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The Diplomacy Training Program is the fruit of the effort of many people, of those who conceived it, greatly improved on its rough outline and funded this first session. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Birt, and the Dean of the Law Faculty, Prof. Shearer, gave their full support to this program. All of us who worked on this project, have received warm support and much of the credit for the future success of this program will have to go to the Vice-Chancellor and the Dean.

However, I must say that one person meant a lot to this program. Without his endorsement, academic contribution and personal commitment, DTP would not have gotten off the ground. He is Garth Nettheim. Garth has been fully behind this program from the very first minute we talked over the idea. He has been our man to do some negotiations with the Dean and the Vice-Chancellor. Whenever we needed an extra concession from UNSW, we would call on Garth and ask him to go and negotiate with the Dean and the Vice-Chancellor. Either Garth is a consummate negotiator or both the Dean and the Vice-Chancellor were always well disposed because he always came back with good news. Pat Hyndman is another member of the Law Faculty who have endorsed this project with enthusiasm and without whom this inaugural session could not take place. John Scott-Murphy, Tony Simpson, Deborah Brooks, members of the Management Committee of the Program have all, tirelessly, worked to bring it about.

Funding for this inaugural session came from the Myer Foundation, Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign, Evatt Memorial Foundation, Community Aid Abroad and Australian Council of Churches. Overseas agencies, the World Council of Churches and Oxfam-Hongkong, the European Human Rights Foundation, contributed with air fares for some participants. We have promises of support from some Japanese, European and American agencies for our future activities. The United Nations Human Rights Center in Geneva and the Director of the United Nations Information Center in Sydney, Ms Thelma O'Con-Solorzano, have provided us with abundant documentation and films for this session. The ILO Bangkok Regional Office is making a contribution by sending one of its senior advisers for a special session on ILO. We hope to further develop relations with the United Nations system.

The academic standard of the Program is assured by the high caliber of session convenors all of whom are providing their time free. Lecturers are coming from the United Nations Headquarters in New York, Geneva, Tokyo, Canberra, Sydney, Bangkok. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is providing some of its best people for some of the sessions. On the other hand, each of the participant in the program brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in a variety of fields which will be a significant input into the whole learning process.

DTP is not an advocacy organization. Rather it provides technical expertise, information and orientation on the international legal system. If anything, by providing training to peoples of the developing world, minorities and

indigenous peoples of the Asia-Pacific region, be they representatives of NGOs in their home countries, community leaders, rural development workers, trade union officials or politicians and government officials, DTP seeks to contribute towards the enhancement of the rule of law, strengthening of the existing international mechanisms of protection of human rights, promoting of dialogue and negotiations rather than confrontation. We are independent thinkers, owe no loyalty to a particular government and yet we are prepared to work with any and all government institutions which share our goals. Our loyalty is to the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; our loyalty is to the indigenous peoples, national minorities and peoples of the developing world. We share with ~~international~~ Australian and international NGOs the same goals.

The breathtaking changes in the world in the last two years are a tremendous victory for all those who unrelentingly and tirelessly have sought democratic changes, social equality, the rule of law. If I mention one name, I will do so only because I wish to honour the memory of the great men and women whose lives were ~~was~~ in total devotion to their fellow beings. This one name I should mention, among many others, is Andrey Sakharov. We grieve his death but, at least, he lived long enough to see the vindication of his years of struggle for disarmament and human rights.

The defence of human rights transcend national boundaries and state sovereignty. No government that abuses its people, rob it of its basic rights and dignity, can or should be allowed today to escape with impunity by hiding

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under the cover of the sacrossant^c domestic jurisdiction laws. When it comes to individual and or group human rights which are enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, state sovereignty^g gives way to international responsibility.

The changes taking place in the world are a comforting lesson that the fight for human dignity is succeeding everywhere and should encourage policy makers to continue to push for human rights in countries where dictators are still clinging to power.

There is an intimate link between human rights and peace. In this century, up to 40 million people have died from war and 120 million have died from human rights violations, ethnic conflicts and religious intolerance. If we look into the history of the wars that have been fought in this century, most had its root cause in the lack of respect for the rule of law and human rights. World War II was started by a totalitarian regime. The "secret protocols" to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which allowed the independent Baltic states to be absorbed by Stalin were possible because there was no free press, elected parliament, independent judiciary, free public opinion and debate in the two countries signatories of the pact. World War I was set off by a Serbian nationalist who tossed off a bomb that killed an Austrian archduke. Oppression by the state breeds opposition and violence and this can escalate into civil war and regional conflict. When the state power is checked by a popularly elected parliament, a strong independent judiciary, a free press, abuses of power are less frequent and violence can be avoided.

The United Nations through its agencies entrusted with enforcing respect for human rights in the world has a special responsibility in preventing conflicts by promoting the rule of law and justice. More often than not, the United Nations failed in its mandate. However, the U.N. only can be what its members want it to be; it only can be as effective as its members allow it to be by upholding the lofty principles and purposes they all solemnly subscribed to in joining the Organization. The U.N. is the mirror of the world with all its imperfections. It is hoped that as the traditional bloc rivalry gives way to cooperation, the U.N. can be more effective in dealing with the multitude of problems affecting the peoples of the Earth.

As cumbersome and bureaucratic as the United Nations system may be, it can be effective in curbing human rights abuses as long as those in need of its services and support know how to lobby their way into the system, by providing credible information, succinct reports, by persevering, by not succumbing to the tedious and frustrating bureaucratic procedures. The training provided by DTP is only the first step in acquainting ourselves with the United Nations system and many other aspects of international diplomacy. We hope to help interested participants in this program to follow up their training with internships in specialized agencies in Australia, Europe and the U.S. *the United Nations.*

Much more will be said in the next four weeks. In closing my remarks, we wish to invite you all to the Common Room, a level ^{above} ~~below~~, for a modest reception.

Thank you.

Jose Ramon Floria