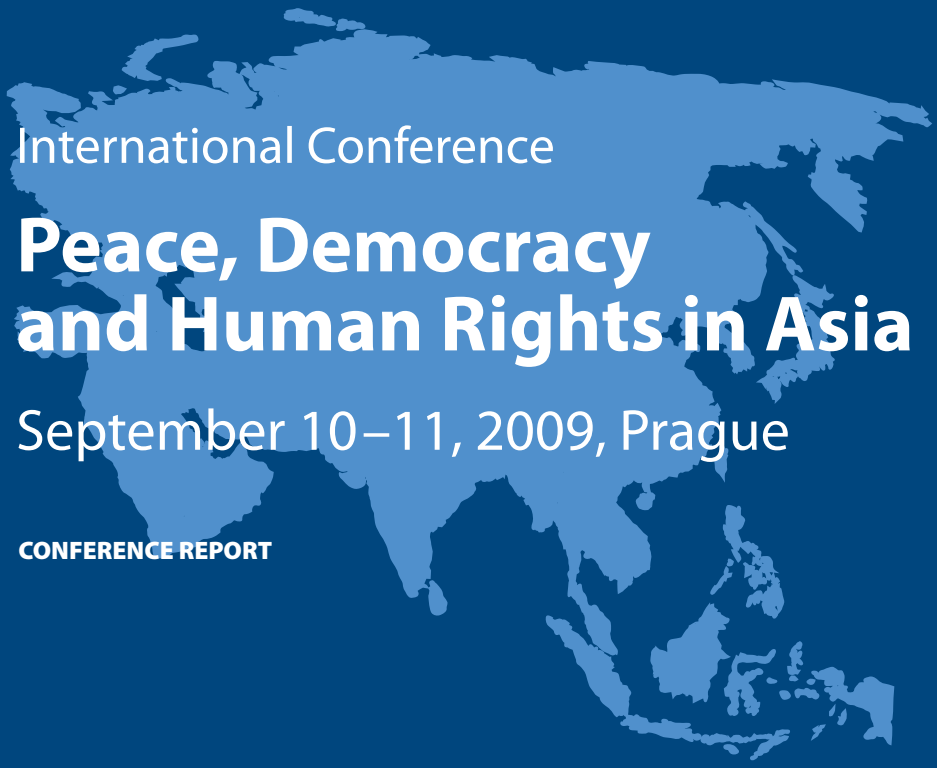
FORUM 2000



International Conference

Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Asia

September 10–11, 2009, Prague

CONFERENCE REPORT

PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA
Conference Report
Prague, September 10–11, 2009

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FORUM
International Conference
Peace, Democracy
and Human Rights
in Asia

Introduction

At a meeting of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Lech Walesa, Shirin Ebadi, Frederik Willem de Klerk, Adolfo Peréz Esquivel, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in December of 2008 in Gdansk, an idea to hold a conference devoted to peace, democracy, and human rights in Asia was conceived. Václav Havel graciously agreed to act as a host and Forum 2000 gladly assumed the role of the organiser.

The participants of the conference focused on the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with special emphasis on freedom of thought, conscience and religion; on protection of cultural rights of religious and ethnic minorities including language, spiritual traditions and customs; on right to education as one of the most strongly contested in the field of minority rights.

Despite rather short notice the response from the invited participants was overwhelmingly positive and what was originally thought of as a small conference developed into a major international event.

Oldřich Černý
Executive Director of the Conference Organiser – Forum 2000 Foundation

Delegates Profiles

George Andreopoulos

Professor, Author, and Editor, Greece/USA

Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for International Human Rights at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. He studied history, law, and international relations at the Universities of Chicago and Cambridge. Over the years, he has participated in several human rights missions, most recently to Sierra Leone.

Maureen Aung-Thwin

Director, Burma Project/Southeast Asia Initiative, Open Society Institute, Burma/USA,

A Burmese-born writer based in New York. She is the Director of the Burma Project/Southeast Asia Initiative of the Open Society Institute, which is part of the Soros Foundations Network. She also serves on the advisory board of Human Rights Watch/Asia and is a trustee of the Burma Studies Foundation, a non-profit organisation that oversees the Center for Burma Studies at Northern Illinois University at De Kalb.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Spiritual Leader and Head of State, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Tibet

The 14th Dalai Lama, he has been the Head of State and spiritual leader of the Tibetan people since 1940. He accepted full political power in 1950. In 1959, in reaction to China's aggression, he escaped to India and established the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamsala. He has also been involved in human rights issues, multi-religious dialogue, and issues of religious freedom. Despite China's resistance, he is recognized as a moral and religious authority throughout the world.

Frederik Willem De Klerk

Former President, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Republic of South Africa

Former president of South Africa. Together with Nelson Mandela, he made a decisive contribution towards the removal of the apartheid in South Africa. He helped establish a process of reconciliation between the black majority and the white minority. Recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. Founder of the FW De Klerk Foundation, dedicated to the development of positive relations among South Africa's diverse communities.

Kanak Mani Dixit

Journalist and Civil Rights Activist, Nepal

Editor of Himal Southasian, a magazine serving the South Asian region, and the publisher of Himal Khabarpatrika, a Nepali language political fortnightly. He is involved in civil rights issues and writes children's books. He was also actively involved in resisting King Gyanendra's takeover and was detained many times, the latest for eighteen days during the People's Movement of 2006.

Paula Dobriansky

Former Under-Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, U. S. State Department, USA

Senior Fellow at the JFK Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University. She was appointed Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues (2001–2009) and President's Special Envoy to Northern Ireland (2007–2009) with the rank of Ambassador. Recognised for her work on global issues and Northern Ireland, she has been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the highest honour the State Department bestows.

Martin Hála

Sinologist, Special Advisor for Nepal and Bhutan, Open Society Institute, Czech Republic

Currently Special Advisor to the Open Society Institute in Asia. He is a sinologist based in Prague and Hong Kong. Educated in Prague, Shanghai, Berkley, and Harvard, he has taught at universities in Prague and Bratislava and conducted research in China, Taiwan, and the United States. He has worked for several media-assistance organizations in Europe and Asia.

Václav Havel

Former President, Writer, Czech Republic

President of Czechoslovakia (1989–1992) and first President of the Czech Republic (1993–2003). He was a founding member and one of the first spokespersons for the Czechoslovak human rights movement Charter 77. A prominent figure in the Czechoslovak dissident movement and a famous leader of the Velvet Revolution (1989), he is the author of a number of essays and plays, including the latest one called Leaving (Odcházení, 2007). Recipient of many awards, and, together with his wife Dagmar Havlová, co-founder of the Vision 97 Foundation (Vize 97).

Doan Viet Hoat

Civil Rights/Human Rights Activist, Dissident, Vietnam

Civil and human rights activist. In 1993, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison after being accused of attempting to overthrow the government. Before his detention, he had published an underground newspaper, Freedom Forum, calling for a multi-party system and the abolition of the ruling communist party. He was honoured by the World Association of Newspapers for his commitment to free press in 1998.

Jana Hybášková

Politician and Diplomat, Czech Republic

Chairwoman of the European Democratic Party. She worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Director of the Middle East Department. Served as Ambassador to Slovenia (1997), Ambassador to Kuwait and Qatar (2002–2003) and was elected member of the European Parliament (2004), where she held Membership in the EPP-ED political group, the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.

Chih-Chieh Chou

Associate Professor, National Cheng Kung University , Taiwan

Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and Graduate Institute of Political Economy of the National Cheng Kung University. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Chinese Association of Human Rights (CAHR).

Ramin Jahanbegloo

Dissident and Intellectual, Iran/Canada

Currently, he is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto and Research Fellow at the Trinity College in Toronto, Canada. Born in Teheran, Iran, he holds a doctorate from Sorbonne University in Paris, France. In his efforts to promote dialogue, he interviewed scholars and intellectuals from all over the world.

Rebiya Kadeer,

Human Rights Advocate, China/USA

Prominent human rights advocate of the Uyghur people. Before her arrest in 1999, she was a well-known Uyghur businesswoman. Her early philanthropic efforts were appreciated by the Chinese government. She was appointed a member of the Political Consultative Congress in 1992. A member of China's delegation to the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. She was released from prison on medical grounds in 2005, three days before an official visit to Beijing by the US Secretary of State. She received the highest Human Rights Watch Award (2000) and the Norway's Rafto Foundation Award (2004).

Ondřej Klimeš

Sinologist and Researcher, Oriental Institute, Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic

Researcher at the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences. Specializes in political and cultural history of modern China and minority policy in contemporary Xinjang Uyghur Autonomous Region. He also lectures on modern China's minority policy and Uyghur language at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague and has published articles in both academic and popular journals. His comments on contemporary China issues are sought by the Czech media.

Blanka Knotková-Čapková

Women's Rights Activist, Researcher and Translator, Czech Republic

Member of the Academic Board of Gender Studies, Society of Friends of India, and European Network of Bangladesh Studies. She is a specialist in Asian studies, gender issues in the Third World, gender in literature and religion, and the political system of the Indian subcontinent.

Karel Kovanda

Deputy Director General, External Relations Directorate General, European Commission, Czech Republic

Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council and Western European Union (1998–2005), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1997–1998) and Permanent Representative to the United Nations (Representative to the UN Security Council, 1994–1995, Vice-President of ECOSOC – 1996, President of ECOSOC – 1997). He holds a PhD in political science from MIT (1975) and MBA from the Pepperdine University, California (1985).

Olga Lomová

Associate Professor, Journalist and Author, Czech Republic

Associate Professor at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague. She is the Director of Chiang Ching-Kuo International Sinological Centre and former Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies, Charles University. Specializes in Chinese history and literature and has published articles about China in various newspapers and magazines.

George Mathew

Founding Director, Institute of Social Sciences, India

Regular contributor to The Hindu, a national daily, and a member of committees and task forces constituted by the government of India. Founding director of the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, specialising in India's local government system, decentralisation and gender equality.

Robert Ménard

Journalist, Founder of Reporters Without Borders, France

Journalist and former Secretary-General of Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontière). Since founding the Paris-based organization in 1985, he has avidly advocated freedom of the press and defended imprisoned journalists around the world. Drawing its mission from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Reporters Without Borders is one of the leading watchdog groups in the free press.

Khin Ohmar

Former Burmese Student Activist, Founding Member of the Women's League of Burma, Burma

Coordinator of the Thailand-based Asia-Pacific People's Partnership on Burma. She is also a Chair of the Network for Democracy and Development (Myanmar) and Vice-Chair of Burmese Women's Union, a non-government organisation aiding women in Myanmar. She studied chemistry at the Rangoon Arts and Science University, Burma.

Zoya Phan

International Coordinator, Burma Campaign, Burma/United Kingdom

International Coordinator at Burma Campaign UK. One of the leading Burmese democracy activists in Europe. Previously active as the Parliamentary Officer for Burma Campaign UK. She is from the Karen ethnic group in Burma. During her recent campaign, she persuaded the British government to double aid to Burma.

Roland Rich

Executive Head, UN Democracy Fund, Former Diplomat, Australia

Diplomat and scholar, the Head of UNDEF. Having joined the Australian Foreign Service in 1975, he was posted to Paris, Rangoon, and Manila. He was appointed Australian Ambassador to Laos, (1994–1997) and also served as Legal Advisor and Assistant Secretary for International Organisations in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Maran Turner

Executive Director, Freedom Now, USA

Human rights defender. Prior to joining Freedom Now, a lawyer with the Southern Africa Litigation Centre (SALC) in Johannesburg, South Africa, where she worked with Southern African jurists on human rights litigation. Holding a B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin and a J.D. cum laude from the University of Miami, she was honoured as a Pro Bono Attorney of the Year for her international human rights work.

Jan Urban

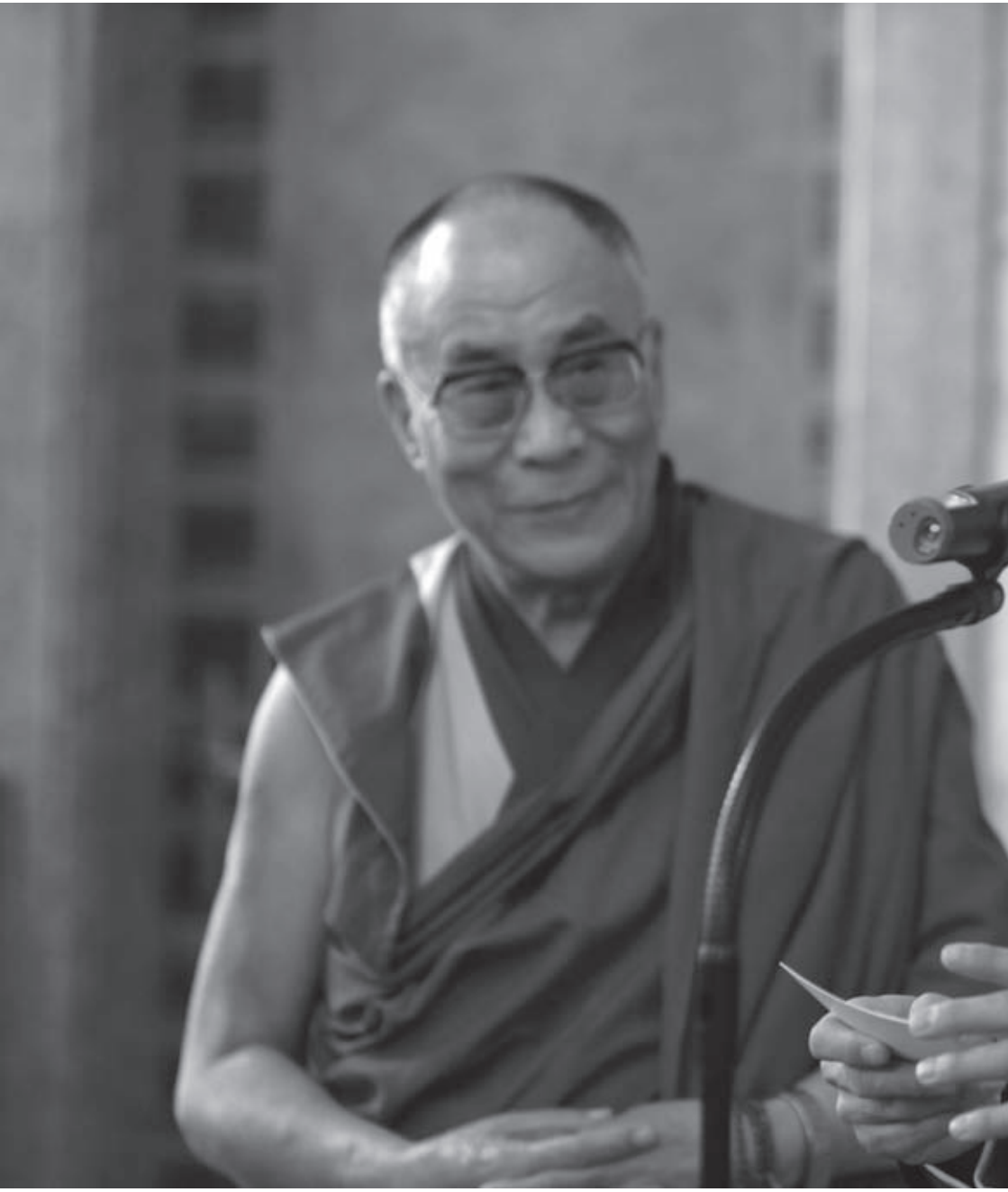
Journalist, Czech Republic

Presently a member of the International Independent Commission on Kosovo and a Professor at the University of New York in Prague. He was dissident during the communist regime who helped to found the Civic Forum (1989) and led it to its victory in the first free elections (1990). Served as a war correspondent in Bosnia and Herzegovina, (1993–1996) and made two documentary films on the Kosovo conflict. He worked in Iraq on heritage preservation projects (2003–2006).

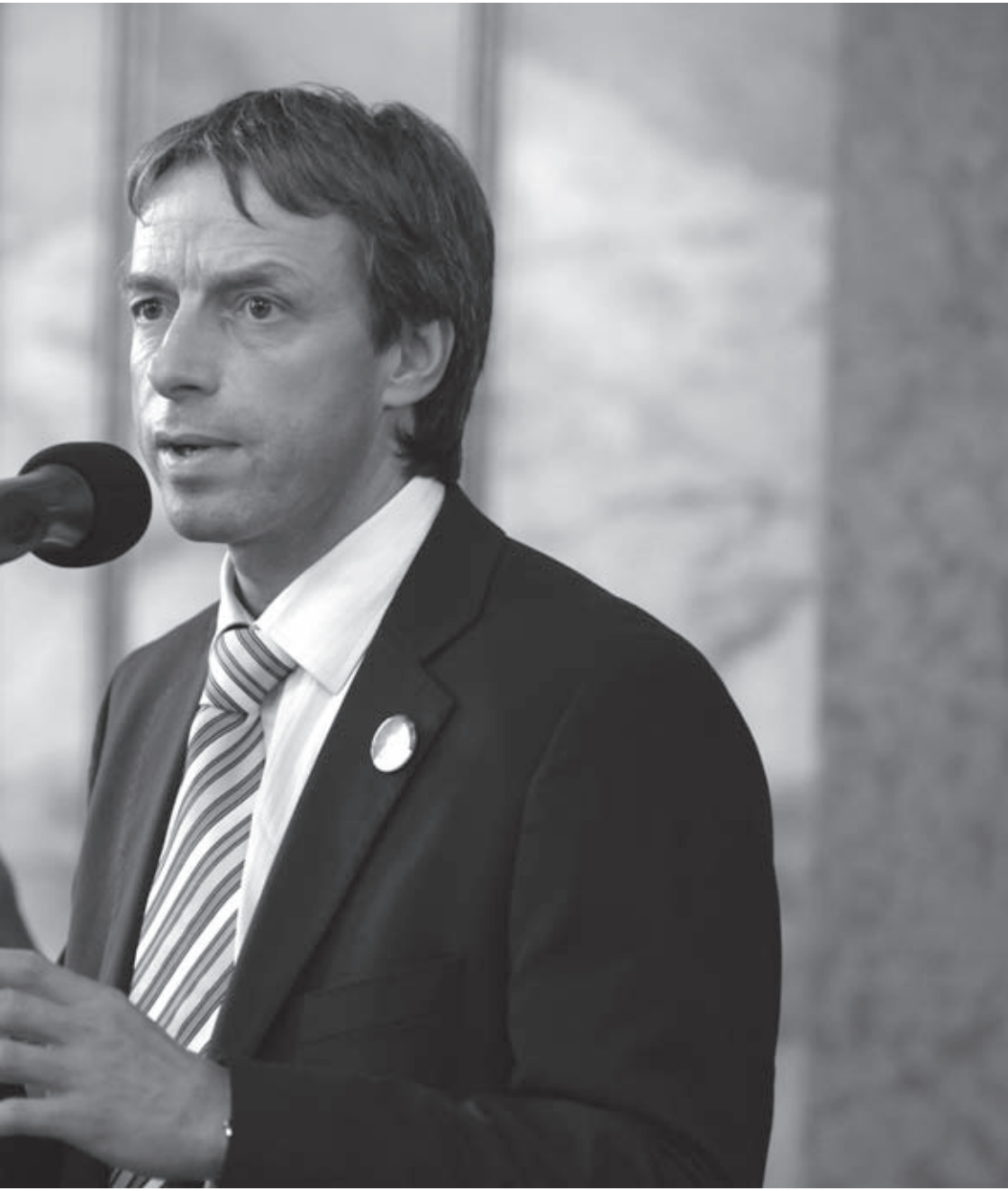
Jody Williams

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, USA

Former diplomat, founding coordinator, chief strategist and spokesperson for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. In 1997, she became the tenth woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2007, she led the High Level Mission on Darfur for the UN's Human Rights Council, and is now actively involved in issues related to stopping the war in Darfur. Recognised for her contributions to human rights and global security, she was named by Forbes as one of the 100 most powerful women in the world in 2004.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the Lord Mayor of Prague Pavel Bém during the official opening in the Residence of Lord Mayor of Prague.



Executive Summary

The participants of the conference shared experiences and discussed recent developments regarding the current state of democracy and human rights in certain parts of Asia and furthermore sought consensus regarding ways to effectively and consistently address these issues using mid and long-term perspectives.

In the context of the conference theme, Peace, Democracy and Human Rights, it was agreed that there is no one solution to these issues. The general consensus was that democracy is a continuously evolving process, not a stagnant, sterile, rigid form of government. There is not one perfect form of democracy, but rather a variety of potential forms that are representative of the people who are governed by it.

Out of the many issues addressed at the conference there were three practices that were recognized as central in order to further inclusive, peaceful objectives throughout Asia: the first was a continued dialogue as a problem-solving mechanism, the second was education and freedom of information as tools to promote understanding, and the third was the vital role that civil society must play in order to effect change and ensure good governance.

Regarding the first point, continuing dialogue, it was widely agreed upon that continued negotiation and conversation, especially with perceived enemies, is required to find equitable and authentic solutions to protracted conflicts throughout the world. Both Rebiya Kadeer and His Holiness the Dalai Lama emphasized their continued hope for diplomatic and peaceful resolutions to their countries' conflicts with China. Zoya Phan and Khin Ohmar both emphasized the need for global solidarity for the people living under the oppressive government in Burma.

Regarding education and freedom of information, there was consensus that education is fundamental to the creation of a critical mind, which is necessary for a participatory government. The concept of government-controlled media and corporate influence in politics was also cautioned by many of the distinguished participants. The need to emphasize our common ground and our shared human condition using independent media can improve understanding and dialogue.

Regarding civil society and good governance, Frederik Willem De Klerk, George Mathew and Maran Turner emphasized that elections don't equal democracy and that democracy and human rights are not synonymous. It was widely accepted that civil society and inclusion of minorities are stabilizing factors in a variety of social and political circumstances. Overwhelmingly, there was a general consensus that the development of civil society is one of the most effective tools to challenge autocracies.

It was not only human rights that were discussed at this conference; it wasn't only an academic forum for theoretical ideas to be shared among experts. There was a living component which was expressed through the lives of many of the panelists who have shared responsibility for their fellow human beings in widely different circumstances. These testimonies are a call for the participation of members of every society. The sentiment was concisely expressed by Jody Williams, who closed her contribution with the statement that "Anything is possible if we all do it together."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama challenged the conflict-provoking dichotomy of us and them. He stressed that "we", everyone, has a shared responsibility to act on what we know is happening in Burma, in Tibet, or in other regions of the world and to share that knowledge with others. By that transmission we inherit the responsibility of each other's plight.

His Holiness and Minister Kocáb at the official opening.

Transcripts

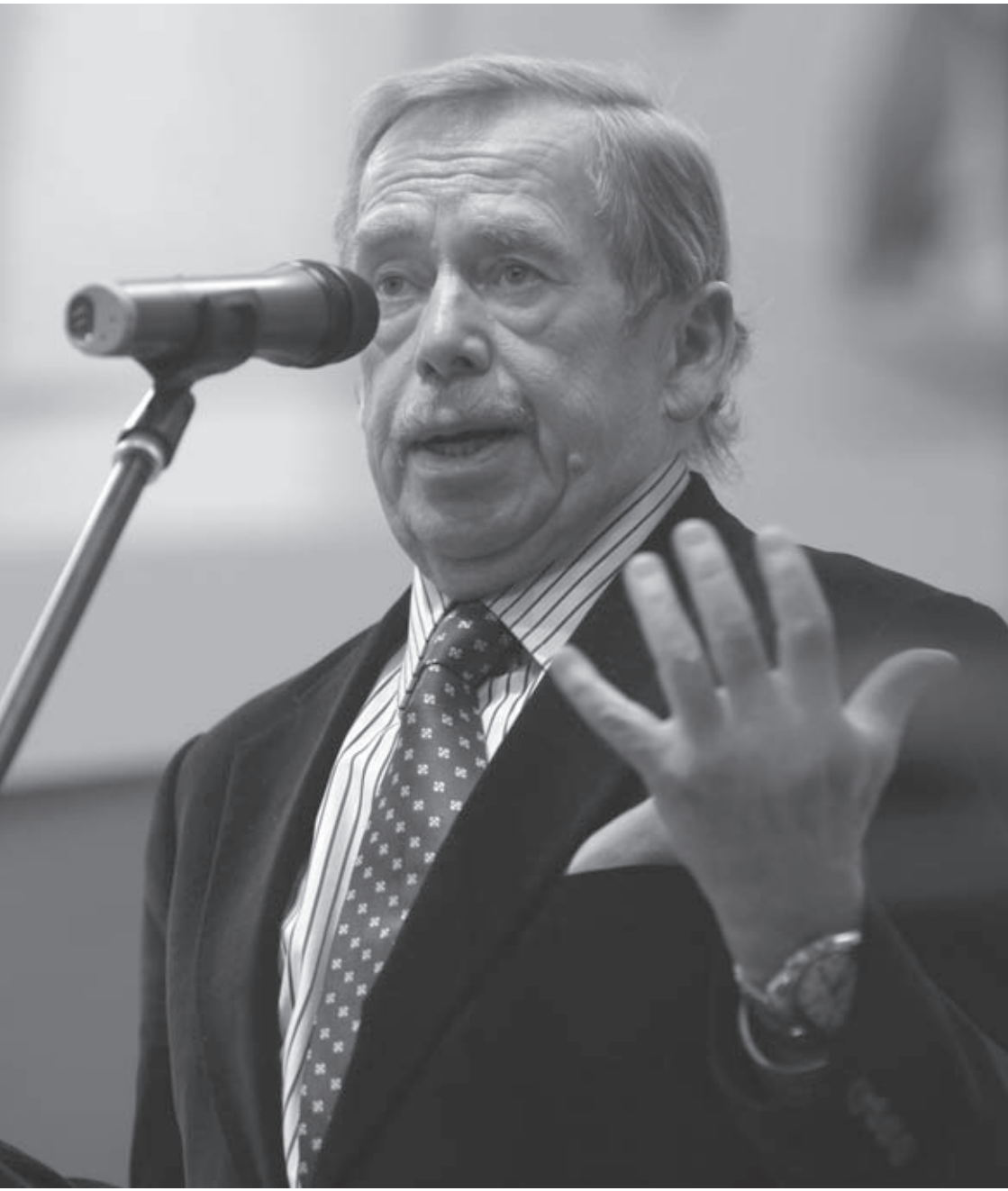
Welcome Remarks (Prague Crossroads)

Oldřich Černý: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, esteemed participants, dear friends, I'd like to welcome you here on behalf of the organizer, Forum 2000 Foundation, and I would like to share with you a few words about the genesis of this Conference. It began with His Holiness visit to Prague in December; from Prague he went to Brussels, from Brussels he went to Gdansk where he met with fellow Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Frederik Willem de Klerk, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Shirin Ebadi, and Lech Walesa. During the meeting the idea was conceived to hold a conference which would be devoted to peace, democracy and human rights in Asia. Now, the question was: Where to hold the conference? Of course, it would be nice if it could be held in Rangoon or Peking or P'yongyang, but, because that is not really possible, they turned to Václav Havel and asked him whether he would like to host it. Václav Havel graciously agreed, and I would now like to invite him to take the floor. Václav Havel, thank you.

Václav Havel: Ladies and gentlemen, conference participants, allow me as well to most cordially welcome you and greet you on behalf of Forum 2000 – a unique kind of institution that every year organises a large conference on the state of the world – and also to welcome you in the name of the foundation of which I am a co-founder, Vize 97, which rented this long since deconsecrated church, renovated it and now runs it under the name Prague Crossroads. I would particularly like to welcome among us once again our friend, His Holiness the Dalai Lama; I would like to welcome Ms Kadeer; I would also like to welcome Frederik de Klerk.

When there was a Communist-style totalitarian regime here and we were trying to stand up to it in a certain way, we felt very intensely how important aid from abroad was for us, as well as the support and solidarity of people from various corners of the world who took an interest in our activities. It was a great encouragement when we saw that there are many people – often very far away – who feel a similar responsibility for the world as we felt. We have been attempting now, for twenty years already, to return the solidarity that we received and express support for all those who are fighting for human rights anywhere in the world – including in Asia.

I trust that this conference will be successful, and above all that some visible results will come out of it; I believe that this conference will in some way address and support Ms Aung San Suu Kyi, the members of Charter 08 in China, the Uyghurs, Tibetans, North Koreans – all those in far-off Asia who are fighting for values that unite the whole world and which we share with them. I wish this conference much success. Thank you.




Nikon

Panel 1 (Prague Crossroads) Religious, Cultural and Indigenous Rights

Jan Urban: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We are honoured to have this distinguished panel to discuss a topic that, as Václav Havel suggested, was not so usual twenty years ago here. I would like to add that serfdom was abolished here in 1848; we all are descendants of people with no rights at all. So, it is a great honour that, in 2009, with this distinguished panel, we can discuss cultural, religious and indigenous rights. You all have the programme – I will not go through the names of our distinguished panellists – you can read their CVs. I would like to save time and ask His Holiness, Dalai Lama, to give us his opening remarks.

Dalai Lama: My dear friend President Havel, dear friends, Nobel Laureates, respected ladies and gentlemen. I am very, very happy to come here to participate in this discussion about peace and human rights in Asia.

Firstly, I want to share my sort of feelings or views. I think that as a result of human beings' painful experience, humanity is becoming more mature. I think today, peace, democracy, openness and dialogue – a dialogue towards spiritual reconciliation – are becoming a positive world trend. These things seem to be going on now. I think this is a very, very hopeful beginning of the twenty-first century.

However, we need a continuous effort. There is a Tibetan saying: Nine times failure, nine times effort. This effort resulted in changes by the end of the twentieth century. The changes came not by force but by popular peaceful movement. These changes, you see, brought democracy, freedom, in this part of the world through peaceful means. These things were happening through a popular movement. I really feel that in the future there is a sort of hope – it lies within the people, not necessarily the governments. Sometimes,

the governments have their own interests. They may not see things holistically; they are simply concerned with their own power, how to control and that kind of thing... I feel that contact – people-to-people – is very important. For that reason, I just want to raise two points which you can later discuss.

The firtst point: free information. Whether positive or negative, I think free information must be there. One example: during the time of the Soviet Union I had one opportunity to visit Moscow. That was in 1979. There I met quite a number of people who said they had the impression that "unless they are not ready to use the armed forces, the West is going to attack them!" They always described themselves as a peace-loving nation. So, this is wrong information. I think that was really dangerous.

And then, my own experience: I'm not a separatist. We strictly wage our struggle non-violently! We would like to find a solution which the people of China can accept. But, the Chinese government uses distorted propaganda. Many Chinese are showing anger to us. Once, you see, they get the real picture, then their anger will be reduced. This, I feel, is quite dangerous, wrong information to the people. And this is, morally speaking, of course immoral: the government wrongly feeds their own people the wrong information, distorted information. It's morally and practically wrong. If people are fed the wrong information, then their whole outlook is something different.

Recently, many Han people have been really showing anger towards Tibetans – they consider Tibetans to be anti-Han people. Actually they are not! So, I think the free information, information on the basis of truth, is very important. I understand that the Chinese government and some other governments are signatories to some Convention. I think we must have free information. This is my point number one.

The second point. Recently in China, in the People's Republic of China, I don't know for how many years, but, recently, there are some NGOs, legal groups. Independent NGOs: they are not part of the Party. These are very encouraging things. In the People's Republic of China as well as in North Korea and Burma, Iran, and many of these countries, I think eventually, an independent judiciary system must develop and with it, free information. Then, eventually, the people will judge. Our hope should be put on the people. That is very important. In order to make people judge right or wrong, they

should have the full information about the reality and some kind of independent judiciary. Then things really change. This is my feeling. That's all, thank you.

Jan Urban: Thank you very much, Your Holiness. Madam Rebiya Kadeer, it's your turn, please.

Rebiya Kadeer (through her interpreter): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Today, I am very fortunate to be in a panel with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and also to be here at this historical occasion in the homeland of President Václav Havel. His Holiness the Dalai Lama says that wrong information leads the people to the wrong paths. Chinese authorities have been accusing me and the Uyghurs and trying to portray the Uyghur people as the terrorists and extremists, but right now I'm sitting in front of you and I'm not a terrorist. Chinese authorities, by their negative propaganda against the Uyghurs, created the hatred among the Uyghur and Han people in East Turkestan. Actually, we are not against the Chinese people, we are not enemies of Chinese people. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama says, we are trying to get our rights by peaceful and non-violent means. So, in order to save time, I have prepared a written statement.

(Interpreter reading the statement) Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I would like to thank Mr. President Václav Havel and Forum 2000 for inviting me to this timely and important gathering. And, I would also like to thank the distinguished guests for their attendance. Since the occupation of my homeland by Communist China in 1949, Uyghur people have been suffering under heavy-handed policies of the Chinese Government, and Uyghur people have never had a single day of peace. Chinese authorities have been suppressing all Uyghur dissent and expression of grievances, no matter how peaceful they are. Communist Chinese governments have imprisoned tens of thousands of Uyghurs for political reasons and continue to arrest, detain and execute Uyghurs for expressing their discontent with government policies. There are well-documented reports that many Uyghur political prisoners are tortured and beaten to death in custody. There is no due legal process and Uyghur political prisoners are not allowed to hire attorneys to defend themselves in court. Their fate is not decided by the courts but by political leaders. The international war on terror has provided China with another

excuse to further crack down on Uyghurs. Since Uyghurs are Muslims, it is easy for China to blame them as terrorists, extremists and separatists. The Chinese government guaranteed the status of an autonomous region for the Uyghur people in East Turkestan in 1955. They promised to respect the Uyghur people's human rights, especially the right to education in their own language, the right to practice their religion freely, and the right to promote their unique culture and traditions. But all of these promises have been broken. Most importantly, they promised that the number of Han Chinese in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region will not exceed the number of the local population. However, almost immediately after the autonomy to the Uyghur people, the Chinese government began a systematic policy of transferring the Han Chinese from mainland China into East Turkestan. The Chinese population, which constituted only 2% of the region's total population in 1955, grew to 46% of the total population now. The Chinese military and the paramilitary group called Bin Tuan are not included in this statistics. By restricting the religious freedom of the Uyghur people, and in demolishing the historical heritage of Uyghur culture and traditions, the Chinese government has been pursuing the policy of cultural genocide in East Turkestan. In 2003 the Chinese government, by breaching its own constitution, banned the Uyghur language as the language of instruction at universities, and, since then, they've expanded this policy to high, middle, and elementary schools, and even to the kindergartens. In 2006, the Chinese authorities began to forcefully transfer tens of thousands of young Uyghur women and girls from East Turkestan to mainland China in the name of providing job opportunities and new skills to the Uyghurs. At the same time, China vigorously continued to resettle thousands of Han Chinese into East Turkestan by providing job opportunities and other social and financial benefits. The July 5 incident is the direct result of Chinese repressive policies in East Turkestan. In the days leading up to July 5, an unknown individual or individuals posted on the forums of China-based website an appeal to Uyghurs in Urumqi to peacefully protest the Chinese government's mishandling of multiple killings of Uyghurs by Han Chinese at a toy factory in Shaoguan City of the Guangdong Province. The forum poster surprisingly remained online, which is contrary to the normal behavior of Chinese government censors. On July 5, Uyghurs, some of whom carried the flag of the People's Republic of China, assembled and marched peacefully

in Urumqi towards the People's Square. They asked for justice for the victims and expressed sympathy with the families of those killed and injured. They also demanded to meet with government officials, but none came out to meet with them. As the protest was public knowledge, the protesters were met by a show of force, including four kinds of Chinese police: regular police, anti-riot police, special police and people's armed police. The police surrounded the protesters, and the tension between the police and protesters grew. According to an eyewitness caller to our offices, the protesters were incited by plainclothes agents to respond to the police presence. As tensions became heated, police started making arrests, and then, under the cover of darkness, began to fire upon the Uyghur protesters. Protesters then fled to the other points of the city. In another phone call to our offices, a protester at Xinjiang University reported that the Uyghurs were being fired upon by Chinese police, and, in the background, we could hear the screams of the people in the vicinity. The caller stated that they could see approximately fifty Uyghurs lying dead from Chinese police shooting in an area around the stop for the number one city bus. Some Uyghurs reacted to the intimidation of Chinese policing; they killed and injured Han Chinese in violent attacks. Here, I would like to say that I strongly condemn the violence which took place in Urumqi. In the immediate aftermath of the violence, Chinese security forces conducted mass arrests of the Uyghurs, according to sources quoted by Radio Free Asia in a July 9 report. A caller to our offices stated that the dormitories at the Xinjiang University were broken into by Chinese police in an attempt to arrest Uyghurs allegedly involved in the unrest. In a Hsinhua Report dated July 7, Urumqi Communist Party Secretary Li Ji was quoted as saying that authorities had detained 1,434 people for their role in the Urumqi unrest. The World Uyghur Congress contests that number as it has not been independently verified. A July 19 Financial Times report states that more than 4,000 Uyghurs have been arrested, and that Urumqi's prisons are so full that detainees are being held in People's Liberation Army warehouses. We fear that these detainees face executions in non-transparent judicial procedures. These reports remain unconfirmed due to the information blackout which remains in place in East Turkestan, affecting internet and wireless communications. On July 6 and 7, 3 – 4,000 Han Chinese took to the streets, attacking and killing Uyghurs. Radio Free Asia reports an eye-witness as seeing 100 to 200 dead Uyghurs in the Chuai Lan District. There have been no

reported arrests of Han Chinese from these two days of violence against the Uyghur community in Urumqi. Radio Asia reported an Uyghur man saying that when the Chinese come out with batons and clubs, there is no one to stop them. They are pretending to stop them, but they are not really strict. If the Uyghurs had come out with batons and clubs, they would have immediately been fired upon. In the week of unrest, internet and wireless communication went down in Urumqi and in the region. This was for a very good reason: to prevent Iranian street-style news from citizen-journalists. The Chinese authorities feared that a different version of events will emerge from the one reported in the official media. According to U.S. Congressional Executive Commission on China, the Beijing Municipal Judicial Bureau issued a notice on its website on July 8, calling on Justice Bureaus, the Municipal Lawyers' Association and the Law Offices in Beijing to exercise caution in representing cases related to the events in East Turkestan. If we learn one thing from the unrest in Urumqi this July and in Tibet in March 2008, it is that the Chinese government is out of policy ideas in addressing the increasing marginalization of non-Han Chinese people in China besides endless rounds of struck downs and strike-hard campaigns. It is time for the Chinese government to sit and talk with me, His Holiness Dalai Lama, and all those leaders of non-Han Chinese communities who have been vilified, imprisoned and slandered just because we happen to disagree with the bankrupt official policy. Thank you very much.

Jan Urban: Thank you very much. Could we have the news perspective from Zoya Phan?

Zoya Phan: Ladies and gentlemen, first of all, I would like to thank President Václav Havel for this conference, and I would also like to thank His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his wonderful and inspiring opening remarks. Ladies and gentlemen, some of you may know about Burma, but for some of you who do not know much about Burma: Burma is one of the most religiously and ethnically diverse countries in the world. Our people have different cultures, different history, and we have different languages, food, traditions and many other things. And we also have a country where Buddhists, Christians, Muslims and Animists live side by side. But, instead of this being celebrated and encouraged, throughout our history in Burma, Buddhist kings, democratic governments, and since 1952,

military dictatorships have tried to crush these different cultures, so that everyone in Burma is from one of the main dominant Burmese ethnic groups. And they are prepared to go to any lengths to achieve this, even committing vile crimes and crimes against humanity.

I am ethnic Karen, and my family is animist. I was only fourteen years old when I was forced to flee for my life because of the attacks by the Burmese Army; and we had to run for our lives, just as more than a million Karen people have had to flee for their lives in the past sixty years. The Karen people who are living under the control of the dictatorship cannot speak their own language freely, and they cannot learn the history of their own language and their own people. Ladies and gentlemen, as generation after generation live like this, the Karen people lose their culture and their identity. This oppression, actually, hasn't just happened under the military rule. Even before the British colonized Burma, Karen people faced the death penalty just for being able to read. There is a lake in Burma called Meiktila Lake, it means "Falling Tears", because it was built by Karen slave labourers and thousands of them died. This kind of situation is not what just happened among the Karen but also other ethnic groups in Burma, including the Shan, the Kachin, the Arakan, Rohingya and other different ethnic groups. Their cultures and languages are being destroyed. Next year we'll have elections in my country. Some say that these elections can be an opportunity for a change. I think they couldn't be more wrong, because not only will these elections be rigged but these elections will also bring in a constitution which will strengthen the military rule in Burma. This constitution was well designed and drafted carefully to maintain and continue the dictatorship's rule in Burma. That is bad enough – but for the ethnic groups in Burma it is even worse because the constitution provides no guarantee of human rights, no protection of ethnic culture and ethnic groups. As we are given no genuine autonomy and democracy I believe this constitution is a death sentence for ethnic diversity in Burma.

As I speak here to you today, thousands and thousands of people were forced to flee in the eastern part of Burma in the Shan state and the Karen state. In early June, more than 6,000 people in the Karen area, 10,000 Shan civilians and almost 40,000 Gunte refugees in Eastern Burma were forced to flee from their homes. In the coming few weeks and months, you will see even more reports about the attacks, especially in the ethnic Wa area and the Karen and Kachin

areas. Any opposition, any ethnic group that will resist the will of the dictatorship in Burma, whether they are freedom-fighters or they are drug-lords, will be attacked. Nothing will be allowed to stand in the way of this new constitution that will continue the military rule.

I believe it is time for governments around the world to wake up to the fact that the generals who rule my country are not interested in reforms, and they are not interested in changes. They are not going to agree with a genuine transition to democracy. The new constitution which they are preparing now is proof of that. These generals are committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma. The soft diplomacy approach by the UN doesn't work. This criminal regime should be treated, and it should be made accountable to the International Criminal Court. The dictatorship regime in Burma has a vision which they call "One blood," which means one language, one race and one religion… one culture, which is theirs.

We in the democracy movement have a different vision of Burma. We have a vision of Burma with a democratic and federal system where everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity or gender or religion, is equal and treated equally. Instead of this regime crushing diversity we want a Burma where the diversity is seen as our strength and something we can be proud of, where we can be different but we are all equal.

I was here last year, I asked to help us, and this year, I ask again "Please, help us!" Thank you.

Jan Urban: Thank you, Zoya Phan. A lot to think about. Professor Ramin Jahanbegloo.

Ramin Jahanbegloo: Your Holiness, President Havel, distinguished Nobel Laureates, ladies and gentlemen, I'm very happy to be here in Prague and very grateful to Forum 2000 to have invited me.

Actually, destiny brought me back to your beautiful city again. I was here nineteen years ago with the European Culture Club as somebody who fought for Eastern Europe while being a student of philosophy in France.

It's an irony of life because later on, I was very much fighting also for Tibet which I continue to fight for, and, as you know, also all my life I've been a human rights activist for Iran. This brought me to prison to be accused of preparing the Velvet Revolution in Iran. So, my readings of President Havel, the work that I use in my own writings on Eastern-European intellectuals, also Tibet, some-

how brought all the freedom-fighters together just as dictators all get together very often. Now I'm back again in Prague, and I'm very happy to be here again.

As we are talking about human rights, religion and indigenous cultures it reminds me of a story – a story that Persians share with the Hindus and the Buddhists about these blind men who tried to describe an elephant in the dark. Each man feels the elephant. One feels the trunk and says that the elephant is like a snake. The other touches the elephant's leg and describes the elephant as being like a pillar. The third one puts both hands on the side of the elephant and concludes that he is more like a wall.

Now, the wisdom of this story is that, very often in politics in today's world, we have a tendency to lead without listening and learning. Actually, listening and learning comes before leading. That's where the work of non-violence and work of human rights activists comes in, and this is where the work of culture comes in. I think that, actually, our real choice is to approach and to recognize different religious traditions, different cultural traditions and indigenous cultures as partners to promote greater respect for the observance of human rights. I think that traditional cultures are not substitutes for human rights, but make up the cultural context in which human rights must be established, integrated and promoted. Human rights must be approached in a way that is meaningful and relevant in diverse cultural contexts. What I'm trying to say is that traditional cultures should be approached and recognized as partners to promote greater respect for human rights and observance of human rights. The recognition and appreciation of particular cultural contexts should facilitate, rather than reduce human rights' respect and observance. There is no credible claim for accepting and practicing cultural relativism as many dictatorships are doing in the world today in the name of Islam, in the name of Hinduism, in the name of Judaism, in the name of Christianity and in many, many different names to repress people.

I think the debate should go on among cultures to help each other out. We see how much – I can see it in my own story – how much I can go from Eastern Europe to Western Europe and back to Tibet and Tibetan traditions, Buddhist traditions, and back to Iran. In all these different activities, I've always been non-violent, taking from the Gandhian movement, the Gandhian tradition which I've been working on, but, at the same time, from the Eastern-European non-violence movement, and also from the Tibetan tradition. I've

always been thankful to His Holiness for allowing me to go and see him and to learn from the Buddhist tradition and from the Tibetan tradition of non-violence, and to use that in my own traditions in Iran, which has become so very important. It would be wrong to argue that human rights are only a Western idea. It is, actually, a moral capacity of humankind to protect, through the rule of law, the necessary conditions for human dignity. That is, maybe, most important. This reminds me of another Nobel Laureate, about whom I teach at University of Toronto. Next to Gandhi and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King said when accepting his Nobel Peace Prize, that he has an audacious faith that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits. I think this is what we are all fighting for today, sitting here next to each other.

What I'm saying is that, actually, the work of Forum 2000 is also a cross-cultural conversation because fighting for human rights, dignity and also for non-violence has to be accompanied by cross-cultural conversation, learning from each other. It's only the cross-cultural conversation that can bridge the gaps among us, among different cultures. It can also destroy this sense of "us" and "them" because there is no such thing as "us" and "them". We try to go beyond boundaries. Although most of us are convinced that the moral progress of humanity lies in the direction of the promotion of human rights, we should insist also that human rights cannot be considered as an accomplished phenomenon. It does not belong to our past. It is also an option for our future. This is why I, for one, am here also to ask you to help us to fight against the violations of human rights in Iran, and to fight for all those comrades and colleagues who are today in Iranian prisons and are waiting for your solidarity. Thank you very much.

Jan Urban: Thank you so much. Robert Ménard needs no introduction.

Robert Ménard: Thank you for inviting me. I apologize that I am going to deliver my speech in a minority language – French – and that I am going to say things which will probably not be pleasant to hear.

First of all, in relation to what you were saying, Mr. Havel, I think there is a huge difference between the struggle in the era of the Soviet Union and the struggle we are waging today. This enormous difference boils down to one phrase: The West did not do business with the Russians but it does do business with the Chinese. And that changes everything, it really does. It means that the radical attitude to China expressed by the Western heads of state is not consistent with their deeds. I know that, as I participated in the battle over the issue of the Olympic Games in Beijing. We in the Reporters Without Borders did not share this attitude, nor did you, Your Holiness. But at the same time, there were Westerners claiming one thing but doing just the opposite. Not because they had changed their attitude to human rights since the Soviet Union era, but because they need the Chinese. Because we all need the Chinese, because we are selling to them and buying from them. This changes the very essence of the fight for human rights.

My second point is that China's economic power is also changing everything in other places of the world. I have been working a lot in Africa, and their problem today is that they are adopting the Chinese model. There is a whole bunch of dictators who think, "Look, it is possible to have economic success," and China does have economic success. It would be a lie not to admit it. At the same time, a country can preserve its power despite being a dictatorship; it means to support the free market and it means to be against the human rights and the freedom of the people.

This has changed everything. This means the pressure which could have been exerted over a number of governments, for example in Africa, by telling them: "We will ask the West to stop helping your regime because of your atrocious behavior, and you are going to fall." But now they will tell you that they do not care. They have the Chinese now. China is now the third largest power in terms of trade and export of capital. This is the second issue I wanted to talk about.

The third issue is that I am suspicious of three concepts we have developed. I am suspicious of minority rights, I am suspicious of religious freedom and I am suspicious of cultural rights. Why? Because they represent genuine values and dangers at the same time. I know minorities, the Muslim minorities whom you, Madam (to Rebiya Kadeer), are representing in China, which behave abominably in other places under the Islam influence. I can see Middle East Muslim leaders declaring that they support your struggle, Madam, and at the

same time, they are treating their own Jewish or Christian minorities in a very unfair way. Any minority can have its own minority. Beware of thinking that this right is not an absolute one – there will always be people with less power than you. For example, there are cultural or religious minorities which oppress their own sexual minorities, women, and/or other religious minorities themselves. Now, it is fashionable to say: "We are defending the minorities," but be careful not to defend people who themselves behave atrociously to their own people or to their own minorities.

Obviously, I want to be especially careful when speaking to you, Your Holiness, and avoid saying silly things about religion, but religion is exactly the same thing. I do apologize for what I am going to say now; I do not mean to offend you. I am not even sure that Buddhism in Tibet before the invasion, the Chinese invasion, was precisely the epitome of freedom for the working classes or for women. What I want to say is that I consider it very dangerous to perceive the respect for religions as an absolute value. I just spent a year in the Near East and the Middle East in Qatar, one of the Gulf countries. I saw the real practical aspects of Islam, and people kept telling me all the time: "Look at the Westerners, how well – or rather badly – they are treating their minorities, namely their Muslims." But back at home, their own behaviour is at least similarly atrocious.

Speaking of the rights, it is correct that you are emphasizing cultural rights. That's true but, at the same time that is used as an argument by the most atrocious regimes. Every time we try to fight against the Communist dictatorship in China, we are told: "It's all because of the cultural differences." I have been told, we have always been told: "But be really careful – there is an enormous cultural gap between Asia and the West and men, groups of people, therefore do not have the same responsibilities and the same rights," and, all of a sudden, human rights, as you have said, are, in the eyes of these people, nothing more than some Western invention. So I repeat again, we should beware of the defence of cultural rights if it ultimately opposes the human rights.

What should we do? To be honest, I have no idea. Can we rely on people who are not reliable anymore? An example of the Western attitude: there was a campaign against the presence of the heads of state at the Beijing Olympics. All heads of states said: "Oh no, I am not going, I am certainly not going" and then they chickened out and they all went there. What were they afraid of? The economic im-

pact on their businesses. And our public opinion perceives and understands this attitude. People keep telling us: "Why do you criticize the Chinese? They will stop buying our planes, nuclear plants and stuff and it will bring unemployment." People understand this way of thinking and they get involved. I know to what extent they criticize us. Enterprises have criticized us saying: "By defending the people of Tibet, you are causing unemployment in the West." I swear people take this as a valid argument.

The United Nations – how do you want us to trust the United Nations? How on Earth can we trust them? The Human Rights Council, which meets in Geneva is a farce; it is a shame. I do not understand why some countries still go there. I do not understand the non-governmental organizations who participate in this farce, either. No-one should go there anymore. A campaign should be launched in order to say: "We're not going to participate in a body which is supposed to defend human rights but which is not behaving like this." The problem of my NGO friends is that they dream of working for the UN one day, and therefore they keep quiet about the UN. The International Criminal Court, you know, you were talking about the genocide, the International Criminal Court should be the first one to condemn it. I was in Doha, Qatar, after the indictment of the Sudanese president, who is accused of being responsible for the Darfur events. He is being prosecuted by the ICC and it was the Security Council which decided to prosecute him. I was in Doha, Qatar, I saw the Sudanese president, and who was there sitting next to him? The Secretary General of the UN. The Secretary General of the UN was sitting next to someone who had been indicted by the International Criminal Court at the initiative of the UN Security Council. You are probably thinking: "What a nerve! They think the entire world is a pack of fools." How do you want the atrocious regimes to be afraid of the UN if these people say to themselves: we are going to buy them one way or another, anytime we like. There are not many things left for us to do, but this is why it is so important that we are here in Prague at the invitation of President Havel. What we have left is solidarity. And as you have said, Your Holiness, solidarity among nations, solidarity among people. But I warn you, I really do warn you, do not count on governments. Do not rely on governments.

One last point. I know that here, in front of you, Your Holiness, it is difficult to do anything but praise non-violence. Everybody respects you and I respect you too as you are such an epitome of

the struggle for non-violence. Let me tell you that from time to time I wonder about certain things. I do not defend violence, but I do question the effectiveness of non-violence. There are some things to wonder about. Some years ago, I was travelling – not to your country as I am not allowed to go to China anymore and even less so to Tibet – but to Dar es Salaam. I met young Tibetans who respect you very much, who do respect you indeed. However, they were questioning non-violence because after 50 years of fighting, where has it led us? You know that the Western people love you very much, Your Holiness, but it does not cost them anything to love you. It is not difficult at all. You are friendly; you are the embodiment of spirituality and wisdom. It is possible that by non-violence you can become a Hollywood star. It is nice to love you a lot, but what consequences does it have in terms of involvement? None. That's what I wanted to tell you. Defending the weak, even against the weak – I think this is a message we should consider. Thank you.

Jan Urban: Robert Ménard at his best. Thank you very much. Doctor Olga Lomová.

Olga Lomová: President Havel, Your Holiness, distinguished speakers, let me express first that I really feel honored to be here with you and listen to the people whose work I immensely respect.

I wanted to share a few points from my point of view as an academician studying different cultures, studying Chinese culture. In fact, all the speakers who spoke before me already in various ways expressed what I myself wanted to talk about. So, I will be short, I will summarize something which may have already been said here, and, then, I would like to stress my own point of view on one issue. I would like to stress that human community cannot exist without its tradition and cultural heritage. We all need something to identify with, we all need a spiritual dimension of our life. This is something all cultures share in the same way. At the same time, we should be aware of the fact that traditions, cultures are constantly changing. I wonder looking at the world around me whether it is really normal, that cultures can develop freely, without violence, without outside pressures. They develop in a way that they absorb new impulses, and, at the same time, they create impulses for the outside world. In the world we live today, which is so interconnected, cultures influence each other, and quite naturally exchange and communicate what is

also common to them. All human traditions, however we study them, have one very simple thing in common: they respect human life and human dignity. We heard it here – after all, it is the basis for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and this is something we don't have to discuss. At the same time, different traditions also share one, let's say, negative aspect: a self-protective aspect, a sort of concentrating on us, not on the others. Especially when they get into conflict, when they get under pressure or when they are threatened, they may further develop this aspect. This, let's say, ambiguity of traditions is very easily used up by authoritarian regimes because they wouldn't stress the universal human aspect of tradition, they wouldn't stress what is common to the people and what would make the people live together peacefully; they would, of course, stress differences, uniqueness, and they would also stress, or would try to stir up people to a sort of aggressive and expansionist feelings.

I can give you just a very small example: recently, I have been working on an ancient Chinese text from the first century B.C. in which the first historian of China, Sima Qian, when formulating the ideal of a ruler, speaks about benevolence and the ability to yield power as the highest values of a good ruler. Now, if you look into Chinese textbooks for children about history, you wouldn't find these values as the most important values of Chinese culture. You would find emphasis on imperial power, great emperors, strong governments and obedient citizens. The very ideology which is now prevailing in China, as if speaking about revival of traditions and return to traditions, is actually cultivating the negative aspect of Chinese tradition, which, of course, has this negative aspect as any cultural tradition has.

One common feature we all share as human beings is indifference. It's too convenient to be indifferent. We have our own troubles, and we simply cannot take on our shoulders all the burdens of humanity. We like to be persuaded that everything is ok, and we also quite easily subscribe – and this is something Monsieur Ménard was talking about – we like to subscribe to this idea that, after all, we do what is convenient for us, what brings benefit to us. There is a Czech proverb, "A shirt is closer to our body than a coat," and, I think, this expresses again something most probably we would find in any human experience.

Now, when we see what's happening in the world, I think we cannot be indifferent. We cannot close our eyes. I believe we should

realize that the coat is, after all, not so far away from our body. What seemingly is not our problem, what seemingly we can forget because of the benefits and solving our immediate problems here, will eventually turn against us. I think there is a great task for educators and for people who create public opinion, including media, including schools, including... well, as I heard here and I subscribe to it: we cannot trust the politicians, they won't do it for us – but we should do our best to spread the knowledge of the positive sides of tradition and also the knowledge of suffering and of oppression of traditions. We should do our best to somehow overcome what eventually threatens to destroy any tradition of humanity. Thank you for your attention.

Jan Urban: Thank you so much. Ondřej Klimeš.

Ondřej Klimeš: Your Holiness, Mr. President, Mrs. Rebiya Kadeer, dear teachers, ladies and gentlemen, I'm very honoured to have been invited to this conference to join the discussion on the state of human rights in Asia. I have been invited as a researcher specializing in Modern China's minority policy. We have heard some information about the situation in the two major minority regions in China. I will try to bring attention to a single particular aspect of minority policy. Excuse me; it's the first time I am speaking at such an honorable occasion, so I will read my speech. My speech elaborates on what His Holiness just said a while ago on Ms Rebiya's remarks as well and what Professor Lomová also mentioned just now.

China, historically, has about 3,500 years of history. What we call now the Han ethnic group has perceived the non-Han ethnic groups as underdeveloped barbarians. I think this is part of some kind of self-defence mechanism; anyway, this is what we are trying to fight or conquer here. The Chinese Communist Party carries on with this traditional perception of minority nationalities. Currently, valid legislation tells us the People's Republic of China is a unitary, multinational state composed of fifty-five nationalities with equal rights and obligations. At the same time though, when addressing its majority Han population, the Communist Party portrays minorities as peoples who are economically and culturally backward. It is their state, or in other words, the Han state, which is responsible for completing the civilizing mission. Minority languages, traditions, religions and other cultural markers are regarded as obsolete and are attributed to

feudal society which has no place in a modern Chinese state. Because of the very efficient propaganda in the current People's Republic of China, ordinary citizens, ordinary majority Han-nationality citizens tend to perceive the minorities as backward, uncivilized beings whom the Chinese state has to feed, which is something they wouldn't be able to do by themselves. Because of the same propaganda, ordinary Han people tend to think that the minorities should be grateful that they are able to participate in the extraordinary development China has achieved over the last thirty years. This perception, unfortunately, underwent a strong change or a strong acceleration in recent years. The Chinese government has been increasingly resorting to cultivating ethnic nationalism among the Han population and portraying minorities as a scare and danger to the development of China. Since September 11, 2001, when talking to the Han population, China portrays Uyghurs as dangerous terrorists who want to split the country and sabotage the revival of China as a global power. Similarly, especially since last year, China has been portraying Tibetans as troublemakers and bandits whose only interest is to discredit the spectacular Olympics. The aspirations of the ethnic groups for autonomy are interpreted as efforts to destabilize China and impede its peaceful rise. Similarly, efforts of minorities to preserve their languages and culture are portrayed as obstacles to China's development. Since the July 5 incident in what is now called Xinjiang region in China, the city of Urumqi has experienced ethnic clashes. Uyghurs have been killed by Han while the police were watching nearby. This is a very tangible result of the ethnic tension that current authorities are trying to promote. The Han population of Xinjiang is so scared at the moment that they fear for their safety. Last weekend, they demonstrated and demanded resignation of provincial authorities for not being tough enough with the Uyghurs. This is the situation that we had thirty years ago during the Cultural Revolution in China. This line of reasoning continues: The Communist Party has many times labelled the minority voices of dissent as terrorists supported by certain overseas circles. The aspiration for autonomy is portrayed as conspiracy, masterminded by foreign forces – it means overseas forces, or, it means us, basically. The Communist Party managed to convince its citizens that Asian values do exist and that they are different from universal values. The Hans in China tend to follow the propaganda which tells them that it's glorious to get rich. It is enough when the Party represents the interests of the overwhelming majority of its population,

and then the reasonably well-off society is the highest form of existence. Any criticism of this success is portrayed by the CCP-propaganda as an effort to continue the century-old discrimination of China. Since the Tiananmen Massacre, the Chinese Communist Party has managed to convince its citizens that democracy and human rights are only means which are devised to discredit and stop China's development.

So far the West has been watching silently the cultural genocide of Uyghurs and of other minorities in China. I think that is one of the reasons might be that the international community thinks it doesn't concern them, that it's an internal issue in China which is not relevant to the whole mankind. I believe that this assumption is very blind and wrong. China's current treatment of minority nationalities, especially Uyghurs and Tibetans, reveals what China thinks about values other than their own. Communist propaganda hopes to achieve a moment when there is one fifth of mankind who believe that the values implemented in China are in fundamental contradiction with the values of China's ethnic minorities as well as universal values and mankind and human rights. Thank you for your attention.

Jan Urban: Thank you very much. This distinguished audience is comprised of people who have the luxury of wanting to know and the convenience of not being there. Could I ask a question to our colleagues and friends coming from Asia: What can be done from outside? We have heard Robert Ménard quite rightly being very critical of the governments. We, who fought against Communism two decades ago, remember there was a similar situation, albeit we had a luxury of living in a time when human rights became politically convenient for Western governments. That situation is not repeated twenty years later, so, what can be done from outside by people like these to help the promotion of human rights in your respective countries and on the continent as a whole? What can be done that would not endanger the people that we want to help? Your Holiness…

Dalai Lama: I always prefer a long-term or a more holistic view. From my own experience fifty years ago, in 1959, when I became a refugee, my certain views have been old thinking. During the last fifty years I was reading newspapers in India where there is complete freedom and access to free information. Later on I followed world news, particularly the BBC and the main thing was interaction with people

with religious people, non-believers, scientists, even some Indian communists, some businessmen, some ordinary people, some beggars, even some AIDS patients. This way one learns many new things. Awareness brings new views or new outlooks. I feel that information, objective information is very, very useful.

For example, in the Muslim case there are differences among Muslims in India, Muslims in Iran or Iraq and Muslims in Indonesia – followers of the same Quran practicing Ramadan or practices the same way. Because of the circumstances or the environment, their awareness is different. Indian Muslims lived for a thousand years in their environment with Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and occasionally, of course in the presence of some ancient Buddhist temples. That brought them a deeper awareness. There is not only one religion, but there are many religions and through this awareness we have a different attitude.

Still within the same Islam, some other Muslims are isolated, only with their one religion. Then, in their eyes any other religion is not a true religion. Then you can see their feeling of threat towards their own religion. Sometimes people even express it: in a clash, aggression. Civilization is no basis for such a clash.

I really feel that awareness comes through true information. Right, true information, I think is very, very important. Awareness of democracy, individual freedom, of liberty in former Eastern European countries is better nowadays. But then I have to think about the Russians, under the tsar – this awareness was difficult! After the Bolshevik revolution – again difficult! Russians never experienced democracy. Awareness of the value of a human being and democracy makes a difference. Unfortunately in Russia, there are still some people who have a feeling of distance from the West because of the lack of information or because of distorted information. If people live in censorship and receive propaganda – distorted information- then from childhood, their minds in some ways become twisted. (to Klimeš) I think you are a true expert; I think you mentioned these things. These things are really dangerous. The leaders who come from such societies are naturally different. As far as Tibetans are concerned – right from the beginning, when we became refugees, our main effort was the preservation of our culture, our language. In the meantime we make distinction: one part of our culture is outdated due to the social system, so there's no need to preserve it. Another part of our cultural heritage is something literally connected with

our deeper human value. This part of our heritage is worthwhile to preserve.

Sometimes there is a certain culture, even religion, emphasizing its main dominance. And there are such things as in India, in ancient times, where culture included human sacrifice. The British rule stopped these practices. In such case, you cannot say "These are our traditions! You have to sacrifice some unworthy human being!" You can't say that, and it must change. The basic thing is more important than some of our cultural perspectives.

I often turn to thinking of the institution of the Dalai Lama: Do Tibetan people want to keep this Dalai Lama institution, and carry on their traditional way of choosing one reincarnation? And I'm often telling: There could be a woman Dalai Lama. In Tibetan tradition, I think more than eight hundred years ago there was a female reincarnation. One of the very top, highest sorts of reincarnations was always female. It is not new. (to Urban) Am I speaking too long?

Jan Urban: It's ok.

Dalai Lama: You know, in human history, in its very early period, a million years ago, there was no concept of leadership. Everybody worked together and shared equally. Then, eventually, as population increased, there was crime, some unhappy things happened, so the concept of leadership was born. At that time there was no education, so leadership's main quality was physical strength and that was the start of male dominance.

Now education is developed. Education brings more equality between male and female. Now, in the twenty-first century: education, generally speaking, is quite adequate, but we are lacking warm-heartedness, human compassion, human affection. These we are lacking. In that respect, because of the biological factor, females, according to some scientists, females have more sensitivity. In past history, most of these war heroes, we can say murderers, in most cases were male. Because of the biological factor, females are more sensitive towards pain. According to scientists, if two persons, a male and a female, see someone exposed to a painful experience, the response of a female is more instinctive and stronger. That's a scientific finding. So, we need more emphasis not only on the development of education but on warm-heartedness. In such a period females should take a more active role in the promotion of

warm-heartedness. Therefore the next Dalai Lama can be – if people want – a female. Not only just a female, but a very attractive female. That should be!

I think you mentioned the concept WE and THEM. I think this is a centuries-old concept. Former Indian president Abdul Kalam – Muslim background, but a great scientist, physicist – often said the basis or the source of trouble is the concept of I and WE. It is true. Because of this self-centred feeling, there has been suspicion and a strong feeling of WE and THEM or I and THEM. Then there's a distance, fear, distrust, hatred, negative competitive feeling appearing on the basis of narrow-minded self-centredness.

Now we really need effort through education – not through teaching, not through prayer, but through education. The whole world – today's world is such that a national boundary isn´t significant any more. Important is the human being. We all are the same human beings, so the whole world should be considered as a part of me. A part of me! Treat THEM as your true brothers and sisters, and their interests as your interests. Then the centuries-old concept of victory by defeating my enemies is no more relevant in this order. All this should come through education. Information will bring awareness. That I feel.

Jan Urban: The same question for Madame Kadeer. What can be done from the outside? What can be done by us?

Rebiya Kadeer: Now, it is the time of globalization. We have heard what's happening in Tibet, and what's happening in Burma and also in East Turkestan. Now, the international community and the world know what's happening there. They are aware of the situation. The situation there, the terrible situation is becoming a humanitarian issue: Not only the question of one nation, but a human issue. China cannot isolate itself from the rest of the world; therefore, the pressure of the international community and the democratic countries is very important to force China to change its policy towards the minorities. The international community has a duty to force the regimes in China, in Burma too, to change their policies towards minorities. The Chinese government is very afraid of the pressure from the international community. China has accelerated assimilation and destruction of the culture of ethnic minorities in China. For example, China recently demolished the old city of Kashgar, which is a cen-

tre of the Uyghur culture and tradition. It was a historical city and held a thousand years of history. It shows that Chinese authorities are aware of the upcoming pressure from the international community. They know that the international community in the end will put pressure on China and will force China to change its policy towards ethnic minorities. Therefore, now, the Chinese government tries to assimilate and to destroy the ethnic minorities culture as soon as possible. Therefore, I urge the international community and democratic countries and non-governmental organizations to accelerate their pressure to preserve a unique culture and a unique identity of an ethnic minority in China. People in democratic countries should force their politicians, should pressure the politicians to get involved in these issues. Although China is a big country and a powerful country, in the end, it will be forced; it will be obliged to respect the international community's demands. I hope that, at the end of the day, China will be forced by the international community's pressure to respect human rights and rights of the people, rights of the minorities and other non-Han-Chinese people inside China. And also other dictatorships in the world will, at the end of the day, be forced to accept the demands and appeals of the international community to respect minority rights. Thank you very much.

Zoya Phan: Thank you. I think many of you came here because you care about human rights. You care about democracy and peace in Asia and also in the whole world. What I would like you to do is to help us raise awareness about the situation in Burma. Ask your governments to take action and also ask individuals to take action to help the people in Burma. What we need to see now is the European Union taking a lead to secure the global arms embargo from the United Nations Security Council. We also need to see the UN set up a commission of inquiry into crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by the generals in Burma. We also need to see the European Union impose more targeted economic sanctions against the regime in Burma, including the sanctions on the oil and gas sectors, insurance companies, financial services and banking companies. We want the European Union, through the European Commission, to provide more humanitarian aid for the people in Burma, for the people who are on the border in refugee camps, and people who are internally displaced. They are the most vulnerable but do not have any access to international aid because the regime blocks aid in this area. I think one of the other best

ways is for President Havel to invite us back every year and to learn from your experience. Thank you.

Ramin Jahanbegloo: There are three levels to go through very quickly; I go back to what I said that we have the three Ls: listening, learning and leading, and, very often, we always talk about leading. Now, I think if it was only up to the leaders and leading, we would still have the apartheid regime and we would not have democracy in South Africa, and we would still have communist regimes in Eastern European countries. Now, why do I say that? Because I think that His Holiness talked about the idea of awareness. I would humbly add also the concept of solidarity which is very important when solidarity means actually the work which is done by media coverage – journalists like Robert Ménard, Reporters Sans Frontières. It also means what we differentiate between, as the French say, "la politique politicians", meaning the politics of the politicians and the politics of the citizens. The politics of the citizens are as important as the politics of the politicians. Without you, people like me or others – when we are in prison – who's going to sign petitions, who's going to push the governments to let us out? I was lucky – most of the intellectuals around the world and many other people signed petitions for me and wanted me to get out of prison, otherwise I would still be there. The third level which is very, very important is what I call the cross-culture conversation, meaning learning from each other. We cannot only listen, but we have to learn from each other so that one experience, a struggle for freedom in one part of the world like in the Czech Republic or, let's say, in South Africa, would be a very important experience for us in Iran. All these levels are very important. Thank you.

Robert Ménard: What should we do? First of all, I would say we should tell the truth, the unpleasant truth. We should not say things which just make us happy. We should talk about the real issues. Let me give you some examples: for a long time I thought, along with lots of other people, that it was impossible to get rid of poverty without democracy. But China is a proof of the contrary. Whether I like it or not, China partly proves that the reality is different. The idea that democracy is the best way out of poverty might not be certain at all. The idea that we must help countries, poor countries – I am not sure whether it is true. We have been sending aid to Africa for 50 years, we have invested trillions in them, but the development achieved is close

to zero. We should ask ourselves why. Just because we are defending human rights, we should not think that these ideas, these disturbing facts, cannot make us change our minds.

There is also another idea I have been thinking about for a long time: If we knew certain things, we would prevent other things from happening. You know, the basic idea is had we known what was going to happen in Germany, we would not have let it happen. But this is not true. This is simply not true. The greatest conflict, the greatest war since WWII, the one with the largest number of victims, did not happen in Tibet, in China, or in Asia – it happened in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the Democratic Republic of Congo! Four million of people died between 1998 and 2002. Everyone knows that. All the heads of states – and some of them are sitting here – know it. Did this fact prevent such atrocities from happening? Of course not. This means that, unfortunately, recent years have shown us that a lot of our ideas were in fact completely mistaken. I had been thinking for a long time that human rights and democracy were synonyms. Now, I do not think it anymore. I think that we should make a distinction between human rights and democracy. And that the worst regimes are right when they say: "You Westerners are confusing universal values with the forms of democracy." I think we must ask ourselves all these questions, and I feel like that because for 25 years, I was leading an organization defending human rights, and we did not ask any of them. Because they open the door to so many other questions, to so many other issues. Because there are difficult questions, and I have no answers to them.

You, Madam, you are a Muslim. We have seen Muslims being treated like they are treated in China. However, at the same time, I do not know a single Muslim country which would be a democracy. When I say it like this, it may sound like a horrendous thing but it's true. There are certain truths we must eventually face. In the history of the mankind, the Shoah, the Jewish Holocaust is perhaps the worst of the monstrosities. I apologize for saying this but this holds also in comparison to the Tibetans. How could people in Israel, who have suffered so much in their history, become the butchers they are now? How is it possible to switch from one to the other in just two generations? These are some of the questions which keep haunting me.

One last question. You said: "We must draw the attention of the world." We agree, the politicians should do this, the European Commission should do this, the U.S. should do that – the problem is that

they don't. How can we stop this talking or imagining of what should be done? How should we transform words into real actions of the politicians? This is my last question.

On Burma: as for my country and the other European countries – we have the European Commission and the European Union which keep saying: "We are going to punish the military dictatorship in Burma," So we introduce sanctions. But not for the oil! The oil is an exception! How can we change that? How can we make it clear to people that it is not possible to talk about a thing and do just the opposite?

And then one last question, Your Holiness. As for myself, I am willing to kiss everyone's mouth and think that mankind is friendly. But there are bastards, there are real bastards in this world. There are even women who are worse than men. I am not sure that Mrs Gandhi in India or Mrs Thatcher were the epitomes of democracy, despite the fact they were women. What are we going to do with the bastards? This is my question.

Dalai Lama: (to Ménard) In some aspects, I agree with you. Now, to the People's Republic of China. A certain sort of change or a collapse could create too much chaos. That is in nobody's interest. A gradual change is the best. I think of the former Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union. Impressive – wonderful! But if we look closely at what happened with Georgia or Ukraine or other Soviet republics, I think we can see a lot of chaos, a lot of suffering. So, regarding the former Soviet Union case – consider much better! We have to look at it very carefully.

Recently, I met some Chinese students; they have their opinions. They have their "view" of China, of course of the rich coastal area. In the interior area of China there are many, many poor people. For them, centralized authority may be good for their material development. It's also possible.

Anyway, we should have a more holistic view. All these problems cannot change overnight. For everybody's interest a gradual change is much better.

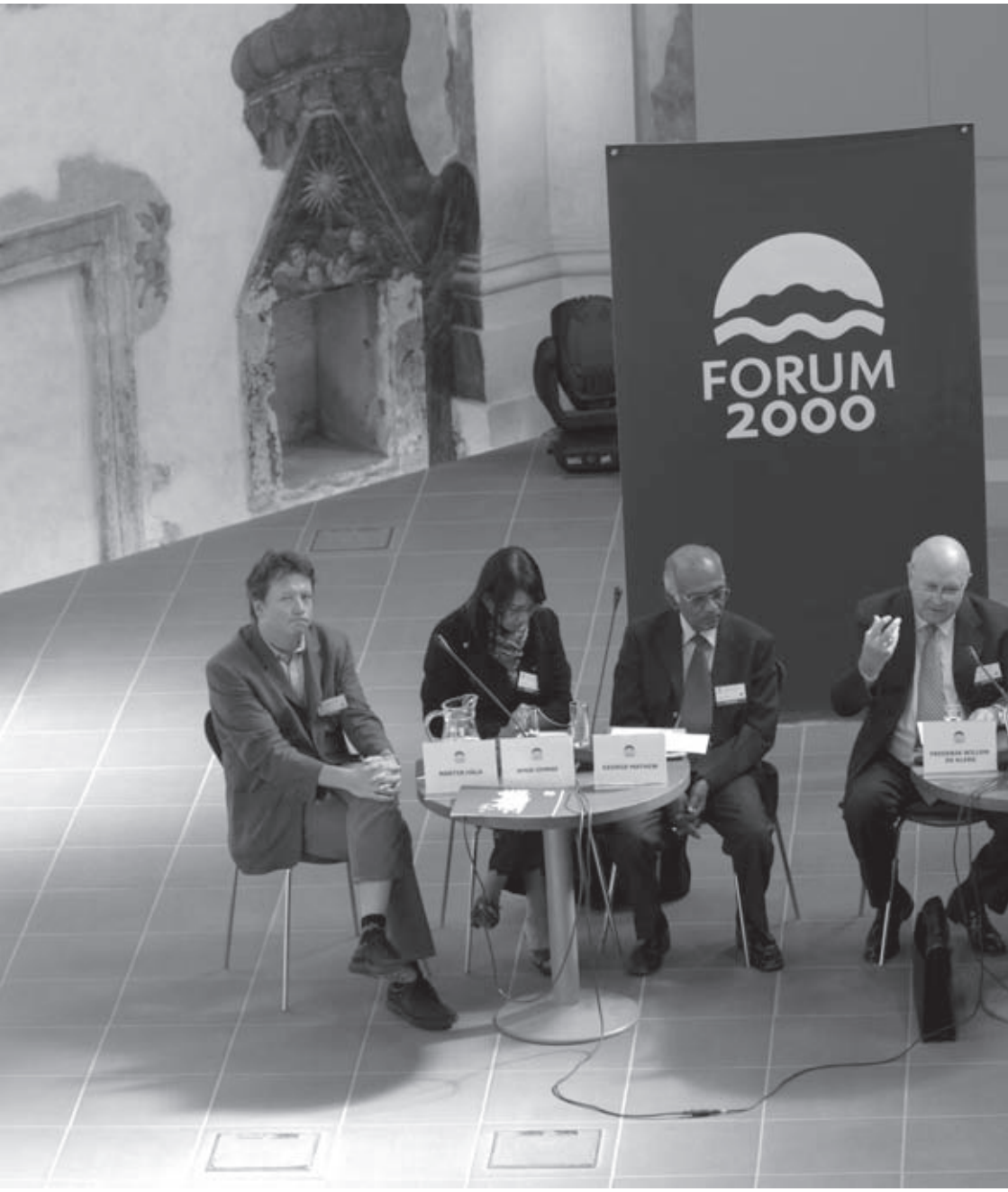
I am often saying that democracy must develop within China´s Communist Party's organization and democracy must be lead by the Communist Party. Gradually.

Anyway, another thing I want to mention: we should be realistic; otherwise, our meeting will be just rhetoric and without much

implementation. We should be realistic. If we say to the Chinese government, "You should change into a democratic country, into a democracy, you should bring democracy!" they will immediately reject it, and nobody can dictate to China. This goes, I think, too far. Democracy must be brought by Chinese people themselves. Not by outside forces. That's more realistic! Therefore, as I mentioned earlier, I believe in education. Now, for example, as you mention (to Ménard) many Han people consider the cultural minorities as something inferior. That's due to the lack of education and the lack of awareness. And now, more and more Chinese are really showing respect and interest in the Tibetan culture, Tibetan Buddhism. The lack of awareness is because of censorship and due to wrong information. Some people keep this kind of view, which is dangerous. I think the Chinese people or any human being have a right to know what is the reality. Free information and being without censorship are crucial. And if we ask them, I think it is difficult for them to deny that. I think no government can say, "my people should be ignorant." No government can say anything like that! The people should have the right to know about the reality!

Rebiya Kadeer: I would like to add a small comment. First of all, thank you very much for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's comment. We are a province, that's a reality, but we have established a republic, East Turkestan Republic in 1944, and this republic was a democratic republic. So, I just wanted to add that. Of course as His Holiness said, democracy should come to China through the Chinese people; it should come from the inside. But outside pressure also plays a big role, because China doesn't allow any dissent, any political organized group, any political movement to carry out any activities in China. And there should be international pressure from the outside as well. If the efforts for democracy from inside, from the people, and outside pressure come together, then democracy will prevail in China. And also, the Chinese authorities should understand our good intentions.

Jan Urban: Thank you so much. To summarize this panel, one can say: the silent ones cannot be heard; speak up, be realistic and stand by your word. Thank you so much everybody, it was a great honour to be here with you. Thank you.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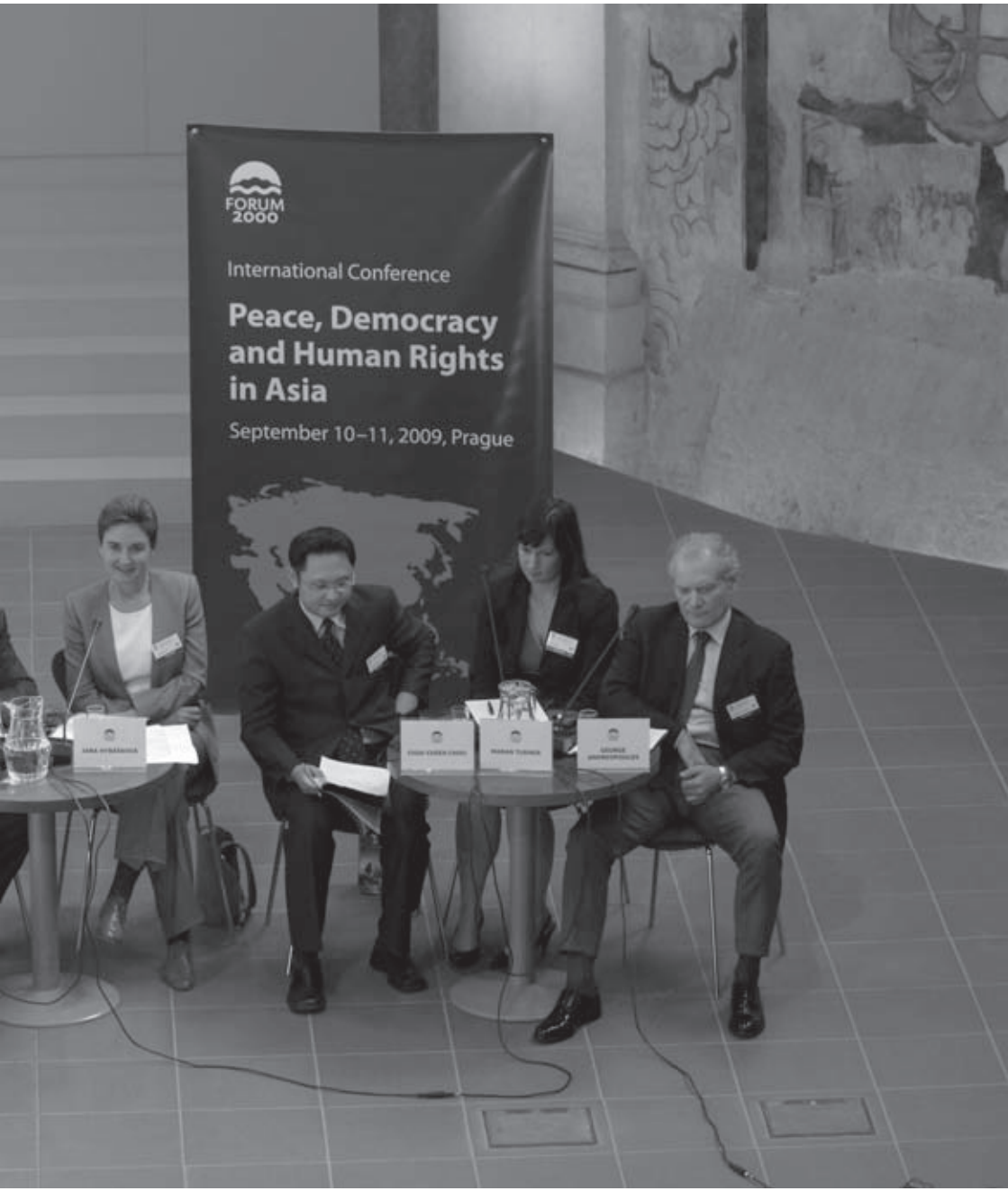
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Panel 2 (Prague Crossroads) Inclusive Government versus Exclusive Governance

Jana Hybášková: Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, honourable democrats, allow me to welcome all of you to the second panel of this conference on Asia. Before we depart for the panel's discussion, allow me not to introduce President de Klerk, who definitely does not need my introduction. Mr. President, welcome to Prague Crossroads and welcome to EuroAsia.

Frederik Willem de Klerk: Thank you very much; it's wonderful to be back in Prague, and to be here for such a very important conference dealing with crucial issues affecting Asia. Asia affects the rest of the world and is becoming such an important role-player in that what happens is fundamentally important to many people also outside Asia.

This afternoon, we'll focus more specifically on Asia. The purpose of this discussion is to talk more about the systems which we need in order to promote human rights, the rule of law, and the like. Evolution, ladies and gentlemen, no longer takes place by means of painstakingly slow changes to the physical design of our species. After all, Homo sapiens hardly changed at all since we emerged in Southern Africa about two hundred thousand years ago. Instead, changes now take place through the much more rapid evolution of the societies in which we live. This process started slowly, and then began to accelerate about ten thousand years ago, and during the past century, change has been exponential. In this view, all of the wars and conflicts that we have endured, all the famines and plagues we have survived, have had as their underlying goal the determination of which form of societal organization can best assure the most rapid and beneficial evolution of the species. The winner so far has been the broadly free market democracy that emerged in Western

Europe and in North America during the past two hundred years. Even in the wake of the current economic crisis, few people imagine that the solution lies in moving away from freedom or moving away from markets. Why should free market democracy with all its forms, have proved superior to all other systems of government? The answer, I think, lies in the following structural advantages of freedom. It is only when peoples' lives and property are protected by law from arbitrary interference by the state that they are able to generate wealth to the full extent of their abilities. It is only when there is freedom of thought and expression that people can safely investigate their environment and postulate their new and better ways of doing things. His Holiness the Dalai Lama this morning emphasized access to information, freedom of thought, and that that is the real source of influence which changes things. I fully agree. It is only when political competition takes place within conventions created by law that society can escape costly conflicts regarding possession of government. In the final analysis, the economic, spiritual, and military power of any society is the total sum of the power of all the individuals that live in that society. If they are free, they will be much more empowered than their counterparts in unfree societies. The question is: which form of democracy can best assure and preserve the freedom of the constituent members of society and create the best circumstances for their development and prosperity? Some believe that social democracies provide the best framework; in their view, it makes sense for citizens to surrender more of their income in taxes and some of their freedom to regulation to ensure the most effective and equitable delivery of social services. Critics say that such societies often stifle individual initiative and lead to overregulation by a new class of well-meaning bureaucrats. Others believe that true democracy requires the extension of maximum freedom of choice to individuals. They believe in the principle of subsidiarity: that government would be devolved to the lowest level at which it can be effectively delivered and that its power should be limited only to those functions that individuals freely agree to delegate to them. They believe that ultimate choice should lie in the hands of individuals. Critics respond that such societies can be uncaring and inequitable, and that the lack of sufficient regulation can lead to abuses such as those that caused the current economic crisis. Which brings me to this question: How can people be free – not only from the harsh rule of dictatorships – but also from the smothering overregulation of advanced democracies? There is no single solu-

tion that will suit all societies at all times. There is no end to history as Francis Fukuyama postulated: only a continuing search for the most effective evolution of human society. But at the heart of all this lies the simple truth: That only if there is basic freedom in a society, can that society prosper and grow and develop in its vision, in its thinking, in its prosperity, and in its meaningful existence. And when there are restrictions which limit freedom in many ways, you find a society which smothers itself, which comes to a standstill, which does not develop to its full potential. Thank you very much.

Jana Hybášková: Thank you, Mr. President for, I would say, your very candid and realistic words. My role as a moderator today should be very humble since we have so many excellent panellists. Nevertheless, allow me to ask a couple of questions so as to open the debate today. I think the finding of a proper balance between representation and participation in the world which is on one hand the world of the bloggers and multimedia. On the other hand, we still do live in the world which is not the world of democracy. Many states do not live in democratic systems: So how to find balance between participation and representation is my first question. My second question relates to the debate: Where are the limits of representation and participation? Yesterday we were shocked by accusations against President Obama, "You are a liar!" but if you walk in Prague streets, you see huge megaboards: "Click YES or NO if you are for euthanasia, click YES or NO if you are for the change of constitution." So, where are the limits of full participation and full representation? How are we to find the ways to inclusive democratic governments in a situation when the public is fully occupied by populism, extremism, information manipulation, allowing for what we can call vast moral frauds to elections? What are full powers of those elected with support of laundered money, media abuse, information blockade, or oil? And the key issue is, of course, for all of us democrats, how to assure that he or she would be able to be empowered enough to decide fully for his or her own definition of participation and representation. So, please, if I may introduce my very good friend, George Mathew, who is as well a member of the Steering Committee of the World Movement for Democracy, an excellent Indian sociologist, who has spent many years working on local governance and local governments. George, the floor is yours.

George Mathew: Thank you, Jana. First of all, let me say how happy I am to be here in this august assembly of scholars, activists, practitioners, thinkers, writers, and everyone – it is something very, very unique. And the presence of His Holiness makes this event very, very special.

The theme given to me to speak on is "Inclusive Government and Exclusive Governance." I'm not going into the theory of that but I would like to say a few words based on the case study of one of the countries in the world which is perhaps the largest democracy and which has perhaps the second largest population in the world: India. You know, within a few months, India's population will be touching one billion and two hundred million. All religions in the world are there in that country. At one time – a few years back, two, three years back – our Prime Minister belonged to a minority religion, the Sikh religion; the President was a Muslim; the Speaker of our Parliament was an atheist and an ardent Communist; the leader of the ruling party was a Christian; and the leader of the opposition party was a Hindu. You know, that is India; and we survive. Now, when we talk about government, the basic factor of government is the constitution. If India's Constitution is taken, this is the most inclusive constitution one can think of in the world. We have borrowed and taken from the best constitutions in the world when we got independence in 1947. The directive principles of the Indian Constitution say: everybody is free and everybody is equal, and there are many provisions stating everything is free, equal and all that. But this Constitution was introduced in 1950 on a highly stratified society. You know, we have this caste system, landlords, the poor and all those sociological factors. There is, on the one side, the inclusive government based on the Constitution of India, and then we have democracy and the election process. Then, the governance happens. Now, sixty-two years have passed after our independence. Sixty-two years! Where are we? Are we inclusive in our governance? No! Even today, about 28% of India's population is below the poverty line. Of course, Indians can be very proud of saying that when we got independence, our poverty was 60%. So, through democracy and democratic process, we have brought it down to 28%. That is a big achievement. But, what does it mean? 28% or 30% of India's population means nearly 350 million to 400 million people – they are below the poverty line. In India, we have in Hindi six words. The poor they don't have these six things: "rōtī, kaparā, makāna, bijalī, saraka, pānī". They don't have it. What

is it? Bread, food, they have no food, no clothes, no house; they have no electricity, they have no roads, and they have no drinking water. So that is the condition of Indians below the poverty line. We have an inclusive election process: for instance, we have six hundred political parties in India, and all the election manifestos are excellent. If you can read the election manifestos of our political parties, they say: we will do this, this, this, that… everything is wonderful, perfect, but when the election is over, who gets elected? The richest people get elected. Recently we had our parliament election: we have 543 members elected, out of that 350 people who got elected were multimillionaires. Well, His Holiness knows it: multimillionaires, how did they get elected in this election process? So, the problem is that we are facing serious exclusive governance. What is the result of this? Today, we have about six hundred plus districts in India. Out of that, two hundred districts have civil conflicts. One third of the districts in India have civil conflicts because the poor are saying: "We have nothing to lose, so we take to arms, why not?" There are enough resources, but they are not reaching the poor, the needy. Farmers are committing suicide. They produce, they put in hard work, but because of the open market and today's economic condition, they have no market, they are committing suicide. The infant mortality rate in India is the highest, perhaps. The sex ratio is very, very sad: only 933 women for 1000 men – that is the situation in India. So, on the one side, we can say we have democracy, we have sustained the democracy, we have bridged the gap, but what is the reality? Why has exclusive governance happened? The most important factor is social forces; negative social forces are still active in Indian society. These negative social forces are the landlords. We could not implement so far, except in one or two states, land reforms. The land reforms are not there, therefore, the landlords are very powerful. Upper-class people are still powerful. Male domination is still a reality. On the other hand, we have now 50% of seats reserved for women in local government institutions, 50% of the seats are for women. But it is not there for the parliament. It is not there for the state assemblies. That is one reality. The officials and the bureaucracy, they always put a hurdle, a road block for progressive issues, because the bureaucracy, the officials – they come from the upper caste. They come from the elite group of the people, and then they have their own vested interest. The political leaders: as I mentioned, these are the kind of people who are getting elected. Corporate business houses – they also have their own

interest. They influence all the political parties. Who is giving money to the political parties for the elections…? Every five years, we have elections to the parliament, or the assembly, or the local government. And then at last, the religious leaders. Patronage, clientelism, and, as a result, sycophancy is the result in the society. Therefore, there is no inclusive governance, but exclusive governance.

Let me complete by saying: unless the entrenched interests are really fought and a real inclusive governance is brought, the situation will not improve – four hundred million, maybe three hundred and fifty, in twenty-five years still will be poor and excluded. Thank you very much.

Jana Hybášková: Thank you, George, for describing the negative social forces. Allow me to pass the word to Khin Ohmar, former Burmese student activist, the excellent woman representative from still suffering Burma.

Khin Ohmar: Thank you very much Chair. This morning, I was listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. What His Holiness has said and what I was going to share with you what our leader, Aung San Suu Kyi has said. It just gave me the chill and inspiration. Aung San Suu Kyi also once said that the people are more important than the government, and His Holiness said the same thing. And His Holiness said that what we are lacking is human compassion. I was reminded immediately of what our leader once said; that what we want to build in Burma is a system of democracy with compassion. I take it very deeply into my heart. What I see now is that the governments in our region, Asia, are often more concerned with stability and economic development on their own terms than promoting democracy and participation of the people. President de Klerk has also already expressed and mentioned this trend. Unfortunately, the Asian governments neglect to realize that the most stable form of development is one that focuses on people and a security framework where the people have political voices, food, health care, and physical security. People: men, women, children, ethnic and religious minorities, and other disenfranchised groups of society. Many of these governments do not want people's participation, but hold on to a top-down authoritarian system in their relationship to the citizens. This authoritarian rule makes it impossible for people to participate in the decision-making and the development in most sectors of the society, which, in turn

prevents real democracy and, of course, the real prosperity of the people. Instead of making efforts to listen to the people, to be able to represent them, which is the role of the government as we all know and would like to see happen… many rulers in our Asia region see the people as the enemy, as a threat to their power. In many cases, the strategy that the governments use to keep the threat away is to govern the people with fear, withhold information from the people, keep them in the dark, deprive them of their education, use torture and force as their state policy, keep their people in poverty on purpose like in Burma. The people of Burma should never have faced a starvation or poverty when the country is so rich in all kinds of natural resources. We can claim that this authoritarian, non-participatory ruling system is not only morally wrong, but is a key challenge that the people of Asia face today. I think it's built on a false assumption about stability and peace. It is certainly true that an elite can rule the people with fear and can control internal unrest for a certain period of time, but history has proven to all of us that, in the long run, the people's will for freedom and democracy cannot be held back. Only when people are allowed to truly participate on equal terms and have influence on decisions that affect their lives, will there be sustainable democracy, peace, and stability. I am here to bring an example of my country, Burma, the most challenging to democracy in the world in the twenty-first century. As you all know, Burma has been ruled by the world's most brutal and repressive regime for about five decades. The regime has consistently and systematically oppressed all political opposition, crashed the people's uprising for democracy and peace, and waged war against ethnic minorities who resisted the regime's policy and practice of hegemony. The regime utilizes the term "stability" to cover brutal violence against the people and to lessen international criticism. Its refusal to listen to its people and to address their hardships has resulted in an alarming rate of human trafficking and migration flows, refugees and internally displaced people, HIV/AIDS epidemics and drug trade, which, in fact, affect the stability and peace of the entire region. This regime claims to be on a roadmap to democracy, but this roadmap completely lacks the participation of the opposition, and anyone else is hand-picked by representatives of the regime. A new constitution which legitimizes and entrenches military rule was adopted by force, threat, and manipulation last year (2008). A sham election is now planned for 2010. The regime usually uses the term "disciplined democracy", which tells a lot about its

mindset. Of course it's not the kind of democracy where people can openly protest against injustices. At best, people will have a chance to choose between different representatives of the military regime. The truth is that the regime sees the people as a threat to its power and now plans to create a system which constitutionalizes and guarantees the regime´s grip on power and immunity for crimes against humanity and war crimes it has committed against the people. Today, the situation in Burma is not getting better at all: in fact, it worsens in spite of the resilience of the people, our people, and their aspiration for democracy is unyielding. For example, more than 2100 political prisoners are detained in Burma's notorious prisons. About twenty-two of them are my very close friends. Torture is a state policy in Burma. Hundreds of democracy activists have been sent to prison for up to 68 years. Many of them are my friends. As we speak today, more and more people continue to be arrested and imprisoned, especially now, as we are approaching the second anniversary of the Saffron Movement. As you will recall, it was led by the Buddhist monks two years ago. Aung San Suu Kyi has been now placed under house arrest again after the sham trial. This way, the regime gets Aung San Suu Kyi out of politics and out of their way to hold an election next year (in 2010). Recently, another preparation for the 2010 election is that the regime declared war on the ethnic groups on the Burma borders. So, recently, we have seen a new, fresh flow of refugees to the China border as well as to the Thailand border. The ethnic groups resist and reject the 2008 Constitution because this Constitution will only entrench more oppression and atrocities against the ethnic nationalities.

So, what future do we see for Burma? The regime wants their exclusive power and exclusive hands on the people and the country. We, the people of Burma inside and outside the country, we don't accept the 2008 Constitution, and we don't accept the 2010 elections because they will not bring democracy, security or national reconciliation to our country. The military has taken only diehard measures to ensure the complete dominance over the election process. We know that, and we only would like to make sure that the international community also realizes that elections do not guarantee democracy, peace and stability as is shown in the experiences of other countries like Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and the former Yugoslavia. A constitution that systematically entrenches injustice will form chaos in ethnically diverse societies like ours in Burma. With further imprisonment of

political prisoners and attacks against democracy activists the fundamental necessities of rule of law, free speech and free association will eradicate even further. A climate of fear and political hegemony will create no peace and stability in Burma. The democracy movement really would like to call on all the people of the international community and the United Nations to really help Burma in this very critical time before this 2010 election is single-handedly carried out by this ruthless regime, to make sure that Burma moves into a genuine transition, by having this regime come to the table to engage in dialogue with democratic opposition, by freeing Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, by stopping hostilities against the ethnic nationalities, and by coming to the dialogue table to work for national reconciliation. We, the democracy movement inside and outside Burma are ready to work with the military hand-in-hand for the country's national reconciliation. Its time for the United Nations and the international community to take action and to make sure that this happens and is realized. We hope that you will join us in these coming months and years of struggle to bring true, genuine democracy and national reconciliation to Burma. Thank you very much.

Jana Hybášková: Thank you, Khin. I think we all admire your courage and we can only wish for European real power-holders to use their exclusive powers to really influence the situation in your country. Martin Hála is my former schoolmate from Charles University, Department of Asian & African Studies. It is my great pleasure to welcome you here. Martin, the floor is yours

Martin Hála: Thank you. It's also my pleasure to be here. I have to confess that when I was looking at the topic of this session, I was a little bit puzzled by the terminology which looks very abstract. And, even though I spent some time in academia, I've never been a part of any government, I don't know much about it, and I've always been watching the government from the outside with some suspicion. So, in the end, I decided to translate these two terms into my own experience with two specific places, the two countries where I go most often: Nepal and Bhutan. Nepal is on paper a very inclusive society: it has its interim constitution and probably the next real constitution that is now being drafted. Both are very inclusive, you have all sorts of quota for every conceivable minority: ethnic, gender, religious, even sexual. So, you know, the spirit in Nepal is very inclu-

sive – I would say the rhetoric is very inclusive – but, of course, on the ground, the place is rather chaotic and cannot really deliver on many of the promises that are written into these basic documents.

Bhutan, on the other hand, is a very exclusive place, it's a place where democracy has been introduced from top-down, so it's, in a way, like a mirror reflection, a mirror image, or perhaps more like a spitting image of these two countries. These two countries represent a very different model of approaching democratization. I would argue – and my Nepalese and Bhutanese friends will excuse me – I would argue that neither of these models actually works very well on the ground. This leads me to suspect that there may be some processes that are actually more important than the formal democracy that are introduced from below or from above. These processes would probably be in the area of institution building or nation building, if you wish. For instance, in Nepal, despite the inclusive spirit and rhetoric, it's very difficult for people to actually claim their rights that are acknowledged on paper by the state. That's because there are really very few institutions that would mediate conflicts between different groups claiming their rights. There are plenty of these groups in Nepal. I would suspect that without proper mature institutions, it's really quite difficult to build up a functional democracy, and, more importantly, to guarantee the basic rights. As you may be aware, in Nepal, recently, the human security situation has actually been deteriorating despite this whole optimistic process which started with the revolution in 2006 and the overthrow of the monarchy afterwards.

To illustrate this point with one more example of another place where I spend a lot of time these days, I will end with a remark about Hong Kong. As you know, Hong Kong doesn't have any democracy at all – neither from above nor from below. However, it does have basic freedoms, and it has the basic guarantees of rights and liberties. That's very interesting because Hong Kong must probably be the only place where these basic rights and liberties are guaranteed without a functional democracy. This is probably due to the very special history of Hong Kong, and it's a good example to bring up when we think about institution building in newly democratized societies because it backs the question whether institutional guarantees of rights and liberties can actually be introduced in societies that do not have formal democracy. I would think that in most cases, it's probably not possible. Hong Kong is probably the only example I can think of

where this has, to a certain extent, happened only because of the very special coincidence of historical factors.

To summarize what I just went through I would think that there do exist, besides formal democratic processes, some more important elements in society that actually make the democratic processes work. I would also argue that these institutions are very difficult to build up in a society that doesn't have a formal democracy. In effect, they go hand-in-hand, but not always, and that's the point. Sometimes, these institutions are missing, and then we're in trouble. Thank you.

Jana Hybášková: Thank you very much, Martin, the next speaker is George Andreopoulos.

George Andreopoulos: Thank you very much. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin by thanking President Havel and Forum 2000 for the very kind invitation to me to address this important meeting. I have a very brief time at my disposal and I would like to address the issue of inclusion. I will begin by making a few comments on the debate that has been waging within the human rights field on the values issue. This, of course, has not been confined to the Asian continent, but it's a global phenomenon. Of course, it took a particularly combative tone in Asia in the nineties when Asian leaders like, at that time, Malaysia's Mahathir bin Mohammed and Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, argued that there were legitimate culturally based differences that justify substantial deviations from international human rights norms and standards. On the other hand, there was another alternative Asian vision that counterposed itself to this argument and was expressed by, of course among others, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the late South Korean Leader Kim Dae-jung and, of course, the Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi. They demonstrated in words, but I would say, more importantly in action, that there are important democratic and humanist traditions in Asian societies that are reflective of a commitment to human dignity and consistent with international human rights norms and standards. I said at the beginning that this is not, of course, a debate that has been confined to the Asian continent. We've had similar discussions in Africa about the importance of African traditions. On the European continent, on the negative side, or, you would say, the less human rights sensitive side, some of the reservation has been expressed by Eurosceptics. They were concerned about progressive

harmonization of rights and standards within the European Union and what that will do to national identity and traditions. And those of you who may follow the debates in the United States recently, you know that these debates have been rekindled also when conservatives have criticized human rights lawyers, activist judges, and environmental groups, among others, for seeking to import progressive foreign standards, particularly in the context of the issue of the death penalty or the rights of homosexuals.

With all these debates about values, the importance of standards, how do you contextualize and how can this lead to a more inclusive form of governance? What are some of the key issues that have emerged? I'm going to say two or three things – the list is by no means exhaustive. One thing that clearly emerges is that while elections are vitally important, democracy is more than elections. We have been reminded of this by some of our speakers today. You need not go further then look at what is happening in Afghanistan and we all know what is the most likely outcome to the Burmese elections that will be taking place next year. Many rights in addition to the voting rights are essential for a meaningful democratic participation and debate. Without free speech, the right to assembly and privacy as well as freedom of the press, individuals, and groups would be unable to form and express their views freely and confidently on public matters. In fact, I think one of the most promising developments is that legitimate democracies – and I want to emphasize LEGITIMATE – increasingly create checks and balances within their procedures, allowing minority vetoes at some points and delegate enforcement of individual rights to courts and other bodies. In fact, I would submit to you today that this is or should become part and parcel of what legitimate democracy is. Moreover, the free expression of minority perspectives improve democratic deliberation by helping ensure that minority views of all sorts are heard and respected, resulting in policies that are more likely to represent broad public interests. Another thing that is important to remember here is that the notion of majority and minority is a very fluid notion, and what may be a majority position or a majority group in one particular juncture and for one particular point of view may be a minority a few years down the line. This is also why it is very, very important to have checks and balances and mechanisms which then can scrutinize the enforcement of individual rights. One other issue that is important: a lot of these debates on values have

focused on "should you give priority to social and economic issues in the case which is a codeword for development as opposed to civil and political issues?" One of the reasons why I think this kind of ideology is misplaced is because those who argue for development, have primarily phrased the discussion in terms of growth, and they have not focused on the distribution of the consequences of growth, and what its impact on human rights would be.

The third point that I would like to make is that there is an increasing density in transnational and transgovernmental interactions based on these international norms and standards. The growing linkages between the global and the local are progressively shifting the emphasis towards the challenge of contextualizing human rights norms. That is, how can you relate a global norm in a local context? How can you apply it and make it relevant, and, in return, how can your understanding of the importance of this global norm in the local context bounce back and shape the global discussion that is going on about the development and refinement of these international norms? This kind of ongoing discussion between the global and the local transcends the traditional dichotomy, false and mistaken dichotomy between international and domestic norms. I think this is becoming increasingly unsustainable, and I see this ongoing discussion and interaction between the global and the local as providing a very credible pathway to enforce also some of these safeguards and guarantees that are necessary to ensure that minority views are adequately represented in public deliberations.

Before I conclude I'm really tempted to say something, to digress a little bit from the discussion that was raised this morning. The reason why I want to make this comment is because I could not not make it in the heart of the Velvet Revolution, which is Prague. You heard some scepticism this morning about all these international institutions and procedures and norms, and where there is a lot of talking the talking, as we say in the United States, and not walking the walking. Of course, this is an existential issue that all of us in the human rights movement struggle and struggle with on a daily basis. However, let me give you just a little bit of a sense of history that you know better than I because I have only read books. When all European leaders and Canadian and U.S. leaders convened in Helsinki in 1975 for the Helsinki Final Act, everybody thought that the human rights basket was a joke. That primarily the purpose of the Helsinki Final Act was to solidify territorial arrangements that have resulted

from the end of the Second World War. In fact, when Ford returned to the United States, many conservative critics accused him of signing a new Yalta, giving away Eastern Europe for good to the Soviets. Within ten years, it was the human rights basket that became the focus of attention, and everything else became a footnote. It provided a platform for the transnational mobilization of human rights advocates in order to challenge the communist rule and progressively erode the moral arguments that sustained it. I am not going to sit around here and tell you that the Soviet Union collapsed because of the Human Rights Basket of the Helsinki Final Act, but I am going to argue that it is impossible to understand the moral erosion of Soviet rule without taking into consideration the importance of the Helsinki Final Act. So, words do matter, documents do matter because they provide us with pathways for mobilization and activism! Sometimes not with a pace that we would like, but sooner or later, we can get there, and I think your example is the best testimony to that. Thank you.

Jana Hybášková: Professor, just allow me one little bitter remark: you spoke about checks and balances, and since half of us here are Czechs, I would like to remind you that we also need some balances. Twenty years after the Velvet Revolution, yesterday the President of this state and one of the most important candidates for the next prime minister, they both called for the limitation of powers of the Constitutional Court. So, balances are needed as much as the checks. Thank you. Maran Turner, Executive Director, Freedom Now, USA, please, the floor is yours.

Maran Turner: Let me just echo what others have said and just to thank Forum 2000 and President Václav Havel and all of you here for coming and being a part of this very important event. Whereas, I think, President Havel said this morning the hope is that we are able to find some way forward rather than just talking as is often the case at conferences. It is putting words into action, which is what is really critical here.

There are a few points that I want to make. I think the first thing, for me at least, is that democracy begins with individual rights. It is the individual rights that are the bedrock of democracy. I make that comment from a position where I have the privilege of working on behalf of prisoners of conscience all over the world, and know

firsthand that the right of someone to hold opinions and beliefs and to express those opinions and beliefs, is paramount in democracy. It is the right to challenge others and disagree and to create some discourse – this is what moves and advances societies. It is this diversity and freedom that leads intrinsically to democracy, and it reinforces these individual rights. It is a cyclical relationship that is started where individual rights lead to democracy which reinforces and furthers additional individual rights. And it is this wonderful cycle that brings about innovation, creativity, and compassion in a society and creates an open society. Any restriction on individual rights is tantamount to the loudest attack on democracy. I have the first-hand experience of seeing many individuals who have been locked up and imprisoned all over the world because of what they say or because of what they believe. We have heard several speakers today speak about Burma which is a country that I know well. My entré into human rights was, actually, not long after college travelling in Southeast Asia and meeting some activists and finding myself in a refugee camp on the Thai-Burma border. I cannot stress enough that it was a life changing experience and because of that I am here today. Because of Burma and the commitment to assist those who were out there really trying to change their country, but ultimately, change the world. It is not just Burma. You know, Burma, of course, is certainly one of the most flagrant examples and because of that it has become a pariah state in most of the world, but there are other countries in Asia where individual rights are regularly curtailed. Vietnam. Vietnam is a country that stands as a startling reminder that economic development does not always bring democracy. Vietnam has made the most incredible economic strides in recent years, and, along with that development, reduction in poverty, but it has not brought an open society. In fact, it has brought further repression. In the last year, we have seen more people locked up in Vietnam than we have in many, many, many years. The situation actually seems to be worsening. You are seeing a contradictory relationship between the improvement economically in that country and the decline socially and politically. I have seen so many heroes in Vietnam. I was speaking recently to the nephew of one of our clients, who spent five years in prison in Vietnam. He said to me, "You cannot imagine what it is like to spend five years in solitary confinement." He is right: I cannot even begin to imagine what that is like. But more so, I can't even begin to imagine why so many of these individuals in Vietnam are speaking

against the government. I am not talking about people who are taking to the streets and trying to create any sort of large-scale disturbance, but I am merely talking about people who have had emails intercepted. Emails sent to friends and family members where they criticized the government; and because of that, because those emails were intercepted, they spent five years in jail or ten years in jail. And yet, these individuals keep doing it. They get released, and it just emboldens their desire to see change in the country, and they continue to go back for five years' solitary confinement or ten years. This is really what is incredible about democracy. It is so intoxicating to people. People want it so badly that there are an overwhelming amount of people who are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to achieve it. Back to the critical question of how you relate individual rights to democracy? How did individual rights become democracy? I think that the key linkage there is civil society.

I had the great fortune of living and working in South Africa, and though this was recent, I was struck by such a vibrant civil society. Of course, civil society does not always win, but it is the ultimate check on the government. I saw civil society in South Africa pushing back on everything. Everything that government did, they pushed back, and were strengthened by it and continued to run strong. I have to say there may have been times where even I questioned just how powerful civil society can be; but I really, sort of, beheld the power and magic and recognized how crucial civil society is even in thriving democracies. I come from the United States. To some extent, we take democracy for granted because we were raised with this entrenched democracy, but even in countries like the United States, our democratic ideals are challenged. We've seen that in the last couple of years, Americans had watched what they see as members of their government do things that the majority of the people disagreed with. This of course, goes back to the notion of what is democracy. When we talk about democracy, we are, of course, talking about rule by the majority. In some instances, maybe not even majority. This is what's hard for all of us to understand. Even I can look at this and see how valuable a strong civil society, even in a country with long-held democratic ideals, can be. I think many other Americans are seeing the same and you are seeing the emergence certainly in the last eight years in the United States. You have seen a stronger civil society emerge, and I think it will certainly be the better for it.

Democracy is a pursuit that we continue, and it's a path that you always have to fight for. It's paramount that we support civil society. It is imperative that we support civil society in Burma and other pariah states because change will come within these countries. There's no question about that, but the change can only come from within if we are supporting from the outside. We must support completely and thoroughly and we must disclose and scrutinize what is not real democracy. This is just the final point that I make. We need to distinguish between the development of real democracies and seeming ones. Again, this is an ever-evolving, an ever-active task that we have to undertake. Mr. Mathew spoke eloquently about India, the largest democracy in the world. He spoke about how it's the elites, the powerful and moneyed elites that control the government. Arguably that's true in many democracies all over the world, all of them. Then we look at Burma which, of course, has set elections for 2010. The word "election" – we hear that coming from democratic societies and we think it is democracy. It's not democracy! The word "elections" has nothing to do with democracy. In the circumstances of Burma these elections are going to be carried out based on a constitution which is fundamentally undemocratic. Starting from how the constitution actually got passed - by a referendum. This again is another word that sounds wholly democratic, and yet it was a referendum that took place days after cyclone Nargis devastated the country and after the government was refusing to permit humanitarian aid. And yet this is where this democratic notion of elections emerged.

I'll just close because I realize that we have other speakers. Just to echo one urgency upon everyone; it's important that we really pursue the fundamental bedrock of democracy, which is individual rights, and through that, I think we'll be able to achieve democracy ultimately. Thank you.

Jana Hybášková: Thank you, Maran. Associate professor, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan, Chih-Chieh Chou, the floor is yours.

Chih-Chieh Chou: Thank you, Chair, Mr. President and respected panellists. I'm a delegate from Taiwan. You know that people in Tibet or Eastern Turkestan or Xinjiang suffer the human rights abuse from the Chinese government. My country Taiwan has suffered alternative threats or intimidation from the Chinese government. My

country, Taiwan, is the most isolated country in the world in terms of diplomacy. At the same time, in terms of the Chinese societies around the world, Taiwan is the only Chinese society with democracy. Comparing to Singapore – it´s a patriarchal democracy country and, Hong Kong since the British rule era, is a society with a rule of law, but without democracy. And there is nothing much to say about mainland China.

Taiwan has a unique role to promote and to push the Chinese government to promote human rights and to practice the protection of universal human rights in the future. I am a professor at a university, but I'm also a human rights activist representing the Chinese Association for Human Rights based in Taipei. Now, we are trying to expand our role, our influence to mainland China. Maybe, some of you would say: "it's a naïve idea," but I think it's very important. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, engagement rather than containment is the key. We work with a lot of NGOs in mainland China, and try to help. There are many human rights lawyers who fight against the Chinese government. They need know-how and they need the outside experience on how to promote human rights. So, I think as human rights activists in Taiwan, we can take this kind of advantage.

I have some points I want to share with this panel and with the audience. We are facing human rights abuse in Burma, in Tibet, in Xinjiang. In other parts of East Asia, so-called newly democratic countries, South Korea, Taiwan, even in Japan, we face another issue. I think it's also important for human rights promotion. Firstly, as Professor Andreopoulos just mentioned Asian values: I think within the past half century, the East-Asian countries developed an alternative model of the modern society with so-called Asian values. Asian value is a part of the elements in this kind of alternative model. But, if I say the Asian value, it refers to hard work, mutual respect, the teamwork, the highly professional bureaucracy, the emphasis on education, emphasis on family values. All those elements are, actually, Confucian value. This is the Asian value. But I don't agree when some political elites in East Asia adopt this Asian value to resist against the universal human rights values – that's another story. So let me correct the concept of Asian value first. Then, I'd like to say: the dilemma faced by another East-Asian country is the value of the government. After the democratization, the people in Taiwan, in South Korea enjoy freedom, enjoy civil rights, but the dilemma, the problem is there – these are just electoral democracies, not liberal

democracies. Why do I say that? It's because in the past fifty years these East-Asian countries kept a biased development strategy even though they enjoyed democracy and human rights energetically. So the key is the inaction and misbehaviour of the government in human rights promotion. I would say it's a kind of wrong policy to kill people as well as triggering guns. The key for me is to change the mindset of the political elite. While saying that, civil society is important in those authoritarian countries, maybe the new democracies, the government, the capacity of governance is still important. That's my point. I give you an example. Maybe a part of you heard that one month ago, Taiwan suffered the most disastrous rainstorm, and the Dalai Lama paid a visit to Taiwan, to those victims and people affected by this storm. This disaster may be partly a result of the global weather change, but, on the other hand, it's also a negative by-product of the biased development strategy during the past fifty years. The indigenous people in Taiwan were disadvantaged during the process of economic development. They suffered a lot. They, actually, are the victims of this disaster.

The key is accountability, transparency, and we have to change the mindset of the political elite. Finally, I'd like to provide a kind of a concept. Maybe we can use the human security concept, rather then the national security concept. The human security concept developed in 1994, at the UN Development Conference. It says that human security refers to that traditional security. Actually, they are elite-oriented. Just think about the most ancient of the state mechanisms. By the human security we go down from the national level, elite level to this individual level and the community level and include the vivid power of the civil society. I think that's important. Maybe the new value elements can change the mindset of the political elite.

Finally, I would like to say something, echo something of the previous panel. The Chair asked the question what can be done from outside to change China's human rights situation. I have been to China, maybe every year or every six months, and I gave lectures at Chinese universities about human rights although, of course, there are some taboos if you want to discuss human rights in mainland China. In my NGO we think the right way is to keep a kind of pragmatic way to engage with the NGOs and with the young men and women in China. Even though I sometimes have to change my speech topic from human rights to fundamental rights I think it's still the right way to gradually change the Chinese young men and

women so that they find a concept and that some values can be imported into their minds.

Finally, I agree with His Holiness the Dalai Lama saying that if you want to see China getting liberalized or democratized, maybe the internal development is more important than the import from outside. Few NGOs proceed in this perspective like my NGO did by now, but I think gradually we can change Chinese society. We can help the mainland Chinese to build their civil societies. Taiwan is not a unique case: we are a Confucian society, but we also enjoy democracy. If Taiwan can do that, why not China? That's my true end, thank you.

Jana Hybášková: Before we come to closing remarks of this panel, allow me to give the floor to President de Klerk who has to leave.

Frederik Willem de Klerk: Thank you very much. I think the real value of our discussion has been to remind us all and to alert us all once again that democracy is not just about having elections and having parties. That democracy, a true, vibrant democracy, consists, and is built, on many pillars such as civil society, a good constitution, a good set of rules, mechanisms which can limit the misuse of power, and so I could go on with the definition which emerged from the discussion. All of us working for human rights support democracy; all of us working for good constitutions support democracy; all of us who say it's not only about rights, it's also about freedoms – support democracy. May democracy grow where it is stifled, and may it become healthier where it exists but where it is often misused to the extent that plays into the hands of those who have power and not into the hands of those who need to benefit from it. Thank you very much.

Jana Hybášková: But before coming to the very end of this panel, I would like to ask the panellists if they have some really fresh, abbreviated remarks. The floor is yours, George.

George Mathew: I just want to say that if there is a crisis of democracy and if there is any problem with the democracy, the answer is MORE DEMOCRACY! And that is what we believe and how we go ahead. In India, as I mentioned earlier, we have tried in the last sixty two years to institutionalize the system of democracy. That's a great achievement: Independent Election Commission in India – nobody

can question once the election is taken over by that; independent judiciary, free press, supremacy of the parliament, independent commissions like National Human Rights Commission, National Women's Commission, National Commission for Scheduled Castes (the former Untouchables and the Aborigines), and, above all, an active civil society. These are the contributing factors. We feel that over a period of time, exclusive governance will be weakened and we will have an inclusive governance. Thank you.

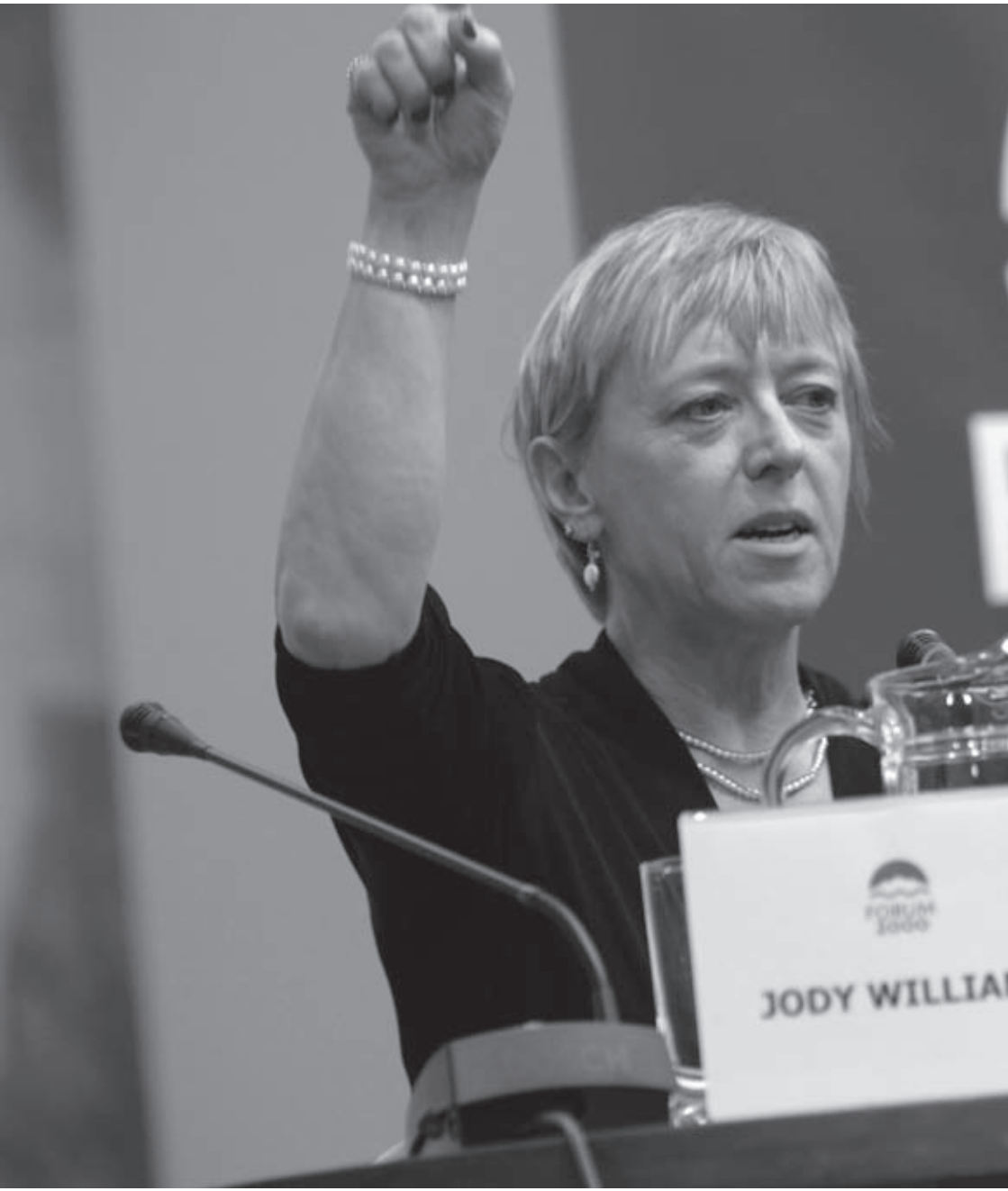
Jana Hybášková: Any further remarks from the panel?

George Andreopoulos: Very quickly, I would like to say something on behalf of much malaligned international institutions: I hope that one of the messages that we get from our discussion is that we need to remain engaged with international mechanisms and processes. Yes, it is true that there is a democratic deficit in international institutions, but international institutions are very often the only forums where the voiceless can express their viewpoints, where competing views can be challenged, where a better knowledge base can be established in order to address certain common problems. We need to stay engaged with the international community, international institutions and processes.

Khin Ohmar: Just very quickly – I just want to share that I feel encouraged to hear from all the speakers and also from President de Klerk about how elections relate to democracy. I am a Burmese who is, under the current circumstances, trying to raise awareness among the international community, United Nations, and all the governments and all sectors of the international community. We've been, myself, and also the Movement for Democracy and Rights of Ethnic Nationalities, we've been receiving some remarks and comments and even a certain push from many people saying that something is better than nothing. Elections are part of democracy and that we should go for it as the first step and then we can, actually, take that step and get to the next step! By this we feel really discouraged since we are really trying to explain what this 2008 Constitution is and how this military regime is really trying to constitutionalize their military rule and everything. But, still, some people keep making remarks that we are stubborn. That for the development of the country, for the people's sake we should go for the elections etc. I just want to say that

coming to this forum, and meeting with all of you and hearing all the speakers, the world leaders for democracy and human rights, hearing that is something very encouraging. I feel very encouraged and I have something that I will take back to my colleagues. There are still people who are with us altogether in this struggle for democracy and change in Burma. There are people who are saying that elections are not – what you call – democracy. Thank you so much for that.

Jana Hybášková: I would like to say that democracy is not the final stage: I think it needs all, it needs elections, it needs institutions, it needs checks, and checks and balances and it needs all of us, democrats to work for it, to empower it every single moment. And this is exactly why I would like to conclude this panel deeply thanking to Forum 2000 and to all of those who helped to organize us and to remind us that democracy, first of all, needs us. Thank you.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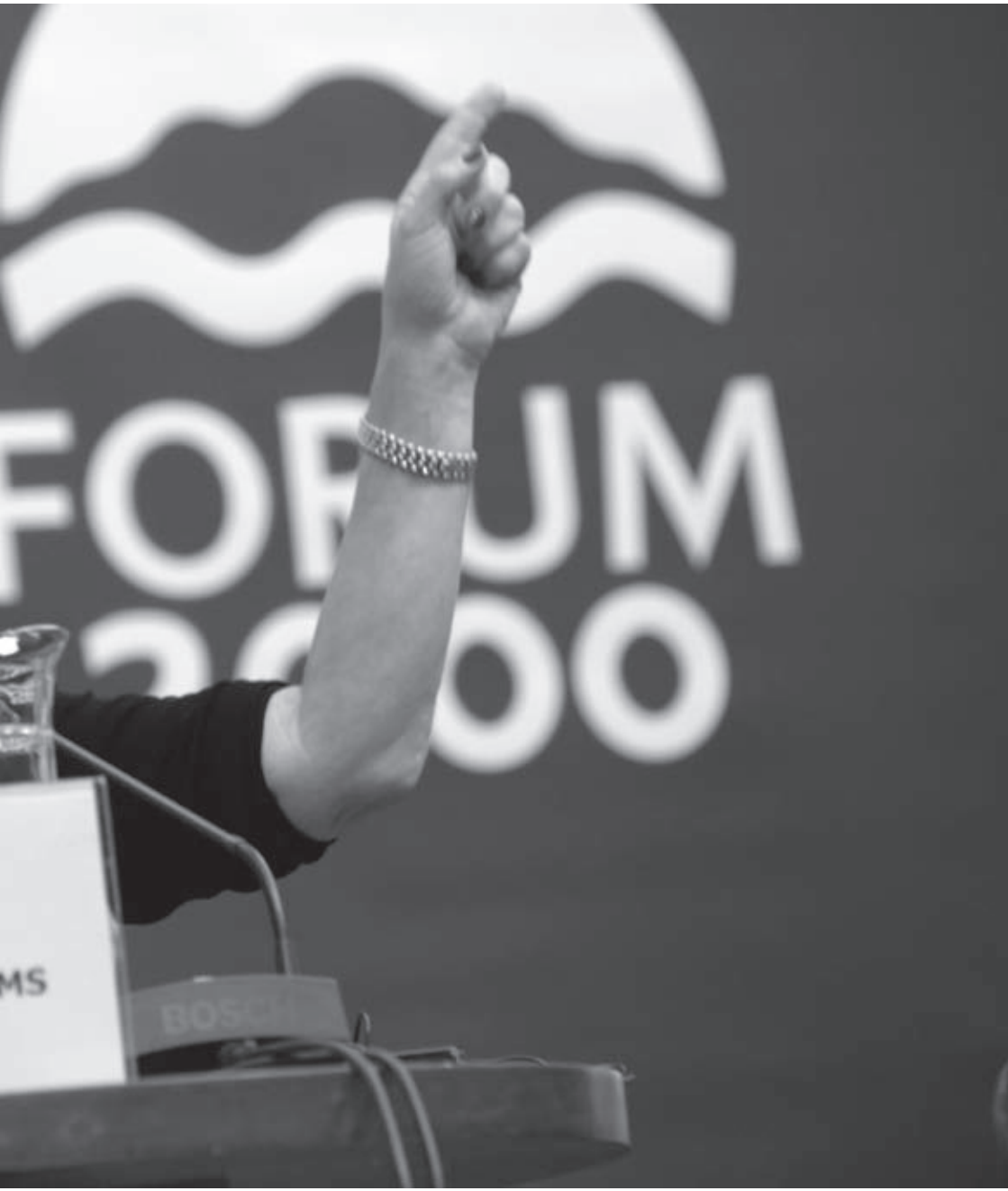
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Panel 3 (Prague Crossroads) Implementing Democracy, Innovative Development and Education

Karel Kovanda: Without further ado, let me introduce Jody Williams whom you all know. Well, if you don't, you can look up her bio in the programme. Jody, I want you to know that one of the reasons I'm proud to make your acquaintance today is that several years ago I represented the Czech Republic in Ottawa signing the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. Jody, it's all yours…

Jody Williams: It's a pleasure to be here. I was listening to both of the panels attentively, and I took a few notes as I listened to what people had to say. I found myself agreeing with a lot, particularly in the first panel. I found myself in complete agreement with the extremely cynical Mr. – I will massacre his name – the fellow from Reporters without Borders, Mr. Ménard. I found I agreed with an awful lot of what he had to say. I am too cynical as well despite the fact that I am supposed to be a great champion of peace. I am, but I am a cynical champion. I'm just going to read what I wrote down, and then I'm going to go back and make a few comments on some of it.

Everybody seems to talk about the "international community", and what it should do. I was thinking about that a lot because I worked on Burma, I work on Darfur, I worked for many years in Nicaragua and Salvador when Ronald Reagan was in charge of the United States and was interfering in the policies of Central America because we "own" it, it is "our backyard"… Not so much any more, but it was at the time… When I hear the phrase "international community", it really brings out my cynicism. When countries and people ask the international community to intervene I get very disturbed. Some of you might not know this, but at the World Sum-

mit in 2005, there was a marvellous breakthrough in terms of what the international community would do in terms of gross violation of international law, genocide, etc., etc.. It is called the Responsibility to Protect. It was unanimously agreed upon by all of the states in the United Nations, and, in brief, what the Responsibility to Protect means is that the primary responsibility for protection lies with the state. Right? It should protect its own people from war crimes, crimes against humanity, rape as a weapon of war, genocide – little things like that. And when the state is unwilling or unable to do so, it then becomes the responsibility of the international community to do that. I think many of you might have heard the phrase "never again!" Right? Never again will we watch tens of thousands or millions of people be killed by people in power. This, of course, is a result of the Holocaust. In my experience, what has been the response of Responsibility to Protect? Zero. Nothing. I worked a lot in Darfur. I led a Human Rights Council mission – I will be saying some nasty things about it. There has been no meaningful intervention in the situation in Darfur. It's appalling! The International Criminal Court has issued a warrant against al Bashir, the President of Sudan. Promptly after that, the African Union, in a show of marvellous solidarity for one of its own, said that he could travel anywhere he wanted on the continent. He would not be arrested, even though many of them were signatories to the treaty that created the International Criminal Court. A slap in the face of international law and the embracing of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and rape as tactics of war. I'm a civil society activist. I started my activism against the U.S. intervention and war in Vietnam. I've been doing this for a long time, and when I hear people talking about "international community" – it does not work in most cases. It worked a little with South Africa… I would ask people to really think about what they're talking about and what they really expect of the international community, and ask: why doesn't it do anything? Why? What are the constraints to the international community taking action when, before our eyes, people are being massacred, and we can see it on You Tube? I also found other things interesting in listening to people – particularly His Holiness – talking about the movement towards democracy and increasing human rights. I love His Holiness, we joke quite a bit, but I don't think I always agree with him and I don't on this. I think that we're in a historic and difficult time, a crossroads – not just on nuclear weapons, which I was speaking about at the UN yesterday in Mex-

ico. It is a historic crossroads where there is a struggle for democracy, there's a struggle for human rights. At the same time I believe that multinational corporations' phenomenal greed and the growing disparity between the few rich and the very many poor is getting so great that, I think, human rights are taking a bit of a beating. Certainly, under Mr. Bush in my country after 9/11 – of course, today is the anniversary – many of our rights and civil liberties were eroded. Somebody spoke about fear, using fear to manipulate the population. It's been done in my own country, one of the greatest democracies in the world. We're fighting now to get back some of the rights that we've lost over the past eight years. I don't know what democracy is and I'm from one. It isn't voting. That is a teeny, teeny, teeny, teeny part of democracy. What I believe real democracy is is accepting your responsibility as a citizen to participate on a regular basis in what you want your country to be. I do not believe that just because I vote for you I have given you my power. I voted for you because you are supposed to do what I want, and then it's my job to make sure you do, and if not, I'll get rid of you in the next elections. I also listened to President de Klerk talking about freedom in markets and smothering overregulation. I'm not a great fan of an over-consuming capitalism although I come from a country where we believe that shopping is a basic human right. We believe that freedom means you can go into a grocery store and select a cereal from an entire aisle, half the length of this room. How can you make that many different cereals out of oats, rye, wheat? Is that freedom? I seriously question what freedom is in my country, when we are manipulated into buying. Smothering overregulation? Well, when we had Mr. Bush, we got deregulation, rancid greed, Wall Street and economic collapse – that's my experience. Speaking from the point of view of civil society, having lost the little bit of money I had. My mother, who makes nothing, has less than nothing now after working her whole life, never graduating from high school. Nor did my father. I have issues with the thinking that freedom and individualism are the underpinnings of democracy. Individualism helps fuel rampant greed, which destroys democracy.

Also, there's been a lot of talking about the media and freedom of the media and freedom of the press. I believe that one hundred per cent, one hundred million per cent. I'll give you the example of my own country again: people look at it as a great place for freedom of the press. When I was growing up (I was born in 1950, by the way), there were fifty major media outlets in the United States of America. Fifty!

And those were just the big ones. That's not counting the little ones in every little village to talk about what the society in that village is doing, and the local radio stations. There were fifty. Today there are five. There might now just be four, I'm not following it regularly. What have become primary news in my country are celebrities. What they do. It's also because the companies that now own media, own Hollywood, and they want you to be interested in going to their movies, buying all the stuff. I'm not sure we have freedom of media in my country, but I'm cynical, as I said. I wish I weren't, but I think I was born that way. Another thing about media which I observed; you can see something happening before your face. You can watch it happen. Then you go home and you watch TV. In my country that'll be Fox News, that's the major news source now across the country. Then, in the printed matter, a newspaper like USA Today because you can get it anywhere, and it's a kind of digested news. And then, if you see that over and over and over again and you hear it over and over and over again, you begin to doubt the reality you saw because the official story is telling you "no! no! no! it's this way!" When people speak about freedom of the press, I support it one million and a half per cent. But I want to know what it is today. I'll just end by commenting that people also talk about the power of civil society: I certainly believe in that. I started the landmine campaign in 1992 with a staff of one (me) and two organizations. In five years we grew to a thousand in ninety countries around the world. Civil society took the issue of landmines that nobody cared about – unless you were a victim stepping on them and dying or being amputated, mutilated – we took that issue and we made governments and militaries around the world pay attention. Because we partnered with governments, civil society, some of the UN… we actually had to take our negotiations outside the UN and we succeeded: we banned for the first time in history a conventional weapon used by virtually every fighting force in the world for about a century. It's because civil society did take action! Waiting for governments to find our solutions will never work. If we as citizens of our own countries and the world want this world to be different, we have to accept our human responsibilities, not just our human rights. I get a little tired of hearing about our human rights – I support them, I fight for them all the time, but what about our human responsibilities? I think that fits in all this! So, those were a few of my observations as I listened this morning. Thank you.

Karel Kovanda: Thank you, Jody, for your cynical, provocative and pessimistic views. It certainly helps us get things into perspective. Here's another perspective: I remember forty years ago after I left Czechoslovakia for the U.S. after the Russian invasion. People in the U.S. were telling me: "Well, we've got it almost as bad as you do." I'll leave it at that and make three comments. First of all: two housekeeping points: the honourable Petr Bratský, who was supposed to be on this panel, ends up having to be in Parliament saving the Czech Republic. I told him that that is even more useful than being here. He will catch the tail end of the debate if he can. Secondly, people were wondering about the video of the proceedings which is streaming out live and loud somewhere. As of tomorrow, it will be available on the website of Forum 2000 for those of you who want to see yourselves in living colour. Thirdly and most importantly: this morning one of the threads which Jan Urban posited in the first panel and which was running through the two debates: What can be done? This panel is dealing with Implementing Democracy, Innovative Development and Education, which is bound to – I hope – at least in part, answer the question as to what ought to be done. So, let me kick off by giving the floor to Roland Rich; he's got five minutes as every other panellist has to make his introductory remarks. Then we will engage in a spirited debate amongst ourselves here. Roland, it's all yours.

Roland Rich: Thank you very much, Karel, and thank you, Jody, for your comments. Like all speakers here, let me begin by thanking Václav Havel for the invitation. It's particularly poignant to me to accept an invitation from President Havel because, many years ago, when I was a diplomat in the Australian Foreign Service, I made representations on behalf of a dissident in Czechoslovakia – that was Václav Havel. The example of a dissident who becomes President is one that really inspires us. But for every Václav Havel and every Kim Dae-jung, we have to remember the other examples that, in fact, Khin Ohmar spoke about before. There are thousands of others that are imprisoned or sidelined or neglected. The Havel example is a wonderful one but is very exceptional. I'd like to talk today, Mr. Kovanda, generally on the topic you set – about a subject that for me is both professionally and intellectually very interesting, and it's the issue of universality of democracy. We know from Amartya Sen that by the late twentieth century, democracy had become a universal value. Everywhere in the world people thought it was a good thing, but the question of its universal

applicability wasn't really considered. In Asia, we really have, I believe, the strongest articulation of other concepts. And so, if you like, it is in Asia where we have a challenge to the universality of democracy. In the Pacific islands, for example, there is a very famous example from Fiji where they describe democracy in a very backhanded compliment: They say that democracy is a beautiful flower, but, unfortunately, it won't grow in our soil. Of course, we heard similar concepts from the tyrants who used to run Asian societies and spoke about Asian values: the Mahathirs and Suhartos of the day. A very self-serving concept of Asian values was to say that "Yes, democracy is excellent but it's for other people, not for us." In today's world, we've heard a lot about the Washington Consensus and the Washington Formula, but, as other speakers have said, there is a Beijing Formula out there, which is not capitalism and democracy, but capitalism and no democracy. This is a challenge to us.

We can easily dismiss these sorts of comments for a simple reason: they are self-serving, they are comments by incumbent autocrats, whether they are hereditary leaders in Fiji or one-party state bosses in other parts of the world. These self-serving comments keep them in office. But when we hear comments like this from highly respected academics, we have to think through the issues. There are two academics I want to mention today, who I admire tremendously. Two excellent anthropologists who both conclude that in Asia, in Southeast Asia in particular and in East Asia, democracy is not well-suited to their societies. Lucian W. Pye wrote a towering book on Asian societies. In "Asian Power and Politics" he basically talks about Asian politics as mimicking the family where we have a dominant father figure who has vast powers and who dispenses these to the grateful members of the family who, of course, accept the power of that dominant figure. That's one academic I want to mention.

Another one is Niels Mulder. Niels Mulder talks about two types of life in South-East Asia: there was village and family life – and that's what most people knew. Then, on the distant stage, in the capital, there was a sort of play going on. This intriguing play with princes and generals and diplomats, and the role of the individual was to stare passively at this distant play, but not to participate in it. If you accept these views of Asia from these excellent academics, you have a family analogy that basically puts Asian society in an infantile, or, at least, a juvenile role, and you have a theatre analogy which makes Asian society a passive audience, not participating in

the process. Well, these are rather depressing views of Asian society. If they are right, they would be challenges to the universal applicability of democracy. No sooner had Lucian W. Pye's book been published, however, than we saw the People Power Revolution in the Philippines. So, in 1986, the Philippine people, within a non-violent demonstration, chased away Marcos. All of a sudden, we started to see this phenomenon emerging in other parts of Asia. After Manila came the Gwangju uprising in Seoul in 1987; after Seoul in 1989, the Tiananmen Square uprising in Beijing; then in 1990 on the streets of Rangoon; in 1992 in Bangkok, trying to stop a general from taking power; in 1998 in Jakarta at Trisakti University, and the beginning of the process that chased Suharto from power; and, of course, in 1998, in Merdeka Square in Kuala Lumpur in support of Anwar Ibrahim. These don't look to me like passive observers. They don't look like people who feel they have no role in the governance of their society. They're not behaving like well-behaved children. They're behaving like people who want to have a say in who their rulers are. That's one response, I think, to the Pye and Mulder criticisms of Asian society. But I think we have to go beyond these explosions and try to look at what's feeding these explosions: not just the volcanoes, but the bubbling lava underneath. To that I return to a theme that many others have spoken about; and that is civil society. Because not only is civil society independent of governments (an important asset that most people focus on), but, from an Asian perspective, for me the more important facet is that it transcends the family. It's beyond the family. It's about people coming together for a course of action regardless of whatever caste or creed or religion or linguistic group they were born into. For me, this is a key to understanding how democracy functions in these societies. Let me give you some figures that, unfortunately, date to 2000, and, I'm sure in ten years they would have grown – this is the number of NGOs in half a dozen countries in Asia: Indonesia 200,000 NGOs, the Philippines 100,000 NGOs, Japan 70,000, South Korea 20,000, Thailand 20,000, Taiwan 15,000 NGOs. Again, this is negating that view of Asian peoples as passive, obedient and not wanting to be involved in their own societies. Clearly, what we have is, through the civil society movement in Asia, the development of a culture of democracy, the development of accepting the responsibility of being involved in governance, accepting the need to participate, not to be a passive observer of the situation. We see this happening throughout Asian society where NGOs are allowed to op-

erate. Of course, Vietnam is one country where they are not allowed to operate; Burma is another. So, where they are allowed to operate, we see this energy to associate. Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, with a little bit of propaganda. I am the head of the United Nations Democracy Fund. We are a fund that actually believes in civil society. We receive contributions from governments, and we make grants to NGOs all around the world to deliver projects that support democratisation in their country. In this little way, we are trying, in one sense, to move the UN a little bit away from its current format of only dealing with governments, to try to bring the UN much closer to the people through the civil society movement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Karel Kovanda: Roland, thank you very much, and thank you for including your plug for one little aspect of the UN system which has been maligned by many. What's the current popular phrase: "green shoot of hope" or something like that? There you go. OK. Maran Turner was talking earlier today about Vietnam, and here we have Hoat who knows it inside and out, and when I mean "inside", I mean inside the prisons of Vietnam.

Doan Viet Hoat: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The first thing I want to say is that this is the fourth time I have come to the Czech Republic. Formerly, Czechoslovakia was a communist country. When I was still in jail, I was so happy that things were happening at that time that helped the Czech people to become a democratic society. I think today is a very good chance for all of us together here, because the organizers have assembled not only activists but also scholars. Together we can discuss how we make democracy work in a country that is already democratic, but we can also discuss about how we can bring democracy to countries like Vietnam, Burma, China and Tibet. In our case, in Vietnam, it was a communist country when Czechoslovakia became a democracy and it still is. Today I want to follow up on what other speakers have spoken about: the role of civil society, for example, the balance between representation and participation, between inclusive and exclusive governance. Those are very important issues. What I want to discuss today in the very short time that I have is transformation of a country like Vietnam into democracy. Now, Vietnam is different from, say, Burma. Vietnam has changed from an old-style communist country to a new-style communist country. It still is a communist regime, it still is authoritarian but

it is a little bit freer and it is economically freer. Now, how to transform that into a democracy? That's what we, Vietnamese activists and scholars, are concerned with. We have a lot of debates, discussions, and we have talked about values, about Asian values, about Western values, about communists and non-communists, about how we can transform a country that has accepted economic renovation and has not accepted political and cultural freedom for its people. And this is what I want to say: in order to transform Vietnam, the first thing is that we have to convince many people, even Vietnamese activists, especially, in the Vietnamese communities overseas. We have to convince them to accept the formula of transformation, democratic transformation. We cannot overthrow the communist government, that's impossible because the communist regime is much better than other authoritarian governments in controlling the people. They have experience of manipulating the people. A popular movement against them cannot exist and develop and that's exactly what's happening now in Vietnam. There are a lot of dissidents and the regime detains many of them. Hundreds are imprisoned. Outside the prison, in society, people are complaining, people are frustrated – the frustrations are very high, but they cannot form a movement. Now, how can we build a movement? That's the thing that I want to discuss. I have proposed what I call a three stage scenario and a five step roadmap to democracy, and a new Vietnam for the present Vietnam. The first stage in the scenario has already happened. It began in 1986 when Vietnam accepted the new economic policy programme – Renovation – as we call it. Many other scholars around the world call it the "First Renovation". What Vietnam is nearing now is the second renovation. The first renovation was about economy. Today, because of that renovation, people have more freedom to do business, and that's why Vietnam has become better off economically and financially. And why? Because people have more freedom. The second renovation or the second step or the second stage of this scenario is renovation in culture and political renovation. That means more freedom for the people, culturally and politically. By culturally and politically, we mean a civil society, an independent civil society. Independent from the government. Not against the government yet, but not dependent on it. Now, in Vietnam, the people are not dependent on the government economically and financially. Ten years ago, twenty years ago, they were dependent on the government, for rations, for food, for clothes, for everything, even housing. Now they are independent.

They don't care what the government does: they can get food, they can get clothes for themselves. With their own money. Consumer power is now very strong in Vietnam thanks to the first renovation. People have more money now, they can buy anything they want to. The challenge now in Vietnam is to have better products, better production, and better governance. In order to have that, we have to move to the second innovation or the second stage in the scenario, that is: opening up and letting the people have more freedom of assembly, free press, freedom of expression. That's exactly what the dissidents are now demanding in Vietnam peacefully, non-violently. The government, the Party, is now in a very difficult position. They have opened up the country but they have not decided to open up the people, society. That means the country is open internationally, and even in dialogue with the American government, its former enemy. And yet they have not accepted a dialogue with the people inside the country who disagree with the government and the Party. This is exactly what we are pressing for: we are pressing for the second stage in our scenario. In order to move to the second stage and to the third stage we propose a five step roadmap towards more dialogue between the communists and non-communists, political activists and civil society activists. Now in Vietnam, they do not allow independent NGOs yet. So we are pressing for independent NGOs. By independent, we mean the NGOs not created by the government and the Party. Even the Church, the Buddhist church, for example, they allow the official Buddhist Church, but they do not allow the Unified Buddhist Church. The latter is not recognized by the government. It is not allowed to be active. In fact, the highest leader of the Buddhist Church in Vietnam today is under house arrest. He was eighty years old and he was arrested in his own temple. He cannot leave the temple, and the Unified Buddhist Church cannot hold public meetings etc. What we are pressing for are independent organisations and to have those organisations enter a dialogue with other organisations organised by the government. What I am proposing is a peaceful transformation from the present situation to greater freedom and democracy. By doing this, I want to consider what we have been discussing today about a new way of changing a country like China or Vietnam. Vietnam is still a communist country. It is an authoritarian and communist regime. It accepts economic development but has not accepted political and cultural liberalisation. This transformation is not my idea, but the ideas of many scholars about how a coun-

try can move from communist dictatorship to a freer, developed, more democratic and humane society and country. Democratic transformation presupposes the development of civil society and a dialogue between the government and people who do not agree with the government, both inside Vietnam and outside Vietnam. We have a very strong, very healthy and quite rich Vietnamese community overseas – even here in the Czech Republic. We have about thirty or forty thousand Vietnamese here, and they know what freedom is, and they can send money back home, and they help people inside Vietnam. That's why the Vietnamese people inside the country now have more financial power. What they need now is to have a greater voice and greater political and cultural power – this is transformation. In order to do that we need international – not intervention – but support. International organisations like the UN, the High Commission or conferences like this are very important. Not only for people like myself: when we were in jail, we were supported by the international community and they had to release us because of the international intervention, including intervention by the Czech government, at that time a very new democratic government. As the regime is still in control I'm very happy that the Czech government is still continuing to support the movement inside Vietnam, China, Burma and Tibet. International intervention is very, very important, especially for those who are in jail, who are suppressed. They have no other voices, so conferences like this give them the chance to speak up. I'm very honoured and happy to represent them and to bring their voices here to you. I urge you to support the transformation process in Vietnam and to pressure the Vietnamese government to open up to their own people and to start a dialogue with them. Thank you very much, thank you.

Karel Kovanda: Hoat, if this panel is talking about implementing democracy, I think you are right on target in explaining to us how you and your colleagues believe that democracy ought to be implemented by means of a transformation formula in your country. Maybe I'll get back to that after the first round in which I would now invite Maureen to take the floor. I think we've got this extreme privilege so far that at every panel we've got somebody talking about Burma or representing Burma or being Burmese. Go right ahead, Maureen.

Maureen Aung-Thwin: Thank you very much. This is the only country where you can overdose on Burma, and I want to thank Forum 2000 for inviting us. Especially for His Holiness the Dalai Lama being here, who is the source of hope for Burma and Aung San Suu Kyi, your sister Laureate. I want to remind those who don't know or don't remember that President Václav Havel gave up his Nobel Prize that he should have got in '91 for Aung San Suu Kyi. He withdrew his nomination and said "We've got our freedom, they haven't got theirs yet, and they need it more." Thank you very much for the Czechs and some of the balances, for being there for us for so long. I wasn't sure what I was supposed to talk about, so I thought I would say a few words about the challenges of implementing democracy since I work for a foundation that's been trying to do that for, oh, a long time now. I don't know what innovative development is, so I won't say anything on that and I'll say just a few words about education. These are the problems I don't have any answers for: what do you do when you are not a mature democracy when even a mature democracy like India – as George was saying – has all those problems? I want to make a little point about the Indian independent judiciary, about the Indian justice system. There are people who have been in jail in India for over thirty years. You know that you can die before your case has come up. In the world's largest democracy. What do you do when you are a neophyte democracy? We thought that Thailand was one of the shining examples of democracy. Then suddenly, a few years ago, Mr. Thaksin Shinawatra, who had basically bought his party, ran and won with a landslide. It was a legitimate victory. The problem was that he also bought the judiciary who should have disqualified his candidacy. Once you get the ball rolling, then what do you do? He won two landslides. As you know, he is the Berlusconi of Asia, he basically has the right and the people who voted for him support him because he's very media savvy. Right now, Thailand is in turmoil. We also deal with South-East Asia. We don't quite know what to do there, because they are using undemocratic ways. The people power that Roland talked about, the sort of what you call the non-violent coup that they used to bring Thaksin down, that wasn't a democratic way. We were glad to see him go, but it was not a democratic way to do it. It's very difficult to answer such questions. We are worried about resurging authoritarianism. Again, back to people power. When you look at comparative people power, of all those people power rallies, the one that sort of succeeded is Indonesia. If

Monsieur Ménard is still in the audience, there is your Muslim democracy, the world's largest one and the fifth largest country, so it's a pretty big democracy. The financial crisis that Jody referred to… I don't know that deregulation was a crony capitalism. Where was that American free press? You know, the people who are running the big bale-out, who do they all work for? For the big companies. Where it affects us is the Asian way, not only Asian values. The Vietnam model, the China model, the Singapore model actually look pretty odd to many Asian non-democracies. Even the Burmese Junta says "we are going to have a disciplined democracy." So, you know, it actually works in their favour. One of the things that we are concerned about is the flow of resources, of, transparency and accountability of government. Our foundation has started a revenue watch. We have discovered that the more resources a country has, the less democracy there actually is in such a country. Norway excluded: Norway is just its own little country and it is already democratic, so this model how to spend its petroleum fund is difficult to follow for countries, like East Timor, that are not yet developed democratically. I have to say something about Lucian Pye. Lucian Pye, actually, blamed the infantilism of Burmese men for all the problems of Burma. I think I would probably agree. Education in Burma, in the late forties right after the war and in the fifties was the shining example. Everybody wanted to go to Burmese universities. Teachers wanted to teach in Burma. Women got their vote in the twenties. A high literacy rate… The current regime is, actually, anti-education… it is like: they should be taken to the International Criminal Court for that. I think it's a type of genocide. Even communist countries believe in education.

So, is there hope? I think there is because we saw that there was a Burmese civil society during cyclone Nargis. During the monks' uprising, there were people who took care of people… they just came out of the woodwork… It's very difficult to be a dictatorship in the twenty-first century. That's why I hope, with the internet, with the porous borders, these generals really don't have a chance in the long run. The regime's moral erosion that you were talking about (to George Andreopoulos) – the regime is already morally eroded by the 2007 Monk Uprising and its crushing of that. You are not supposed to step on the shadow of a monk in Burma! So, can you imagine touching him? Much less beating him up or killing him! I think that the trauma has been internalized. Some think "oh, it's gone." No, it's not gone. You have to take my word for it. I think it's the beginning

of the end. Parts of the fissures we've been waiting for in this supposedly monolithic regime: they're all there. In recent months – if you've been following Burmese news, lots of confidential memos of high regime officials visiting North Korea, Iran, China, India were leaked. This is freaking them out… the release of photographs of these caves they built up near Naypyidaw, the new capital, that you can fit trucks into. I have some hope because the supreme general, Than Shwe, asked the Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono when they had a private talk: "What did you do with Suharto. Is he in jail?" This man is worried about the ICC. So, go, Zoya! That's all I can say. Even if it looks impossible, the threat (of ICC and jail) is almost as good as putting him in there. I just want to make a comment about Singapore's banks. There are ways that you can proxy the international community. If you can't get at the regime directly, what you can get at are their trading partners. A news report just two days ago states that Singapore has two banks that have been money-laundering (for Burma). There's a report on it by Earth Rights International. Singapore is not going to give up its big trading partner to trade with this regime. So there is its vulnerability. Lastly, for Forum 2000: I think we must talk to the enemy, we must talk to them, there is no way out of this. We can't just say: "We're good, they're bad, they must change!" No, we have to talk to them, it has to be a slow transition like His Holiness said, and it has to begin with a negotiated peace. Thank you.

Karel Kovanda: Thank you very much, Maureen. You didn't talk about Burma as much as you could have, but I appreciate the fact that you put it into a broader southeast Asian context, which is always helpful. Professor Blanka, who's got an unpronounceable last name – for non-Czechs at least. So I won't even tell you how to pronounce it…

Blanka Knotková-Čapková: Good afternoon. I would say that many people in Europe look upon Asia as a space that is completely different to ours. That is exotic or, perhaps, even underdeveloped. This is a very arrogant standpoint. What does "development" mean? It has many sides, of course. As far as the differences are concerned, I would like to focus here on areas and experiences that may be similar, and where we can perhaps inspire each other. My original specialisation was Indian Studies, Bengali Studies, to be precise. Since

1990, I have been to India eleven times, not only doing research or lecturing, but also living in Indian families. That is my sort of experience. Of course, one should live there for a much longer period to be able to say something that could be generalised. I'm not going to do that. But what I found is a sort of experience that we can perhaps share. It is the experience of the powerless in the framework of the power discourse. The Indians often characterise their present search for identity as a sort of post-colonial identity. We can say that perhaps our identity and our present situation is also a sort of post-colonial one or, at least, a post-totalitarian one. So, that means that the experience of power was of the underside of power, trying to stand against power, trying to remove the power that was alienated from the people. This is one side. How does it influence people if they have the experience of the powerless? I would say that it is a sort of "trying to pretend", not to be open. In Czech society, what is very striking is that many words have lost their original meaning: words not only like "democracy", but like "progress", like "solidarity", like "peace" and so on. The reason is that these words, and even the ideas and the meanings behind them were misused by the communists' propaganda. If you speak now about solidarity with other countries or about equality or about the voice of people, many people laugh at it, especially people of my generation and the generations around. Not so much the youngest ones, but our generation. There is quite a widespread atmosphere of nihilism, of scepticism and disbelief... I am not talking about religious belief. No. But about belief in the meaning of civic activism as Jody Williams spoke about it, and about responsibilities and about social activism. This is different in India: there I found a different side or expression of pretending. For example, in language policy; English is the lingua franca in India. My specialisation was Bengali studies as I said, and Bengalese are, well, great patriots, let's put it like that. In public places, in many speeches, I have often heard that Bengali should be made a medium of education, of literature, of political communication, etc. But the people who say that in public usually send their children to English schools. That's very understandable, of course, but there is a sort of problem inside. Another practical example: let's say that I meet a male colleague from the university, he invites me to his home, we are sitting face-to-face and discussing issues of gender equality. This is a theoretical discussion, but his wife is serving us, is jumping around us, and does not even eat with us. This is another side of pretending. There

are of course, different and specific cultural and social contexts here in the Czech Republic and in India, but I think that pretending is a common feature. What I would like to end with is a way in which we can learn from educated Indian people and from their social activism. Another practical example… excuse me, I am a teacher, so it is probably professional deformation to give practical examples: once in India I saw the celebrations of International Women's Day; it was at one of Calcutta´s universities, Jadavpur University. In former communist Czechoslovakia, International Women's Day was another form of pretence and of misuse. It was a holiday that was completely alienated from women. In many workplaces, the women usually got one rose and were sent home where they prepared dinner while the men stayed in the workplace and they drank, and drank, and drank. If you talk about International Women's Day here, usually people laugh again or consider you to be a communist. In fact, it is dangerous in society to talk about it, because then people think you must be a supporter of the previous regime. The experience in India was really fascinating. It really was a celebration from the bottom up, and this is the core of democracy – being engaged, being interested. It was not just several seminars at the university where writers, social activists and academics came and spoke. What is important, and what I would like to emphasise, is that about one third of the audience was male, which would not happen here in the Czech Republic. Apart from that, there were many students – not only gatherings, but student happenings, a student theatre. It was a very joyful event that I, in fact saw for the first time in my life, and I understood it as evidence that how one approaches a certain word, a certain expression, and even a certain holiday is determined by the social and political situation. What was typical of that experience was the clear belief and active participation. The belief in progress, perhaps, whatever it means, but in the meaning of doing things… in speaking about discrimination and anti-discriminative actions. I think this is where, perhaps, we can be inspired by India.

Karel Kovanda: Well, thank you very much for that. For those of you who were curious how to pronounce your last name, it's Knotková-Čapková. Try to repeat after me! What I found intriguing about what Blanka was saying is that the differences across cultures of what some word means, what some expression means, what some custom means, what some holiday means and how it's practiced, implies that

the transferability of experiences and of languages is not automatic – it must always be examined more carefully. It reminds me of a Czech saying that when two people do the same thing, it's not always the same thing. My last speaker for the time being will be Kanak. We already have heard a bit about Nepal from Martin Hála during the previous session. Now, tell us, Kanak, that Martin was completely wrong and that Nepal is completely different from what we heard in the presentation earlier today.

Kanak Mani Dixit: Well, I think I'll travel a little further than Nepal in my presentation, but, certainly, it will be based on the experience of Nepal that I have gathered over the last few years. Distinguished friends, I will try to stay with the topics of Implementing Democracy, Innovative Development and Education as best I understand these terms. I'll divide my five-minute presentation into three parts. It's really a privilege to be here in the bastion, I come to realize, of classical liberal democracy that the Czech Republic has evolved into with Prague as its capital. It's interesting that those who have a long experience of democracy have the privilege of cynicism. Those who are just starting to experience it, strive for it. You've got to get to the other side and then you get into the position of becoming a cynic. I think it's important to keep in mind that there is a striving for democracy. It is a never-ending project, including the so-called most advanced countries of the world. I refer to the suggestion made earlier about how Muslim societies may not be democratic, or are almost a challenge to democracy. I would point to one country that is Muslim and that is democratic. I would suggest that that denigrates the striving nature of democratic experience. If you look at India, India is the second largest Muslim country in the world, even though Muslims are a minority. Does that mean that the Muslims of India do not participate in democracy? What about South Asia as a whole, which probably gives you 440 to 450 million people of the Islamic faith? And what does that make of the experience of the Bangladeshi and the Pakistani and the Indian and the Sri Lankan constantly knowing and wanting democracy? I believe that democracy is mostly to be treasured in the striving, and with that little bit of experience, let me come back to Czechoslovakia and your Velvet Revolution. I think the most recent equivalent in Asia of the Velvet Revolution comes from my country, Nepal. It was not mentioned by Mr. Rich in his line-up of people's movements because he spoke essentially about South-East Asia. If you look at Asia

as a whole, 2006 was what we call in Nepal the Jana Andolan, that means, the People's Movement of the years 2062-63. This in the Gregorian Calendar is April 2006, and that was when a largely undereducated – some would say illiterate – population came out in their millions. It came out to show that you do not need to have a highly sophisticated education to understand the needs of peace and democracy and to push back the Maoist revolution and to push back an autocratic king. This is what the people of Nepal proved to themselves and to the world: democracy is sacrosanct! We want it! And we will be cynical afterwards… For me, in particular, going through the post-transitional catharsis, as we are in Nepal, where there is such a lot of – if I might use the term donor-induced cynicism of our processes – it is important to get more feedback from our Czech friends than from people from across the Atlantic or from Western Europe. That is because you have so much more experience with autocracy of the right-wing kind and of the radical left kind. It seems to us in Nepal that one needs to have experience of both types of autocracy before we can settle down to what is the kind of democracy that we are going to fashion. A lot of the time, there is a willingness to criticise right-wing autocracy, but to be a little more lenient of the excesses of the radical left. This is where, at least, people like me from a country of the south can get arguments about democracy from a country such as the Czech Republic. I would say I am presently at the stage in my life where I have the simplest and most simplistic understanding of democracy. That is where we begin and the sophisticated learnings come later as we build the processes and as we build the institutions of democracy. Democracy is rather boring, and I would like Nepal to remain a boring country, if that is what is required. Because what does democracy do? It saves lives, it brings stability, and it brings economic growth. I will not go into the argument made for China and Vietnam about autocratic-totalitarian regimes and their high economic growth. The implication of that argument is that first you have to have a cultural revolution, millions have to die, and then your economy flowers without democracy. If that is the prescription for the rest of the world, I rest my case. However, I would say that if we do not want to go the way of the Cultural Revolution, then day-to-day democracy, building institutions, building democracy and building the economy so that you bring progress is the way to go. This is probably the way we should go in Nepal. Nepal right now is not on the international radar screen because we're going through a complex peace-building and constitution-making exercise. It is good not

to be on the international radar screen. Some of my friends in Nepal, in Kathmandu, think perhaps about how Xinjiang is getting all the attention. So is Burma, so is Tibet. I think that is because of the tragedies in those respective regions. There are the weaknesses of the Western media which we all ingest, so we do not know about the tragedies in Darfur and elsewhere, because perhaps Western media is less interested than it should be. I believe that a country that is working out its own problems, democratically, from the inside, does not build a high international profile, and that is exactly where we want to be. By being there, we help out those regions and those countries that, unfortunately, have a tragic international profile like Xinjiang and Burma, and we talked about Tibet all morning.

I would move on now therefore to talk about development. What does democracy do for us? It gives us, as I suggested, opportunities to develop. What do we mean by innovative development, which is what we are asked to speak about? In my experience, in my country, innovation and development come from making them participatory. That participation comes from democracy, not as a word that is written on a wall and then forgotten, but democracy that goes right to the grassroots. What the people of Nepal have shown is that if you give them political stability – it has been very rare that they've had a period of political stability – if you give them peace, then the genius of the people just moves ahead, moves society ahead. Nepal achieved democracy in 1990 for the first time and once again in 2006. From 1990 to 2002 the political parties got lambasted. There is a particular proclivity in the middle classes of South Asia to denigrate the political parties so much that people lose faith in pluralism. In Nepal, too, there was an attempt to denigrate the political parties. I will tolerate the denigration as long as they don't forget that pluralism took us ahead. What did it do for us? It gave us participatory development, because in the long years of royal autocratic rule until 1990, we talked, we mouthed the word "development", but we never absorbed its meaning. It was only after the people got a voice to challenge authority through democracy, from the national legislature to the villages. That is when development became participatory. That is when it became more than a word. Development in the last six decades has become an automated word. You could forget what the goal of development is, because it has become a career for people, not an activist endeavour. When the term "development" is used and overused by autocracies and oligarchies and democracies

through a very non-inclusive, donor-funded process, you must wake up and say "what do we mean by development?" We mean social and economic progress. How do you get social and economic progress? I rest my case by saying just that the Nepali experience is not about how much money you raise from the international community. It is how much spark you can give to the people's own ability to decide things for themselves through debate in parliament, through debate and through discussion in a democratic process. Finally, if we talk about development, how can we inject that into education? I would like to essentially end by saying that education too is seen as part and parcel of development but, once again, we are in the process of trying to build schools where there are none, bringing teachers when you need teachers, but never talking about quality education for the masses. There is an automatic reliance on private schools for the elites and government schools for the masses. If you ask me what is the one line that I would suggest for developing our societies in the South, and, I presume, in the North, it is: how can you bring education to the mass public? How can you get over this class centralism where there is a mental state where everybody agrees that there has to be education for the masses, but nobody does anything to provide quality to the masses? There is a lot of focus on eradicating poverty, but there is almost no focus on accessing the intellect. Do not people all over, at the mass level, have the right to use their intellect, to enhance their knowledge base? I believe that in the next realm of development in the decades ahead, we must get back to the basics, and not just mouth the word "education" but to see how you cannot make the public educated enough that they become – each and every person – critical thinkers. I think that is what I have to say – from democracy to development, to education. This is how I see the progress. Without democracy, no education. Thank you.

Karel Kovanda: Kanak, that was another fascinating contribution to our debate here today, and I want to sum up a little bit, put into one line of argument the stuff that I've been hearing here, starting with Jody perhaps, who described herself not as a pessimist and a cynic, but as an optimistic pessimist. Roland started by giving examples of people power, so to speak, people uprisings, revolutions, attempts at uprisings suppressed in a couple of places (Kanak added Nepal to those). Maureen responded, as I would have, to Robert Ménard's point from this morning that there is no Muslim country that is

a democracy, by reminding us of Indonesia. It isn't a democracy of 80 years' standing and it has limitations without a doubt, but it is a Muslim democracy and the largest Muslim country in the world. Kanak, sort of, broadened it by pointing to South Asia. One can add Bangladesh, and he mentioned India, and, of course, one can add Turkey to the list of Muslim democracies. What that does to the notion that Muslim societies can't be democratic is for you to figure out. I was very impressed by Hoat's description of Vietnam's development when he talked about it being today a new-style communist country. I'm quoting him, I hope, exactly. "A little bit freer…" Listen to that! A little bit freer. Is that good or bad? Would it be better perhaps if Vietnam had stayed as an old-style communist country, and, perhaps, the fires of discontent would be stoked further? I leave that to you to reflect on. Hoat continues with the need to accept a formula for transformation, a peaceable transformation – as I gathered him – and he's got a recipe, he's got steps, steps that he proposes be taken. Hoat will, no doubt, understand Blanka's concerns about the screwing-up of language by an authoritarian regime. In many ways, I think it is similar in former Czechoslovakia as in communist Vietnam, and which others of us who have that experience know from communist China. Here is the question that comes… and this is tied, actually, with education, the point which Kanak made very eloquently. Here comes a question that I'm asking myself, and I'm asking the panellists – whoever who wants to pick it up. Is Hoat's proposal, concept… never mind the specific proposal of the three stages and the five steps… is Hoat's concept of a peaceful transformation something that could be thought about in the context of the other troubled areas of Asia that we have been talking about today? Is it conceivable to think about that in the case of Burma? If not today, then five years from now, and in the context of this awful referendum and the awful elections that are planned for next year? Are we all conscious of the inevitable emergence of unintended consequences? Something that we know from our history: so, they changed the General-Secretary of the Party, who cares? And last! You know, the floodgates of 1968 burst wide open. These are the questions I'm posing to the panel. I'm not sure who wants to take it up. Anybody is welcome.

Kanak Mani Dixit: I can only answer the question with reference to my country – a peaceful transformation, not a calibrated transformation. The latter would imply social engineering. A peaceful step-by-

step transformation without seeking "revolution" which can be so populist and so diversionary. Revolutions can kill their own children, whereas if you look quickly at Nepal, the transformation was led by the political parties. The very political parties that are so denigrated by all and sundry and they're not going to get the Nobel Peace Prize. What did they do? They reached out to a brutal revolutionary force, the Communist Party of Nepal – the Maoists. There had been a conflict. Ten years of conflict, which was not an easy situation. It was not a token conflict: the political parties egged on by the civil society reached out and brought in the Maoists. The Maoists are in the process of transformation now. It is messy because peaceful transformation is endlessly messy. Then you've got the king. Challenged, he left the palace with a press conference. I would suggest this was a peaceful transformation led by the political process, supported by a civil society. What is the requirement for this? Not to be cynical of the political process and the democratic institutions.

Karel Kovanda: Thank you very much, Kanak. I give the floor to Roland and then I give it to Hoat.

Roland Rich: Thank you very much, Karel. You know, the question you pose is also a question from a policymaker's perspective about ostracism or engagement. Do you impose sanctions or do you try to deal with the regimes? I think Monsieur Ménard this morning also made the distinction that in the Cold War, we opposed the Soviet Union without engaging greatly with it economically, whereas with China, we are very strongly engaged in a sort of a symbiotic economic relationship. I'd like to look at this issue through the lens that His Holiness put to us this morning. That democracy has to come from the people. It seems to me that any degree of freedom that the people have is good: if it's economic freedom and no political freedom, obviously that's not good enough, but it's better than no freedom at all. What we see in China is people developing with a lot of economic freedom, a little bit of associated freedom, very little political freedom below the level of the commune elections, but, surely, this little bit of freedom is contributing to their democratic culture. Ultimately we will see this little bit of freedom develop as people will demand more freedom. I'm sure people with economic freedom will ultimately demand political freedom. They go hand-in-hand, and people will see that they can't really have one ultimately without the other.

Doan Viet Hoat: Thank you, Chairman. This is a good opportunity for me to explore a little bit more the transformational idea. First, I want to add a word on the transformation: it's not only peaceful, but it must be democratic. That means: a democratic transformation. Vietnam now accepts renovation – it's a sort of transformation, it gives more freedom, economic freedom, back to the people. Now, economic freedom is very good. That's the first step in the three stages that I propose. The first stage is economic freedom. The second stage is cultural, informational, educational freedom. This is very important. Now Vietnam is at this second stage. And that's why – if you observe or follow the news on Vietnam, the government and the Party detained new prisoners, they are not political prisoners, they are newsmen, they are bloggers, they are people who are demanding freedom of information, of expression. This is very important. I call it the second stage in the three stages. The last stage is coming, and with our pressure, it will come faster than the Communist party wants. The Communist party knows that they have to open up, but they want to slow it down. Our work is to speed it up towards more freedom for the people. The people now in Vietnam are better off, because they have more freedom. This is very important. Another thing I want to clarify is: in order to have transformation, people must be better off. I mean, better off economically, financially and educationally. Education is very important, information is very important, and that's why the internet is so important now for Vietnam and maybe for other countries too, like China. Internet: People in Vietnam, especially young people, they are using the internet. They are using their websites, their own blogs to express their ideas and that's why the government is now trying to have a law to forbid freedom of expression on the blogs. They are trying to force the bloggers to follow some kind of rules, and that's why recently they detained three bloggers, because those bloggers expressed the idea of freedom. This is very interesting, too: the government is anti-Chinese. You'll know this if you follow the news now: China is a problem for Vietnam now because of the claims in the South China Sea. China claims all the islands there which belong to Vietnam. I think this is what I wanted to elaborate on and to clarify about transformation.

Karel Kovanda: Thank you very much. Maureen?

Maureen Aung-Thwin: Real quick, though: one of the good concepts or models would be Indonesia and how they did it, but we don't have time so I'm not going to go into how. Kanak, you can't have education in a non-democracy as in a Communist state. I didn't want to talk about sanctions, but, Roland, I'm sorry. When you have a predatory state that has a stranglehold on the whole economy, which has five billion dollars in reserve and is making two billion a year, you have to have sanctions, especially, from the country that espouses democracy and you need it for your leverage to lift it when they do something. That's all.

Karel Kovanda: Thank you.

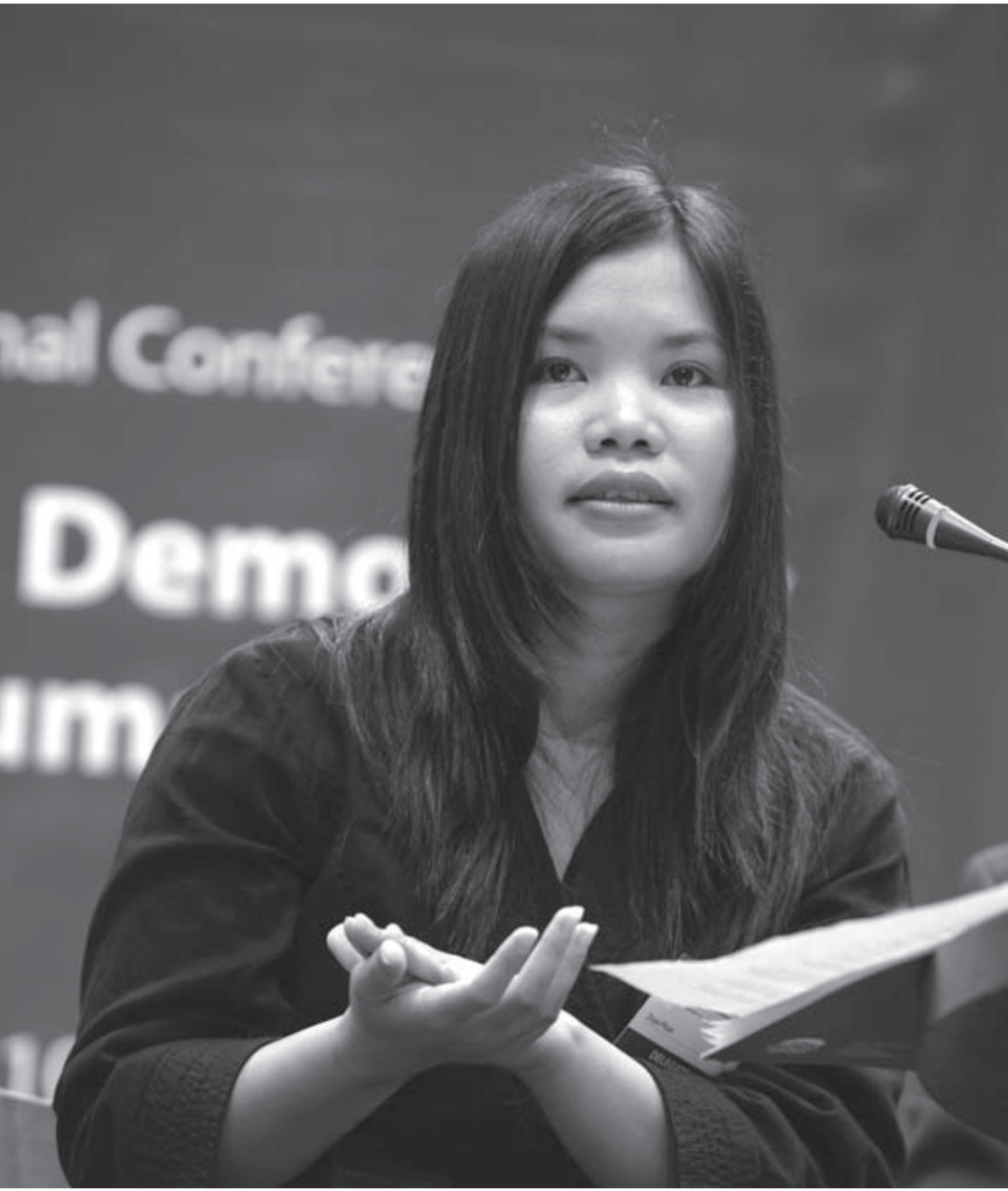
Blanka Knotková-Čapková: So, just two brief remarks based on my observation of the traps of economic development and democratic development that I have seen in India. First, it would be the social differences that are still maintained there. Since 1990, the economic development can be seen in the fantastic leaps forward of the middle classes. Unfortunately the poor have remained poor. The question is: could the country really manage to give the same economic standard to everybody? Very probably not. If the very big problem of corruption was solved, the situation would be much better. When talking about corruption, it's not just an Indian problem, but the problem of this country as well. Another brief remark. It is the conceptualisation of modernity and of development. Here, I think we could be very inspired by the writings of Partha Chatterjee who maintains that modernity does not mean and should not mean westernisation. For many people in India, it looks as if it is because there is a big process of commercialisation, and even of increasing snobbism. The question is: is this really inevitable and is there another way to approach modernisation and development?

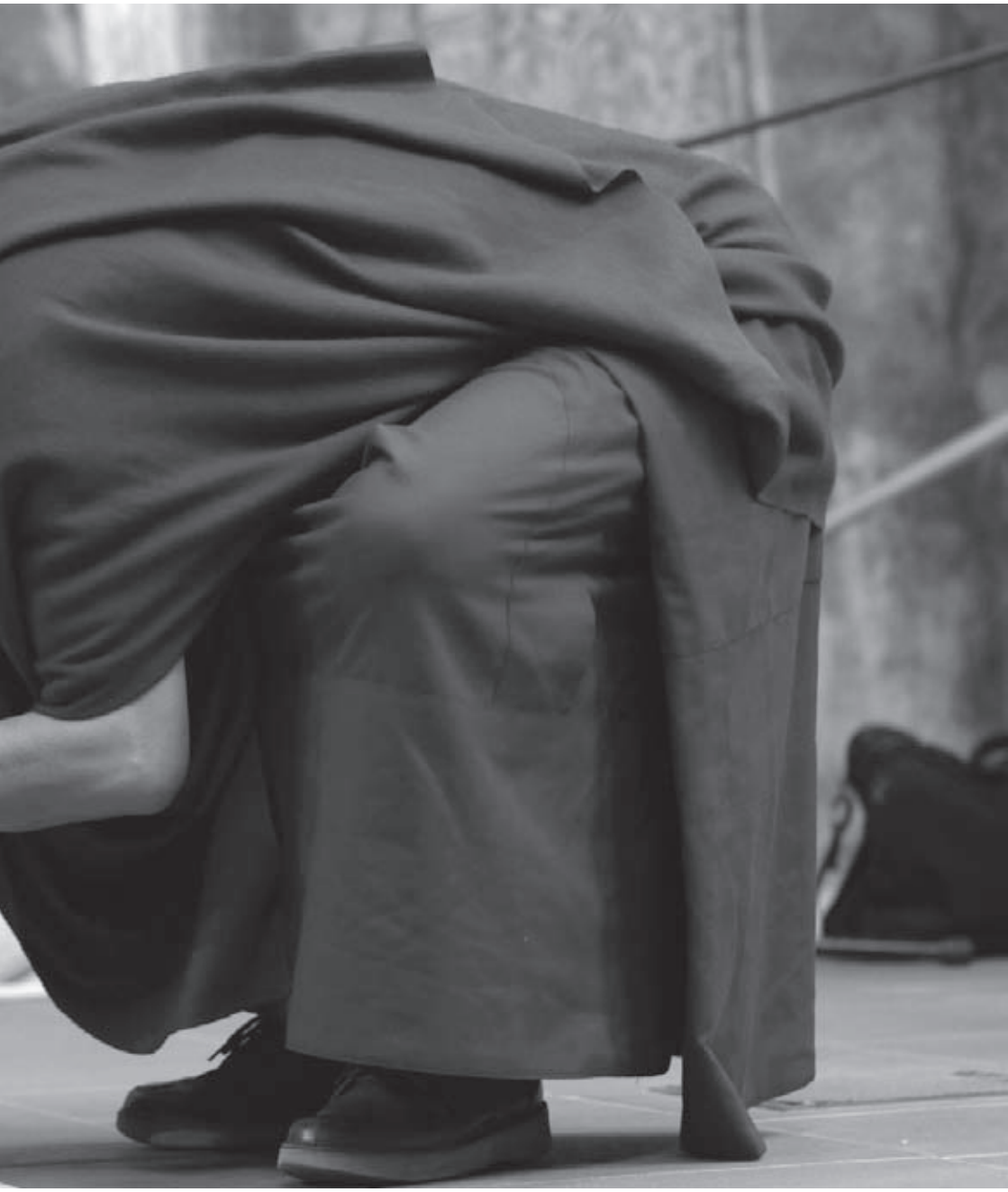
Karel Kovanda: Thank you, Blanka. Jody, bring this to a neat close.

Jody Williams: That's not my job, it's your job (laughter). Now, I just wanted to make a few comments about the things I've heard. Democracy can be boring… I disagree: when it is a vibrant, involved democracy, I don't think it's boring at all. I think that's part of the problem. When the government is not good, when political parties don't react, whether it's in a Western democracy – there are plenty of

governments in the West that don't react – it doesn't matter where it is. Democracy is vibrant when people recognize that the government is only the expression of them and works for them. I agree with you – it's a continuous work in progress, it's exciting, it's vibrant. The basis, I agree, is education. Where have I seen the most vibrant education? In the people of Burma outside of Burma, in the mountains. They're mentoring, learning about what civic involvement means and what democracy means. But not in the words that we were so cynical about. What does democracy mean? You know, to George Bush, it meant one thing. To somebody else, it means something entirely different. Where I'm inspired, what international community means to me is solidarity, it means civil societies around the world working together to transform governments so they are truly democratic. You go to Dharamsala and the education of students in Dharamsala astounds me. You know, with the limited resources there, the students are taught English, they are taught computers, and they have a knowledge of the world that puts students in my country to shame. Then, the young women of Burma, and the schools, and the backpack education, they understand that that is the root of power, and of citizen involvement and of civil society and of real democracy. Democracy is the sharing of power, the sharing of information. It is not having somebody else tell you what democracy is, but working together to develop that democracy. I do believe it's unstoppable, and I do believe that modern technology makes it harder and harder for dictatorships to stay in power. The more civil societies around the world communicate and share the same goals the better. You can do it differently – but we have to continue to do that and continue to believe that it is possible. We have to be aware that I (every one of us) have to be part of it. I can't wait for the other guy to do it! I think we can do anything in this world… that's why I am an optimistic pessimist. That's why I keep doing what I do in the world: I believe anything is possible if we all do it together.

Karel Kovanda: I would take it that this applause was to Jody, and now, put your hands together again for the whole panel with me. We are just a bit behind schedule. We'll hope to catch up. Please be back for an overdose of Nobelists on the 4th panel.





Panel 4 (Prague Crossroads) Challenges for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Asia

Paula Dobriansky: Good afternoon to all of you, I'm Paula Dobriansky. I'm the moderator of Panel number 4 which will be focused on challenges to peace, human rights and democracy in Asia. This panel is very distinguished, as you can see, because we have the esteemed Nobel Laureates, who are here, who will be imparting their wisdom and their thoughts on what are the challenges in Asia, and maybe some of the most constructive and effective ways forward. Each will make brief opening remarks. Then we will have some questions that I will pose, and then we will go to the audience for some questions. So, be thinking of some questions you would like to ask these very distinguished, esteemed Nobel Laureates. First, I would like to invite His Holiness to begin and lead us off with his remarks.

Dalai Lama: I've nothing much to say. I very much enjoy the conference. It was quite a full day of discussion, and I prefer listening to different ideas and opinions on the basis of each individual's experiences. One thing I want to share with you: at the global level or the national level or the individual family level or the personal level some problems are always there. Some challenge is always there. It is unrealistic not to face any challenges or solve all challenges – that's unrealistic. So long as we, human beings, remain here, some form of challenge, some form of difficulty will always be here. Here is my fundamental belief: many challenges or many problems are essentially man-made. They are our own, human beings' creation. Logically, those problems which humans themselves created we also have the potential or ability to reduce, if not eliminate. We should have the ability or wisdom to solve these problems. It is very, very important to maintain optimism rather than be pessimistic when we face some

challenge and can lose hope. Pessimism I think is a real failure. In spite of difficulties and obstacles and problems, we must keep our self-confidence; thus we can overcome these problems. Then, when we face problems, I think we should look at these problems more holistically. If you look just from one angle, then you cannot see the whole picture. Without knowing the real picture or the reality, your method, your effort becomes unrealistic – so we won't be very effective. In order to have a realistic, effective approach, we should know the reality. In order to know the reality, we must look from various angles. We cannot see the reality in one dimension. If seeing four dimensions or six dimensions, then there is a possibility to know the reality. That I think is important. For that reason, when we approach problems, our minds should be calm so that the best part of our brain, which can judge or look objectively, can function well. If our mind becomes too emotional or agitated, then we can't see the reality. So, the very serious challenge: our mind should be more calm – that is, I think, important. So, full stop, finished!

Paula Dobriansky: Your Holiness, your messages are always so inspirational and so uplifting and always so clear and direct. Thank you. President de Klerk.

Frederik Willem de Klerk: Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, we've come to the end of a remarkable day. I think, the subject for discussion has been chosen well, because it will really bring together the various discussions we had under different headings. I would like to start out by saying that, for more than three decades after the Communist victory, the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong had co-existed beside the China Sea. Hong Kong flourished, its economy grew at an astounding rate, and its people prospered. Just across the border, in China, the population did not prosper, the economy did not grow rapidly, and the country experienced enormous crises caused primarily by political ideologists. Yet, these were the same people, speaking the same language and sharing the same culture. What was the difference? It was not democracy – political rights under British rule were quite significantly limited in Hong Kong. Right until 1998, the territory was given the poor rating of 4 by Freedom House on a scale where 1 indicates absolute freedom and 7 absolute tyranny. The difference was not democracy. The difference was freedom – particularly economic freedom in which Hong Kong

has for several years had the highest rating in the world. Interestingly enough, freedom and democracy do not always coincide. It is quite possible to enjoy high levels of civil and economic freedoms in states that do not have democratic governments. It is equally possible for economic and civil liberties to be stifled by overregulated democracies. Economic and civil freedoms often have far more immediate advantages for ordinary people than the typical democratic freedom: the latter allows the citizens the right to make a choice every four or five years in elections in which individuals can have only the most minimal influence. Economic and civil freedoms, however, give the individuals the power to make many choices every day that have a direct impact on every aspect of their life: where they wish to work and live, how they wish to educate their children, how they decide to spend their money and their time. Such freedoms represent the ultimate level of self-determination and self-rule. In general, those societies that accord their people the highest degree of economic and civil freedoms are also the most prosperous and successful in many other areas of national endeavour as well. The essence of such freedom is that they limit the ability of the state in whatever guise to arbitrarily seize the property of its citizens or to harm their persons or to interfere with their legitimate activities. The role of the state is, in such cases, limited to the maintenance of the rule of law and to such functions and regulations that are necessary for the smooth running of the society. It was precisely because Britain and the Netherlands were the first societies to protect sizeable portions of their populations from the arbitrary power of kings and oligarchs that they were the first nations to benefit from the global mercantile revolution. That, ultimately, is why the British ruled places like Hong Kong, and the Chinese and the Indians did not rule the Isle of Wight. However, societies, ladies and gentlemen, ignore the need for democracy at their peril, and nothing in what I have said is to run down democracy: democracy is an important pillar in the whole human rights issue and the important pillar with regard to fairness and a just society. It is not possible to maintain a sophisticated and prosperous economy in the information age without freedom of information and expression. Informed citizens will inevitably be critical of the manner in which government carries out its responsibilities. It is also essential for successful governance that there should be constant and vigorous competition between parties to combat the complacence, lethargy and arrogance of office and to ensure renewal and healthy change.

These then, I believe, are factors that will affect the development of democracy and human rights in Asia. Two or three decades ago, China wisely decided to reform its system by gradually extending to its own people the economic freedoms that had worked so well in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The result has been overwhelmingly positive and has transformed the drab, repressed and regimented masses of the Mao era into the confident, colourful and creative Chinese society of today. However, the Chinese government has made no parallel move to establish genuine democratic institutions in its society, and, at the moment, it seems as if there is little prospect that it will relax the Communist Party's monopoly of power. The history of periodic and cataclysmic divisions and civil strife in Chinese society runs too deep to allow this. Nevertheless, the Beijing government will not be immune to the enormous pressures that will be created by the hundreds of millions of citizens who are rapidly entering the global information and technical economy. Wealth and information are power, and power will increasingly be in the hands of the people, whatever the Communist government does in China. The Beijing government will have to find ways of accommodating these pressures by developing its own brand of democracy and by creating new ways of ensuring that governance at all levels responds quickly and effectively to the needs of the people. There is, by no means, one single blueprint for democratic governments. The United States' model of razzmatazz and four-yearly election extravaganzas, driven by enormous budgets and advertising campaigns, may not be the best system for all people in all places. As a matter of fact, I don't think it is the best way for all people in all places. Similarly, the British system that effectively disenfranchises the fifteen to twenty percent of the population that support the LibDems also has its own idiosyncrasies. The important aspect of successful democratic systems is that they should effectively limit the power of government, and that they should make provision for genuine competition and governmental responsiveness. There are plenty of models that can theoretically accommodate these requirements. I've no doubt that Asian societies will continue to develop their own models of governance to suit their diverse cultures and circumstances. However, they would be well-advised to start with the principle of freedom under the law. That, I believe, is the foundation for the future. Asia is coming into its own again, ladies and gentlemen. In 1820, it produced 58% of world's production; this has fallen to less than 20%. It's now again in excess of 30%, and by 2030 it will

again be 52%. Asia is a lion awakening. But with the information age and with everything that goes with that, I firmly believe that democracy will grow and will even reach those areas where, at the moment, the people are denied the very freedoms that I spoke of. Thank you very much.

Paula Dobriansky: If I just may make a brief comment before we go to Jody: Mr. President, your words really summarize, I think, themes that emerged over the course of the day. In fact, I wrote down precisely myself: "There is not one blueprint for action." You can't have just one model and merely take one model, save the model of the United States, and merely transplant it into the soil of another country.

It was underscored in the last panel: the importance of the sharing of experiences, that is the richness, that is how democracy can grow and flourish. Your words really underscore that. Now, we go to Jody.

Jody Williams: In our last panel, we kind of concluded with the thinking that democracy is a work in progress and that it takes vibrant involvement of civil society to create the form of governance that we want (and, it isn't a blueprint, I would totally agree). Fundamental to the ability of society to do that is education. By education we mean critical thinking: the ability to ask questions bravely even if people don't want to hear them. We have a saying in English about, you know, armies are always fighting the last war because that's their most recent experience. And whether it's emerging democracies in Asia or cynical democracies in the West, in some ways, sometimes, I wonder if we are not just kind of fiddling while Rome burns. Democracies matter, and the emergence of democracy matters, and civil society involvement matters but, as almost everybody has mentioned, as this world keeps getting smaller and smaller, how does that all fit into the global democracy, if you will. I don't mean that kind of democracy like being able to vote every four years or six or eight. Are we worrying about old systems, when we should be thinking about what is really going to make this small, teeny planet more secure for all of us to develop whatever we want? I think a challenge for us all is re-thinking security. One of the speakers talked about it. Does the old thinking of national security, which is still all around the world, does that provide the framework today, in today's world, for us to meet the challenges that face us all, whether we're living in

emerging democracy in Asia or cynical democracy in the West? What will we, as an international community – civil society, government, UN – I don't care who it is, what will we actually have in the end if we don't address the needs of us all in a just and equitable fashion? You know, people predict the next resource wars are going to be over water, and we were hearing speakers talk about how many more billions there will be on the planet, and we keep hearing about the gap between the rich and the poor getting worse and worse, and worse, and worse… I think those challenges have to be met for democracy to emerge anywhere, or for cynical democracies to try to rejuvenate. I think that is also part of the importance of civil society, the emergence of transnational civil society and solidarity. We are, even if we don't know it, talking about that. We are talking about different ways of thinking about education, different ways of thinking about democracy, different ways of communicating across cultures. I believe those things will be the roots of the possibility of a different way of thinking about human security. A human security where your basic needs are met: your children can go to school or you can get medical care, you can have a decent dwelling, people can have work so they have the possibility of thinking about a hopeful future so that they don't want to strap a bomb on themselves and blow you up. I think we have to think about, you know, not sovereign democracy, but global democracy, and not just be thinking about systems from the past. We have to think about how we're going to collectively meet the challenges that we are facing every day. They are accelerating as you, President de Klerk, said before. Thank you.

Paula Dobriansky: Jody Williams epitomizes the essence of democracy. Her first words were about how one can come forward and be critical and criticize. That is the power of an individual or of a non-governmental organization in a democracy. It can bring about change, and, we have witnessed time and again, how it does bring about change whether in my own country or across the globe. I feel very privileged to moderate this panel, because these three very distinguished individuals as Nobel laureates have had an impact on peace in their own ways. They were each individually recognized for bringing about peace and achieving that through different means. So with that, I want to pose the first few questions before we go to the audience. I'd like to come back to this issue of the challenges in Asia, the title of this panel, and to ask you really: what do you think from what

you've heard during the day and what is your own personal experience? What are, not only the challenges, but also the most effective strategies? I think I've heard that education matters, that civil society matters – we've heard how democracy as a system provides opportunities for development… there are other ways. Let me open that up to you to say some words about what you see as the fundamental challenges and what you think are the most effective approaches in your own view. President de Klerk, let's go to you first.

Frederik Willem de Klerk: Let me take a page or two from our experience in South Africa. I think the challenge is not to affront and deliver sermons and say: "you must become a democracy!" The challenge is to analyze what are the underlying causes of problems in countries, in this case, in Asia. Why are people having civil wars in country A or B or C? One of the lessons we've learned after decades – you can even say centuries – of conflict is: you cannot settle a dispute unless the disputing parties talk to each other. There's only one way to resolve a conflict, and that is not with the barrel of a gun. That always leaves a victor and a vanquished, and the vanquished will stand up again, and the victor will do something about it again… It is through negotiation, talking to each other, ascertaining that you are not as different and as far apart from each other as you thought, and then, sitting down and in a process of give-and-take, working out compromises which can work in practice. This is what happened in South Africa and with other countries taking the chair without being prescribed to. South Africans sat around the table, structured a dialogue, arrived at a conclusion through great concessions from both sides and drew up a Constitution and a set of rules of which we are very proud and which counts among the best in the world. Isn't that a solution? Shouldn't that have been the solution for what has happened in Sri Lanka? Isn't that the solution, to a certain extent, to what is happening in Burma and in other afflicted countries in Asia? That's one lesson we learned.

The other lesson we've learned is that typical Big Brother prescription is not the best change agent: sanctions did not work in the case of South Africa. The most important change agent in our case – if I look historically from the fifties – has been economic growth and development. It has been more and more people knowing more and more and achieving better and better positions in life. That has created the pressure that has cracked apartheid. The years of sanctions

and growing isolation – I'm not saying it didn't have an influence: it kept us on our toes – but it twisted our economy. It deprived the very people whom it was intended to help from social investment, because investment was put into storing up oil, into building atom bombs and the like because of growing isolation. I believe in internationally addressing the problems in Asia, in the concept of constructive engagement. I could carry on for another half hour about other issues, but I would like to give other panellists a chance also.

Paula Dobriansky: May I just ask you a follow-up, though? Would you also say that international voices, a term that we've heard in the previous panels, also mattered and factored into the situation on the ground? Would you agree with that? That that was one factor in the mix?

Frederik Willem de Klerk: Absolutely. But shouts had less influence than constructive criticism and engagement.

Jody Williams: Since I wasn´t the president of South Africa, I can't speak with your authority, but as an outsider, I totally agree that conflicting parties have to talk to each other. I've always been a strong advocate, for example, of the United States by itself, like an adult, speaking to North Korea or speaking to Iran without pre-conditions. Same with the situation in apartheid South Africa, but the devil is in the details. I think it would have taken significantly longer for resolution of the apartheid system of South Africa without consistent pressure from outside, while supporting people on the inside who were trying to change the system. I would also argue that the apartheid system itself skewed the development of that economy by depriving the majority of the population from the ability to be all that they could be. The same thing is happening in Burma, and we keep hearing: oh, no, we can't, you know… My Senator Webb from my state refused to answer my letter as his constituent, by the way, about his wonderful policy of constructive engagement with Burma. He wouldn't even answer me, and I vote, you know! The argument is "oh no, it will hurt the people." Talk to the people themselves. They're hurt. They have no access to the resources that go into Burma. They don't have access to the banking system. There is no pressure on Burma to change because the neighbours are way more interested in buying the resources. I think that change comes when this pressure from

outside and from within amounts to what makes conflicting parties go to the table since they know there is a cost if they don't. People in power don't give up power, unfortunately. The more you have power, the more you want it. Something happens to the human psyche when you really believe that you are different. It takes a really unique individual who has been a long time in power to put aside the feeling that they are different. We were talking a bit before about "the other". Everybody creates "the other" in order to bring their own community together. Imagine, if you have more money than Asia itself, you'll certainly feel like you're way more important than the disposable people.

I think it's a little more complicated than just saying, you know: "the bad guys should talk to me, the conflicting parties should talk to each other…" I'm proud to say my first arrest was protesting apartheid in South Africa outside the embassy of South Africa when every single day U.S. citizens went to that embassy and got arrested. We helped you guys sit at that table, and that wouldn't have happened as soon as it did.

Frederik Willem de Klerk: Can I just respond… I think we need to agree to differ a bit. I can just say from experience: Maggie Thatcher and Helmut Kohl had more influence on what we did than Jimmy Carter. Great Britain and Germany which continued to trade with South Africa was a greater influence towards change than America and Sweden who were at the forefront of sanctions. Thirdly, in our case, sanctions carried on for almost thirty years. How much longer before we would have cracked? I could still have been president today. What really helped me to lead from my side – I couldn't have done it without President Mandela from the other side – was the fall of the Berlin Wall, the removal of a superpower which had its own designs and its own plans, and was prescribing to us from the scene. The fall of the Berlin Wall suddenly allowed us to take initiatives. I'm not saying: "la-di-dah, sit down around a table and talk!" There need to be influences and strategies and creative thinking about how to create an atmosphere which will be conducive to successful negotiations. I'm not saying to sit back and, say, "let's talk." Yes, there need to be strategies, but, I think it was Roosevelt who said: "There's a time for a stick, the big stick, but there's a time also to talk softly." The big stick, if it's overused, becomes counter-productive; that's the point I'm trying to make. Thank you.

Paula Dobriansky: If I may just inject a comment, and then I'm going to ask His Holiness to comment on his thoughts on challenges in Asia. A comment just on South Africa – if I may – having served in the last years as the special envoy to Northern Ireland, I could tell you that the experience of South Africa was very important in their own deliberations. There were aspects that were not directly related, and then, there were some that were. But the reason why I share this with you is again the importance of sharing experiences. As I think both of you have said, you have a different view, but the importance is of sharing these experiences: what you get out of it and how it could benefit your own conflict and situation on the ground. Your Holiness, would you like to comment, not on South Africa but on Asia?

Dalai Lama: I really don't know. Basically, I totally agree that the best way to solve problems, whether between countries, or within the country, the best thing is dialogue with respect to others' rights and by understanding others' viewpoints. This morning I mentioned that we should consider others as part of us, part of me. Consider something: I think if the problem lies within a good family, then the members inspire different views within the family and both sides are taking the issue from this wider perspective. Then try to solve the problem. Even, you see, your own view may be achieved. I think that spirit is what we really need in this world. The dialogue: if you use a holistic view, then, the only method is dialogue, not relying on force. I think the Chinese and also Burmese and Iranian authorities rely on using force. That's ultimately counter-productive, particularly with one's own people. Violence controls physically, but violence never controls the mind. Minds can change through affection, through understanding, through respect, through trust, so dialogue is the only way. I used to tell people that the twentieth century has become a century of violence. Now, this twenty-first century should be a century of dialogue. Again, as I mentioned this morning, awareness of the public, better education, I think is very important. I agree with the critical view; it's very, very essential. Being sceptical is very essential. Scepticism brings questions. Questions bring investigation. Investigation brings answers. That is a typical Buddhist institution and a way of thinking; even by Buddha´s own word: you are always, at the beginning, a little sceptical and you investigate. That, I think, is important. Then, I can challenge all, the whole world, and, particularly Asia´s population. I am a Buddhist monk with no children,

so, I already made some contribution to no population increase. The population increase, this is a very serious matter, so we need some kind of family planning or birth control – it's highly necessary, but through a non-violent way. The best way, the best non-violent way of birth control is more nuns and more monks (laughter, applause).

Paula Dobriansky: Thank you, Your Holiness. Let's now go to the audience. I'm going to go over here first. The gentleman right over here: could you keep your hand up? If you don't mind introducing yourself to the panel…

Paul Ermite (from the audience): I will speak Czech, is that possible? With respect to our host, though I am of Canadian origin, I would like to speak Czech. I am a poet and journalist. When I look at this one stage and see there the three Nobel laureates, I am very much honoured. I also see two potential Nobel laureates, of course, Mr. Havel, the former president and possibly Zoya Phan who – I reckon that within five years – will receive the Nobel Prize. I was even somehow involved in that, I nominated candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize. But, I cannot but point out that the Nobel Peace Prize is actually funded by proceeds from the sale of explosives, mainly of Alfred Nobel´s dynamite. Now I was very interested that we do not speak specifically about poverty – even though it was mentioned – it is one of the main causes of war and dissension among nations. I think that we need a total disarmament initiative, because there is the dragon, which takes its victim… there is an initiative which is called Total Disarmament Treaty. I think that all states of the United Nations in fact violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in five or seven points, like the right of the people to live in peace, welfare and well-being. I would suggest that Forum 2000, the honourable guests, and the respected audience could meet on the first of May and we would go to the United Nations. We would just say that all states violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and we would demand zero tolerance of arms production and sale. This should include the country where I spent a lot of years and that awards the Nobel Prize, which is also one of the most important arms dealers. I would like to know what the honourable speakers think on this. Thank you.

Paula Dobriansky: Thank you for the question, I'm going to turn to Jody Williams on that one, especially, because of the front part of your question and comment. Jody…

Jody Williams: I certainly wouldn't disagree with you. I've been actively involved in disarmament, mostly micro-disarmament. I'm happy to say that I'm now getting actively involved in the issue of nuclear abolition because I do believe we are at a crossroads and we can seize this moment. We have the President of the United States calling for the abolition of nukes. We have the President of the U.S. and Russia sitting down and beginning the negotiations. We have four men of the Cold War, Kissinger, Shultz, Perry and Nunn – I never thought I would agree with Henry Kissinger in my life, I have to admit – calling for nuclear abolition. There's something in the air if you will. It's not going to happen though, if we, citizens, don't get actively involved because the governments, they're not going to give up their weapons. Nobody does. They didn't want to give up landmines. For god's sake, it was a slippery slope. They thought, "If we gave up landmines, they might go after nukes." And by God, here we are! But I think it's bigger than that. I agree with you about the issue of disarmament, and I wouldn't even put it in the context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26 of the UN Charter calls for the Security Council to fashion a plan through which they can divert money from armaments to the needs of humanity. If my country alone stops dealing with nuclear weapons…? Six trillion dollars that we know about, the United States has spent on its nuclear programs. I can't even count six trillion. I can barely get beyond a million. A billion confounds me. Six trillion, I don't even know what that really means. Imagine that money dealing with poverty, and that's just one country. That's how I agree with you, but it takes putting things into, and this is like you're talking about, a larger context. You ask them to get rid of the nukes and take that money and make them put it into dealing with poverty. You know, "think large!" would be my argument.

Frederik Willem de Klerk: I would like just to add a footnote, and that is to say I'm absolutely in favour of nuclear disarmament, but I think it is a bit unrealistic if we go for total disarmament: for no country to have an air force or a navy, for all policemen to go without any form of weapons to protect the people against violent criminals. If disar-

mament means that, then I think we are going too far in our thinking. I think we need to draw a distinction. We don't live in an ideal world; there are bad people out there, bad governments and people with designs to take over other countries. I think one must say: weapons of mass destruction are out, but I think to say that a country like the United States shouldn't have an army, and a navy, and an air force is going too far, and that applies to most countries. I think that's unrealistic and impractical.

But can I just say, your emphasis on poverty is extremely important. We must analyze the causes also of terrorism. It lies, to a great extent, in the denial of rights on the one hand and in poverty on the other. The single biggest challenge I think we face in the process of globalization is to realize that the two billion people in this world, of more than six billion, who live under the breadline are the people on whom we have to focus. We must improve their lot in life, and we must not think selfishly. Not just by giving. We must create opportunities for them. We must be creative in how we help people to help themselves. Thank you for raising the issue of poverty. It should have come out of the discussions more clearly than it did until now.

Dalai Lama: Question about disarmament is a very serious one. As I mentioned earlier. When we promote the spirit of dialogue, then automatically people find weapons as no longer necessary. However, (to de Klerk) as you mentioned correctly, out of six billion there are some mischievous people always there. We need some form of forces. Such as the French-German Unified Force. I think that spirit we can increase. Now, for example, all European Union member states set up a unified force. Not individual-national force, but a unified one controlled by the European Union. One day there might be an Indo-China Unified Force. Then, Asia – that huge continent – then, there is no longer any danger of a conflict between China and India. I heard once the idea of ABC. That means: A = Afghanistan, B = Burma, C = (Ceylon) Sri Lanka. Then India, Pakistan – all create some kind of federal union. In Asia, although we have a more ancient civilization, now we must look at the European Union. They were colonialists, imperialists – they did very bad things – but they've become very, very mature. They see their common long-term interest rather than individual short-term interests. We in Asia should look in the same direction of a unified sort of force. Eventually one day there is some kind of European Union, Asian Union, African Un-

ion and a Latin American Union as a first step of a regionally-based unified force. Then, eventually, the whole world can have a unified force controlled by something like the United Nations. I think that is possible. Anyway, although I think it is difficult to achieve in the foreseeable future, we must have a blueprint or a vision! Then, educate people and the media will mention these ideas to the public and, eventually, I think there is a possibility to achieve such things. Armament and the military industry are very expensive. Nuclear weapons are very expensive, even just their maintenance is very expensive. At the same time, nobody dares to use nuclear weapons, so it's a waste of money, isn't it?! If you really have these weapons, then you should use them. Shouldn't you? But nobody wants to use them. At the same time, they keep these things. Why? That is a contradiction. Of course, the poverty…the gap between the rich and poor… If the richer nations who have nuclear weapons demolish these things, then a certain amount of money can be used to uplift the poorest section of the world. This gap is not only morally wrong, but practically the source of problems. Isn't it?

Paula Dobriansky: Thank you very much. We have a question here, in the front, thank you, please…

Doan Viet Hoat (from the audience): I am from Vietnam, but living in exile now in America. I want to bring up an issue or challenge for all of us, especially for the international community, for people who are outside the countries that we have to deal with. Like the UN or any other organization of the international community – how can the international community intervene or help a movement inside a country to change something without being accused by the country´s government of interfering in the internal affairs of that country? Now, I think this is a very, very big challenge, and I haven't seen any solution yet. I don't support blockades or economic sanctions – I don't think that that works. But I don't support completely an engagement without conditions. So far, countries like the United States and those in Europe engaged with governments, for example in Vietnam and China, are saying that it's a positive engagement. Until now, I don't see anything positive in that engagement. For example, human rights have not been a condition of that engagement and we try to pressure for that. I have talked to many government officials and I have worked with many NGOs to pressure the governments in Europe

and in America to put human rights as a condition for any assistance to governments in Vietnam or China, but we have failed. So far some governments talked something about the improvement of human rights, but not as a condition. I think that the challenge here is how the international community can help those inside a country like Vietnam or China or Burma, or outside the country, as myself and many of my friends from Burma and China who are living in America or in Europe with the governments, with the NGOs, with the UN (High Commission on Human Rights)... I think that a conference like this should bring this up as a very important issue, and we have to find a solution, a way that international organizations and governments can work with the government inside a country like Vietnam or China for transformation, for a change towards more democracy and freedom and work with the people, not just the governments alone. The international community must work with the people to build up civil society there to empower the people. I think that for engagement we should work in two directions at the same time: With the government and with the people. So far, the democratic governments have not worked enough to help the people. Thank you very much.

Paula Dobriansky: Thank you very much for that very thoughtful question. Who would like to go first on that issue? Your Holiness, Yes?

Dalai Lama: Unfortunately, the United Nations is the only and the highest world body supposed to take care of 6 billion people. Unfortunately, the United Nations is the highest body of governments, not people! Democratic governments, maybe, can represent their people, but totalitarian regimes – these governments cannot represent their people. The United Nations is a political organization whose top priority is the national interests of the governments. Global warming, for example, and these things are not considered a priority by individual governments. The governments consider their national interest as the topmost priority. I feel very strongly and I tell people in every field, even in the religious field, that too much emphasis is on the secondary level. On the fundamental level, we are the same human beings, all six billion. What colour, what sort of religious faith, what sort of nationality, these are secondary differences. What's important is that all of us are the same human beings; we all have the same right to have a happy and a satisfying life. The secondary differ-

ences are not important, but we usually emphasize the importance of the secondary level: my religion or their religion, my nationality, their nationality, my interest and their interest. We are forgetting the fundamental level: we are the same human beings on the same planet. Many years ago, I expressed that we need some sort of group, some body which is really representing people and has a moral authority. Then, perhaps if the United Nations is too politicized, this group, this body can be a little more educated and help them (laughter)… That kind of an idea I had many years ago. I don't know whether it is realistic or not. I don't know. So, finally, specifically to your question my answer is ZERO, nothing.

Jody Williams: Since the UN has come up a couple of times, I'd mention my experience with the UN Human Rights Council. One of the speakers this morning mentioned that it was becoming appalling…

Dalai Lama: One thing…

Jody Williams: (to Dalai Lama)… Sexism! You said it was time for women to take over… (Laughter)

Dalai Lama: There is one thing I want to add: I really feel NGOs should do more, can do more. I think we really need the promotion of their influence and their sort of respect. They're important. Individual governments sometimes even maybe wish to do more, but the system is difficult. NGOs have more freedom. They can speak, they can carry on with some sort of initiative. I think that's very important.

Jody Williams: I certainly agree with you.

Dalai Lama: (to Jody Williams) I am very glad. Thank you.

Jody Williams: I had the misfortune of leading a UN high-level mission on Darfur, and it was a nightmare from the beginning. The situation of Darfur itself isn't even what I'm talking about. The experience with the Human Rights Council was appalling. The governments on the Council – that you would imagine – certainly supported Sudan's efforts to kill the mission before we got there. That is a story that I can go on talking about and rant for hours. What was also appalling was that the Western states (not all of them), but the Western

states who consider themselves to be the great protectors and supporters of human rights were just about as bad. I had two Western governments, and I'm still not sure why I haven't said which ones they were. I haven't figured that out, so I'll continue not saying who they were. These two governments come to me and asked me to kill the report. Why? "Because the Human Rights Council is so new, and your report surely will not make everybody on the Council happy, which means that the Council could fail. Do you want that on your conscience?" My response was: "Absolutely." If the governments in the Human Rights Council see their primary role as covering the misbehaviour of other governments because they're frightened that when it will be the other´s turn, their human rights violations will be revealed, then the council should not exist at all. When someone spoke this morning and said: "it's appalling that human rights organizations go to that charade…" I totally agreed. I think it's time that human rights NGOs should just stop going to those ridiculous sessions. I personally oppose the United States' desire to become part of it again. I listened to an official of the U.S. government talking about how important it was for the U.S. to be there. This language really offended me. It was important for the U.S. to be there so that it could advance the interests of the United States, NOT so that it could protect the human rights of people everywhere! I was appalled when this administration, which many of us have celebrated – when our Secretary of State in engagement with China said that human rights were no longer a primary issue and would not affect the fundamental relationship between the United States and China. This is why I was a little agitated when I spoke earlier about where the situation of human rights is today. It is not smoothly moving forward. We are being challenged on all fronts at this point and to push back, it takes civil society not accepting that. It takes civil society, not happy NGOs, to fight for everybody, you know that. It takes NGOs saying to governments, "we're not going to deal with this any more; we'll create and we'll hold our own tribunal, and we'll present our own points of view, and we won't listen to you because you aren't caring about the people. You are caring about the maintenance of your own power." Calling upon the Human Rights Council to help… forget about it! Call on civil society to help! It will be there for you! Not that you shouldn't try to find good people in government, because they exist. We succeeded in our little campaign on landmines because there were good human beings in governments who shared the goal. Our

challenge is finding them, working with them, helping them move along their own government, the institution, the structure that His Holiness was talking about. But rely on your colleagues, the ordinary people as much as you try to rely on governments. We are the ones that really bring about change, in my view. Thank you.

Paula Dobriansky: As moderator, I'm going to make one quick comment, and then, we have time for one more question. We'll get the gentleman in the middle. My quick comment as the mike is going over is to your question: Roland Rich mentioned the United Nations Democracy Fund. I did want to echo that point because it's important in terms of its creation; the fact that those resources go to civil society. I heard this morning from all the panellists – very distinguished panellists representing and talking about different countries and experiences – who underscored the importance of support for civil society. That fund is one institution that's been created that I think has been very helpful and needs to be supported. Secondly, I do think it's worth mentioning regional organizations; I think about the history – and I am thinking about the very controversial Helsinki Accords. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe did have a drumbeat on human rights, and it now plays a very pragmatic role in the region. Finally, just a comment: I think that when you look at other countries, it is important to look at the holistic approach. His Holiness has mentioned it a number of times. What you should look at is not only the discourse on human rights but also look at constructive ways to engage in, say, health issues, which we all as human beings have a stake in because we want to see our citizens live better lives, and in environmental issues which also relate to the wealthier, economic issues. All of those are important and should be sustained in approaching other societies. Let's go to you, please, and if you'll identify yourself. You have the last question before we'll wrap up.

Dan de la Costa (from the audience): My name is Daniel de la Costa, and I'm from the Dominican Republic. I represent the Global Initiative Program. And my question is: we've been talking a lot about many things today: freedom, individualism, but it seems to me that we've never really talked about the impact which multinational corporations have in the peace process and in the violation of human rights in Asia. I mean, Asia oftentimes is a playground for multina-

tionals to go and get cheap labour, and, oftentimes displacing many communities which reinforce the inequalities that are already there. My question is: since this is an international conference for peace, democracy and human rights, why haven't we invited them to the table to talk?

Paula Dobriansky: I'll make a comment as the moderator here, and that is: you know, interestingly enough, your point is, I think, an important one. Many corporations have, actually, moved in a direction where now, they are very engaged in helping with labour issues in countries abroad, health issues, human rights issues. It certainly has been a very important change that we have witnessed. I know that, actually, in a bipartisan way in the United States by the Clinton administration and the Bush administration – in the Human Rights Bureaus, there was a set of principles that were established, and to which many corporations signed up and supported those various principles. I will say that today, the organization here, I think the focus was on our very distinguished Nobel Laureates and the path for peace. What you raise is for the next gathering, and that is looking at that component and the integration of those players in this discussion and discourse – you raise a very good point.

Frederik Willem de Klerk: Can I just from experience once again say that, by and large, multinational involvement in the South-African economy has benefited the people of South Africa. I find that in this modern day and age, they realize that they have also social responsibilities if they go into a country. In our case, it works that way. They don't only make money and profits and they don't only create jobs, but they comply with the regulatory system in South Africa. They pay the minimum wages prescribed. They're building schools and they're involved in housing schemes. They're involved in clean water schemes – and our experience has been a good one. I don't think we should tar all multinational corporations with the same brush.

Jody Williams: My smart comment aside. With the economic collapse and the growth of awareness in some corporations about having to give back to society, it's an important time for each of us to vote with our money. Find out about the companies that you buy from. If you don't agree with what they do, what their practice is, how they treat their workers, don't buy there. It takes more than just governments

trying to make regulations to help the situation. It takes us paying attention to where we put our support with our money.

Paula Dobriansky: Let me attempt to summarize not only this discussion but today's discussion on the various themes, and let me try to do this very briefly: First, I want to begin with His Holiness's reference to the fact that hope is essential to this process – that we persevere, and we can overcome. As His Holiness had said, democracy must come from the people. I think that education today has been underscored as being absolutely critical. Roland Rich, if I may quote him again, used the term of the development of a culture of democracy – and I think that's what we've been talking about. The notion of the internet and the power of ideas resonated throughout, together with bottom-up approaches, civil society and the critical role that civil society must play, and our support for civil society. Development: I was very struck in the last panel about the point made about the opportunities for development that are afforded through democracy. It's not perfect, but there are opportunities that are provided for citizens. The importance of voices and international support for voices: that came through in every single panel – about how our individual voices and collective voices matter greatly. Clearly, the point of engagement versus just, you know, ostracism in this case is that engagement is the better way to go. Also, the sharing of diverse experiences: on this one, I would like to say that there is a network known as the Community of Democracies. It's been here for almost ten years and it's interesting to me that one advantage of that Community of Democracy is the sharing of experience. I'll give you one example. East Timor had the benefit of hearing of the experience of Cape Verde. Two very small countries, two countries that also were seeking change. That's the way to bring about impact when you have those kinds of comparable experiences. Then, as President de Klerk mentioned, there is not a single blueprint for action, but one must look at the multiple approaches. It's not just one way, and it's not just merely transplanting a single model of democracy onto the soil of another country.

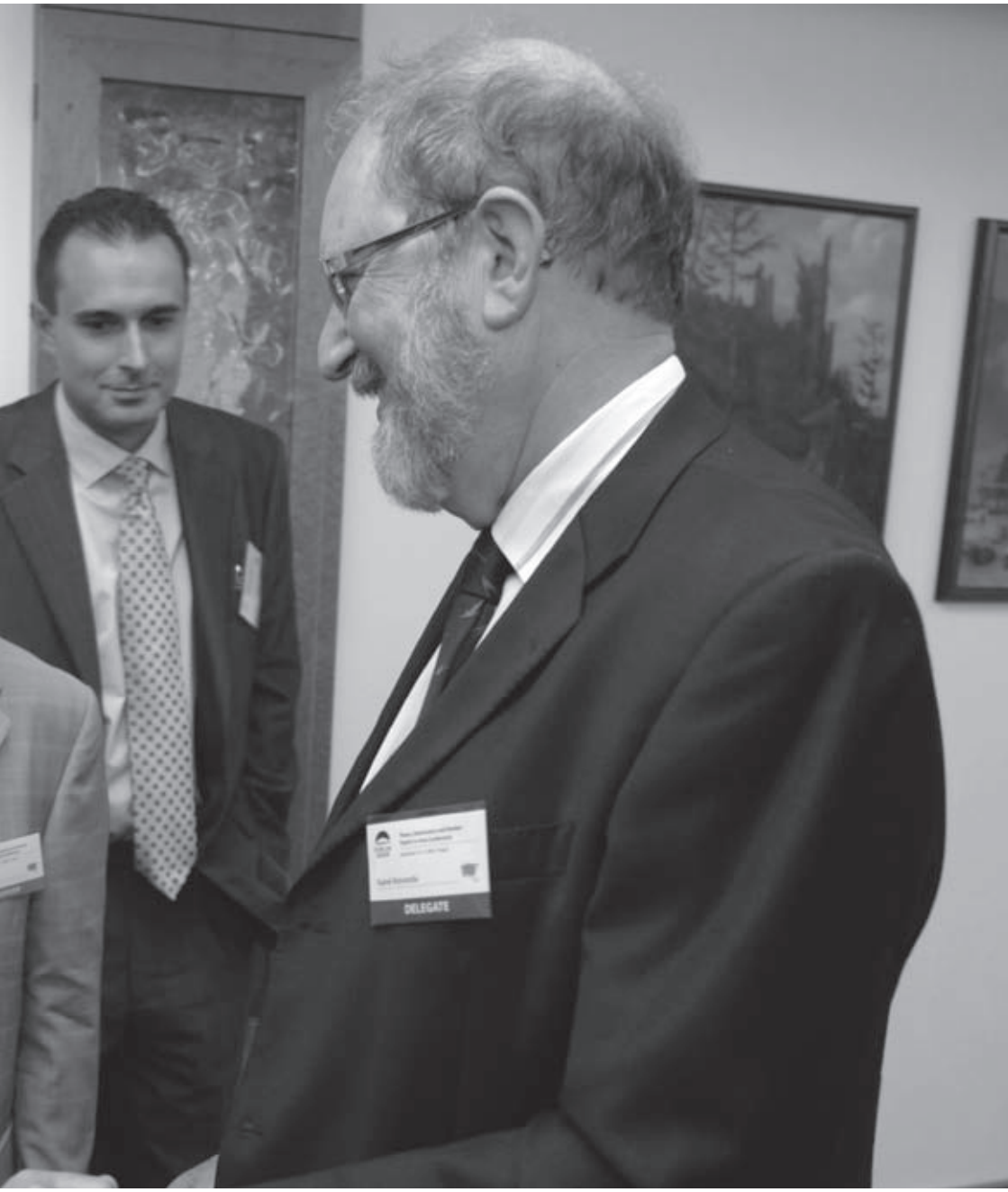
I'd like to thank very much this distinguished panel – again, as I said in the introduction, we are very fortunate indeed to have this unique panel of Nobel Laureates – individuals who have devoted their lives to peace. So, first, join me in thanking them for today's session. I think we all have benefited tremendously from their words of advice and from their shared experience. (Applause).

Now, I'd like to specially give thanks and congratulations to President Havel – someone who has devoted his life to this very topic of peace, human rights and democracy. Who, time and again, has demonstrated his leadership and his unwavering support and commitment to democracy and human rights worldwide. President Havel will make some comments, please…

Václav Havel: With your permission, I will attempt to briefly reflect on the point of such conferences. When someone applies for public money or for sponsorship for basic research, they generally emphasize that basic research can rapidly lead to concrete benefits for humanity. That it can lead to discoveries, to a new generation of washing machines, dishwashers, automobiles or electric shavers. This is useful as an argument. All meaningful human action is preceded by reflection and of course reflection can lead to new generations of gadgets, can bring countless specific, immediate, tangible benefits for human life. This does not however exhaust the meaning of reflection, and its other layers are perhaps more important still. Reflection means that people meet, that they see things for what they are, that they adopt new terms or the knowledge of others, that they share out loud things that they may have only meant for themselves. That they make room for conversations not only at meetings, but also in the corridors where they meet. And this can have two effects. First of all, that it will pay off sometime, somehow, we don't know when, we don't know how. The actions of so-called dissidents are generally considered completely hopeless, yet after years, they surprisingly enough can pay off – although it is not the rule. Thus, we have only the hope that it will pay off, that some concrete, visible, tangible gain is possible, but only possible. However! There is yet another level. Humans think, reflect about the world simply because this process is human. Reflection needn't ever change into something specific or pay off, and yet there is a point to it because in this way humans reconfirm that they are human, a highly curious creature. Creatures that are intrinsically interested in what is beyond. What is beyond our solar system, what is beyond our galaxy? Creatures that are interested in the world in which they live. If these conferences were never to lead to anything other than fulfilling this fundamental, human, defining need for reflection, then in my opinion they still have a point.

Thank you for coming. Thank you for your contribution to our joint reflection on the things of this world and thereby hopefully also on the meaning of this world.

Paula Dobriansky: Thank you again, President Havel, for your leadership and for your vision and for bringing us here. Also, if I may say, thanks to your team of the Forum 2000: to Mr. Černý and all of those who did a superb job in the organizing of today.


DELEGATE

Closing Cocktail (Hotel InterContinental) Remarks by Karel Kovanda

I've been wondering how to address this gathering – and got my inspiration from Ondřej Klimeš, the Czech Uyghur specialist. Just imagine: an Uyghur specialist! In Prague! It makes me proud of this city. And Ondřej addressed you thus:

"Dear Teachers!"

Indeed, this has been a day of teaching, and of lessons, and of learning. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, "reflection!" We have been learning about situations: in Tibet, from His Holiness; in Xinjiang, from Rebiya Kadeer; in Burma, from Khin Ohmar, Maureen Aung-Thwin and Zoya Phan; in Vietnam, from Doan Viet Hoat.

We have ascertained attitudes. Solidarity was mentioned by Ramin Jahabegloo. Blanka Knotková-Čapková recalled "solidarity" as a word that had been debased by the Communist regime. Let me also recall President Havel's philosophical mentor, Jan Patočka, who was active in the Charter 77 Foundation. This programme was inspired by exactly the Helsinki Final Act that George Andreopoulos discussed as one example of worthy governmental efforts, though they may not seem that way at the time. Jan Patočka spoke about solidarity, the "solidarity of the shattered", as one of the few tools that the oppressed have at their disposal.

We talked about tolerance, we talked about compassion. I think we also talked about non-violence, although rather obliquely, by implication, rather than directly. With His Holiness here, the personification of non-violence, we probably took it for granted. We talked about all this in order to pin down our objectives. Which are – what exactly? Democracy? Freedom? President de Klerk helpfully highlighted the difference between the two on the example of Hong Kong: lots of freedom, but until recently, very little democracy. And if democracy, then what kind of democracy? The US democracy was found wanting. The Czech democracy was found deficient. India's is

far from perfect, and George Mathews detailed its shortcomings. We talked about Burma, Tibet, etc. – and no one mentioned North Korea, even once! Focusing on the imperfections of the West, it's saying, like, I feel your pain! We too suffer! Well, really?! Our democracies may not be perfect – but how many hundreds of thousands in Asia, millions perhaps, have sacrificed their lives to attain even that!

Hoat spoke about Vietnam which is "a little bit freer". And this is a good thing. I say: Even small changes count! "Simple democracy" is how Kanak Mani Dixit described what is emerging in Nepal, adding that that's good enough to start with. "Directed democracy" might offer at least something; let us not dismiss the chance that it may transmute – perhaps under popular pressure – into something genuine. Roland Rich reminded us of a number of such efforts, including several successful ones. The term "disciplined democracy" that the Burmese junta is using is surely an oxymoron. But whether or not to boycott the elections there in 2010 may be a tactical rather than a fundamental question. There are honest, well-meaning people on both sides of that argument. The same goes for sanctions – honest, well-meaning people on both sides of that argument as well. South Africa is often quoted as an example of where sanctions worked – but President De Klerk argues that even there they really didn't.

With freedom come responsibilities. We didn't discuss them much today. Robert Ménard made comments that would imply responsibilities. He pointed out the need for freedom for minorities within minorities, for women, etc. George Andreopoulos pointed out that the minority-majority relationship is often fluid, though obviously not when it comes to ethnicity. And Zoya invites governments to celebrate ethnic, religious diversity! And I say, always support the weakest!

The importance of NGOs, civil society, was a thread permeating the entire day. Roland mentioned countries which feature tens, nay, hundreds of thousands of NGOs! Who would have known? This is an expression of what His Holiness meant when talking about the need for humanity becoming "more mutual". President Havel reflected on how much we needed international attention when we were isolated. Maureen, in the same vein, mentioned prisoners of conscience.

So, what is to be done? The question was first posed by Jan Urban, but we were rather short on answers. The international community was adjudged as being largely a failure. Jody Williams was scathing in her criticism of how R2P, the concept of "responsibility to protect", has worked out in practice, and how the new Human Rights

Council is broadly failing. Still, let us not throw out the baby with the bathwater. There are many good people, here and there, there's financial support, here and there, even if a lot of effort is often needed to channel it the right way. This is where I could make a commercial for what the European Commission does, but I won't. I'll only note that Zoya who criticized the European Commission didn't ask us to stop, but to do more. We must be doing something right.

There are some successes in the democracy and human rights efforts. Chih-Chieh Chou spoke usefully about Taiwan. But only a word here and there on Korea and Japan… are these countries not a part of Asia, or what? We have a new Japanese Prime Minister. I have been reading Yukio Hatoyama's article on his philosophical roots. He is inspired by the fraternity concept of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, a European thinker who foreshadowed the European Union. He says: "Freedom without fraternity leads to anarchy. Equality without fraternity leads to tyranny." I see this fraternity concept resonating in his Holiness' remarks about what relations among people should be like. We need a closer examination of what worked in these democratic countries – and in the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, etc. Their democratic developments are often recent. But a lot of Europe herself has been emerging from assorted totalitarian and authoritarian regimes for only the last 60 years or so. The process is not simple, and it features reversals. So we Europeans should be humble here.

Not much was said about development, which is a shame. The European Commission tightly links its development support with human rights and democracy. Many – including Robert Ménard – argue that the current development model doesn't work. A lot of this criticism comes from Africa itself; suffice it to mention Dambisa Moyo. Paul Collier from Oxford is another major critic of current practices. Education, which Kanak eloquently tackled, is another topic that should be explored further.

My conclusion from our conference is this: we have to try as hard as we can, though we'll probably fail and fail again. As His Holiness said: "Nine times failure, nine times effort." We must stick together. We must exchange experiences (for graduates of the Chinese Communist regime, this would be another debased expression). Above all, engage!

Bottom line – be realistic. Better yet, as the French students of May 1968 had it: "Be realistic – demand the impossible!"

Associated events:

Globalisation in the Third World
Date: Friday, September 11, 2009
Organiser: Institute of International Relations
Venue: Institute of International Relations
Form: Debate
Guest: F. W. de Klerk

The 10 Conditions of Love (Film screening)
Date: Friday, September 11, 2009
Organiser: Forum 2000 Foundation
Venue: Municipal Library Prague
Form: Documentary about Rebiya Kadeer by Jeff Daniels
Guest: Rebiya Kadeer

Prague Society Dinner
Date: Friday, September 11, 2009
Organiser: Prague Society for International Cooperation
Venue: Luna di Notte
Form: Informal dinner, remarks by F. W. de Klerk
Guest: F. W. de Klerk

About Forum 2000

Mission

The Forum 2000 Foundation was established in 1996 as a joint initiative of Czech President Václav Havel, the Japanese philanthropist Yohei Sasakawa, and the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel.

Forum 2000 Foundation aims are:

- to identify the key issues facing civilization and to explore ways in which to prevent the escalation of conflicts that have religion, culture, or ethnicity as their primary components
- to provide a platform to discuss these important topics openly and to enhance global dialogue
- to promote democracy in non-democratic countries and to support civil society, respect for human rights and religious, cultural, and ethnic tolerance in young democracies

Projects

Annual Forum 2000 Conferences

The annual Forum 2000 conference is the most significant project of the Foundation. In thirteen years it has evolved into a successful and widely recognized conference series, which provides global leaders with a platform for open discussion about crucial global issues. Dozens of prominent personalities from all over the world take part in the conference every year. Past participants include Bill Clinton, Frederik Willem de Klerk, the Dalai Lama, Wole Soyinka, El Hassan bin Talal, Madeleine Albright, Nicholas Winton, Shimon Peres, and a number of other political, intellectual, spiritual, and business leaders.

Shared Concern Initiative

This project brings together recognized personalities who issue joint statements addressing the most important problems and challenges of today's world. The members of this initiative are: El Hassan bin Talal, the Dalai Lama, Frederik Willem de Klerk, André Glucksmann, Vartan Gregorian, Václav Havel, Hans Küng, Mike Moore, Michael Novak, Shimon Peres, Mary Robinson, Yohei Sasakawa, Karel Schwarzenberg, George Soros, Richard von Wëizsäcker, Gregory Yavlinski.

Excerpts from the Initiative's statements:

"It is time to strongly condemn the exclusion of a considerable number of people from voting and to insist on the release of Burma's political prisoners. The United Nations and the European Union should be ready to reject conclusively the result of the referendum and strengthen sanctions against the regime. Burma's neighbours in ASEAN should stop looking the other way as Burma's rulers trample on Burma's citizens."
Statement on the situation in Burma, 2008

"...because Darfur is emblematic of wider difficulties in the world, the international community must look beyond the immediate circumstances of the conflict and increase efforts to deal with the threats that have played a role in the disaster, such as climate change and environmental degradation. Indeed, the accelerating expansion of deserts will likely lead to a decrease of agricultural yields from the surrounding areas, acute deterioration of the availability of water, and possibly to further conflicts and displacement of people."
Statement on the situation in Darfur, 2007

"...indeed, the fundamental principle of democracies and civilized states is at issue in Chechnya: civilians' right to life, including the protection of innocents, widows, and orphans. International agreements and the United Nations Charter are as binding in Chechnya as anywhere else. The right of nations to self-determination does not imply the right of rulers to dispose of their people."
Statement on the situation in Chechnya, 2006

NGO Market

The Forum 2000 Foundation also organizes the largest event of its kind in the Czech Republic and Central Europe with a ten-year tradition. This year's NGO Market was attended by more than 100 NGOs, mostly from the Czech Republic, Taiwan, Belarus, Austria, the USA, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and other countries. NGOs active in education, volunteering, human rights, environmental and other issues are given an opportunity to present their activities to the broader public, establish new partnerships, address potential sponsors and volunteers, and gain valuable know-how needed for successful NGO-management.

Interfaith Dialogue

The aim of the Forum 2000's Interfaith Project is to promote dialogue between the world's faiths and secular society. The tradition of the Forum 2000, together with Czech history and the history of Prague in particular, represents a unique platform for the dialogue of secular humanism with the world's great spiritual traditions.

Exploring Water Patterns in the Middle East

This year marks the thirteenth year that the Forum 2000 Foundation has addressed the issue of water scarcity in the Middle East through its initiative, Exploring Water Patterns in the Middle East (EWaP), a project that receives joint support from Václav Havel and HRH El Hassan bin Talal from Jordan. The aim of EWaP is to comprehensively address the issue through a series of events which stay abreast of political, economic, and technological developments, and ultimately, help facilitate a peaceful, equitable, and stable resolution that is shared by all stakeholders.

More information about our activities is available on our website: **www.forum2000.cz.**

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