Speech by the Vice-Chancellor
Thanking The Hon President Fidel Ramos
Inaugural Centre for Democratic Institutions Annual Address
Main Committee Room, Parliament House
26 November 1998, 12.00 noon to 2.00 pm

(Filipinos employ the American practice of retaining the title of President after individuals have completed their incumbencies, hence “President Ramos”)

The Honourable President Fidel Ramos
The Honourable Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Guest
Ladies and Gentlemen

President Ramos, The Australian National University is honoured that you consented to deliver the Inaugural Centre for Democratic Institutions Annual Address.

Your credentials to do so as a soldier, statesman and scholar speak for themselves.

Your present role as Senior Adviser to the current President of The Philippines ensures that your wisdom and experience continues to season your country’s efforts and those of the international community to secure peace, democratic institutions and stability.

It is appropriate, therefore, that you have brought that wisdom and experience to us today.

The Centre for Democratic Institutions at The Australian National University is an initiative of the Australian Government.

- And the University is proud that it was chosen as the location of this important initiative.
The ANU has a long tradition of involvement in Asia and the Pacific, playing a unique role in the economics, politics and sociology of the region and has produced many exceptional regional leaders. Its reputation for excellence was acknowledged again earlier this year by *Asia Week*. And this excellence is something in which the University takes pride.

It makes it a fitting home for the Centre for Democratic Institutions, which will in turn strengthen the linkages between The ANU and the countries of the region.

Earlier this week, I attended the opening of the new Graduate House at the University by the Governor-General, which is a new state of the art residence for postgraduate students, including some from Australia, but 90% of whom are from other countries. The students have chosen to live in an environment in which the varied cultures and living needs of a diverse student population are accommodated in harmony.

Students from the countries of our region have always played a significant role at The Australian National University.

- In 1998, we have 609 students from Asia
- 560 of them from East, South-East and North-East Asia
- and 46 from your own country.

Your visit to deliver this Inaugural Address strengthens those links at the highest level.

The address and its delivery in this venue are symbolic of what the Centre for Democratic Institutions will offer.

It brings together your own distinguished service as soldier, statesman and scholar with the linkages between The Australian National University and the institutions of government here in Canberra and an already strong relationship with the countries of our region.

We are all grateful for your contribution today and for the honour you have done CDI and The ANU and on behalf of the University and the Centre I would like to express my sincere appreciation for a very inspiring address.