

Future security depends on present management

I believe that world security will depend largely upon how governments manage the crises of the present decade. I also believe that world security will depend on the degree to which liberal ideas can survive in this economic climate. The modern world economy really does not leave room for pure ideology — while the private sector has much to offer the process of international development, it is not a panacea, nor can it ever be. Societies of the world community are too complex, and too divergent, and this to me is something that must not be ignored.

Not all developing countries share the same values as Western democracies. Often their infrastructures are lacking, as are skilled people to manage their economies, and staff their bureaucracies. In other respects, lack of the basic necessities, such as food and shelter, along with such conditions as illiteracy and under-education often mean that Western style democracies cannot serve as the immediate model to be emulated.

On the other hand, liberal values, which have driven all of our societies, can serve as a catalyst to the betterment of many developing countries. The values to which I refer are those which characterize the true liberal — someone who can personify moderation and balance. In our societies liberalism has been a cast of mind which emphasized procedural fairness, equality of opportunity, acceptance of the rule of law, and the protection of civil liberties. Liberalism has tended to view the role of government as catalytic or moderating relation to the private sector. It has been identified with pragmatic policies in a mixed economy.

Liberalism a tradition of principles

Liberalism has not been a tradition of policies so much as it has been a tradition of principles — a recognition that while there may be eternal truths, there can be no eternal policies. In this sense, liberalism could be and should be the driving force for many new nations; allowing them the flexibility to develop mixed economies to respond to the specific needs of their own peoples, and, at the same time, leaving the private sector scope for individual incentive. Too often, in throwing off the colonial yoke, newly independent nations have swung to dictatorships of the right or left, often at the expense of a number of the sectors of their individual societies. The role of Western democracies, I believe, is not to turn their backs on such societies, but rather, with their tradition of liberalism, with their political contacts with their largesse, to assist such nations towards moderation and balance, so that the people of these countries do not suffer unduly. This is, of course, the human side of the North-South dialogue, and it requires that openness of thought that I referred to earlier as one of the characteristics of classic liberalism.

Put more pragmatically, I believe that in the 1980s industrialized democracies must forge a more mature political relationship with developing countries. Yesterday, we discussed at length the current course of East-West tensions. Whether or not we can be optimistic about East-West relations, what we can and must do is to seek to insulate the Third World more from East-West contention. We must demonstrate