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Please Use Your Liberty to Promote Ours

Bo Kyi



My name is Bo Kyi. I come from the Southeast Asian country of Burma, which has been ruled by a brutal military dictatorship since 1962 and has been racked by civil wars since 1948. I and many

of my fellow Burmese people served (and some continue to serve) as political prisoners of Burma's ruling military junta, the ironically-named State Peace and Development Council.

Since 1999, the year I escaped from Burma, I have been the Joint-Secretary of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), an organization based on the Thailand-Burma border. The AAPP was formed by former political prisoners who fled from Burma to avoid re-imprisonment. Like other members of AAPP who work, and also live, in our compound, I served time in prison for my political beliefs. Altogether I completed two consecutive sentences and spent over seven years behind bars. I endured beatings, torture, insufficient nutrition, withholding of medical treatment, and substandard living conditions. My crime? I was the head of a student union that called for a change to democratic rule in Burma and that participated in the nation-wide, non-violent, pro-democracy movement that culminated in August of 1988. I was among many student

leaders and activists who were jailed. My friends were among the thousands who, instead of facing prison, were killed.

In 1999, a year after I completed my multiple sentences, I fled to neighboring Thailand, like over 10,000 student activists had done before me.

*I endured beatings, torture,
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of medical treatment, and
substandard living conditions.*

Many thousands more of my colleagues remain inside Burma where they continue the struggle for democracy and human rights.

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Globalization and the Gospel

Tony C. Rahlf



There are certain people in this world that find the word "globalization" so crass and foul that for me to mention it in a favorable context with the gospel is sheer blasphemy. For some reason, globalization is seen as the ultimate destructive force in which evil corporations profit largely from cheap child labor while destroying all traces of the cultural heritage of third world countries. In reality, globalization is the proponent that just may lead to church's ability to preach the gospel among the four corners of the earth. However, since feelings of hostility are harbored for free trade, especially at universities, I must first disprove the myths of globalization before I show its unique and auspicious connection with the gospel.

Myths of Globalization

Ironically, the enemies of globalization make arguments that are largely contradictory to their ideals. Firstly, these opponents claim that globalization makes the poor poorer and the rich richer, complaining that there is so much poverty in the world that the rich do not deserve to enjoy such lifestyles. Secondly, they feel that trade liberalization replaces the rich cultural traditions of the lands involved in trading with the ugly commercial culture of the West. These arguments have no real support, and documented research has shown that the opposite of these claims is often true.

Whereas, it is fact that free trade makes the rich richer, it is also fact that it makes the poor richer.

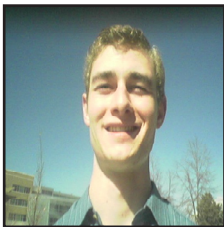
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Chávez and Friends

Michael Layton



Sun-tzu once taught, “Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.” The United States would do well to remember those words of wisdom in it’s relations with Latin

America. Recent events suggest that countries south of the border, whether friends or enemies, may not be close enough to the U.S.

Hugo Chávez, President of Venezuela, serves as a prime example. His recent antics have commanded headlines: oil given to heat homes in the northeastern United States, protests in Argentina against “American imperialism,” and provocative actions that have led to diplomatic counterpunches from both President Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox.

Few people in Washington care for Mr. Chávez, but they shouldn’t underestimate him or the populist movement. Barring the intervention of Pat Robertson (a televangelist who suggested that Mr. Chávez be “taken out”), Venezuela will reelect him to another six-year term this December. He has allied with Fidel Castro, whose beloved Cuba shows no signs of an impending conversion to capitalism. Evo Morales, the first indigenous person to win the presidency of Bolivia, has also become a friend of Mr. Chávez. With seven other presidents yet to be elected this year in Latin America, the left may yet gain more strength.

Chile, which arguably possesses the most robust government in the region, also picked



a socialist president in Michelle Bachelet. But the socialism of Chile differs greatly from the ideology of Mr. Chávez. Chile stands out for its willingness to promote open-market trade. In 2005 the World Economic Forum ranked Chile 23rd on its Growth Competitive Index, ahead of China (49th), India (50th), and the nearest Latin American country, Mexico (55th). That leads me to my point. The United States still enjoys allies

The United States still enjoys allies and general support, but risks losing them within the next couple of decades.

and general support, but risks losing them within the next couple of decades. Countries like Chile, Columbia, Mexico, and Brazil have already begun to establish stronger ties to China. As Asian and Latin American economies continue to grow, those countries will have much less need to cooperate with Uncle Sam. (Consider that only seven of 34 Latin American countries supported the invasion of Iraq. Six of the seven were having trade negotiations with the U.S. Money indeed makes the world go round.) Add the populists and the Asian connection to increased anti-American sentiment—or is it anti-Bush?—and you get a group that could become a formidable opponent in the future. We should remember that when debating policies on controversial issues like immigration and tariffs. Peter Hakim, President of the Inter-American Dialogue, recently wrote in Foreign Affairs, “Perhaps what most troubles Latin Americans is the sense that Washington just does not take the region seriously and still considers it to be its own backyard.”

Even more reason to befriend them, I say. Let’s invite them in from the backyard and have a conversation, maybe over cup of tea. We have room at the table. Judging by current world conditions, the United States needs all the friends it can get.

Michael is from Orem, Utah majoring in International Relations.

Globalization

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Thorvaldur Gylfason, professor of economics at the University of Iceland, documented the phenomenal economic growth among nations which switched from a closed or planned market to a free trade market during the 1990’s. The results were astounding: the living standards of the poor in each country rose. Yes, the gap between the rich and the poor increased, but the poor enjoyed an increase in pay as well.

As far as culture is concerned, globalization has forced others to embrace materialism about as much as my liberal professors have forced me to join the Democratic Party. Free trade does not force others to give up their cultures. This has been shown by the research of Martin Wolf, current chief economics commentator at the Financial Times and former senior economist of the World Bank. He has shown in his definitive work, *Why Globalization Works*, that cultures involved in free trade are given the choice to be a part of the market, or to stay out of it. Free trade in no way enslaves others into materialism. It just gives them more options.

Opening the doors of democracy

It can hardly be argued that nations embracing democracy are more likely to allow missionaries to proselytize in their countries. There are exceptions, of course, but these are few and far between. The more freedom people have to choose, the more the principle of free agency can be a part of their lives. The more desire people have to choose freely, the more a free market will develop into their nations. This has been seen most recently in China and India, whose moves to free trade are opening up their borders and minds not only to economic prosperity, but to Christianity as well.

Free trade has this effect on people. The more a nation becomes part of the global economy, the more it will become democratic. This idea has been shown to be true by Wolf’s research, but is supported by economists all over the globe. This is simple economics. If people wish to have more prosperity, they must trade. If they wish to trade and benefit themselves, they must have a democracy. As citizens, not governments, are able

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to determine their own destinies, the church may have an influence on their lives.

Take Russia for example. Ever since they opened up their borders and markets by overthrowing communism, the church has been able to bless the lives of the former Soviet citizens, forming new stakes and building a temple in Kiev. This is an amazing turn around, which would never have been expected if the planned market of the USSR were still in power. Free trade and democracy allowed missionaries to build up the kingdom.

From Globalization to Consecration

There is perhaps only one common argument against globalization that is true: it creates a larger gap between the rich and the poor. The poor still benefit, but at a lesser rate. This is incongruent with the Gospel, which teaches us about the importance of equality. Indeed, the book of Moses tells us that one of the qualities of Zion is that there are no poor among the people. It is safe to say then that globalization is not the answer. I submit, however, that it is a large part of the equation.

The Law of Consecration is not, as some may believe, communism. It actually looks more like a big business, with Christ as the CEO. The world belongs to the Lord, and we are given stewardships with which to work. We are “employees,” more or less, in the service of God. Governments, however, don’t care what we believe. This is why free trade is so important. Governments in favor of free trade are also in favor of the protection of private property. Without private property, the church would not be in control of its assets, and the Law of Consecration would not function.

Globalization alone will not solve the ills of the world, but it will give the world the opportunity to do such. As people are free to trade with others around the globe, they will move towards democracy. Democracies will allow missionaries to teach their people while protecting the private property of their citizens. With private property, the members of the church can consecrate their possessions to the greater good, and eliminate poverty among them.

Dear Government, mind your own business!

The role of the government should be to protect our freedom and our possessions, not to burden us with superfluous laws and taxes. Adam Smith understood this centuries ago. Limiting government expands freedom and leaves room for people to choose to be Christ-like. No government can enforce such principles. The cure for the world’s ills is found in a simple formula: globalize, democratize, proselytize, and baptize.

Tony is from Cincinatti, Ohio majoring in German. His favorite movie is Oh Brother, Where Art Thou.

Intervention and the Problem with Haiti

Sarah Bruton



If you have heard anything about Haiti recently then the news probably was not very pleasant. Last week, Haiti participated in its first presidential election since ousting former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004. The election was not only marred by violent demonstrations in Port-Au-Prince but also by recent accusations of election fraud which has only furthered the violence. The UN Security Council has called on Haiti’s interim government to investigate these accusations as well as calling on the Haitian people to demonstrate their protest in a non-violent manner.

Yet, violence in Haiti seems normal to outsiders. Since 1990 the UN has had five separate peace-keeping missions to the Caribbean nation. Yet what essentially has “gone wrong” with Haiti? Haiti represents a proud history with the world’s first black-led republic and the first Caribbean state to achieve independence. Yet Haiti’s pride has been marred by decades of poverty, violence, political instability and dictatorship which have left it as the poorest nation in the Americas.

The goal of stability thus came to replace the ideal of democracy.

Many recall the brutal dictatorships of former voodoo physician Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier, and his son, Jean-Claude, or “Baby Doc”. With the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide (a former priest) many hoped the nation would finally take a turn for the better. Yet a military coup dashed any such hopes and the nation continued in its downward spiral. Economic sanctions were put into place and even a US-led military intervention forced the nation to return to a constitutional government in 1994. Yet Haiti’s horror persisted with ongoing corruption, torture, and brutality.

The US-intervention in Haiti in 1994 was nothing new to Haitian history. The United States of America has intervened militarily in Haiti multiple times. The longest period of US intervention in Haiti lasted from 1915 to 1934. US interventions displayed a constant pattern; military forces would arrive and depose rulers,

install a provisional government, supervise national elections, and finally depart. Historian Peter Smith wrote “the political key to these operations was the holding of elections-which, as tangible signs of democracy at work, justified both the fact of intervention and the decision to lift the occupation.”

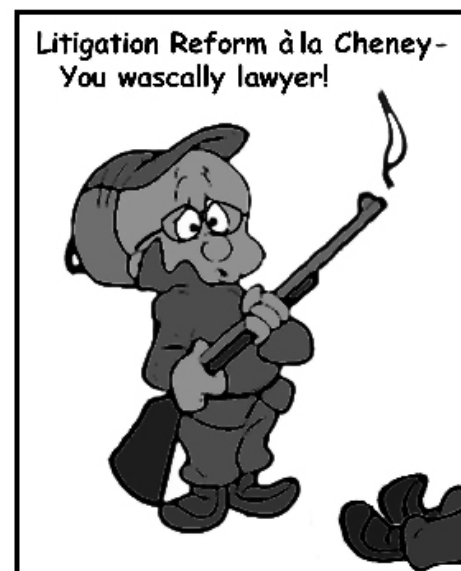
Thus, Haiti endured nineteen years of US military occupation only to be subject to a seemingly endless course of dictatorship. It can be said that for the majority of the times US military intervention was more for geopolitical and economic motivations than for the wish to spread democracy. If anything else the economic reasons for intervention seem to outweigh any other purpose for action.

Looking back, US occupation forces did nothing to help strengthen democratic practices and institutions. Elections were merely held as an excuse to enter the country and then to leave when unpleasant situations arose. As Historian Peter Smith wrote “The goal of stability thus came to replace the ideal of democracy.” Furthermore, the US tried to use military power in the name of democracy. As President Wilson himself stated “true democracy is not and cannot be imperialistic.”

Now you may ask, why the history lesson? It may be cliché to say but history has a nasty habit of repeating itself. Haiti is the perfect example of failed intervention for “the growth of democracy”. If anything US policy should have learned from the past and not committed the same mistakes again. At this point all we can hope for is that our current escapades do not turn into more Haiti’s.

Sarah is from Ashburn, Virginia majoring in International Relations. Her favorite movie is Hotel Rwanda.

Cartoon by Abe Gong



CHECK IT OUT

Upcoming Political Events on Campus

Global Hotspots: Images and Ideas

Ruth Fremson

Pulitzer prize winning photographer

Wednesday 22 February 12:00 HBL Auditorium

Book of the Semester Panel Discussion Surprise, Security and the American Experience

Wednesday 22 February 3:00 HRCB

Contentious Republicans: Popular Politics, Race, and Class in Nineteenth-Century Colombia

James E. Sanders

Thursday, 23 February 11:00 238 HRCB

Burma's Human Rights Crisis

Bo Kyi

Friday 24 February 2:00 238 HRCB

Hunger Banquet

February 24th and 25th 6:00 PM 3220 WSC

HELP FIGHT WORLDWIDE POVERTY

Help fight the worldwide poverty and hunger epidemic by attending the Hunger Banquet on Friday or Saturday, February 24-25 at 6:00 pm in room 3220 in the WSC. Tickets cost \$6 if purchased from the WSC information desk the week of the event or \$8 at the door. The evening includes dinner (parties are randomly assigned to a high, middle, or low class style meal) live entertainment, and a keynote address from Ko Bo Kyi, a former political prisoner from Burma. Don't pass by this opportunity to learn about and help solve serious world problems – all proceeds from ticket sales are given to aid organizations operating across the globe.

The event is sponsored by BYU's Students for International Development. Questions can be emailed to international_development@byu.edu.

Torture

continued from first page

My mission now, and the greater mission of the AAPP as an organization, is to document the suffering of democracy activists in the gulags of the military regime and to expose these abuses to the civilized world.

One month ago, the Washington Post published a major article on torture in Burma. This article described how political prisoners are treated in Burma. At present, there are over 1,100 political prisoners in Burma, including 12 elected members of parliament. The world's only imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Aung San Suu Kyi, is also in detention. All these prisoners have been arrested for working for freedom and democracy. At least 80 political prisoners have died in prisons and interrogation centers due to torture and denial of medical treatment. Most of those arrested and detained have been subjected to torture.

I have tried to document in detail some of their stories in a report, entitled "The Darkness We See", which details the torture inflicted on political prisoners in Burma and also shows the physical and psychological effects of torture. The report contains interviews with thirty-five former political prisoners who were tortured physically and psychologically in some of the country's forty-three prisons.

It is clear that torture is the state policy of the military junta. Torture is used by the military regime to try and break the will of political activists and create an overwhelming climate of fear.

Despite the heavy sentences and harsh treatment that political prisoners receive, it's not as difficult as you might think to become a political prisoner in Burma. Simply try to exercise your basic human rights, or advocate for the basic rights of others, and you're likely to find yourself facing seven years of hard labor or isolation and, of course, torture. All basic rights, including freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of association, freedom of worship, and freedom of movement are denied or severely limited by the military regime.

Overall, the human rights situation in Burma today is still quite bad and will never improve under the hands of the junta and its leading General, Than Shwe. Hundreds of thousands of ethnic nationalities live as internally displaced

persons in the jungles and mountains. More than two million people live in neighboring countries as refugees. Forcible recruitment of children into the Burmese military continues, and Burma has more child soldiers than any other country in the world. Modern forms of slave labor, as well as forced relocations in which people's villages are burnt to the ground by the Burma Army, have become a common practice of Than Shwe's regime not only in rural areas, but also in the capital city of Rangoon and other major cities. The Burmese military continues to use rape as a weapon of war in ethnic minority areas. Burma is the second largest producer of heroin, and may be one of the largest producer of amphetamines in the world. According to Parade Magazine, Than Shwe is the third worst dictator in the world, after Kim Jong Il of North Korea and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

I feel very fortunate that I am able to share the experiences of my people with the American people. The United States government has been one of the greatest supporters of Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's democracy movement. One of the most important and valuable actions of the US has been to implement sanctions on Burma through the 2003 Burma Freedom and Democracy Act. The US has also been at the forefront of efforts to bring Burma to the United Nations Security Council. Being in the United States, I feel I am among friends and allies. As someone who has suffered personally at the hands of Burma's military junta, I ask you to "use your liberty to promote ours." Tell your Congressional representatives and President Bush to renew sanctions on Burma and bring Burma to the UN Security Council, travel to the Thailand-Burma border, and befriend the thousands of Burmese refugees who have been resettled here in America. I thank you for the friendship and support that many Americans have extended to me, and look forward to welcoming you to a free and democratic Burma one day in the future as friends in my people's struggle for freedom.

The author is the Joint-Secretary of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma, an organization based on the Thailand-Burma border. He received an award from the Italian Section of Amnesty International in 2001 for his work promoting human rights in Burma and has testified in front of Congress. Mr. Kyi will be speaking Friday Feb. 24 at 2:00 238 HRCB.



CURRENT EVENTS

STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Discussion with Full Disclosure.

BE IN THE KNOW.

Discuss Current Events every Friday at noon
270 HRCB (Kennedy Center)

BYU Political Review meets Tuesdays 6:00 pm
238 HRCB (Kennedy Center)

BYU Political Review is an open forum for students and faculty to share their opinions.

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