

**Rt. Hon. Christopher Patten**

Lord Garel Jones, Tristan, Miguel Ángel, Ladies and Gentlemen: Perhaps I had better find out straight away, Tristan, how long you want me to go on for?

(Tristan: As long as you like.)

As long as I like. It was the very first constituency lunch that I did when I was a Member of Parliament, in one of those fell moments, which put an end to my political career, in a way. The very first constituency lunch held by Wintery: I said to the president as we went into lunch, how long would you want me to speak for? And he said: You go on as long as you like, but we all leave at 2:15. So, perhaps I will have to judge for myself when the booking fee runs out. Tristan is entirely right to say that he and I go back a long way. Our friendship and our years together cover the period when the Conservative Party in my country was still regarded as the natural party of government, so you can tell how old we are.

We have done, as old lags, as convicts, say, "we have done time together". And we have done quite a bit of time together. And it is always a pleasure to be associated with any of Tristan's intellectual endeavours.

One finds oneself at a conference like the one that will start tomorrow, the Summit between the European Union and the Countries of the Latin American and Caribbean regions. One finds oneself inevitably talking a great deal at the time about money, about trade, about free trade agreements, agreements about intellectual property rights; on public procurement, on trade in services, agreements about all sorts of things I had never heard of before. I found myself the other day mastering a brief extraordinarily well on pine-wood nematodes.

And one finds oneself talking about wine agreements. And in my experience, negotiating about wine is incomparably more difficult than negotiating about anti-ballistic missiles. Now, all those things matter. We know how important the dismantling of barriers to trade is in increasing people's living standards, in promoting growth, in enabling people to not just get jobs, but to get better jobs.

One knows as well that one is hoping to create the resources which deal with social inequities and hence, help to produce greater political stability. But one is also aware

and perhaps particularly aware that at a conference like this, trade, commerce, money... is not the whole of what one is discussing.

And I would like to make an announcement today in the context of the broader discussions you have been having about our common cultural heritage, about our common pluralist aspirations, about the common challenges that you face in running institutions in two continents, two continents which share so much in our literary, cultural, historic heritage.

Let me put what I will say fairly briefly in context, let me put it in the context of two or three books, which have made, or in my judgement, in one case, will make a considerable impact on intellectual and political debate.

We ended the 1980s with that famous article by Francis Fukuyama in *Foreign Affairs*, subsequently turned into a book, "The End of History", in which to be fair to Fukuyama, he was not arguing that we had seen the end of interesting times, but was contending that we had seen the end of the debate between right and left. That we had seen the triumph of virtually 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal notions of politics and economics. It was the triumph of Tocqueville and Mill and the other great figures of 19<sup>th</sup> century political philosophy. The barbarians had been repelled from the gates. Politics was over. Doris Lessing, who was herself a vigorous card-carrying Communist in 1940s and 50s, said, when she came to write her *Memoirs* in the 1990s in the "Introduction" that she no longer felt under any obligation to talk about politics, because politics was a thing of the past. Politics did not matter any more. We were living in a society which was entirely about marginal consumer choices. So how much had we succeeded in driving the barbarians from the gates?

The decade ended with the publication of another book by an American writer, who is in my judgement, a very good example of the proposition that "a little learning is a very dangerous thing". A writer called Robert Kaplan. Now, Kaplan is notorious for two reasons: the effect he has had on two American Presidents. Kaplan wrote a book called "Balkan Ghosts", about a decade ago, which is said to have been extremely influential in persuading President Clinton not to get involved in the Balkans, a nasty, dangerous place.

The most recent book by Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy", suggests that we are now living in a "Hobbsian" global community, in which the rich and the powerful have to

look after themselves, have to protect their own liberal democracy, have to protect their own pluralism and “hang the rest”. And it is said that Kaplan’s writing has had a great effect on another American president; this was said in the Washington Post, so it must be true.

A third book is about to be produced, which I think is as remarkable in its way, as Spengler’s “Decline of the West”, except that I think it is much more sensible. A book by a historian, a military historian, a nuclear strategist, a former member of the National Security Council in the United States called Philip Bobbitt. A book called “The Shield of Achilles”, in which -and this is to caricature what is an extraordinarily sophisticated argument - Bobbitt traces the history of the State from the feudal state destroyed by guns to the domestic state destroyed by railways, to the mutation of the State today, into what he describes as the “market state”, created at the end of a period of epochal wars by information technology.

And in what sort of a world is the market state going to exist, according to Bobbitt? And this is where the depressing answers come, as he predicts a world which lies somewhere between low-level global violence and cataclysm.

Now how is all this relevant to you? I think it is relevant in three ways. First of all, I think your world, your shared world of ideas, of intellectual endeavour, your world of scholarships --and it is worth recalling that the Chinese regarded a scholar as having a particularly distinct aura and a particularly distinct authority - your world is relevant, I think, particularly to us in Europe, but perhaps as well in Latin America for this reason.

In that post Fujiyama world, in that world in which we have managed to defeat totalitarianism, we can settle back with 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal democracy, triumphant. In that world, politicians, I think, cease to connect political purpose with principles and ideas. I think it is an extraordinary world to live in, in which people ask focus groups what they should believe. And then go back to the same focus groups, to ask them how they should express what the focus groups have told them they believe.

I do not think it is very surprising that when you disconnect politics from ideas you create a vacuum, which is filled by people with very simple solutions. And I think that is what has been happening in Europe. I think if you divorce politics from ideas, if you divorce politics from serious political debate, if you divorce politics from intellectual

struggle, the danger is that you encourage populism on a huge scale. And I think that is very largely what we have been seeing in Europe.

Secondly, I am in my copious spare time, the Chancellor of a University, Newcastle University, part of a great 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial revolution foundation, in a part of England which used to be famous for its shipbuilding industry, when we still built ships. And being Chancellor, which is an entirely honorific occupation, I should say, being Chancellor of a University, has made me think quite a lot about the role of Universities and the role of intellectual endeavour in society.

We talk these days about knowledge-based economies and there is a tendency, I think, to talk about universities, to talk about academic institutions, entirely in terms of economic expedience. You do not have to contemplate the term of "knowledge-based economy" for long to realise what a witless expression it is. When is an economy by and large not to be "knowledge-based", since the invention of the abacus? But we know perfectly well, that increasingly high technology and economy performance can be related to research and development and can be related to the work that goes on in universities. It is interesting that when I go to China these days, it is the thing the Chinese most want to talk to us about; cooperation in science and technology with Europe. So I accept that there is an important role for universities and for cultural institutions in that economic sense.

But I feel much more profoundly that one of the two greatest 19<sup>th</sup> century Englishmen, Cardinal Newman, was right, when he argued the liberal case for universities and for cultural institutions; when he argued that the universities and cultural institutions were part of the fabric of a plural, open society. He argued, of course, that they were also of enormous importance in enabling the individual to develop to his or her full potential, that is true. But he saw the university fulfilling a genuinely liberal role in defending and preserving pluralism. It is in that case, in part, that I/we at the European Commission have been extremely keen to develop further the relationship between higher education in Latin America and in the European Union.

A large number of students used to come from Latin America to study here in Europe and many still do come but not nearly enough. I think that that is partly a result of the extraordinary economic growth in the United States in the last few years, 40 %, and the global economic growth in the second half of the 1990s. I think it is also partly because

of the endowments which many American Universities have and because of the attractions which the American Universities can offer.

I think that we in Europe suffer greatly because we are still not attracting as many graduates to do their further degrees from Latin American Universities to European Universities. We gain enormously from young people coming to study with us, just as we know that our own young gain enormously by going to study elsewhere. Two of my own daughters who would have been able to address you in Spanish, which I am afraid that their uneducated father is unable to do, spent a good deal of time studying in Latin America, with the result, I say with pride and shame, that they know more about Latin American poetry than they do about English poetry.

But we gain enormously from the infusion of young talented people in our own universities and I think they can make a contribution to their own societies when they go back, not just because of the economic consequences of higher education, but for other reasons, more profound than political reasons as well.

We, therefore, made this proposal - and we have had great support from Miguel Ángel and from the Spanish government - of establishing a scholarship scheme, which we have called "ALBAN", which will provide over the next nine years -at a cost of eighty-eight and a half million euros-, four thousand scholarships for young graduates from Latin American universities and some young people who are doing more technical courses to come and study here at European universities. We will start with scholarships in the academic year 2003 – 2004. The average value of each scholarship will be about nineteen thousand euros per year and we will be asking for bids from a network of universities and other foundations to help us manage the programme in the years ahead.

I think that is an important initiative for Europe to take and if we can make this work with Latin America, I hope we will be able to, in due course, extend it to other regions in the world as well.

I put this in the context of the broader intellectual debate, that you have been having about the role of institutions and the broader intellectual debate triggered, I think, about some of the ideas I referred to earlier.

But there is one other aspect which I think is relevant, relevant to the work of universities and relevant to the work of cultural and other non-governmental institutions. You do comprise and do so far more today because of the impact of information technology and a real global community of scholars... a community which is a reflection of the better side of globalisation. There is, of course, a darker side as well, a darker side which can, in our judgement, in Europe I believe, only be dealt with by multi-lateral cooperation on an enormous scale.

I do not think it is very difficult to argue for anybody who is part of the broader global academic community. But you can no longer these days define the national interest in strictly national terms. I think that all of us know that you can only pursue the national interest, by recognising invariably you require international solutions to what appear at first sight to be national problems. I think that is another issue to which your institutions and the academic community can bring your scholarship and your insight and I hope you will do so.

I am afraid, provoked by Tristan, that this is a long way from the extremely good speaking note I was going to stand up and read you about the scholarship scheme. I have got it still here, if you'd like, but I think perhaps not on balance. I just wanted to put in context the announcement about this scholarship scheme which I think is one of the most positive things which will come out of this Summit.

Finally, I would just like to thank all those who organised this dialogue between cultural institutions in Latin America and the European Union, as one of the gems in the crown of this Summit. I think it is an extremely good idea and a demonstration of how fundamental our relationship is and how enormously important it is as well, that we use it to its full capacity, in working together to make the world in the next few years a slightly less alarming place than Mr. Kaplan and Mr. Bobbitt have suggested it is going to be. I hope we can work together to make sure that unlike the rich in rich suburbs with walls and security guards, we do not think that all we have to do is secure our own well-being against a brutish and poor world. I hope we can work together to ensure that liberal values enhance people's lives as widely as possible, in countries both poor as well as rich.