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Reasons to be cheerful — despite what the television and other media show you every day about a world in flames. We all know that the media deceive, even when they don't intend to: it is a very small screen, and even the smallest tragedy anywhere in the world fills it immediately. So by turning on the television news (or indeed by reading your *Globe and Mail*, should you be so inclined), you get no sense of the scale of tragedy that is unfolding, or of how many tragedies are actually unfolding compared to how many there might have been.

Even in a near-perfect world, there will always be enough bad news to fill the headlines and the news programs every day. So you have to think about it a little bit more carefully before you come to the conclusion that this is a world where you would have every reason to cut your throat.

Let me rehearse for you a recent and connected series of events, all of which you're aware of, and yet you may not have connected them up in the same way that I do. Most of these events I went to wearing my journalist's hat, and I must admit that at the time I too didn't connect them up in the way that I'm now going to do for you.

Let us begin with 1986 in Manila, where a dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, in power for 20 years, was evicted from power non-violently, through a process of popular protest in the streets, by the widow of a man he'd murdered. Cory Aquino accomplished Marcos's overthrow leading unarmed crowds and using the classic techniques of non-violent resistance. The Filipinos are Asians, so they have access to the Gandhian tradition, but more importantly they were an American colony, and so they also have access to the Martin Luther King tradition: they have available that knowledge of how to do non-violence.

So what? Everybody "knew" that non-violence never worked against Third World dictators. It was a technique you used against morally vulnerable democracies caught on the wrong footing, whether the British imperialists in India or the American government in the time of Viet Nam and the civil rights movement. The idea that you could use non-violence against a Third World dictator, and that he would be deterred somehow from shooting you just because you stuck flowers in the barrels of his soldiers' rifles, was not readily accepted at the time. And I must say I expected to see blood in the streets.

It didn't happen and yet the only difference between Manila in 1986 and many other occasions where there had been blood in the streets not long before was that this was in fact the first popular uprising against a Third World dictator after the introduction of live television satellite uplink, so that all the news unfolding in Manila was instantly seen all around the world.

Now I don't insist on a direct cause-and-effect relationship between live global TV and successful non-violent revolution, but there was something going on here,