



**KEYNOTE SPEECH # 2**

**IMPACT AND IMPLICATION OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS AND CONFLICTS  
ON PEACE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC**

by

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When a ‘bomb’ is finally available, it might perhaps, after mature consideration, be used against the Japanese, who should be warned that this bombardment will be repeated until they surrender.

**Churchill-Roosevelt, secret agreement, 18 Sept. 1944: Gilbert (1986) p. 970.**

**The warning was issued in the Potsdam Declaration of 26 July 1945.**

The morning was still, the place was cool and pleasant. Then a tremendous flash of light cut across the sky. Mr. Tanimoto has a distant recollection that it travelled from east to west, from the city toward the hills. It seemed a sheet of sun.

**Joseph Hersey, Hiroshima (1946) Ch. I, on the nuclear annihilation of the city on 6 Aug. 1945.**

President, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends, Brothers and Sisters, it is my great honor and pleasure to be given a chance to speak before you on such an important issue as “Impact and Implication of Global Economic Crisis and Conflicts on Peace and Human Development in the Asia-Pacific.”

1. Our Standpoint

I want to start my speech by recollecting two important documents, which mark the post-war



history now we are living. I read the two.

These two documents show something like apocalyptic fate that we should take over from our grandparents. We can't escape from our reality threatened and ridden by nuclear weapons, which less than ten nation-States possess among two hundreds nation-States in the world. In my thinking, the history today begins with a threat: "Accept either the Potsdam Declaration or Nuclear Bombs." In fact, Imperial Japan should have accepted both of the two. And a new era began. Since then world economies grew bigger, and the US economy is still running at the top of the world in 65 years. Now we are facing a big question whether a turnover of these systems will come or not.

As I'm not economist or not even an economic analyst, I can't give you detailed explanation about what is going on in the world. In fact I can't tell you what the exchange-rates are today between yen and peso, peso and US dollar or euro. Rarely do I read economic reports in a newspaper. What makes things worse is my profession. As you know, I teach law, especially criminal law, at my university. I'm a kind of guys who are said to know everything but real life. But one thing in my capacity might deserve opening remarks as to such an urgent topic. I'm activist like you in the conference hall. I've worked for more than thirty years in an association affiliated to the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, IADL. I'm very proud to be a member of the International Association that was built from the ashes of World War Two by brave lawyers, who fought against fascists, Nazis and Japanese imperialists. I want remind you before anything that the first elected president of the IADL was Prof. Rene Cassin, French law professor. He was also member of the Provisional Government of Republic of France led by General Charles de Gaul during the war, and after the war joined in a commission of the United Nations to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. So we can say without exaggeration that the International Bill of Rights and the IADL were born out of the same spirit.

As you know, the Universal Declaration has thirty articles. Each article defines variety of freedoms and fundamental rights. Can you remember what "Four freedoms" mean? These four were firstly put into a shape by the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and then incorporated into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the four cornerstones in it. To name them, the first is freedom of speech and expression, then the second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way, and the third, freedom from want, fourth and the last is freedom from fear.

And I like to mention that the United Nations, a universal entity of international organization,



stands on two main pillars: the one is to preserve peace and security at the global level; and the other is to promote and protect human rights and to realize human welfare all over the world, and that without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. In short, promotion and protection of all human rights for everyone is a promise to keep, and a goal to achieve. It is true that the Universal Declaration itself has no legally binding force at all. We are however obliged, at least morally, to make every effort to achieve the goal and to keep this promise. Freedoms and wellbeing without distinction of any kind is the very core of the Universal Declaration. Today we have a dozen of international instruments on human rights.

Before tackling a serious issue as “impact and implication of global economic crisis and conflicts on peace and human development in Asia-Pacific,” I want you to understand from what standing point we ought to start our argument: internationally and domestically, we, all the people, are equal and should be treated as such. We are now facing serious economic crisis and conflicts. We are challenged by global economic crisis, which can be accelerated and turned into legal implication by somehow strange mechanism of international political relations. What are they? This is what I want to talk to you. Let’s begin.

## 2. How Do We Grasp Global Economic Crisis and Conflicts?

It is said that we are globally in an economic crisis or that we are now facing global economic conflicts. Is it true? If it were true, how can we grasp it? How do we know it? The International Monetary Fund or World Bank may give it to the public. And the following resolution adopted in February 2009 by the Human Rights Council of the United Nations is supposed to have it or something like it in mind<sup>1</sup>. I quote it:

“Human Rights Council,

- (2) Recognizes the severe impacts that the global economic and financial crises are having on the ability of countries, particularly developing countries, to mobilize resources for development and to address the impact of these crises, and, in this context, calls upon all States and the international community to alleviate, in an inclusive and development oriented manner, any negative impacts of these crises on the realization and the effective

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/S-10/2, 23 February 2009



enjoyment of all human rights.”

There are other points in this resolution. But we can easily recognize that our standpoint or view-point should be put on the most affected by the global economic crises as well as the most affected countries, namely developing countries.

I want to show you another opinion in this regard: Mr. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, managing director of the International Monetary Fund who wrote a comment as follows<sup>2</sup>.

“As the global economy continues to recover from the worst economic downturn since the second world war, policymakers face both challenges and opportunities in 2010. The challenges include disturbingly high unemployment in the advanced economies, and the unfinished task of restructuring devastated financial sectors. In emerging and low-income countries, internal sources of growth will need to be found, as external demand and flows of foreign investment and credit remain weak. But there will also be opportunities to lay the foundations of a safer and more stable financial system, and so secure sustainable economic growth.”

According to the managing director of the IMF, the global economic crisis is described as the worst economic downturn since World War Two. Unemployment in the advanced economies may be grasped as something outcome from the global economic crisis. That is to say that for the IMF there is only a weak relationship between economic crisis and unemployment. This picture drawn by him goes encounter to what we ordinary people understand. For us, unemployment is a critical cause of economic crisis. If we were fired, we would immediately face daily economic difficulties. We need a job to get food and other livelihoods. What Mr. Strauss-Kahn might try to mean by this is something different from what I said as an ordinary meaning, because he knows the global economic crisis is a result of financial deficits or outburst of babbly and overheated credit economies. That is what Mr. Greenspan, former president of the US Federal Reserve Bank, called as “too greedy.”

The second challenge Mr. Strauss-Kahn underlines is also different from what we know. He says that policymakers face unfinished task of restructuring devastated financial sectors. It may be true or may not be true, because it depends on what he means by unfinished task of restructuring devastated financial sectors. On the contrary, Mr. Stieglitz, a Noble Prize Winner for

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<sup>2</sup> Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Reshaping the post-crisis world, *The Economist, The World in 2010*, p.138.



Economics, said as you know that the globalization itself would be a cause of unhappiness. He went further to say that the globalization might bring devastated economies. Why? It is simply because the world would be ruled by a law of jungle: “The stronger may prosper, the weaker may perish.” I wonder if what Mr. Strauss-Kahn means by restructuring devastated financial sectors were to bring the world to a century-long reign of US leading world financial system, which was once challenged by Japanese economy, and now is challenged by China and India, not to mention other regional stakeholders like Brazil, Russia or European Union. We should make things clearer in this conference. We should have a clearer vision on what we are facing. I think it a crucial point now we are facing to make a better world.

In other words, as everybody in the room knows, the world is ruled mainly by about two hundreds nation-States and international institutions like United Nations, the IMF, World Bank and others. But in reality, impacts and influences shed by the global enterprises can't be overseen. The United States are the most powerful of all nation-States in the world, and also too greedy. US are the strongest in terms of political influences and armed forces. In spite of size of economy, US economy isn't so healthy. They produce less than what they consume. They spend more money to non-productive sectors than to productive sectors. They still keep a million strong armed forces overseas and hundreds military facilities all over the world or even outer-space. They spend, as Mr. Stiglitz calculates, 3 trillion US dollars to conduct wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan at the same time. They recruit soldiers from the poorer families at home to send them overseas. I dare to say that they have invented a new type of social system by combining social welfare and military industries to offer bread and ice-cream to the poor who take guns and missiles against the poorer. That is the question. That is really the most serious and tremendous quagmire to be solved by ourselves.

### 3. Impact and Implication: “The World Is Flat”?

The world we are living is often divided into 5 regions, namely Europe, America, Africa, Asia-Pacific, and former socialist countries. Among others, Asia-Pacific is the most populous and the largest region in the world. What does the world look like? According to a best-seller book, “The World is Flat.” Is it true? Or what does it actually mean? From our standpoint, the world doesn't seem to be flat at all. It seems sloppy and slippy. It is sloppy, as the money flows from the poor to the rich, not the contrary except public spending. It is also slippy, as the rich may easily fall



down to be swallowed into the poor. So there are many highs and lows, ups and downs, mountains and valleys in the world. Today 4 billion people in the world live less than one US dollar a day. 40% of the world wealth or Gross Domestic Products in the world are shared by only two economic giants, namely US and Japan. China is growing bigger next to Japan. India is also getting richer. But anyway, larger portion of world wealth is occupied by a smaller number of rich nation-States.

At the center of the world still remains the United States under control of military complex and multinational enterprises. When Mr. George W. Bush reined the US administration, neo-conservatives decided policies in every field. They claimed against Kyoto protocol for climate changes; they tried to kill the new-born International Criminal Court, by declaring the Rome Statute to be unsigned and by using other legal tricks; they threw the world into a war against terrorism by defying the international law and international human rights. So the world was not flat during Bush administration, and even today under Obama administration the world is not flat either.

#### 4. What We Want to Know and Do Now

In this conference, you can hear many, many real testimonies, and you can see many, many real evidences in this regard. A lot of people suffer from lack of resources, little means available or high hurdles to overcome. Sometimes political and legal barriers protect the rich and exclude the poor. Children, women, immigrants suffer most. We should know real conditions we are facing. We should know each other to understand real meaning of world situation now we are facing. We should know to overcome the situation, to change the world, to make a better world, and to make a history better and brighter.

I like to give you a very good example from my experiences in Japan. As you know, Japan is the second biggest economy and now taking off muddy political rule of a conservative party, which has ruled more than a half century. Since the last decade of the rule, numbers of suicides has been hitting high as marking over 30,000 cases a year, while fewer persons have been killed by traffic accidents in the same period. The Government opened an office for supervision and planning counter-suicide policies, but in vain. The numbers of suicide cases never declined. I think it a kind of sad answer to pathetic economic and political rule of the stronger over the



weaker. The stronger eat the weaker. In another word, the strong prospers, the weak perishes. This is really at odds with what we have in mind with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is nothing but negation of what we dreamt six decades ago. We must stop it. We must see a better world. We must realize a world where all the peoples can enjoy all the human rights. Yes, we can.

Thank you for your attention.