

Remarks by Professor James W. Muller  
Chairman of the Board of Academic Advisers, International Churchill Society  
Winston Churchill Memorial Dinner  
Estoril Political Forum, 29th International Meeting in Political Studies  
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Your Excellency, Professor Espada, Mr. Sondermann, Mr. Burnay, Fellow Churchillians, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What a delight it is to come together again at Estoril to celebrate the anniversary of the Atlantic Charter proclaimed by Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill eighty years ago. Tonight we are gathered to honor Churchill and to celebrate the accomplishments of the Churchill Society of Portugal and the founding of the new Churchill Society of Brazil.

The anniversary helps us remember what distinguishes liberal democratic nations—nations that have achieved an important measure of civilization for their citizens—from those which have yet to attain it, and whose citizens still stand to gain so much from achieving it for themselves.

What Churchill understood as civilization was to have learned to restrain ourselves and others from using violence and force without right, and to live in a society that takes its bearings from reflection and choice, respecting equal rights for all, even for those who are weaker.

These days, instead of hearing about the achievements of civilization, we often hear about diverse cultures around the world. Certainly those cultures differ. When people urge that all cultures deserve equal respect and admiration, they mean that no culture is better than any other culture. That idea may sound appealing, since at first it seems sophisticated, tolerant, and cosmopolitan. We are encouraged to think that equity requires us to be inclusive and to accept diverse cultures.

But a little observation and reflection shows that the idea quickly runs into contradiction, since many of those cultures are anything but sophisticated, tolerant, or cosmopolitan. Many, in fact, are altogether intolerant. If tolerance is a virtue, then it makes little sense to say that it means we should be equally tolerant of tolerant and intolerant cultures.

If we tolerate all cultures, we still find that some of them do not tolerate us. Even if we decide to tolerate cultures like that anyway, because we are open-minded and easygoing and they are faraway and weak, we have to keep an eye out in case they begin to get closer and stronger. If we fail to pay attention, they may find a way to threaten us, as Russia, China, and political Islam do today. They may really get closer and stronger if we begin to forget the difference between tolerating something and approving of it. If we equally approve of tolerant and intolerant cultures, then we can no longer pride ourselves on being tolerant.

Others are not comfortable or sophisticated enough to fall into this kind of error. You see many of them, from countries with cultures that are violent and intolerant, trying to come to liberal democratic countries instead. You see this in Europe and we see this in America. You

don't see much traffic in the other direction, people from liberal democratic countries trying to move to countries without the rule of law, without a free government, without any respect for human rights. The crowds are trying to migrate from countries that are ruled by brute force to countries that enjoy more decent regimes and offer a better life for their citizens.

This is a sign of a flaw in the sophisticated viewpoint that all cultures are equal, which has gained a growing sympathy among crowds in civilized countries who follow the fashion of political correctness. If there is a difference between civilized and uncivilized cultures, and people live better who enjoy the benefits of civilization, then there is something perverse, wrong-headed, and self-defeating when civilized people refuse to acknowledge it.

We remember and honor Winston Churchill, who understood this difference between civilization and a barbarous way of life. Drawing on lifelong study and understanding of history and politics, through his speeches and writings he showed others how living a civilized life makes us happier and more fully human. By prudent action as a statesman, and by inspiring men and women all around the world, he helped them find their way through a violent century in which brutal totalitarian governments tyrannized over their people and threatened decent nations.

To Churchill's credit, throughout his life he was not tempted, as many others were in the twentieth century, to countenance tyranny from the left or from the right when it seemed akin to their own views. Churchill was not distracted by ideological excuses for tyranny: he was equally and resolutely opposed to both communism and Nazism. By his example, by his good humor, and by the irresistible delight he took in life, he points the way to what a human being can achieve.

In the words of Churchill's youngest daughter Mary Soames, who as the longtime patron of the International Churchill Society was an inspiration and an example to all who knew her, we aim to keep his memory green and the record accurate. Most recently, thousands of members and friends of Churchill gathered earlier this month in person and online at the 38th International Churchill Conference in London to explore the theme of Churchill and freedom.

In addition to an international conference each year, the Society's educational programs include seminars for students, teachers, and professors. The focus on Churchill in the curriculum of the Institute for Political Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal, in which I was honored to take part last week, makes its academic program a shining light for students who are inspired by his example as they embark on adult lives and careers.

Through its quarterly journal *Finest Hour*, and a publishing program to keep Churchill's books in print, including the new edition of his early book *The River War* displayed on the book table at this conference, the Society collaborates with affiliated organizations and societies around the world to help people understand why Churchill's life and career deserve attention.

The International Churchill Society has been fortunate for many years to have an affiliate in Portugal, the oldest ally of Churchill's country, the United Kingdom. The Churchill Society of Portugal, led by its founder Professor João Carlos Espada, a gentleman of many talents, has attracted a select and loyal membership from his discerning countrymen and offers a growing

number of enlightened alumni of the Institute for Political Studies, who have been educated under Professor Espada's guidance, a chance to continue their exploration and deepen their appreciation of Churchill's life and achievements.

Tonight the International Churchill Society is honored to welcome into our ranks of affiliated organizations around the world the newly-formed Churchill Society of Brazil. Under the leadership of its founder, Ricardo Sondermann, whose remarks we have enjoyed hearing tonight, our new sister society aims to encourage Churchill's example and inspiration in South America's largest country.

Brazil, Portugal's sister nation in the Atlantic lusosphere, was among the first nations to take up the invitation from Roosevelt and Churchill to endorse the Atlantic Charter and join the united nations fighting the Axis powers during the Second World War. The International Churchill Society looks forward to our partnership with Mr. Sondermann and the Churchill Society of Brazil.