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“Long Live Liberty”

In the eyes of most American citizens, a democratic government provides a life in which they have a voice in their government and know that they have certain rights that will never be stripped away. Not only do most Americans feel this way, but so do numerous other countries all over the world. Many countries today currently have some form of democracy or are slowly converting to some kind a democratic government. Democracy allows citizens of a country to construct rules which give them certain freedoms and rights. Benjamin Franklin once wrote about an idea such as democracy, “God grant that not only the love of liberty but a thorough knowledge of the rights of man may pervade all the nations of the earth, so that a philosopher may set his foot anywhere on its surface and say: ‘This is my country’.” If democracy continues to spread, eventually the entire world may be able to cooperate with one another and fulfill Franklin’s wish. Democracy has proven itself to be the most dependable type of government over the past 300 years and now countries all around the world are recognizing the significance of such a government.

Democracy, in its simplest interpretation means government by the people either directly or through elected representatives. Even though democracy can have such a simple denotation, there are many different forms of democracy, therefore expanding on the basic definition of democracy. For instance, Iceland has a democracy; the United States of America, a federal republic; Australia, a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy; the United Kingdom, a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; Italy, a multiparty republic; and Albania, an emerging democracy. The one common thread between all these countries is “the love of liberty” and “a thorough knowledge of the rights of man.” The reason many of these countries choose to have a democratic government is that no other government gives the people the right to have a say in their futures.

According to Victor Davis Hanson, a senior fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution, “Democracy is not just majority rule through voting, but an entire protocol—free expression, property rights, protection of minority rights, economic liberality, civilian control of the military.” This democracy which we take for granted did not come without a price. The people in the United States have fought for their rights; they have protested over such affairs as the abolition of slavery, the right to vote, and the rights of minorities. The inhabitants of this country have fought wars and lost thousands upon thousands of soldiers. So why would these soldiers sacrifice their lives? They fought because they loved their country and what their country symbolizes—freedom. This freedom and love for one’s country epitomizes Franklin’s idea.

Many other countries have come to see that democracy outshines any other form of government. As Winston Churchill once said, “Tyranny could not be ignored or appeased without great risk” which means that the countries who have followed in the United States’ footsteps realize that the long journey is worth the destination. A few wars may have to be fought and mistakes may have to be made before a country finds the right choice of government. However, democracy seems to be the only government that pulls people together and gives them a sense of freedom, choice, and ownership.

Our president George W. Bush said during a speech on Winston Churchill and the War on Terror, “The message to those who long for liberty and those who work for reform is that they can be certain that they have a strong ally, a constant ally in the United States of America.” Those nations wishing to join us because of this common bond also realize this need for such a government in other countries who do not yet have a stable government. “The love of liberty” which Franklin wrote of, illustrates the feeling of the countries around the world who now live in a democratic nation. One day, every country may come to see that democracy is the only equalizer available. We can see countries coming together over democracy even today which gives us hope that one day “a philosopher may set his foot anywhere on its and say: ‘This is my country’.”