independent institutions, and a balanced regulation framework that does not eliminate a culture of responsibility.

And so while donor countries have to stand for their commitments, the leadership of recipient countries has to do solid work on the ground. None of all attempts of funding AIDS-treatment, to get boys and girls in school, will come to anything unless leaders do not every day insist on funding infrastructure to strengthen and shore up state capacity and civil society institutions.

Governments are often strong in rhetoric. But the actual pace of implementing is disappointingly slow. It cannot be that some countries sell their national resources and do not in parallel develop their human resources and innovative companies. Yet an African citizen wrote recently, "After the ore has been mined, the trees cut and the oil pumped, people in some countries are often actually more behind."

In far too many nations, too, we see a shocking underinvestment in education and a resulting poor educational system. In large part, that may be because quality education is a key tool for social mobility and the sine qua non of scientific and technological advancement. Indeed, education threatens the monopoly over information and interpretation of powerful regimes.

Of course there is a widespread feeling in some parts of the world that countries there have lagged behind the West in economic and political terms. Colonialism has blamed for this turn of events. Colonialism has indeed done harm to many countries. But many of these nations have been independent for almost two generations now. There is thus a growing realization that the slow pace of economic, political, and scientific development is due to internal factors.

It is not always others who are to blame for one's own shortcomings. It is a matter of societies' own ability to modernize externally and internally. The underlying causes of crises are not to be found in globalization but instead above all in the uncertainty of regional, political, cultural, and social conditions for dealing with it. Globalization is not fate. Let me repeat: It is an opportunity. It is created in people, and people can shape it in such a way as to ensure active participation.

Here is another truth: While technological knowledge and managerial skills are important to growth and social stability, it is as crucial for the citizens themselves to develop a sense of ownership over what happens to them and to their country.

With the resources at its disposal, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation is actively engaged in ensuring meaningful people's participation worldwide. It operates in 61 countries; it pursues a wide variety of projects and initiatives to build civil societies and democratic structures; it works to promote human rights. It seeks to open up more and more opportunities for liberal-minded individuals and foster the emergence of political environments that enable active participation and in which Liberals can develop liberal policies. Successfully coping with the ever faster pace of our time, cultivating and imparting universal values, and contributing worldwide to stable societies are the primary aims of our work.

International policy needs an orientation toward basic values, as well as courage and a sense of responsibility. It is always a matter of ethics and power, of helping or looking the other way, of legitimacy and injustice, of human beings. It is ultimately a matter of helping human beings, especially if their own country is unwilling to help them or even victimizes them. The people and states that are free have a special responsibility to help others become free. Only in this way can they themselves also remain free and secure.

The free development of human potential needs a state that guarantees peace and security. We need ground rules if freedom is to endure. The security of the citizens and their subjective sense of security are the indispensable foundation of a stable democracy. In a liberal legal and constitutional order, security and freedom are not in competition with one another. Security is no foe of freedom; security is the prerequisite for sharing in freedom.

Part and parcel of a legal order recognized by the citizens as right and just is its enforcement and hence protection against criminal offenses and crime. The state must therefore have suitable means at its disposal in order to resolutely enforce its monopoly on the use of force. The authorities must be equipped with the financial and personnel resources to resolutely enforce the existing laws. Internal security and the fight against crime at both national and international level are indispensable prerequisites for the preservation of freedom and social peace.

But: It is not the state that deigns to grant citizens freedom. Rather, it is the citizens who grant the state limitations on their freedom to safeguard the rights of all.

The state cannot be given a completely free hand. Transparent customers, transparent patients, transparent taxpayers: That is not the liberal conception of the relationship between the state and its citizens. Internal security can be safeguarded and defended only by the rule of law. Only on the basis of rule-of-law principles, and not against them. The private life, home, communication, movement, friendships and relationships, bank accounts, and freely pursued economic activity of citizens cannot be subjected to total state surveillance. Confidence in the rule of law is an important pillar of security, and not the imperial state incursions into the private sphere and freedom of the people. We are what we do. And we are what we promise never to do. If we wish to remain a free and liberal state governed by the rule of law, then we dare not sacrifice the ethical superiority of the rule-of-law state.

Ground rules are only one dimension of the precondition for free and liberal societies, however. As well-meant as everything may be, proportionality is still – and will remain – a principle governing state and ultimately also police action. Security encompasses social as well as physical security. It also encompasses the revamping of social security systems that are no longer viable and no longer intergenerationally just. It is also a matter of education and training and, in

essence, of opportunities and prospects for a life led in human dignity and freedom. Especially in the shaping of opportunities—security calls for proactive policies and a willingness to change instead of an aversion to risk.

The state must offer its citizens choices. It must organize systems competitively. It should not think it is smarter than the citizens themselves. If it tries, it will overextend itself and ultimately be condemned to incompetence. Nothing is more dangerous than a state suffering from "overextendedness." The state cannot do everything; it just acts as if it can.

State and private sphere, parliaments and legislators: That's not all there is to it. A written constitution alone is not enough; it is not self-implementing. The mental constitution of a society is crucial if freedom is to be enduring.

In 1776, Thomas Jefferson wrote in the U.S. Declaration of Independence "that all men are created equal." A politically explosive phrase then, as well as now. This phrase does not, however, mean that all people are completely the same, irrespective of their genetic makeup and the talents and skills arising therefrom. As the Polish writer Stanislav Lee once noted, if all people were the same, one would basically be enough.

A look at Webster's dictionary teaches us that the word "equal" means "like, as great as, or the same as another or others in [certain respects]." We are not talking about the sameness of all people, but rather about the "likeness in worth and status of all people," above all before the law. This is what Jefferson meant by "equal"—a word that is so misunderstood by many people today is the hallmark of societies dedicated to the avoidance of envy. These are not, however, free societies. Quite the contrary; such societies make themselves poorer, not richer, through their emphasis on sameness. They waste talent out of enviousness and resentment. Armed with the idea of sameness they crusade against the idea of freedom, the idea of competition, and the idea of opportunities and personal responsibility for what we do or don't do.

In a free society, people must also be able to take decisions freely and develop freely according to their abilities. This also means that one person can be faster or better than another. In this free society, "just" consequently means that all people, because they are of equal value, should enjoy equal opportunities.

The quality of education, for instance, is a key tool for social mobility and the sine qua non of scientific and technological advancement. But education threatens the monopoly over information and interpretation of powerful regimes, which may be why there is underinvestment in education and the poor quality of education systems in several countries. Yet it is also true that while the state should afford its citizens opportunities, it cannot guarantee them success.

In the end, social justice will permanently materialize only through employment, and employment in turn through growth, and growth in turn through skills; it is less likely to result from a distribution-oriented, welfare-state concept of the kind now also being built up to be the European identity. As if, so to speak, social security and jobs could exist without competition.

An overextension of freedom in the name of freedom is not liberal; it is destructive. A liberal order cannot function without a fixed line. It needs markers, which – as the English anthropologist Mary Douglas put it – create shady spots for the individual. One of the key questions confronting liberal societies is how many traditions they can afford to lose, how many commitments they can incur without harm, and how much awareness of the common good they must also preserve and instil. It depends on their sense of balance, on an ever new combination of openness and awareness of origin, of old and new. All this calls for the relinquishment, on principle, of the idea of a single truth. This calls for ground rules.

Liberal societies by their very nature need commitments and an awareness of common ground for both the harmonious coexistence of their citizens and their own security.

Notwithstanding all state measures to ensure the security of its citizens, every country remains dependent above all on a minimum of common ground between its citizens and on ties that regulate the exercise of freedom from within. Every free and liberal society hinges on a sense of balance.

One's own faith and own convictions, no matter how suffused with a deepseated belief in their correctness, must observe principles. A religion should honor God or Allah, but not play God or Allah. The constitutions are binding for all who wish to live in a free country, regardless of what identity they claim as their own and what life they lead. If we wish to protect it, there can be no tolerance of intolerance. The state itself must take steps to ensure a "balance of power" within itself, within the framework of institutions, as well as at the governmental level.

Free societies, according to the German editor Joachim Fest, are founded not least on a number of prerequisites, "which, strictly speaking, go against human nature": self-imposed prohibitions, civilized rules, norms, tolerance, even privileged treatment of minorities, a system of precautions. Only in this way can people live halfway bearably with other people. Herein lies the "peculiar pathos of the idea of a free order."

Ground rules are the bases for culturally compatible interaction among people who learn them and in whom they must be instilled through good examples, through character and attitude.

Political stability and its cultural, economic, and scientific achievements are not based on bureaucratic and centralist uniformity, but instead on a tradition of governmental and cultural diversity. Cultural independence is a value in itself. Personal responsibility is a value in itself.

Personal responsibility produces achievements, initiates learning processes, and creates ties for a functional polity. Effective federalism lives from competition, from the creation of distinct profiles, from the crystallization of one's own identity and from the bringing out of one's own strengths in competition with others. Uniformity of living conditions does not mean their standardization and levelling but rather their given local manifestation at a comparable level.

Problem-solving capability in an increasingly more complex state will hinge crucially on the functioning of the decentralized level of political decision-making and action. From municipal self-government to competitive federalism. Autonomy creates transparency, assigns clear responsibility. It rewards personal effort. It also presupposes a considerably stronger will to political leadership.

A written constitution alone is not enough, however; it is not self-implementing. A work ethic and a learning culture are the foundation of solidarity. A society of citizens – not clients of the state – is the prerequisite for the preservation of freedom. The responsible citizen, not the coddled subject, figures crucially

here. A renaissance of responsibility in freedom is essential, for freedom dare not become a forgotten ideal.

To paraphrase philosopher Karl Popper, we must lead the way into the unknown, unconscious and unseen, using the power of reason at our command to create both freedom and security.



by Selyna Peiris

Speech delivered at the CALD Populism and Democracy Conference held in Colombo on 9 March 2012

There is little sympathy for tyrants toppled as a result of popular uprisings, but Liberals have long worried that populism can harm instead of help democracy. Such concerns have come to fore even more in recent years, as populist governments and regimes installed by popular movements have come short in the protection of rights.

Sri Lankan Liberal Youth President and then CALD Youth Chair Selyna Peiris argues, however, that whether or not populism would benefit a democracy depends highly on the leaders of a populist movement or regime. Peiris, who has a master's degree in law from University College, London, also says that the youth—who have figured prominently in populist movements—would do well to learn from experiences of nations that brought down an autocratic regime by force, only to replace it with a government that was not only inefficient, but also all too quick to ignore any pleas from non-supporters. Patience, Peiris says, is needed for any profound change; so is achieving one's objectives through non-violent means.

The youth leader acknowledges the powerful role of information and communication technologies in affecting reforms, especially when employed by the youth. At the same time, however, she emphasizes the value of making friends and building networks in the pursuit of liberal and democratic goals.



THE PAST two decades have seen a resurgence of populist movements, from Latin America to the post-communist and post-Soviet states, to the old democracies of Western Europe, during the Arab Spring from Tunisia to Libya, and to the Wall Street of the United States. Most political analysts present

populism as a threat (and an alternative) to pluralist, procedural democracy. In contrast, some theorists of the so-called new populism see in it a response to democracy's shortcomings, such as elitism, democratic deficit, corruption, and the lack of efficiency in solving social problems. New populism is seen as a potential corrective mechanism leading to the improvement in quality of democracy—a way in which 'people power' strives to adjust a failing system. The rest of the presentation will work its way through the workings of democracy and populism and further focus on the role of good leadership within its application.

Let me begin at the end and say that populist movements can be as much a threat to democracy as it is a corrective. It is visionary and strategic leadership that defines which way the cookie crumbles.

Democracy is a term and a concept with a long and convoluted history. It is also a highly contested concept in our own time. The literal meaning of democracy, as indicated by its etymological origin in ancient Greek, is the power or rule of the people. In contemporary terms, this principle is usually understood in terms of the rule of the majority, as expressed through free and fair elections. It is almost universally recognized that majoritarianism by itself does not capture the contemporary understanding of democracy. As Leszek Kolakowski wrote in 1990 in the very first issue of the *Journal of Democracy*, "The principle of majority rule does not by itself constitute democracy; we know of tyrannical regimes that enjoyed the support of a majority, including Nazi Germany and the Iranian theocracy. We do not call democratic a regime in which 51 percent of the population may slaughter the remaining 49 percent with impunity."

For a regime to be considered democratic today, it also must protect the rights of individuals and minorities—in other words, it must guarantee the freedom or liberty of its citizens. These guarantees are typically incorporated into a written constitution, and government is further limited and constrained by the rule of law. Democracy so understood is often called constitutional or liberal democracy.

The relationship between the two components of liberal democracy—individual rights and majority rule—is a complex one. They can and have been separated, not only in theory but in practice. Pre-modern democratic city-states were not liberal (in the sense of protecting individual rights) and did not aspire to be. Some European constitutional monarchies were relatively liberal even if not democratic. Hong Kong under British colonial rule was exceedingly liberal even though its residents had very little voice in how they were governed. Yet in today's world, majority rule and the protection of individual rights almost always appear in tandem.

According to a Freedom House survey, countries that regularly hold free and fair elections are much more likely to protect individual rights, and vice versa. So when we speak of democracy in today's world, we are really speaking not simply of rule by the people, but of liberal democracy—one which seeks to ensure the ultimate sovereignty of the people, and at the same time limits the day-to-day rule of the majority so that it does not infringe upon the rights of individuals or minorities. In other words, it pursues not a single goal that one can seek to maximize, but two separate and sometimes competing goals. Marc Plattner in the January 2010 *Journal of Democracy* states that "the solution to the problems of democracy cannot simply be more democracy, because liberal democracy is in tension with itself."

Liberal democracy requires the maintenance of a successful balance between majority rule and individual and minority rights, and such a balance can surprisingly be easily tipped. World examples have shown that one such way is through the mechanisms of populism. The definition of populism is currently a subject of controversy among social scientists and historians. The concept has a checkered international history dating back to the latter part of the nineteenth century. Its early exemplars are often said to include the Russian Narodniki and the U.S. Agrarian Movement that founded the People's Party and later supported the 1896 presidential candidacy of William Jennings Bryan. Various twentieth-century parties in Latin America, especially the movement that backed Juan Perón in Argentina, are generally labeled as populist. Today, of course, it is Hugo Chávez and his imitators—Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador—who are commonly regarded as populists. In Europe, by contrast, the designation has been given primarily to right-wing politicians, including the late Jörg Haider in Austria and Jean-Marie Le Pen in France. In Thailand, the movement backing the ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is often called populist. Arab Spring—from Tunisia to Libya—saw new populist movements use the tactics of mass occupation ultimately leading to the overthrow of autocratic leaders in the region. Inspired by such action, movements such as OCCUPY have cropped up and participated in what their website calls a nonviolent, "leaderless resistance movement" to denounce "the greed and corruption of the 1%."

As is apparent from the listing above, the populist label has been applied to a highly diverse array of leaders and movements, and some scholars even question whether populism really is a distinctive or unified phenomenon at all. For further clarification or possible confusion, "populism" in the *Encyclopedia of Democracy* is "a political movement that emphasizes the interests, cultural traits, and spontaneous feelings of the common people, as opposed to those of a privileged elite. For legitimation, populist movements often appeal to the majority will directly, through mass gatherings, referendums, or other forms of popular democracy, without much concern for checks and balances or the rights of minorities."

On one hand, it is clear that populism embodies a vision of democracy that is not wedded to liberalism or to constitutionalism. Populism remains democratic in the majoritarian sense, in that it justifies itself as the agent and the embodiment of the people as a whole, excluding, of course, the corrupt and privileged elite and its agents. If the populist message were issued merely on behalf of a minority segment of the citizenry, that message would be drained of its appeal. Populists want what they take to be the will of the majority, often as channeled through a charismatic populist leader, to prevail, and to do so with as little hindrance or delay as possible. For this reason, they have little patience with liberalism's emphasis on procedural niceties and protections for individual rights.

At the same time, the recurrence of populist rhetoric and even populist movements offers a useful corrective to the tendency of liberal democracy to move too far away from its foundations in popular sovereignty. Such movements increase the political involvement of groups that otherwise are likely to be passive, and they can provide a useful "wake-up call" to elites and public officials who have grown too cozy with their privileges and too remote from the concerns of public opinion. In short, they can help to prevent liberal democracies from aggrandizing their liberal side and neglecting their democratic side. It is fair to say that, despite which school of thought you chose to agree with, populist

movements can be as much a threat to democracy as it is a corrective. I will go one step further and state that it is in fact visionary, strategic, and intelligent leadership that can define the consequences of a populist movement.

At this juncture, it is most appropriate to emphasize on the role of young leaders in today's world. To quote Harry Truman: "Men (or women) make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better."

In this regard, it is increasingly becoming important for young leaders today to take strategic and non-violent approaches to political change, as sociopolitical and economic costs of revolution are extremely high and such revolt is at most times counter-productive. For example, the mass occupation of Tahrir Square in Egypt indeed led to the ousting of an autocratic leader but it also cost Egypt 30 billion U.S. dollars. Analysts say that each day of the 18-day uprising cost Egypt's economy one billion dollars in capital outflow, as foreign investors took money out. The uprising also affected the country's infrastructures, key institutions, and its tourism industry, which accounts for 11 percent of GDP and 10 percent of jobs.

Some have said that the economic losses are a small price to pay for freedom. This is true. However, it is also impossible to gloss over the economic challenges in post-revolution Egypt. After all, many of the reasons that brought Egyptians to revolt were economic, and will not be resolved by a cabinet reshuffle. Young leaders from all around the world should learn from these lessons. Replacing one system with another through populist movements does not necessarily bring about the desired freedoms or rights. Sometimes it merely replaces one bureaucracy with another. What young leaders today should strive for is systematic transformation and not anarchic change. Have a long-term vision, but realize that its realization will take time.

Further, young leaders of today need to be advocates of non-violence. As the Lord Buddha said, violence begets violence and the world has seen on numerous occasions that this is indeed true. Take for example the case of Sri Lanka, where two violent youth insurrections by the Sinhalese and Tamil Youth in the form of the JVP (Peoples Liberation Front) and LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) movements saw the perishing of nearly two generations of skill and

talent. We can never have them back and it is the duty of young Sri Lankan leaders to ensure that such violence never floods our beautiful island again.

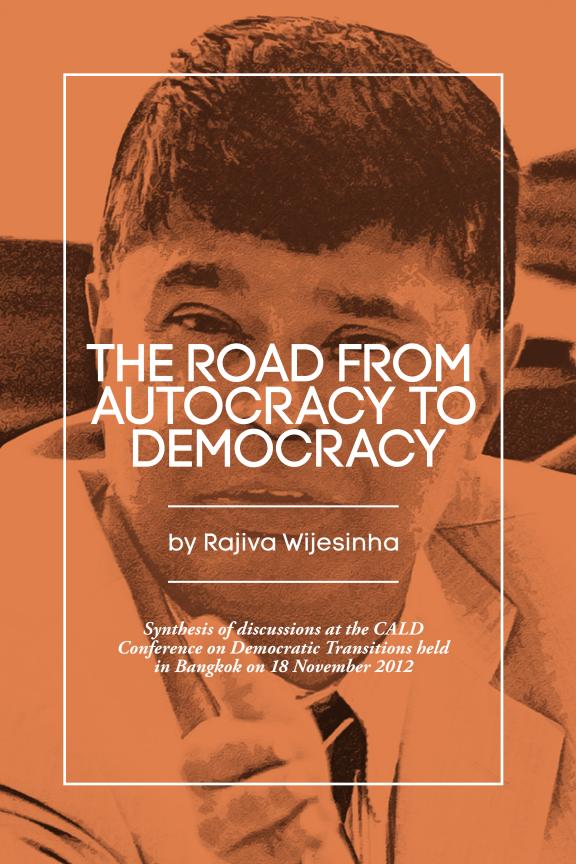
Emotions aside, resorting to violence for change is also counter-productive and the costs often outweigh the realization of the causes. Non-violent political change is not a mere aspiration. The thousands of people who marched in the cities of Eastern Europe in recent decades, the unwavering determination of the people in Tibet, and the recent demonstrations in Burma are powerful reminders of this belief in non-violence in achieving political change. Freedom is the very source of creativity and human development and visionaries such as Mahatma Gandhi and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. have shown us that successful changes can be brought about non-violently. From the Velvet Revolution in the former Czechoslovakia to the popular pro-democracy movement in the Philippines, the world has seen how a non-violent approach can lead to positive political change.

Young leaders of today also have technology on our side. With a click of the mouse, we can reach millions of people within our countries and also around the world. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Linkedin, and so many more, have created a universal language that transcends national boundaries. Technically, social mobilization has never been easier and an important part of any campaign would be to use such available technology to further our causes. Having said this, using technology can also be difficult in less developed countries as there is often no widespread connectivity, especially into more rural areas. An area that we Asian leaders can share ideas about is how we can overcome such challenges.

Last but not least, the power of human relationships should never be underestimated. Building networks and making friends is of untold value in our journeys toward freer and more democratic societies or in the preservation of existing ones. It is easier when talk or negotiation of freedom and peace happens between friends. CALD Youth offers exactly this forum, as within its philosophy is the hope to unify the present liberal and democratic generation in Asia in order to contribute strategically, effectively, and intelligently to the development and preservation of democracy and freedom in the Asian region.

I would like to conclude by inviting all the young delegates to a fruitful discussion on how to prepare the Asian youth for leadership. The time is ripe,

the opportunity is ours to take and using the words of one of my heroes, Nelson Mandela, I end by stating that sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. I want to you to think about whether we are that generation.



Twelve years after its first conference on democratic transitions in Asia, CALD reprised the theme for one of its conferences in 2012. At the time, what looked like profound change was starting to take place in Burma, Southeast Asia's erstwhile pariah state, but this was met by cautious optimism by the outside world. Any transition, after all, is never easy, and one from authoritarianism to democracy could be downright difficult and complicated. In the case of Burma, it was emerging from military rule that had lasted more than half a century. That it would have a rough and bumpy ride ahead was almost a given.

Asia, though, has had nations that had gone through such an experience—with several of them, in fact, sparking the first CALD conference on democratic transitions. CALD thus thought of looking at what some of these countries had gone through as part of the conference, the better to gauge what Burma could expect, and what steps it could take to ease the process.

Liberal Party of Sri Lanka head and MP Rajiva Wijesinha synthesized the proceedings at the conference. In this speech, he highlights several elements that he says are essential to ensuring a smooth transition from autocracy to democracy. For one, he says, while compromise should never entail giving up one's principles, flexibility is still needed to reach "a common understanding." He also says it is only right to recognize and acknowledge when a formerly intransigent regime finally begins to open up. And while many do not find it strange that such a regime would elicit distrust, Wijesinha points out that those who want democracy to succeed would do well to nurture confidence from all sides instead of creating any reason for animosities to prosper. He notes as well the importance of promoting and strengthening institutions that preserve and protect rights and ensuring the free flow of accurate information.

A leading liberal theoretician in South Asia, Wijesinha was once the Secretary General of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process in Sri Lanka and Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights. He is now the Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation.



PRODUCING A synthesis of the various interesting and instructive papers we heard today is not an easy task. Understandably, almost all speakers looked at the issue under discussion through the prism of their own experiences, but unfortunately, very few made any clear connection between

the problems they discussed and those of Burma, which is supposed to be our primary concern.

Nevertheless, the issues they raised suggest what I hope will be productive lines of thought. I will look at these in terms of a formula suggested by a former President of Sri Lanka, who had to deal with the aftermath, in the early nineties, of not only the ethnic conflict and the settlement brokered by India, but also a Sinhalese youth insurrection that used dissatisfaction with that settlement as a focus to rouse armed opposition to government. His argument was that we must have consultation, compromise, and consensus, and I was reminded of this when Cambodia raised the question of the possibility of talking with the devil, and Hong Kong talked about dancing with wolves.

The answer to what might be a conundrum was outlined in the very first presentation we had on Burma, which fleshed out the position put to us by Aung San Suu Kyi when I was privileged to lead the CALD delegation that met her way back in January 2011. Earlier we had been to the National League of Democracy headquarters where some of the party elders seemed to suggest that no compromise was possible. But her position was clear: She was prepared to talk and to aim for consensus, but she would not compromise on basic principles. Compromise, I believe, is generally a good thing, when it is based on sensitivity to the positions of other individuals. It should not involve abandoning principles, but one should be prepared to be flexible with regard to other people in trying to reach a common understanding.

Dr. Myo Aung this morning, in a moving description of the approach taken by his party now, mentioned that they engaged in talks with all parties based on mutual respect. Their aim was long-lasting peace and reconciliation, and this clearly required understanding of what the different parties wanted, what they needed, and what they stood for.

In the discussion after that session, following on the description of the gradual increase in people participation in government in Hong Kong, some very

significant points were made. One was the fact that, in developing a pact between competing forces, we need also to take into account competition within one or other party to the principal conflict. This is particularly true where ethnic groups are concerned, whether in Burma or Sri Lanka or the Philippines, where extreme views have evolved, whereas there are usually also more moderate forces.

It is understandable that minorities which feel they have been tricked and abused—and this applies to political groups too—feel they cannot trust those who have oppressed them. But experience shows us that even apparently intransigent regimes change, sometimes because of external pressures, sometimes because of changes of personnel. South Africa and Burma are obvious examples that come to mind, but of the eight countries in CALD that had obviously authoritarian regimes yet experienced transitions to democracy, we can see some sort of softening in four of the original oppressive governments when new personalities emerged. In Taiwan and Indonesia and Mongolia and Pakistan, a hardline leader presided over elections that led to a change of government, and I see no reason why the same thing should not happen in Burma. Indeed it could be argued that the same thing happened in Thailand, when General Prem Tinsulanonda was succeeded by Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan.

Prem, now revered it seems by Democrats in Thailand, is an example of the seminal power exercised by individuals. He was a general who became Prime Minister without being elected, but he understood the need to move toward democracy. And while I appreciate the view presented by the Democratic Progressive Party—that the changes in Taiwan were triggered by bottom-up opposition—I do not think we can ignore the opening up, after the total domination by General Chiang Kai Shek, by his son, who was President for a brief period. That again seems to be the model Burma is following, and I hope the other conditions that allowed peaceful transition in Taiwan obtain there.

Amongst these is the need to ensure confidence. The fact that then Taiwan President Chen Sui Bian appointed a military man as his first Prime Minister was a vital factor in ensuring that animosities did not develop. Animosities, we should remember, often arise from fear, and I believe the point made by the chair of the second session, about the confidence the Burmese military have because of the 2008 constitution, should be kept in view. Certainly the constitution must be changed, but this should be done in a manner that does not threaten. I myself believe that the hardliners in 1989 were able to get their way because

of threats made by individuals after the NLD won that election, and that is why the very positive approach that was described today, involving mutual respect, is vital. We should never forget that respect should be as much for the weaknesses of competing forces as for their strengths—or perhaps even more so.

It is such an approach that I believe will be most fruitful with regard to relations with China, which were referred to frequently, though often obliquely except in the case of Hong Kong, where they are obviously of immediate significance. When we think of the support China has given to authoritarian regimes, we should not forget the policies of the United States until very recently—to give them the benefit of the doubt, despite the graphic descriptions of say, the former British ambassador to Uzbekhistan, about support for torture and secret renditions fairly recently.

The fact is, all countries look after their own interests, and morality will not stand in the way of this, as the peoples of South America found to their cost for well over a century and a half after the promulgation of the Monroe doctrine. I would like to think that the United States has now realized that its own interests are better served by promoting democracy and human rights than by supporting authoritarian regimes, but we would be naïve to think that democracy and human rights are an end in themselves for any country with regard to any other.

It is the people of a country who provide the best defense of their own rights, and that is why we must not only promote democracy, but also institutional mechanisms that preserve and protect rights. Cambodia, having experienced the hollowness of what passes for democracy because of regular voting, noted the vital importance of the police, the Courts, and the Election Commission being independent institutions. Let me add that Singapore, if not so obviously, would also fail this test of a fully functioning democracy, that such institutions should be independent of the government in power.

To that Hong Kong added the need for an independent institution to prevent corruption, and I should note that that element in Hong Kong is some compensation for its lack of democracy in other respects. But I think we also need to stress the importance of the media, while also realizing that an independent media is impossible. All media, we must recognize, will fall in line with the predilections of those who fund it, but diversity in the media is vital, and we need a situation in which different political perspectives should have

outlets that represent their views. I am delighted that the Democrat Party of Thailand has taken positive steps in this regard, and am only surprised, given what outsiders knew about the influence exercised by the media opposed to them, that remedial measures have come so late.

This point about the media, or rather about the need for a free flow of information, is relevant to the last paper we had today, which discussed environmental problems. The theme of the speaker was the need for synergy between political parties and those concerned with environmental protection, and the failure in this regard of the DPP in Taiwan after it took power was highlighted. This sort of criticism, encouraged by the party itself, is heartening, for it suggests understanding of one of the cardinal principles of democracy, namely that it requires constant consultation of the people, for otherwise they would not be empowered.

In this regard I was deeply impressed by the point made by the speaker, that the path to democracy is made up of challenges to authority. Even the most idealistic political parties can forget this when they assume power, for they begin to think that those in charge know best, and they are privilege elites, whether they be political or administrative or financial elites. But we must not forget that the authority such elites exercise only has legitimacy in terms of benefits to the people amongst whom they function.

At the first session this morning, in talking primarily about the economic crisis and its implications for democracy, the Thai speaker noted three areas with which government should be concerned. The first was job creation, which is of course something that political parties of all persuasions pursue. The second point he mentioned was social concern, and this is something Liberals should stress. Unfortunately there is a strand in liberal thinking that concentrates on free markets, and believes that market forces will solve all problems. But the great tradition of liberalism—that which distinguishes it from right-wing parties that believe capitalism is a panacea for everything, and left-wing parties which believe state controls are essential—emphasizes the importance of equity. Therefore, while accepting the central position in economic policy of market forces, Liberals believe in welfare measures that will increase opportunities for all, and thereby promote the level playing field on which alone market forces can operate to the benefit of all. Thus, as Count Otto von Lambsdorff so graphically put it once, while Liberals believe in a small state, they also believe in a strong

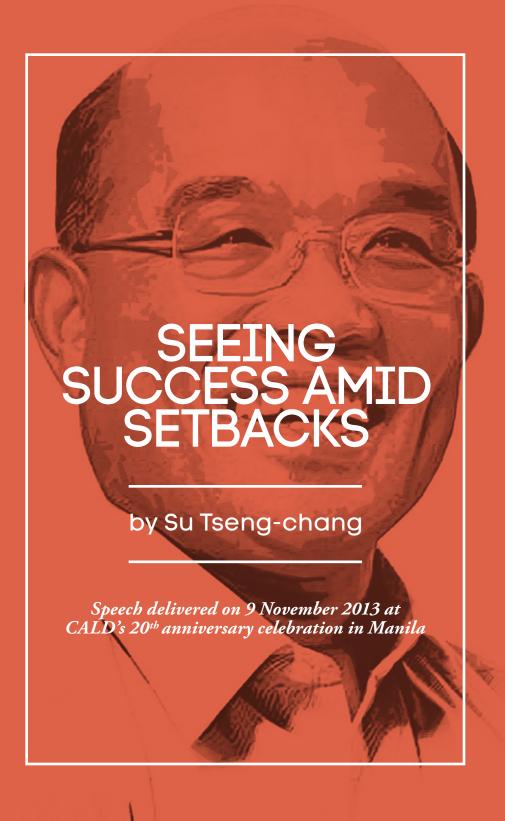
state, and this was the message that came through clearly even yesterday, when our Secretary General introduced the Seminar on Climate Change.

Nowhere perhaps in the modern world is the need for state intervention to regulate market forces greater than with regard to the environment. I recall that, twenty years ago, when I used to conduct workshops for the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, the obvious areas in which even Liberals recognized the need for state authority were defense, law, and financial security. In those days the environment did not figure high on the list. But with every year that has passed since then, we realize how important it is for the state to provide security for its people with regard also to nature and its resources.

We must then make sure that there is concerted attention to environmental needs, and this requires constant consultation of local communities. As countries move toward greater democracy, we must also make sure that the people who should exercise power are aware of issues that could affect them adversely. Information that is relevant must be collated and disseminated, so that decisions are made on the basis of full awareness of possible consequences. For this purpose media involvement is essential, but given the predilections and priorities of most media outlets, we need also to promote new concepts of media and information dissemination.

Democracy, after all, is not about governments; it is rather about the governed. Political parties therefore must, in promoting transitions to greater and greater democracy, also enhance the power of individuals to make decisions. Better understanding of the needs of others is vital, as we discussed in the session on forging ethnic harmony, but so too is awareness of the consequences of the decisions we make.





In the last two decades, many of CALD's member parties have had a rollercoaster ride. While most had the opportunity to serve their people in government, several were no longer in office by the time CALD celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2013. In some cases, the governments that replaced them were run by parties that had an authoritarian past.

The Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan, a CALD founding member, had such an experience. It was formed in 1986, when Taiwan was still under martial law and political parties were illegal. By 2000, Taiwan had a DPP president, ending 50 years of iron-fist rule by the Kuomintang (KMT). But DPP suffered a severe trouncing at the polls in 2008, resulting in the KMT's return to power. Yet while DPP again failed to capture enough votes in 2012 to enable it to govern Taiwan once more, it managed to deny the KMT a satisfactory showing in the legislature.

DPP Chairman and founding member Su Tseng-chang highlights the positive in this speech even as he acknowledges the setbacks his party and other CALD member organizations have encountered. A former governor of Taipei as well as Pintung, Su is no stranger to the constantly changing mood of the electorate. Su says one key question Democrats and Liberals should remember is this: Have we done enough to win the support of the people?

At the same time, though, he says that non-democratic forces can be best fought with the coming together of Democrats and Liberals. Regional cooperation is also crucial to level a playing field that globalization has rendered rocky and favoring the powerful few, as well as in promoting peace and stability in an Asia where bullies are rampant.



IT IS my pleasure to join this great gathering with our friends from CALD and ALDE to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of CALD. I am proud to say that the discussions to form CALD actually started in Taiwan in 1993 when I was serving as the Secretary General of the Democratic Progressive Party. As you

can easily tell, the DPP and CALD already formed a strong bond when Taiwan's democratization started to gain momentum. I am very glad that the relations between the DPP and CALD are still going strong.

This year also marks the 27th anniversary of the DPP. In 1986, when Taiwan was still under martial law, I and seventeen other members founded the very first democratic party in our country to push for democratization as the only path to end political persecution.

We fought hard against the KMT's one-party rule and successfully pushed for general elections for the parliament and the president. Ultimately, the DPP became the ruling party in 2000. We joined the Philippines and Korea in leading another wave of democratization in East Asia.

We have worked closely with our friends in CALD to promote democracy, human rights, and freedom throughout the region. Now I am very pleased to see that CALD has become the most important party alliance in Asia. As we look back, we did not foresee how far we could go when we started this network. But we have come a long way, and we should all be proud of ourselves.

In the past two decades, some of us were given the opportunities to govern. But just as some new European democracies have experienced, some Asian democracies are now fighting democratic setbacks. For just one example, the people of Taiwan allowed the former regime return to power a few years ago. We now see some old practices come back alive.

However, our determination to consolidate democracy in the region should not be compromised by the setbacks. What we need now is to pin down the causes and work hard to overcome the challenges. In this regard, we face fundamental issues such as building strong democratic institutions and new factors such as globalization. Even though the latter was not directly related to democracy, it has certainly affected our democratic processes.

Globalization, beginning from the late 1990s, has brought both opportunities and challenges to all of us. Our societies have been reshaped and the societal gaps have been widened. The challenges have come very fast and people seem to have lost their patience for long-term structural reform. Many people simply want to relive the "good old days" and support the past regimes in exchange for a more secured economic environment. In some countries, such as my own, the democratic formalities still exist, but the substance is otherwise.

The issues associated with globalization require more regional and international cooperation, as none of us can cope with the challenges alone. We must stay in solidarity. Together we will consolidate democracy domestically, regionally, and globally. We should bear heavier responsibilities to share the experiences of good governance in moving forward our common objectives.

The young democracies should not go against each other. Rather, we need to work together to meet the challenges of the anti-democratic forces. We also need to support each other to suppress the temptation of some people to welcome back the past. We know quite well what the old regimes in new faces are capable of: painting an unreal economic picture, then depriving the people some fundamental rights, and in the end the fruits of growth are only in the hands of the powerful few.

Nevertheless, we should never be discouraged by the setbacks or the challenges, as successful stories are still evolving. I am particularly happy to see the launch of political transition in Burma. This is the result of the effort made by the people with strong international support. I also notice that the Philippine liberal leadership has demonstrated their determination for good governance by launching political reform.

Your sister party in Taiwan, the DPP, has now received more popular support than the governing KMT in nation-wide public opinion polls. The localities in which the DPP governs have also been recognized to have outperformed their peers. We are confident that we will gain more ground in the elections next year. The DPP is ready to shoulder more responsibilities.

There are still new challenges ahead of us, including overdevelopment, pollution, ecological damages, and ever more natural disasters caused by the climate change. We should come to the awareness that growth rate is not the only

figure that matters; sustainability should be our prime consideration. In this regard, the experience of some of our European partners can illuminate our path to development. We also need to adopt a policy to help revitalize the private sector and to create an environment friendly to small and medium enterprises. In my view, we should always remind ourselves the objectives of CALD and ask ourselves the key question: Have we done enough to win the support of the people?

In my trip to Tokyo earlier this year, I proposed to form a democratic alliance among Asian democracies to safeguard our values and our common interests. The DPP advocates peaceful resolution through diplomatic consultation to end disputes in East and South China Seas. Taiwan can and should serve as a regional leader in promoting peace in the contested areas. And fellow democracies in the region should work together, based on our belief in universal values, to overcome the challenges brought by the regional strategic dynamics.

Here I would also like to repeat what I delivered in my trip to Washington, D.C. in June: responsibility, reconciliation, and rebalance. The DPP is committed to its responsibilities for the future of Taiwan, is willing to reconcile through dialogues as a means to normalize cross-strait relations, and desires to be a responsible partner of fellow democracies in the Asia Pacific.

My dear CALD colleagues, we have built a solid foundation of a democratic alliance among the Asian liberal and democratic parties. We need to stand firmly together, in power or in opposition, to repel the threats to democracy, and to promote our core values, freedom and democracy, in the region and throughout the rest of the world.

The DPP enjoys the benefits of the international network provided by CALD and LI. They are crucial to Taiwan, for our international space has been limited. I would like to take this opportunity to extend to you our appreciation for your support all these years, in all issues.

I look forward to the next twenty years of CALD.

Thank you very much.





by Florencio Abad

Keynote speech delivered during the CALD 20th Anniversary Dinner in Manila on 9 November 2013 The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats has come a long way from its founding in 1993—and so has Florencio Abad, who gave this speech. As Abad recounts, CALD had its beginnings over beer, scribbles on a paper napkin, and the shared woes of a handful of Asian Liberals who had felt left out in discussions at a conference in Portugal. Abad himself had much to cry about over beer then, having just quit from what he had hoped to be his dream job. That night in a small Portuguese coastal town, however, he and his colleagues were more concerned about a possible forum that would allow them to discuss and mull over Asian concerns. At the time, much of Asia was still under repressive regimes. But the success of the 1986 People Power Revolution in the Philippines had stirred in peoples across the region similar aspirations of freedom and democracy, and the opportunity was ripe to nurture such hopes and help turn them into reality.

And so plans were laid out, more Liberals were consulted, and soon CALD was formed with six founding member parties: the Democrat Party of Thailand, the Democratic Party of Korea, Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party the Liberal Party of the Philippines, the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party of Cambodia, and the Parti Gerakan Rakyat of Malaysia.

Today CALD has 10 member parties; it has also had three individual members. In the last two decades, the organization has seen many countries in Asia embrace democratic reforms—with the help of CALD member parties—but then it has also witnessed a few of these nations take several steps back some years later. Yet as Abad, who is now the Philippine Budget Secretary, says in this speech, Liberals never back down from challenges, and take hardships and instances of defeat as stepping stones toward success. Then as now, he says, the challenge for CALD is to help spread liberalism and democracy in Asia and to remain true to its belief that everyone has the right to be free.



LADIES AND gentlemen, especially to our Liberal partners from Asia, I'm happy to see some of them whom I have not seen in a long time. Soon Juan is finally out of Singapore—Mr. Chee Soon Juan has the distinction of having been chairman of CALD but to never preside over any of its meeting because

of the fact that he was practically in jail that whole time. We are really elated to see Dr. Chee Soon Juan joining us this evening.

Let me also recognize our chairman—we are really happy with the developments in Cambodia, especially after the last parliamentary elections. You're getting there, Rainsy, and don't forget us. Don't you forget us! Also our partners from Europe and the other countries like the United States and the community of democracies. Of course, Graham Watson's here, certainly we welcome you all here in Manila; my colleagues from the Liberal Party, our former president for a long time, Congressman Raul Daza, and some of my colleagues in the cabinet are here. Secretary Manny Mamba is over there, and friends of the Liberal Party and the Council of Asian Liberals Democrats—*magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat*. Good evening.

Sometime in the early '90s a handful of Asian participants in the Liberal International conference in Sintra, Portugal decided to come together and wind down over bottles of beer. You know, I can still distinctly remember that location of our meeting because it was a beautiful castle right at the outskirts of Sintra. It was not even in the town center. There were Wolfgang and I and Maysing—the Thai MP who was there was Alongkorn Ponlaboot, and Maysing was with a young Taiwanese intern named Renata Chen, if I recall correctly. We made up a very small Asian contingent amid very noisy South American and African groups. Reserved as we were as Asians, we were kind of overwhelmed by the very Eurocentric discussions that were happening there.

So one night we decided to walk about the long stretch of—I think we went over the hill, Wolfgang, to go to the PUB at the center of Sintra, and talk about things other than what was being discussed by the South Americans and the Africans. We were asking Dr. Sachsenröder, you know, there has to be a forum where we Asians can also speak out and express our aspirations and dreams about liberalism and democracy in Asia. And I think that was really the whole point of that meeting over beer. In fact, I was the one who was trying to figure out a concept at the back of a paper napkin that we could sell to the Friedrich

Naumann Foundation, which eventually, as was earlier mentioned, blossomed into what we are gathered here for tonight.

I remember how out of place we were in that conference. We could not relate to the very continental topics dominating the discussions there. We were disappointed that Asian issues were not being discussed, and after the alcohol had already liberated our thoughts and feelings, the idea to form CALD came into being.

Later on —I think in December of 1993, after an initial brainstorm in Taipei — CALD was officially inaugurated in Bangkok, Thailand. And today after twenty years CALD has become a crucial element in the global struggle for liberalism and democracy. I think for that we deserve a big round of applause.

CALD is close to my heart as its formation coincided with the critical junctures in my own personal political career. When I was in Lisbon, I was still licking my wounds from political defeat, stepping down as Secretary of Agrarian Reform under the administration of the late—our icon of democracy—former President Cory Aquino. After serving for a record of only three months. In 1990 I had accepted President Aquino's offer to serve in her Cabinet, which I considered a great distinction even if I had to pay the price of giving up my congressional seat. I wholeheartedly accepted the challenge because I was to manage what the President then called the "centerpiece" of her economic recovery program. This was the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, which I had the honor of sponsoring when I was a neophyte congressman, after the dismantling of the Marcos martial rule.

At the time, the first Aquino government, built after the People Power Revolution of 1986 that toppled the Marcos dictatorship, was deeply under threat of military adventurism, as well as the dominance of vested interest who were able to re-entrench themselves in our political life. In fact, I was asked to join the first Aquino Cabinet after the eighth coup attempt, which was the bloodiest and which almost brought our fledgling democracy down. It was also the coup attempt where our current President—the son of Ninoy and Cory Aquino, Noynoy Aquino—was almost killed when he was met by a hail of bullets as he was trying to join his mother in the besieged palace of Malacañang. To this day President Aquino still carries some of the bullet fragments in his neck, as his doctors have been very reluctant to touch his nerves close to his heart.

I took on the Agrarian Reform portfolio, fully aware of the powerful landlord interests, which were against the success of the program. Such interests included my own former colleagues in Congress, who rejected my appointment a record seven times. After three months and seven rejections by the powerful Commission on Appointments, I decided to pack up and thought that Sintra was a better option.

And so I found myself in that conference, and the rest is really, as they say, history. I had learned as an activist during the years of martial rule to never back out of great opportunities—to never give up even after falling so hard, to consider acts of stupidity in the eyes of traditionalists as acts of heroism. After having been rejuvenated by our sojourn in Portugal, I went back home to face another difficult yet important juncture in my political life. That was our first democratic presidential elections in 1992. I ran for the Senate—for some of those who have forgotten, because it was really a forgettable attempt—not as part of any major political coalition at that time, but as a candidate of the Liberal Party coalition. I supported the presidential campaign of then Senator Jovito Salonga, the candidate that activists like me had gravitated toward due to his integrity as a politician, his heroism during martial law, and his leadership in rejecting the renewal of the U.S. military bases treaty in the Philippines and finally after about 400 years, dismantling foreign military bases in our country.

The Liberal Party at that time was considered a "Volkswagen Party" — the car, not the van, because people said that we were so few that we could all fit in a Volkswagen Beetle. Still, we pegged our hopes on the support given by the civil-society movement and other fellow activists in the anti-martial law struggle. But sadly, we did not have the "three G's" of Philippine politics: guns, goons, and most especially, gold. And so, miserably, we lost that election. The Liberal Party could have just closed shop after that massive defeat. I could have quit mainstream politics and just remained in the sidelines. But I held firmly onto my advocacy for a new kind of politics and critical issues against corruption, inequity, and social conflict — problems that today we continue to face — and in my belief in the free and democratic way of life that we all aspire for.

Today I am here. I'm still here in perhaps the most important point in my political career, during yet another critical juncture in our country's democratic history. All of us in this room, I believe, have faced gargantuan challenges in our fight for democracy, in our respective countries—numerous defeats in the

face of those who stood for authoritarianism and who even questioned us on whether the liberal ideology is appropriate for Asia. Yet despite incarceration, humiliation, and our own, once in a while, self-doubts, we prevail, and we are still here, fighting for liberalism and democracy.

This is the beauty of the Council for Asian Liberals and Democrats. It is the tapestry of our collective struggles to establish democracy and to make it work in our respective countries. It is the hallmark of our belief that the free and democratic way of life is the Asian way of life. Last month, I was invited by the President of Myanmar or Burma, and you know what we did? We launched the open government partnership in Myanmar. A very remarkable occasion—I couldn't believe that I was addressing the hierarchy of the Myanmar government, talking about open government.

This story of CALD is our ongoing story of our defeat and victory; of incarceration and liberation; of oppression and empowerment. It is the story of our dear friend, Sam Rainsy—sometimes he keeps running around and running away, but I think now he will be there adding to the 55 seats they got in the parliament. Our current chairman who after being in self-exile from facing politically motivated charges has now been pardoned by the King and allowed to return to Cambodia. We're happy for that, Rainsy.

It is the story of Dr. Chee Soon Juan, who was recently discharged from bankruptcy—when were you ever not in bankruptcy?—and now able to contest the upcoming general elections in Singapore in 2016. Good luck!

Of course, it's the story of Aung San Suu Kyi, who is now in the Burmese parliament after the military regime opened the doors for process of democratization. The story of CALD is likewise the ongoing story of the Liberal Party in Philippines, which has risen from relative obscurity as a "Volkswagen Party" to national prominence with the election of President Noynoy Aquino in 2010 due to his platform of anti-corruption and poverty-reduction. Ours is an ongoing struggle against vested interests, which have benefitted from the corruption and patronage that are deeply entrenched in our political life. It is our ongoing story of making democracy work and meaningful for our citizens. Before we came in three years ago, the Philippines was called "the sick man of Asia." But since then, to the credit of President Aquino, we share with China the distinction of being fastest-growing economy in the region.

Today as we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of CALD and as we envision our next twenty years, let us recall our individual and collective stories and reflect upon the values that enable us to persevere in our struggle for democracy. Tonight I look forward to hearing your own stories of struggle and success in your respective countries for it is something that will inform my own ongoing journey as a leader and as a Liberal.

As I end this speech, allow me to recall the most unfree period of my life: The two decades of the Marcos dictatorship. I was imprisoned twice, the first in 1978 after I took part in protests against electoral fraud and we campaigned for Ninoy Aquino, who was in jail and could not leave jail and campaign for himself. The second time was in 1980, when I was charged with "conspiring to assassinate President Ferdinand Marcos."

I'm sorry we failed, but when we got wind of the news that I was to be captured, my wife Dina and I tried to elude arrest and for days and months, we were running away, moving from one town to another, seeking refuge from relatives and friends. But finally the Marcos regime caught us. At that time Dina was pregnant with our first daughter, Julia. My greatest fear at that time was that she would be born behind bars, that she would be raised apart from us—or even without us, if ever we got killed by the regime. And that she would never know how it is to be free.

But with divine providence perhaps, we were spared from our fears. We are alive today. Julia, too, eventually grew up to become an independent and courageous woman, and is now sitting in the Cabinet with me, as head of the Presidential Management Staff. We were luckier than most other victims of martial rule who were tortured and raped, who were incarcerated in military camps or summarily executed. Among the victims of regime were liberals like Evelio Javier, who was assassinated in broad daylight, and of course our President's father, Ninoy Aquino, who after arriving from the United States was shot while coming down from the plane, on the tarmac of what is now the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Perhaps it is the mysterious work of force greater than ourselves, the creator of our history, our greatest ally in the heavens who is opposed by the dictatorship of a man — of Man. The creator has something greater in store for me and our

nation. Who am I to allow myself to be disempowered by hardships and defeat, to turn down great opportunities to serve and lead as a Liberal?

Indeed, I am fortunate to be addressing you this evening to be a key part of the growth of CALD, the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats, and of our own Liberal Party; and to now serve under presidency of President Noynoy Aquino. And I believe I would not have been here in this moment today had I not met fellow Asian Liberals in Sintra, Portugal more than twenty years ago, that critical juncture in my personal history, which has irreversibly shaped my political career. For this I remain in deep solidarity with the struggles of Liberals and Democrats worldwide, especially here in our region in Asia. From those who are fighting to free their countries from authoritarian rule, to those whose democracies are under threat by corruption, populism, and patronage politics, rest assured, I and your fellow Filipino Liberals are certainly on your side.

Perhaps this is the challenge to all of us in the Council of Asia Liberal Democrats and the continuing Liberal struggle—the continuing but broadening Liberal struggle in Asia. To never give up on our efforts to make the process of democratization work in our respective countries. To never surrender to the supposed hegemony of strong-handed rule in our region. To never waver in our belief that the human being, that the Asian person, is born to be free.

Thank you very much, and good evening to everyone.























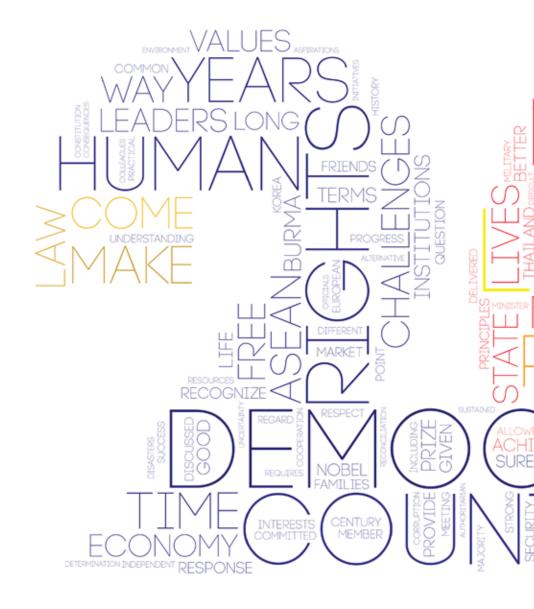


































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