Two distinguished figures will share the 2005 Civil Courage Prize: Min Ko Naing of Burma and Anna Politkovskaya of Russia. The awards will be made at a ceremony to be held October 11, 2005 at the Harold Pratt House in New York.

Min Ko Naing is one of the foremost leaders of the 1988 non-violent popular uprising against Burma’s brutal dictatorship and was imprisoned for 15 years, suffering torture and solitary confinement. He has been described as second in importance in the Burmese opposition movement to Nobel Prize-winner, Aung San Suu Kyi.

While he was a student at the University of Rangoon, Min Ko Naing secretly organized a nationwide student union to oppose military rule. In 1988, the union coordinated a nationwide non-violent uprising, and millions marched throughout Burma demanding democracy and an end to military rule. Participants reached beyond the students to monks, teachers, and even members of the military.

Released from prison in November 2004, he has declined the Civil Courage Prize money. His share, $25,000, will be donated in his name to a non-profit organization.

Anna Politkovskaya, a leading Russian journalist, has faced death-threats, intimidation and poisoning.

Former Asia Society Head, Nicholas Platt, Will Give Keynote at Award Ceremony

Former US Ambassador to the Philippines and Pakistan, Nicholas Platt, who also served as President of the Asia Society, will be the featured speaker at the Civil Courage Prize Awards Ceremony to be held October 11, 2005 in New York.

Platt served also in Hong Kong, Beijing and Tokyo. Moreover, in his remarkable career, he also served as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for UN Affairs and Executive Secretary of the Department of State.
Min Ko Naing and Anna Politkovskaya

for her coverage of the atrocities committed in Chechnya.

She made her name by writing vivid, accurate and detailed reports on the plight of civilians in Chechnya brutalized by Russian and internal troops since 1994. Standing up to the power of the state in 2000, she was arrested in Chechnya by the FSB (formerly the KGB) and imprisoned in a pit for three days without food or water. Having exposed the war crimes of a Russian officer, she was forced into hiding in 2001 when he threatened to kill her.

As well as her frank writing for newspapers, Anna Politkovskaya is the author of three books: A Dirty War: A Russian Reporter in Chechnya; Dispatches from Chechnya; and Putin's Russia. Among her honors, she has received the Courage in Journalism award from the International Women's Media Foundation in 2002, and a special award of Amnesty International in 2001.