# DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN A CHALLENGING WORLD

## HEARING

BEFORE THE

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# DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN A CHALLENGING WORLD

**THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2018**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. This committee will come to order.

There is no doubt democracy is on the ropes. Freedom House reports that democracy has declined worldwide over the last decade.

The question for us is do we care? And if so, what should we do about it?

We better care. Democracy's expansion brought unprecedented prosperity. America is more secure when fewer nations are authoritarian, which is the unfortunate alternative to democracy.

Strongmen regimes justify their repression at home by creating enemies abroad. Since the freedom we enjoy is a threat to authoritarian regimes, the U.S. and our allies are natural targets of their aggression.

We have seen this with Russia and China and North Korea, and I'd rather trade and do business with a democracy than with a regime.

Democracy is morally just. Members of this committee have spent countless hours holding hearings, protesting, and fighting injustice abroad. Human rights are far better protected in democratic countries, ones without dank prison cells full of political prisoners.

Democracy is more than just elections. Democracy without the foundation of rule of law or individual liberties, a free press, and a culture of tolerance is dangerous populism or mob rule.

We've seen that in Burma, South Sudan, Gaza, and too many other places. Democratic values are universal. Of course, each country will develop democracy in different ways and at a different pace, and we may have differences over how best to promote democracy in various countries, especially given our strategic interests.

But we should always remember that, as Ronald Reagan noted in his 1982 Westminster speech, free elections are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At home, we must maintain the decades-old bipartisan consensus that democracy is a core element of U.S. foreign policy.

That is why it is important to have the National Endowment for Democracy, the International Republican Institute, and the National Democratic Institute here today, and that is why it's important that Congress continues to adequately fund these institutions.

Promoting democracy is not easy. There are many stresses, including destabilizing mass refugee flows and accelerating economic change.

Mistakes have been made, but lessons have been learned. These include the need to promote women in building and supporting democracy.

Compounding the challenge, authoritarian regimes such as Russia and China are aggressively attacking democracies across the globe, including attacking our own democracy.

As one witness will note, these attacks are broad, political, economic, and they are cultural. Beijing is spending billions, using the technology revolution to surveille its citizens at home while spreading propaganda abroad.

I have seen Moscow's assault on its neighbors firsthand. We better wake up to this threat. Now.

For years, our great Nation has inspired countless individuals to seek freedom in their homelands. Some have been tortured, murdered for their democratic commitment.

Many have succeeded. Our wonderful legacy of leadership on this issue has given us power and influence. We must protect and nurture our own democracy for that to continue.

And I will momentarily turn to our ranking member, Mr. Eliot Engel from New York, for his opening statement here this morning as well.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to our witnesses, welcome. I want to especially thank Ken Wollack for 35 years of service. Congratulations on your retirement in September.

Your organizations do incredible work promoting democracy around the world, making governments more accountable and responsive and shining the light on abuses and corruption.

It's such important work because around the world democracy, unfortunately, is backsliding. According to the Freedom in the World report, democracy and global freedom has declined around the world for 12 straight years.

In Africa, while we have seen a slight opening of political systems, in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Gambia, and elsewhere, in Burundi, Rwanda, and the Republic of the Congo, the new normal has become constitutional coups, which is term limited incumbents changing the rules so they can stay in power.

When I was in Africa with the chairman we tried to speak to the leadership about this but, of course, they wouldn't speak with us because they knew what we were going to say.

Tanzania and Zambia show warning signs of creeping authoritarianism, and more and more governments are shutting down the internet to stifle dissent and buy time to tamper with election results.

In the Middle East, Tunisia's progress has been inspiring and we should help improve the climate for foreign investment there. But it's another story in Egypt, where draconian laws have limited the ability of civil society to operate.

And I am a friend of Egypt, so it really pains me when I say this. The recent elections in Iraq are overshadowed by reports of fraud, which should be cleared up by full recounts before forming a new government.

Across Europe, democratic practices have steadily eroded. Turkey's President, Erdogan, has consolidated power and cracked down on dissent. It's just really disgraceful what's going on in Turkey.

In Hungary, refugees and migrants face hostility from the higher levels of government. In Poland, free speech and an independent judiciary are under attack.

Now, much of this is driven by Russia, a fake democracy, whose leader, Vladimir Putin, seeks to undermine Western unity and discredit democratic institutions.

Since 2014, in Asia, there has been a military coup in Thailand, a populist leader elected in the Philippines, who shoots people on sight because the thinks they are involved with drugs, ethnic cleansing in Burma at the hands of the military—very disappointing.

Cambodia's prime minister of 33 years has neutralized political opposition and China grows more aggressive in oppressing its own citizens, quietly promoting its authoritarian model around the world as an alternative to Western democratic values and chipping away at international norms.

Here in our neighborhood in our hemisphere, Nicholas Maduro has turned Venezuela into a full-blown dictatorship with sham elections, political prisoners, and a denial of the country's humanitarian crisis.

Taken together, these cases and others become a problem for our national security. The United States wants to see vibrant democracies around the world, countries that share our values and priorities.

Strong democracies make strong partners. When we collaborate with like-minded governments, we are better able to meet challenges, project stability, and drive prosperity.

On the other hand, the greatest threats we face come from places where governments are closed off, where human rights aren't a priority, where ordinary citizens have less of a say in choosing their leaders.

These are the places where vulnerable people are exploited and extremism is able to take root. So promoting democracy, helping to advance our democratic values around the world—the work that your three organizations do—as I say to the witnesses—should be at the center of our foreign policy.

As I often say, it's the right thing to do because democracy helps people live fuller freer lives and it's also the smart thing to do because democracy is good for our security.

That's why it's baffling that the administration has decided that democracy is no longer a foreign policy priority. The budgets the administration has sent us seek to slash investments in diplomacy and development by a third.

So many of the efforts we make around the world to strengthen democracy would be hobbled if Congress went along with these draconian cuts.

Thankfully, Congress did not. In Nicaragua, for example, 140 people have been killed in the last 2 months, primarily at the hands of President Ortega's thugs.

The White House request for democracy assistance in Nicaragua for next year, zero. The three organizations represented today all rely on Federal grants to carry out their important work. Not if the administration gets its way.

The State Department even removed democracy from its mission statement. What does that say about American values and American leadership?

And on issues like this, leadership starts at the top. Democracy isn't just under attack in distant places. The Economist's Democracy Index recently downgraded the United States to flawed democracy as opposed to a full democracy.

Just yesterday, the President tweeted, "Our country's biggest enemy is the fake news so easily promulgated by fools."

Attacking the free press, the way I see it, is an attack on democracy. It's an attack on a fundamental right in this country.

Our President has spoken glowingly of Vladimir Putin, Saddam Hussein, Erdogan, Duterte in the Philippines, Xi in China, and, of course, in Singapore, he had nothing but kind words for Kim Jong-un, a brutal dictator, a murderer, who rules over the most oppressive system in the world, all while attacking America's closest friends like Canada.

So the world looks to us to set an example, to show leadership, to advance our interests in a way that respects the dignity and rights of all people, and right now, I don't believe we are sending the right message.

So I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how we can get back on track and revitalize democracy as part of our foreign policy.

I thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

This morning, I am pleased to welcome our distinguished guests here on the panel, including Mr. Carl Gershman, who has served as president of the National Endowment for Democracy since its founding in 1984.

He's a long-time friend of this committee. He's respected worldwide for his work, especially in his efforts to help peaceably end the Cold War and transition countries from behind the Iron Curtain to democracy, and he's done this through nongovernmental action.

Before his time at NED, he was the senior counselor to the United States representative to the United Nations, where he worked on international human rights issues.

Mr. Daniel Twining is the president of the International Republican Institute and previously he served as the counselor and director of the Asia program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. He also worked here in Congress as a foreign policy advisor to Senator John McCain.

And we have Mr. Kenneth Wollack. He is president of the National Democratic Institute, and he has co-edited the Middle East Policy Survey and written regularly on foreign affairs for the Los Angeles times.

We wish him well on his retirement, but we are going to miss his active expertise on so many issues.

We appreciate all of you being here today, especially given the contributions the three of you have made, and without objection, the witnesses' full prepared statements will be made part of the record.

Members here will have 5 legislative, or calendar, days to submit statements and questions and extraneous material for the record.

So if you would, Mr. Gershman, please summarize your remarks and after we hear from the panel we will go to our questions.

**STATEMENT OF MR. CARL GERSHMAN, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY**

Mr. GERSHMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your long leadership and for your commitment to the cause of democracy throughout the world. We deeply appreciate it.

I agree with you that democracy is on the ropes. Freedom House data and so forth, resurgent authoritarianism, democratic backsliding in many countries, the sharp power phenomenon that we have called attention to.

But I want to devote myself this morning, if I may, to a more positive narrative, to take a look at something that I would call democratic resilience and also authoritarian vulnerability, and then what we can do practically to help, because I think it would be a mistake to assume that the decline of a democracy is inevitable or irreversible.

I'd call your attention, for example, to some recent events, among them the remarkable democratic transition in Gambia; the fall of the corrupt Zuma government in South Africa; the stunning victory of democracy in Malaysia, and the freeing of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim; the equally stunning triumph of democracy in Armenia; and the successful local elections in Tunisia that are, in my view, a decisive step forward in the Arab world's first democracy.

These are just a few of the examples that I could give of recent democratic advances. There is Slovakia, interesting developments in Ethiopia. Even in a country like Uzbekistan we can see some glimmerings of some opening.

They show that we should never underestimate the desire of ordinary people for freedom and dignity or the extent of the anger at corrupt and unresponsive government officials.

On the question of authoritarian vulnerability, the Islamic Republic of Iran, for example, is a failed system, in my view, which was shown by the protests that swept over the country less than 6 months ago and that will certainly recur.

The Bolivarian dictatorship in Venezuela and the Ortega regime in Nicaragua are also, in my view, failed systems, not to mention the Cuban and North Korean dictatorships as well as the stagnant Russian kleptocracy.

China is projecting its military and economic power and threatening to spread its model of the totalitarian surveillance state.

But while Xi's regime may claim performance legitimacy because of its economic growth, it lacks political legitimacy. Why must Xi prohibit what he calls historical nihilism, meaning any discussion

of the Tiananmen Square massacre or the Maoist disaster like the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward?

Why has it been necessary to eliminate a political dissident like Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo, to arrest hundreds of human rights lawyers, suppress the Christian house church movement in China and expunge the cultural and religious identity of Tibetan and Uighur minorities?

By stoking nationalism to fill the void left by the death of Communist ideology, the regime just exposes its failure to develop values with broad appeal.

Why, therefore, should we assume that the so-called China model will not also end up as Reagan said in that Westminster address "on the ash heap of history?"

We must not underestimate the immense challenge of building and consolidating stable democracies, and Congressman Engel referred to that.

Democracy is hard work, especially in countries that are poor and that have experienced violent conflict, and it takes time and a great deal of effort.

That means helping the people who share our democratic values and who want to build free societies governed by the rule of law is something we have to do.

And so it is in that spirit that the NED and its institutes helps the kind of activists we honored last night, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for speaking at our event last night with the NED's Democracy Awardees who are fighting to rescue the people of North Korea from enslavement and it's remarkable work that they do and which we are supporting.

It's why we have supported people like Cynthia Gabriel, one of the recipients of last year's Democracy Award, who led the effort to expose the massive corruption associated with the 1MDB scandal in Malaysia—Raphael Marques, another award recipient last year, who has led the fight against equally massive corruption in Angola and who is now on trial for allegedly insulting corrupt officials.

Other examples include the support that NED has given in Ukraine to the Anti-Corruption Action Center that has tirelessly led the campaign for the establishment of an independent anti-corruption court, and I am pleased to report that just last week the Ukrainian Parliament at long last approved legislation to create such a court.

Another important victory just occurred in Afghanistan where a daily newspaper that we support published an investigative report on the illegal issuance of diplomatic passports to Afghan strongmen and the government immediately cancelled over 4,000 such passports in Afghanistan.

The last example is the nonpartisan training conducted by four NGOs in Tunisia of new candidates who participated in last month's local elections. Of the 235 individuals who were trained, 112 won seats and 25 were at the heads of their electoral lists.

These elections have made democracy in Tunisia more inclusive and responsive, dealing a blow to ISIS, which has been able to recruit young people in Tunisia who are frustrated over the failure

of the revolution to produce meaningful social and economic change.

Mr. Chairman, I could go on and give many other examples of dedicated NED grantees whose work is advancing American values and security around the world.

Our job is to empower such brave people and to let them know that they are not alone because they have the support of the American people and the American Congress, of course.

This, I believe, is what Reagan meant when he said at Westminster that as important as military strength is, and I quote,

> "The ultimate determinant in the struggle that is now going on in the world will not be bombs and rockets but a test of wills and ideas, a trial of spiritual resolve, the values we hold, the beliefs we cherish, and the ideals to which we are dedicated."

We can win this test of wills and ideas if we have the spiritual resolve to fight and to stand with the people and support people around the world who are struggling to build democratic societies.

If we do this, we will make the world a safer and more peaceful place and the values upon which this Nation is founded will be strengthened as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gershman follows:]

**Testimony of Carl Gershman**

**House Foreign Affairs Committee**

**June 14, 2018**

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your continued support for the National Endowment for Democracy.

The NED was authorized by Congress in 1983 as an independent grant-making organization to fund brave actors on the front lines of the struggle for liberty in the world. We make grants to our four party, labor, and business core institutes, as well as some 1,400 small grants that we make annually to civil society groups, independent media, and other non-governmental organizations. Such grants, along with initiatives such as the World Movement for Democracy that networks the activists we support, provide a coordinated, whole-of-society approach to aiding democracy. This approach makes the NED both effective and cost-effective.

The Cold War ended more than a quarter of a century ago, but today the United States confronts enemies that are at least as dangerous as the Soviet Union was in 1983 when the NED was founded. It is not a coincidence that the threats we face emanate from states that are dictatorships – above all China, Russia, and Iran. Supporting democracy and investing in democratic leaders and building democratic institutions are both moral and political imperatives. Systemic corruption, deep inequality and injustice, and the failure of governments to address the needs of ordinary citizens breed political instability, terrorism, and massive flows of refugees – conditions that threaten our own security and well-being.

Authoritarian leaders have accelerated their efforts to penetrate and corrupt fragile states through aggressive political, economic and cultural mechanisms with the goal of purchasing political influence and securing strategic ports and resources.

In this new era of contestation, China has claimed a larger role on the global stage and has sought to promote its own preferred ideas, norms, and models of governance. "Sharp Power," as described in a December 2017 report by NED's International Forum for Democratic Studies, seeks to pierce and penetrate targeted populations by manipulating and distorting the information that reaches them. While there are differences in the shape and tone of the Chinese and Russian approaches, both stem from an ideological model that privileges state power over individual liberty and is fundamentally hostile to free expression, open debate, and independent thought. Beijing, which spends an estimated $10-15 billion on such Sharp Power efforts, is investing resources in media, academic, cultural, and think tank initiatives, even in consolidated democratic states, like Australia and New Zealand and in our own country as well.

Democracy is being severely challenged today in many other ways. The latest Freedom House annual survey reports that civil and political rights in the world have declined for the 12th consecutive year. As worrying as this trend is, I think it would be a serious mistake to assume that the decline of democracy is inevitable or irreversible.

Democracy was also thought to have been in decline in 1982 when Ronald Reagan delivered the Westminster Address that launched the bipartisan effort in Congress to pass the National Endowment for Democracy Act. The Solidarity Movement in Poland had just been suppressed, the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan, and the U.S. was still reeling from the defeat in Vietnam.

Yet Reagan said that he saw a "democratic revolution gathering new strength" in the world, and he was right. What Samuel Huntington was later to call "the third wave of democratization" was just gathering strength in the early 1980s, and while it was later to crest with the fall of authoritarian regimes in Latin America and East Asia and the collapse of communism in Central Europe and the Soviet Union, none of that could have been anticipated in 1982.

I don't know if a fourth wave of democratization is now gathering strength, but we shouldn't discount that possibility. I would call your attention to some encouraging recent events – among them the remarkable democratic transition in The Gambia, the fall of the corrupt Zuma government in South Africa, the stunning victory of democracy in Malaysia and the freeing of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, the equally stunning triumph in Armenia of the democratic opposition, and the successful local elections in Tunisia that are a decisive step forward in the Arab world's first democracy.

These are just a few of the examples I could give of recent democratic advances. They show that we should never underestimate the desire of ordinary people for freedom and dignity, or the extent of the anger at corrupt and unresponsive government officials.

Nor should we assume that strongmen always win. Many people thought communism would last forever because it had concentrated so much power in the hands of the ruling bureaucracy. Yet Reagan understood the vulnerability of closed and corrupt political systems, which is why he declared in his Westminster address that "the march of freedom and democracy…will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash-heap of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people." That vision remains relevant today.

For example, the Islamic Republic of Iran is a failed system, which was shown by the protests that swept over the country less than six months ago and that will certainly recur. The Bolivarian dictatorship in Venezuela and the Ortega regime in Nicaragua are also failed systems, not to mention Cuban and North Korea dictatorships, as well as the stagnant Russian kleptocracy.

China is projecting its military and economic power and threatening to spread its model of a totalitarian surveillance state. But while Xi's regime may claim performance legitimacy because of its economic growth, it lacks political legitimacy because it was never freely elected, and its insecurity shows in many different ways. Why must Xi prohibit what he calls "historical nihilism, meaning any discussion of the Tiananmen massacre or such Maoist disasters like the

Cultural Revolution? Why has it been necessary to eliminate a peaceful dissident like the Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo, or to arrest hundreds of human rights lawyers, suppress the Christian house-church movement, and expunge the cultural and religious identity of the Tibetan and Uyghur minorities? By stoking nationalism to fill the void left by the death of communist ideology, the regime just exposes its failure to develop values with broad appeal.

Why, therefore, should we assume that the so-called "China model" will not also end up, as Reagan said, on the ash-heap of history?

We must not underestimate the immense challenge of building and consolidating stable democracies. Democracy is hard work, especially in countries that are poor and that have experienced violent conflict. And it takes time. But "While we must be cautious about forcing the pace of change," as Reagan said at Westminster, "we must not hesitate to declare our ultimate objectives and to take concrete actions to move toward them."

That means helping people who share our democratic values and who want to build free societies governed by the rule of law. And so it is in that spirit the NED helps the kind of activists we honored last night with NED's Democracy Award who are fighting to rescue the people of North Korean from enslavement.

It's why we have supported people like Cynthia Gabriel, one of the recipients of last year's Democracy Award, who led the effort to expose the massive corruption associated with the 1MDB scandal in Malaysia; and Rafael Marques, another Award recipient last year, who has led the fight against equally massive corruption in Angola and who is now on trial for allegedly insulting corrupt officials.

Other examples include the support that NED has given in Ukraine to the Anti-Corruption Action Center that has tirelessly led the campaign for the establishment of an independent anti-corruption court. I'm pleased to report that just last week the Ukrainian Parliament at long last approved legislation to create such a court.

Another important victory just occurred in Afghanistan where the daily newspaper Hasht-e-Subh (8am), another NED grantee, published an investigative report on the illegal issuance of diplomatic passports to Afghan strongmen and their families, leading the government to immediately cancel over 4,000 such passports.

A last example is the non-partisan training conducted by four NGOs in Tunisia of new candidates who participated in last month's local elections. Of the 235 individuals who were trained, 112 won seats and 25 were the heads of their electoral lists. These elections have made democracy in Tunisia more inclusive and responsive, dealing a blow to ISIS which has been able to recruit young people in Tunisia who were frustrated over the failure of the revolution to produce meaningful social and economic change.

Mr. Chairman, I could give many other examples of dedicated NED grantees whose work is advancing American values and security in the world. Our job is to empower such brave people and to let them know that they are not alone because they have the support of the American people.

This, I believe, is what Reagan meant when he said at Westminster that as important as our military strength is, "the ultimate determinant in the struggle that's now going on in the world will not be bombs and rockets, but a test of wills and ideas, a trial of spiritual resolve, the values we hold, the beliefs we cherish, the ideals to which we are dedicated."

We can win this test of wills and ideas if we have the spiritual to fight to stand with and support people around the world who are fighting to build democratic societies. If we do, we will make the world a safer and more peaceful place for America and the values upon which this nation was founded.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Carl, for that testimony today. Thank you.

Dan Twining. Say, Dan, turn that up or hit the button. There we go.

**STATEMENT OF MR. DANIEL TWINING, PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE**

Mr. TWINING. Got it. Got it.

Thank you to all of you, the chairman and the ranking member, so many of you and so many in this body, for representing not only our country's interest out in the world but the values that reinforce those interests, and I would like to argue that those aren't separate things but one and the same.

Last month, IRI honored Jim Mattis and Nikki Haley at our annual Freedom Dinner. We appreciated Chairman Royce's participation, and other members of this committee.

Secretary Mattis shared an observation that speaks to the heart of why America supports democracy in the world. Here's what he said:

> "I have many privileged glimpses into the human condition, but I've never once seen human beings flee the freedom of speech. I never saw families on the run from the free practice of religion in the public square and, as a young Marine, I never picked anyone out of a life raft on the ocean, desperate to escape a free press."

By nurturing democracies abroad, by sharing best practices in responsive inclusive and just governance, IRI prepares the soil for that flourishing.

Now, Secretary Mattis is no one's idea of a starry-eyed idealist. His military experience led him to the conclusion that American power derives not just from our martial prowess but from our democratic ideals. Dictators and extremists who deprive their people of basic rights inevitably create problems that endanger our security at home.

I would like to focus on the role of democracy assistance in managing four key threats to American security—violent extremism, uncontrolled mass migration, the Kremlin's hybrid warfare, and Chinese sharp power.

The first challenge is countering violent extremism. As the national security strategy points out, violent extremists groups "thrive under conditions of state weakness and prey on the vulnerable, as they accelerate the breakdown of rules to create havens from which to plan and launch attacks on the United States," and we can't simply fight our way out of this problem.

Democracy assistance is a vital tool on the preventative side, helping create conditions in which populations vulnerable to recruitment by extremists have peaceful outlets to express grievances and hold a stake in their societies.

We at IRI carry out this work around the world from Nigeria to Indonesia to Bosnia. Our approach builds on public opinion research, leverages relations with political and civic actors.

We really work to build local community resilience by directly engaging with vulnerable populations, particularly youth.

The second challenge is uncontrolled mass migration. I am afraid we are living through the biggest refugee crisis since World War II. Conflicts in the Middle East are destabilizing not only that region but our core allies in Europe.

Lawlessness in Latin America and Venezuela and Central America is producing migration, fuelling transnational crime, including human trafficking and the drug trade, with desperate populations fleeing the breakdown of law and order in search of a decent life elsewhere.

The fallout from uncontrolled mass migration for U.S. interests is enormous. I don't need to tell you. To address the drivers of this migration that so often washes up on American shores, IRI works with local and national governments as well as civic groups in Central America to strengthen the institutions that deliver citizens security so that people are less likely to flee their countries and more likely to build successful societies there at home in their own countries.

The third challenge is the Kremlin's hybrid warfare. Russia and China are looking to export their authoritarian models to undermine U.S. leadership and alliances.

In Europe, the Kremlin is deploying a sophisticated information warfare campaign to undermine democratic institutions, erode citizen trust in democracy and wedge apart the transatlantic alliance.

This form of warfare is particularly insidious—this political warfare—because it uses core features of democracy against us—exploiting our free media, manipulating false information, undermining confidence in electoral systems.

IRI's Beacon Project is engaged in a big line of work to leverage our relationships for European political parties and civil societies groups to track Russian misinformation including in many local languages and then to coordinate political responses to that.

The fourth and final challenge is Chinese sharp power. The Chinese Communist Party uses sophisticated tactics to build political influence around the world. Their goal is to challenge and ultimately supplant America's global leadership.

Their authoritarian political model and leveraging of vast economic resources pulls smaller countries into China's orbit. These activities contribute to political corruption and state capture by China, risk the creation of an expansive hostile sphere of influence that's inimical to American interests.

Fragile democracies are most vulnerable. Helping U.S. partners build political resiliency to protect their own sovereignty, to stand on their own two feet, and not be captured by a foreign authoritarian power is a vital U.S. interest, I would argue, and our work works with many countries to help protect them to prevent China suborning their democracies.

I would also just mention some other opportunities. Anti-corruption programs that level the playing field for U.S. business in the world, programs on youth and women's empowerment both speak to rising generations to include them in politics and, of course, to get greater female leadership in politics to stabilize and build peace.

I would just close with the thought that we do face a really dangerous world. It's perhaps more complicated and dangerous than any time including during the Cold War.

I think it can be tempting to take refuge in a believe that democracy promotion somehow is a luxury we can't afford. But democracy assistance is not about making ourselves feel good.

It's not just about doing the right thing. It's a way of advancing American interests and American influence in a contested world.

So thank you all for your continued support for this vital work.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Twining follows:]

INTERNATIONAL
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INSTITUTE

# Democracy Promotion in a Challenging World

TESTIMONY OF: **Daniel Twining,** President

U.S. HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
JUNE 14, 2018

## Introduction

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, distinguished Members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to testify before you today on the topic of democracy promotion in a challenging world.

Last month, the International Republican Institute (IRI) had the privilege of honoring Secretary of Defense James Mattis and UN Ambassador Nikki Haley at our annual Freedom Award dinner, for a truly inspiring evening that we were pleased Chairman Royce could join us to celebrate. In his remarks, Secretary Mattis shared an observation that speaks to the heart of what we mean when we talk about the importance of democracy promotion:

> "I had many privileged glimpses into the human condition, but I never once saw human beings flee the freedom of speech; I never saw families on the run from the free practice of religion in the public square; and as a young Marine, I never picked anybody out of a raft on the ocean desperate to escape a free press. By nurturing democracies abroad, by sharing best practices in responsive, inclusive and just governance, IRI prepares the soil for that flourishing."

Secretary Mattis is no one's idea of a starry-eyed idealist. Through his decades of service in the military, he arrived at the conclusion that American power derives not just from our martial prowess, but ultimately from the democratic ideals that underpin and inform everything we do. In contrast, the societies that do not embrace those ideals inevitably create the problems that are driving some of the world's most difficult challenges.

Today I will explore the irreplaceable role of democracy assistance in advancing U.S. strategic interests, focusing on four key threats: violent extremism, uncontrolled mass migration, the Kremlin's hybrid warfare and Chinese sharp power.

### CHALLENGE 1: COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Nearly 17 years after 9/11, we have grown more or less accustomed to the ever-present threat of terrorism, and we are all too used to seeing lives destroyed and nations torn apart by this scourge. As the Trump Administration's National Security Strategy points out, violent extremist organizations "thrive under conditions of state weakness and prey on the vulnerable as they accelerate the breakdown of rules to create havens from which to plan and launch attacks on the United States, our allies, and our partners." In order to successfully combat extremism, we must look to the source of the problem. Sobering experience has taught us that a kinetic response, while necessary, is not sufficient to

address violent extremism. We cannot simply fight our way out of this problem but must also look to preventative measures.

The dynamics that enable violent extremists to flourish are not just confined to the Middle East. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, violent extremists intentionally exacerbate the country's legacy of interethnic conflict to drive radicalization in vulnerable communities. In young democracies like Bosnia, the problems attendant with developing institutions and residual difficulties in bridging the gap between citizens and government can create feelings of hopelessness that drive some toward the illusory promises of violent extremism.

Our approach to this challenge must be multifaceted. Democracy assistance is a vital tool on the preventative side—helping to create the conditions in which populations that might otherwise be vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists have peaceful outlets to express grievances and have a stake in their societies.

IRI carries out this work in 13 countries around the world—working in a variety of contexts and adapting our approach to local conditions. IRI's institutional approach builds on public opinion research and leverages our extensive relationships with political parties, government officials, and civil society groups to address the unique challenges faced in each country.

In Africa, IRI invests in building local community resilience by directly engaging with vulnerable populations—particularly youth—and supporting inter-religious dialogue that counters polarizing and extremist ideologies. In Tanzania, IRI's work includes engaging with youth, religious leaders and security organs to improve relationships, foster greater information sharing and build common understanding and partnerships that make communities more resilient to extremist threats. In Nigeria, the U.S. ambassador told me his greatest fear is that ISIS is defeated in Syria and Iraq only to reconstitute its self-proclaimed caliphate in northern Nigeria—but that IRI's work to give young people a voice in shaping Nigeria's future through political inclusion is one antidote to that risk.

Southeast Asia is another target for recruitment by ISIS and its affiliates, who seek to gain a foothold among vulnerable populations in countries where democratic deficits and interethnic rivalries present opportunities for radicalization. In Indonesia, terrorism, ethno-religious conflict and intolerance have undermined the country's democratic progress since the fall of Suharto 20 years ago. IRI conducts focused public opinion research to better understand both the vulnerabilities to violent extremism and sources of resilience in this country, with the aim of better equipping stakeholders in the government, political parties and civil society organizations with the tools they need to combat this threat.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, IRI is working to prevent violent extremism by strengthening democratic institutions, especially parliamentary caucus structures, and investing in programs that target the most vulnerable populations—namely, youth. We help strengthen institutions so that they can address the issues of greatest concern to citizens and reduce the sense of hopelessness that drives people to embrace terrorism. IRI's Western Balkans Task Force on Violent Extremism has been helping legislators and government officials design effective policies to prevent and counter terrorism—including helping to design a law to cope with foreign fighters returning from Syria. We also bridge gaps between communities that have suffered from interethnic strife so that these divisions are not manipulated by extremists who thrive on nurturing grievances.

**CHALLENGE 2: UNCONTROLLED MASS MIGRATION**

We are in the midst of the most significant refugee crisis since the Second World War—creating monumental security and societal challenges and destabilizing entire regions, including not just conflict states in the Middle East but also our close allies in Europe. In our own hemisphere, uncontrolled mass migration fuels transnational crime, including human trafficking and the drug trade, as increasingly desperate populations flee the breakdown of law and order and governance in places like Venezuela and Central America in search of a decent life elsewhere.

The fallout from uncontrolled migration around the world for U.S. interests is enormous—undermining core security interests, weakening our allies, radicalizing new generations of young people, and costing billions in both direct humanitarian assistance and in the indirect problems caused by this destabilizing trend.

Any successful approach to this complex problem must address the drivers of mass migration, often caused by the failure of government institutions to provide the conditions in which people can live with security and provide for their families. Corruption, the breakdown of law and order and citizen insecurity are key drivers of mass migration.

IRI works with national and local governments and civil society organizations in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to strengthen the institutions that deliver security and key services so that people will be less likely to flee and more likely to build successful societies at home. IRI helps citizens, governments, and law enforcement authorities to address public safety needs, making citizens an integral part of the solutions to the problems they are trying to escape.

IRI has also worked with local governments in Guatemala to create Municipal Economic Development Offices (OMDELs) that help stimulate local economies. OMDELs provide

citizens with technical and vocational trainings that have enhanced workforce readiness, produced a job-seeker database to help recruiters fill employment vacancies, and helped to drive the creation of private businesses. If governments can provide a minimum of citizen security and opportunity to their citizens, they are less likely to want to come to the United States and more likely to invest in their own country's future.

**CHALLENGE 3: KREMLIN HYBRID WARFARE**

In his National Security Strategy, President Trump put the challenge we face from the so-called "return of geopolitics" starkly:

> "China and Russia want to shape a world antithetical to U.S. values and interests. China seeks to displace the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, expand the reaches of its state-driven economic model, and reorder the region in its favor. Russia seeks to restore its great power status and establish spheres of influence near its borders."

Secretary Mattis' National Defense Strategy similarly warns that Russia and China both seek to export their authoritarian models in order to undermine U.S. leadership and the democratic world order the United States built with our allies after the Second World War.

America's authoritarian challengers merit separate consideration, so I will start by addressing the dangers posed by Russia's increasingly aggressive campaign of hybrid warfare. In Europe and beyond, the Kremlin is deploying a sophisticated information warfare campaign—including cybersecurity attacks on electoral systems and political parties and coordinated campaigns of disinformation—to undermine democratic institutions, exploit societal divisions, and erode citizens' confidence in democracy. Moscow's aim is to create an environment in which the post-war American-led democratic order is diminished and the Putin autocracy is free to continue stealing from its own people, deny the Russian people their basic rights, and extend its historical sphere of influence into the heart of Europe.

What makes this form of political warfare particularly insidious is that it uses some of the core features of our democracy against us—exploiting free media to manipulate and spread false information, and attempting to undermine confidence in our electoral systems. Our approach to this challenge must be to harness the strengths of democracy to expose these practices and create coordinated policies that push back against this campaign to subvert our open societies.

IRI has been combatting this problem for more than two years with the Beacon Project—one of the very first programs to track and mobilize political coalitions against Russian disinformation and meddling on European society. We have leveraged our vast and

established network of relationships with European political parties and civil society groups to create coordinated policy responses that tackle this problem and reinforce the transatlantic alliance and our shared values.

When IRI began this initiative, we set out to overcome two major deficits: the dearth of information about the extent and impact of disinformation and the lack of coordination among political and civil society stakeholders on this issue. Since then, the project has expanded its informal Beacon Network from a disparate collection of organizations working independently into a sustainable coalition of experts and political activists across Europe with access to policymakers at the EU and national levels. IRI has operationalized this network by training members in the use of our proprietary media monitoring platform, a digital tool called >versus<. This tool has enabled our local partners to track disinformation, propaganda, and other forms of media manipulation as a means of informing their policy and advocacy responses.

**CHALLENGE 4: CHINESE SHARP POWER**

As the National Endowment for Democracy's recent report on the phenomenon of authoritarian "sharp power" explains,

> "Over the past decade, China and Russia have spent billions of dollars to shape public opinion and perceptions around the world. This foreign authoritarian influence is not principally about attraction or persuasion; instead, it centers on distraction and manipulation. These ambitious authoritarian regimes, which systematically suppress political pluralism and free expression at home, are increasingly seeking to apply similar principles internationally to secure their interests."

The Chinese government, led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), utilizes sophisticated tactics to build and wield political influence around the world, with the aim of challenging, and ultimately supplanting, America's global dominance. China's vast economic resources and its efforts to tout rapid economic development under strongman rule as an alternative model to Western democracy allows it to have a deep and often hidden impact in any given country.

The CCP's authoritarian political model and the role of the state in steering Chinese economic engagement abroad for grand strategic purposes poses grave risks to smaller countries by pulling them into China's orbit in ways that undermine political pluralism. In addition to authoritarian sharp power tactics, the Chinese government and government-linked companies use financial leverage and influence operations beyond its borders to silence critics of China's authoritarian model and influence domestic political decision-making in China's favor.

Whether through sharp power tactics or leveraging economic investments, the Chinese Communist Party seeks to build political influence in target countries through such efforts. These activities are often meant to influence local government decisions over time—contributing to societal divisions and political corruption, which in turn leads to state capture by China and an expansive illiberal sphere of influence hostile to the United States.

It is becoming clear that fragile democracies and authoritarian states are most susceptible to such influence. In countries including Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, weak governance structures are further undermined by the influence of large sums of Chinese government investment, feeding corruption and derailing the government from representing the interests of citizens.

While established and developed democracies may be able to more effectively address such foreign authoritarian influence, for many developing countries, this influence succeeds primarily because governments caught in Chinese debt traps have no choice but to work with the Chinese government and government-linked companies and organizations. In most cases, the West has not sought to actively compete with China nor provide alternatives for host governments.

It is well past time for the U.S. to confront this challenge. Helping countries build political resiliency to corruption and state capture by a hostile authoritarian power is an American national security interest. One important way of doing this is to invest in bolstering democratic institutions so that they can represent the interests of their people and resist this crypto-colonization. IRI is pushing back on this development with a new initiative designed to expose the projection of Chinese sharp power in Europe and South Asia. In doing so, we will increase awareness among our democratic partners of the perils of China's efforts to suborn their democracies and help them resist its dangers.

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

Other lines of IRI work include helping countries pursue *anti-corruption* programs. This not only helps legitimize democracy in those countries; it creates a better environment for American business. American corporations struggle in countries marred by kleptocracy; they thrive where there is rule of law, open government and strong institutions that help create a level playing field for business and protect their investments.

IRI also works extensively on *youth empowerment* around the world through our youth initiative, Generation Democracy. Africa alone will have more than one billion new people born over the next 30 years. Young people will need a voice in their country's politics so they do not become marginalized and aggrieved in ways that produce vast, destabilizing flows of migration and new extremist networks.

Finally, IRI is committed to promoting *women's empowerment*, which we carry out through our Women's Democracy Network program. This is a vital component of democracy promotion, because we know that where women have a strong voice in society and politics, those countries are less likely to be corrupt, violent, and dangerous to their people and their neighbors.

**CONCLUSION**

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, Members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today. There is no doubt that the U.S. faces an array of daunting challenges to our strategic interests and national security, and it can be tempting to take refuge in the mistaken belief that democracy promotion is a luxury we simply cannot afford. Yet as IRI Chairman Senator John McCain argues in his new memoir,

> "[America] has done great good in the world because we believed our ideals are the natural aspiration of all mankind, and that the principles, rules, and alliances of the international order we superintended would improve the security and prosperity of all who joined it. That leadership has had its costs, but we have become incomparably powerful and wealthy as well."

Democracy assistance isn't simply a matter of making ourselves feel good, or of doing the right thing; it is a way of advancing our interests and influence through what is arguably our most powerful export—our values. I am grateful for the opportunity to represent an organization that is helping to do that around the world, with the generous support of the Congress, and I am proud to stand alongside our friends at NED and NDI on that journey.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman ROYCE. Thanks, Dan.
Ken.

**STATEMENT OF MR. KENNETH WOLLACK, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE**

Mr. WOLLACK. Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity on behalf of NDI to speak on democracy promotion efforts.

Mr. Chairman, your leadership will be sorely missed, not only in the halls of Congress but in many countries, particularly in Africa where your voice and engagement has made a real difference.

The notion that there should be a dichotomy between our moral preferences and our strategic interests is a false one. Our ultimate goal is a world that is secure, stable, humane, and safe, where the risk of war is minimal.

Yet, the hot spots most likely to erupt in violence are often found in areas of the world that are nondemocratic—places defined by the Defense Department as the arc of instability.

These are places that experience ethnic conflict and civil war, they generate refugee flows across borders, they are places where terrorists are harbored and illegal drugs are produced. And in this interdependent world, what happens within borders of nations have regional and sometimes global impact.

The 2018 National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, the Worldwide Threat Assessment by the U.S. intelligence community, all point to efforts by Russia and China to propagate their authoritarian models as a threat to our interests.

A proper response calls for a democratic stimulus, not a retreat, and the best way to counter this new threat is not to confront it unilaterally but to build stronger global alliances that support an alternative model based on transparent and accountable government.

We have witnessed more than a decade of democratic recession. Autocrats have become more aggressive and new fragile democracies are failing to deliver.

Even more established democracies have been beset by political polarization and growing public discontent. Authoritarian regimes are using digital tools to advance their interests including electoral espionage and the dissemination of disinformation to skew electoral outcomes, disrupt democratic discourse, discredit institutions, and fuel ethnic and social divisions.

NDI has responded by providing cybersecurity support, assisting efforts of civic, media, and political groups to detect, expose, and combat this information, and conducting new types of public opinion research to identify populations that are most susceptible to Russian disinformation and develop messages that can build resilience.

In cooperation with IRI and NED, NDI is helping to launch a new effort with democracy groups, civil society organizations, civic tech partners, political parties, and a global network of 4 million citizen election monitors to interact more regularly with the technology companies.

Among other purposes, this Design for a Democracy Coalition will identify disinformation that subverts democratic processes so tech companies can find speedy resolutions.

Now, despite recent declines in democracy, there is another more positive story. Public opinion polls in every region of the world show large majorities agree that democracy is the best political system.

Democratic change and rising citizen demand for democracy in such diverse places as Ethiopia, Armenia, Malaysia, Slovakia, and Nicaragua are but a few examples in recent months.

Some have argued that the Arab Spring unleashed a new era of instability in the Middle East by toppling repressive but so-called stable regimes.

However, the idea that autocracy equals stability collapses under scrutiny as the remaining supposedly stable regimes are increasingly the locus of conflict.

In contrast, those places that are going through democratic transition like Tunisia or political liberalization like Morocco and Jordan are better able to address economic challenges or threats from extremist ideologies and groups.

I would like to highlight two democracy efforts in challenging environments—Ukraine and Syria—which is seemingly one of the most unlikely places on earth to find good news on this front.

Ukraine faces severe economic problems and deeply-rooted corruption, not to mention occupation in the south and a war in the east.

However, NDI's research shows that Ukrainians are virtually united in their view that democracy is the best guarantor of their independence and sovereignty.

Ukrainians can point to concrete achievements in recent years. These include the emergence of new political parties that have national reach and are focused on citizens they represent rather than on oligarchs who would finance them.

Brought together by NDI in partnership with the European Parliament, party factions in the Rada are overcoming deep fragmentation to agree on procedures that will make it easier to build consensus around reforms.

In NDI programs alone more than 45,000 citizens have engaged directly in the national reform process and are reaching more than 1.3 million citizens through the media.

These are the kinds of bottom-up changes that, given time and continued support, can put down deep democratic roots.

Another story of democratic resilience is unfolding in Syria. In northern Syria, citizen groups are prioritizing community needs and local administrative councils are responding by providing critical services.

Fifty NDI governance advisors are working each day in 34 locations to advise citizen groups and administrative councils and bringing them together to solve problems.

Courageously, these groups and counsels have challenged extremist groups, which have sought to establish parallel governing structures.

As one regional news outlet noted, "You may think Syrians are condemned to an unpleasant choice between Bashar Assad and the

jihadists. But the real choice being fought out by Syrians is between violent authoritarianism on the one hand and grass roots democracy on the other."

Mr. Chairman, the citizens of our country have held the conviction that to secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our country, we must establish government that derives legitimacy from the consent of the people.

We received the help of others in our founding and have assisted those around the world who step forward, sometimes at great risk to their own countries and to their personal lives to promote, establish, and sustain democracy.

Our Nation has benefited from the peace that global democracy produces and the economic opportunities that it creates.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wollack follows:]

**Statement by Kenneth Wollack,**
**President, National Democratic Institute on**
***Democracy Promotion in a Challenging World***
**before the**

**House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

**June 14, 2018**

Chairman Royce, Ranking member Engel and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity on behalf of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to present our views on the importance and efficacy of U.S. efforts to support the global development of democratic institutions and practices.

Democracy promotion, long a pillar of America's foreign policy framework, has, in recent years and in certain circles, become an issue of some debate. Paradoxically, and wrongly in my view, democracy assistance is viewed either as too soft or idealistic as a response to serious security threats facing the nation; or it is seen as too bellicose -- conflated with regime change and the use of military force. The real issue, however, is not whether democracy promotion is "hard" or "soft" or whether it fits neatly into the "realism" or "idealism" paradigms. The issue, rather, is whether advancing democracy reflects our values and is an important means of advancing America's interests and protecting our national security in a turbulent and often violent world. I think the answer is clearly "yes."

The notion that there should be a dichotomy between our moral preferences and our strategic interests is a false one. Our ultimate foreign policy goal is a world that is secure, stable, humane, and safe, where the risk of war is minimal. Yet, the reality is that hotspots most likely to erupt into violence are found, for the most part, in areas of the world that are nondemocratic -- places that have been defined by the Defense Department as the "arc of instability." These are places that experience ethnic conflict and civil war; they generate refugee flows across borders; they are places where terrorists are harbored and illegal drugs are produced. The international community has rightly worked to restore order by helping to establish a democratic framework for governance in a number of these countries. The response has not always been entirely successful, but on the whole, the introduction of democratic processes and citizen engagement have made these countries less dangerous than they had been.

Moreover, the 2018 *National Security Strategy*, *National Defense Strategy* and *Worldwide Threat Assessment* by the U.S. intelligence community all point to efforts by Russia and China to propagate their authoritarian models as a direct threat to our interests. Clearly, therefore, these threats, require renewed efforts by the U.S. -- in fact, a democratic stimulus -- not retreat. As Tom Carothers of the Carnegie Endowment points out, "such efforts align closely with and serve a critical array of unquestionably hard interests. These include limiting the strategic reach of the

United States' autocratic rivals, fighting terrorism, reducing international drug trafficking, and undercutting drivers of massive refugee flows." The cost for the U.S. has been relatively inexpensive; foreign assistance is only about 1 percent of the total U.S. budget; democracy assistance represents just 4 percent of our foreign aid.

There are those who have argued that the Arab Spring unleashed a new area of instability in the Middle East by toppling repressive, but so-called "stable" regimes. However, this idea that autocracy equals stability collapses under scrutiny as the remaining supposedly stable regimes are increasingly the locus of conflict; while those places that are going through democratic transition or are engaged in either political reforms or liberalization are better able to address economic challenges or threats from extremist ideologies and groups. As President Kennedy said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

Even from the traditional foreign aid perspective, economic assistance alone can not achieve sustained economic growth and social stability. Political systems that lack accountability mechanisms or sufficient political and social inclusion are usually plagued by corruption or conflict, both of which undermine the objectives of economic development aid to achieve self-sustaining growth and poverty reduction. Deforestation, rural dislocation, environmental degradation, and agricultural policies that lead to famine all trace to political systems in which the victims have no political voice; in which government institutions feel no obligation to answer to the people; and in which special interests feel free to exploit the resources, land and people without fear of oversight or the need to account. In short, authoritarian regimes create the illusion of stability but, in reality, they fuel instability. That is because autocrats who arrogate power to themselves by claiming to have all the answers are bound to fail. The respected diplomat, Princeton Lyman, reminded his colleagues in a 1998 cable that the problem with even an enlightened authoritarian leader is that "blinded by economic success, hubris takes over along with greed: his or her rule is perpetuated, and corruption grows." He urged policymakers at that time to judge trends, rather than the snapshot of the day.

During the 1980s, an important lesson was learned about political transformations in countries like the Philippines and Chile: that forces on the political fringes enjoy a mutually reinforcing relationship, drawing strength from each other and, in the process, marginalizing a democratic center. Prospects for peace and stability only emerged once democratic political parties and civil society were able to offer a viable alternative to the extremes. These democratic forces benefited In short, authoritarian regimes create the illusion of stability but from the solidarity and support they received from the international community and, in the United States, Republicans and Democrats joined together to champion their cause. Today, these conditions find their parallel in other countries around the world.

When World War II ended, fewer than a dozen democracies stood as the Iron Curtain rose, military dictatorships proliferated, and colonialism sought to regain its footing. Major breakthroughs against those trends began with the so-called third wave of democratization which, since the 1970s, impacted more than 100 countries where people in every region of the world struggled against oppression and for government based on popular will.

Freedom House, the Economist, and others, however, have now chronicled more than a decade of democratic recession, with a decline of political rights globally, along with a decreasing number of democracies. Autocrats have become more aggressive and sophisticated in stifling the voices of civil society and political opponents, undercutting independent media and judicial independence and manipulating elections.

We now know that initial views about the impact of technological change were incomplete. There were those who had presented a cyber-utopian view of the impact of social media on democracy, whereby increased internet access would inevitably lead to more open societies. This has now given way to a more realistic, if not darker view. As Wael Ghonim, the democratic activist whose Facebook posts helped ignite the Egyptian revolution now warns: "Social media was once seen as a liberating means to speak truth to power. Now the issue is how to speak truth to social media."

Authoritarian regimes are also using a broader and more aggressive set of tools to advance their interests, including various forms of electoral espionage, the hacking of politicians and political parties, and the dissemination of misinformation and fake news -- all designed to skew electoral outcomes and to discredit democratic systems. Repressive regimes are using what we call "distributed denial of democracy" (DDoD) attacks to pollute new media channels with disinformation, making new media less useful as a mechanism for legitimate democratic discourse. This hybrid warfare uses troll farms and botnets to amplify certain stories on new media. Such efforts also aim to create a false equivalency between legitimate international democracy assistance and foreign interference that subverts democratic dialogue, practices, and elections.

At the same time, new, fragile democracies are struggling to meet rising expectations of their citizens, particularly with regard to efforts that would combat corruption and improve standards of living. Democratic transitions have been stymied or reversed by violence and terrorism by non-state actors, or by the inability of democratic movements to move from "protest to politics" and to challenge the resiliency of the so-called "deep state" -- the elites and institutions that benefited from years of corruption and impunity afforded by entrenched autocracy. And even established democracies have been beset by political polarization and growing citizen discontent with the performance of democratic institutions and elected leaders.

While women have made significant political gains in the last several decades, they remain woefully underrepresented in political parties, parliaments, and government, at both the national and local levels. Moreover, with the advent of the internet, women face a growing threat against their active participation in politics -- psychological along with physical violence. Cyber bullying not only impacts women who are targeted but also has a chilling effect on others who may want to enter the political arena. In response, NDI launched the global #NotTheCost campaign in 2016 to collect data, report on and combat this scourge.

I don't want to dismiss these negative developments because they are real but we should view the past decade as a snapshot and offer a degree of perspective -- another picture that includes a slightly longer sweep of history. But it is not the distant past. Four years after President Reagan

delivered his landmark democracy speech before the British parliament in 1982 and less than three years after Congress established the National Endowment for Democracy. Freedom House scored only 52 countries as "free" as compared to 88 in 2018. The countries of Latin America were largely run by military regimes, as were the Asian countries of South Korea, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Burma. Dictators were in power in Indonesia and the Philippines; martial rule was in place in Taiwan; the communists ruled Mongolia; and the monarchy enjoyed absolute power in Nepal.

On the African continent, only four leaders since 1960 had retired voluntarily or left office after losing an election -- that figure stands at nearly 50 since then. Democracy, freedom and dignity were not even part of the lexicon of the Middle East. And Soviet communism, which extended to the borders of Western Europe, seemed deeply embedded. Only Senator Moynihan and a few others at the time were naive enough to predict its demise. Meanwhile, intergovernmental groups like the Organization of American States and the Organization of African Unity -- the predecessor to the African Union -- operated on the principle of "nonintervention" into the affairs of member states. They routinely turned a blind eye to military coups and other abuses. Today, both organizations and others like them have adopted democratic charters and have intervened to defend democratic rule .

In 1986, there was minuscule if any democracy and governance funding by USAID, the State Department, the UNDP or by the OECD donor aid agencies. Aside from the German party foundations, which played such an important role in the democratic transitions of Spain and Portugal during the 1970s, there were no democracy support NGOs; in the mid-1980s, no networks of citizen election monitors, who today number 4 million, democratic governments and legislatures, or parliamentary monitoring organizations.

Yet there is another, more positive story -- a story that should remind us about the universal demand for democracy and progress being made, sometimes in the most challenging of environments. Public opinion polls from countries in every region of the world have shown that vast majorities agree that democracy, despite its problems, is the best political system. One recent study of more than 800 protest movements around the world show that they are not driven primarily by a desire for better economic conditions, but rather by demands for a better democracy, which the protesters believe can better address economic issues. This shows that the desire for improved economic opportunities often coexists with the demand for a political voice. And in today's interdependent world, citizens will not indefinitely postpone the latter for the former. Recent democratic change, or rising citizen demands for democracy in such diverse places as Ethiopia, Armenia, Malaysia, Slovakia and Nicaragua are but a few recent examples. Admittedly, there have been times when many citizens seemingly abandoned democratic aspirations because of instability, insecurity, or the performance of government. This was the case in Pakistan, Venezuela, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, and Chile; but broad support for authoritarian rule in these places has been short lived.

Then there are countries where active civil societies and reform-minded political leadership have maintained positive democratic trajectories. Nascent African democracies of Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone are among the world's fastest growing

economies, while many countries -- including Indonesia, Mongolia, Chile, Colombia, Georgia, South Korea and Mexico -- have continued to make strides in both consolidating their democracies and maintaining steady economic growth. There are also places where democratic setbacks have been reversed, either by the demands of citizen movements, as was the case in Burkina Faso, or through the intervention of regional organizations as recently occurred in The Gambia. And in Myanmar/Burma, Ukraine, and Tunisia, active U.S. support for the democratic transitions underway have reflected the convergence of our values and strategic interests.

Since the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the four core institutes of the Endowment were established, we have learned a great deal about democratic change, along with appropriate and effective ways to nurture and support democracy. I would like to share some fundamental lessons.

First, in this interconnected and interdependent world, what happens for good or for bad within the borders of nations has regional and, sometimes, global impact. Contrary to that famous tagline in tourism marketing, what happens, let's say, in Kyiv or Cairo doesn't stay there. Therefore, at a basic level, we have a direct interest in how people live and how they are treated by their governments.

Second, the credibility of a democracy ultimately depends on how it works in practice and on what it delivers. Democracies must be able to hold credible elections so that the institutions that emerge from those polls enjoy legitimacy. But those institutions must be built and strengthened between elections, and citizen engagement must be developed and sustained. Nascent democratic regimes often inherit the legacies of their nondemocratic predecessors -- poverty, corruption and political exclusion. And when those institutions fail to meet public expectations, opportunities are created for populist, often nondemocratic leaders who will roll back hard-won democratic gains.

The once rapid pace of democratic change had led many in the democracy community to hope, if not expect, that progress toward fuller democracy would be more linear than has been the case. As the late Polish historian and politician Bronislaw Geremek warned, "Democracy is by no means a process that goes from triumph to triumph nor is it exempt from creating the very conditions that undermine it." This means long-term commitments are necessary to support a culture of transparency, participation, and accountability.

Sustaining socioeconomic development over the long term requires a political system whose incentive structures make it more likely that responsive, reform-minded, and accountable politicians will emerge at all levels of government. It requires governments that have the popular support and legitimacy to sustain development policies. It also requires mechanisms for orderly alternation of power in order to reduce the incentives for corruption that inevitably affect governments with no fear of losing office. It requires strengthened policy development and capacity within political parties in order to help raise the level of political discourse. It requires effective legislatures -- with significant roles for opposition voices and the means to build broader consensus on public policy issues -- in order to avoid policy reversals when governments turn over. It requires greater voice and power for citizens, particularly women and young people,

along with historically marginalized communities, in order to complement increased economic empowerment with increased political participation.

Third, while citizens around the world have begun to harness the benefits of information and communication technology to amplify their voices, their political institutions have often been slower to respond. As one tech leader explained via Twitter, "Citizens using 21st cent tools to talk, gov't using 20th cent tools to listen, and 19th cent processes to respond." As technology innovation amplifies the voices of desegregated citizen interests, fledgling democratic institutions -- governments, parliaments, and political parties -- must harness innovation to strengthen deliberative discourse, broker compromise, and respond in a timely and effective manner.

New responses are also needed as authoritarian regimes have become more aggressive in utilizing technology to subvert democracy and to project their interests internationally. These responses include: cyber security support; media literacy training with respect to disinformation spread through new media; assistance to civic, media, and political groups that can expose and combat misinformation; and policy advocacy with technology firms to help them understand the impact of their policies on democratic discourse and to help them prevent their platforms from being used in distributed denial of democracy (DDoD) attacks. In NDI is helping to launch this last effort by working with a global grouping of democracy groups, civil society organizations, civic tech partners, associations of political parties and a global network of 4 million citizen election monitors to interact with major technology companies. This so-called Design for Democracy Coalition will identify incidents of disinformation that are designed to subvert democratic processes, including elections, and bring them directly to the attention to the tech companies for speedy resolution. The Coalition will also provide a vehicle in which to coordinate research, monitor and investigate trends concerning the abuse of technology in efforts to impair democratic discourse, processes and institutions.

Fourth, for those of us in this country who are engaged in assisting democratic development overseas, we have been most successful when we have joined with others in the international community, including governments, parliaments, political parties, intergovernmental organizations, and other non governmental groups. Today, these groups make up an international democratic architecture that did not exist some 30 years ago. As a practical matter, people making a democratic transition require diverse experiences and expertise, along with broad peer support. Cooperative approaches also convey a deeper truth: that democrats are joining a community of nations which have traversed the same course, that they can count on natural allies and an active support structure because other nations are concerned and are watching.

Fifth, the U.S. government -- including the White House, State Department, Congress, and overseas embassies -- can set the tone and foreign aid can provide needed resources. Yet, much of the day-to-day democratic development work should be carried out, with proper oversight, by nongovernmental organizations, which operate in the realm of people-to-people relations. Such mission-driven groups often have pre-existing, global relationships and are not constrained by the stringent rules of formal diplomacy. Most important, in countries where a primary issue is

the paucity of autonomous civic and political institutions, the very idea that government ought not control all aspects of society can be undermined by a too visible and too direct donor government hand. This is borne out by the results of a new type of opinion research being carried out by NDI in Ukraine to determine populations that are most vulnerable to Russian disinformation campaigns and how best to respond with messages that that build resilience. One result shows that such counter messages delivered by government are not seen as credible and may, in fact, lead people to more readily believe in the original disinformation.

Ultimately, it is the nature of relationships with local partners that matter the most. In a recent New York Times op-ed, David Brooks asked a veteran youth activist in this country about which programs "turn around" the lives of young people living in poverty. "I still haven't seen one program change one kid's life," he replied. "What changes people is relationships." The same can be said about successful democracy efforts overseas. How positive relationships with local partners are established, developed, and evolve will ultimately determine the success or failure of any and all interventions.

Sixth, pluralism in democracy assistance has served the United States well, allowing for diverse yet complementary programming that, over the long term, could not be sustained by a highly static and centralized system. Funding by the NED has allowed the Endowment and its four core institutes to plan strategically, yet respond quickly and flexibly to emerging opportunities and sudden problems in rapidly shifting political environments. In addition, the NED has been able to operate effectively in closed societies where direct government engagement is more difficult. USAID has provided the basis for longer-term commitments in helping to develop a country's democratic institutions. The State Department's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and other programs within the Department, such as the Middle East Partnership, have given the U.S. government the capacity to support -- without cumbersome regulations -- cutting edge and highly focused democracy initiatives for individual countries, as well for regional and global initiatives. It would not be advantageous to try to create a centralized structure, or a highly coordinated approach for the design and implementation of these initiatives, but rather to promote ongoing cooperation and open lines of communication. Already, much of this cooperation and communication is taking place both here in Washington and in countries where we and others work.

Seventh, and finally, democracy assistance can best be delivered in four ways: 1) through direct, in-country presence where long term, day-to-day relationships can be established and nurtured. (in non democratic places that prohibit such engagement, long distance learning using information technology and offshore programs can maintain solidarity and provide more limited but critical outside support to groups and individuals); 2) through targeted financial support to governments, election commissions, civil society groups, and parliaments; 3) through international and regional networks that can offer peer support; and 4) through the development and application of international norms and standards. The latter two approaches are designed to provide external incentives for reform, particularly in places where local organizations, leaders, and institutions seek to become members of a global community -- whether a community of civic groups, political parties, parliaments, or governments. Examples of these communities include the Open Government Partnership, the four major international groupings of political parties, the

Community of Democracies, the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors, and the World Movement for Democracy. In this regard, the House Democracy Partnership, led by Representatives Peter Roskam and David Price, has contributed measurably to parliamentary strengthening efforts in 19 countries to date.

I would like to point to democracy support efforts in two challenging environments: in Ukraine and in Syria, which is seemingly one of the most unlikely places on earth to find good news on this front. These efforts have been supported by the NED, USAID, the Department of State, the Canadian and British governments, and others.

Ukraine undoubtedly continues to face grave challenges, including severe economic problems, deeply-rooted corruption, public impatience with the pace of reform -- not to mention occupation in the South and a war in the East. Purveyors of false news would have us believe that the country is deeply divided and that a large portion of the population is desperate to be rescued by Russia. The truth, however, is exactly the opposite.

NDI's research shows that Ukrainians expect that the next generation will be better off than their own with 86 percent saying it is "important" or "very important" that their country become a democracy. This is true whether respondents live in the East or the West and regardless of political affiliations. Moreover, the research and our observations on the ground show that Ukrainians are not particularly susceptible to populist appeals or to conspiracy theories, particularly those seen as emanating from outside the country. Ukrainians feel strongly that they will not give up their right to determine their own future -- even if doing so would bring peace.

As these findings show, Ukrainians are virtually united in their view that democracy is the best guarantor of their independence and sovereignty. To the extent that their country succeeds, it will be because ordinary Ukrainians have embraced these goals as their own and are taking responsibility for reaching them.

This positive outlook is not based solely on public attitudes. With outside encouragement and support, Ukrainians can point to concrete achievements in recent years. These include the emergence of new political parties that have national reach and are focused on citizens they represent rather than on oligarchs who would finance them. Brought together by NDI, in partnership with European institutions, party factions in the parliament are overcoming deep fragmentation to agree on procedures that will make it easier to build consensus around reforms. Local civil society groups are partnering with larger national organizations to push for economic and political change, and Ukrainians are advocating and voting for more women in elected office.

At the local level, citizens without prior experience in any kind of activism are participating in decision-making in large numbers. One quarter has attended community meetings and an additional 29 percent are willing to do so. In NDI programs alone, more than 45,000 citizens have engaged directly in the national reform process in the past two years and more than 1.3 million have been reached by television. A decentralization process will ultimately give Ukrainians more opportunities to influence decisions that affect their lives. These are the kinds

of bottom-up changes that, given time and continued support, can put down deep democratic roots.

In the midst of a massive humanitarian crisis and refugee flight, another story of democratic resilience is unfolding in Syria. As the Syrian government has lost control of large parts of the country, and the war has expanded over the past six years, millions of citizens have been left bereft of services and governing institutions to maintain order and to meet their basic needs. But in liberated territories across northern Syria, citizen groups are identifying and prioritizing community needs, and local administrative councils, some democratically elected, are responding by providing critical services. These democratic subcultures can become a powerful model for the country's future once the conflict subsides.

More than two dozen NDI governance advisers are working each day in 34 of these locations within Syria, helping to advise local citizen groups and administrative councils, and bringing them together to solve problems. Already, thousands of consultations and training sessions have been conducted. More than 500 council members and staff and 7,000 civic activists, including many young people and women, have been engaged in the program. Courageously, these civic groups and councils have challenged extremist groups which have sought to establish parallel governing structures. "You may think Syrians are condemned to an unpleasant choice between Bashar Al Assad and the jihadists," noted one regional news outlet. "But the real choice being fought out by Syrians is between violent authoritarianism on the one hand and grassroots democracy on the other."

Mr. Chairman, the citizens of our country -- from its very founding -- have held the conviction that to "secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our country," we must establish government that derives legitimacy and power from the consent of the people. We received the help of others in our founding, and from that point onward have embraced the ethic of assisting those around the world who step forward -- sometimes at great risk in their own countries -- to promote, establish, and sustain democracy. We as a nation have benefited from the peace that global democratic development produces and from the economic opportunities that it creates.

Assisting the advance of democracy has helped war-torn and violence-prone states achieve more "domestic tranquility," preventing humanitarian disasters, refugee flows and violent extremist recruitment. Across the globe, it has helped establish more stable and honest frameworks for economic life, opening markets to trade and investment. Democratic development has also helped cultivate a community of nations that refrain from war with each other and often ally themselves with the U.S. on geostrategic concerns. It is our hope that this mission remains a priority for both the Congress and the Administration.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Wollack.

I guess the dichotomy here is that your data that you're expressing shows that in terms of support for grass roots democracy worldwide that's on the upswing in terms of how people feel—what people want to see, and the Freedom House statistics then reflect the sales pitch of authoritarian regimes, in particular Moscow and Beijing and their efforts to convince other strong heads of state to move toward their model.

So I will just ask you this. I've traveled throughout Europe and I've seen firsthand the very powerful impact that information can have as well—and I saw that in 1985 in East Germany with our broadcasts and how impactful or inspirational it was.

But I've also seen that damaging power of disinformation that Russia is actively manipulating in order to sow chaos and in order to push an anti-Western agenda in those frontline European states and, frankly, to push it here.

And so you're in these countries. How effective are our international broadcasting, which is something that Mr. Engel and I have been trying to reform—how effective is that in combatting Russia's disinformation campaigns abroad and are we coming near to neutralizing this threat or is this continuing to advance?

And so, Carl, if I would have your observation.

Mr. GERSHMAN. When we published the Sharp Power Report in December, we were calling attention to this problem, and it's a growing problem.

People are aware of it now, especially because of what Russia has been doing but also and especially because of China, and when the Economist magazine picked up the sharp power report they focused more on China, whose efforts are enormous in this area.

And I think the importance of having that concept, Mr. Chairman, is that it helped people understand the nature of the problem. If we called it soft power they wouldn't understand—that they would think it was pretty much what we do.

But if you call it sharp power, you understand that you have really undemocratic hostile powers who are using information to penetrate, to manipulate, to undermine, to control, and that's basically what we have.

And radios are, obviously, one important instrument, not to counter that in terms of building a defense against disinformation but to project a positive message.

But you've got to build a defense against it and a lot of the groups that we helped stop fake news in Ukraine and other groups like that are being able to identify fake information.

We have a dialogue—a very ongoing dialogue with the internet companies to take down a lot of incitement, a lot of fake news.

We are connecting our grantees with the internet companies. We have groups like Bellingcat, which is an investigative journalist group. They use open source information. But they've identified the Russian general who provided the missile that shot down the Malaysian airliner.

You have got to fight back. You need a good defense but you need a good offense and we have to understand that we don't live in a world where everybody loves us or loves the values that we stand for.

There are people who are against those values and we have developed the capacity within the framework, obviously, of our democratic values to defend those values and to fight back against the attacks upon us.

Chairman ROYCE. And Ken, what else could we be doing?

And I've got to tell you, in terms of one of the disappointing things across much of the world is watching Beijing also sell this concept that rather than democracy or independent courts or bolstering civil society you'd need a strong authoritarian model.

Mr. WOLLACK. Let me say the Russian cyber warfare is quite different than the Soviet Union's propaganda. The Soviet Union propaganda was that our tractor is better than your tractor.

Nobody believed it. And what makes the Russian efforts so effective is they're playing on fertile territory. They're reinforcing preconceived notions that people have about their own political institutions.

So, first and foremost, the institutions of democratic governance, particularly in places like the Balkans and eastern Europe need to be shored up. There needs to be reform and modernization efforts and this is one of the most effective ways to respond to disinformation.

Secondly, radio is extremely important. But this a daily fight on the ground.

Chairman ROYCE. A social media fight?

Mr. WOLLACK. Yes. To give you one example, the Democratic Party of Serbia, 2 weeks before the local elections, the Russians—presumably the Russians—had hacked their Facebook page, and put horrible content on it.

The hackers then contacted Facebook, told them to look at the site. Facebook immediately took down the Facebook page.

Now, the party didn't know who to contact. They had no contact with Facebook. They were able to contact us. Our office in Silicon Valley managed to reach the Facebook executives. They immediately took it down.

But this is playing out dozens, hundreds, and thousands of time all over the world, and not just propagated by the Russians and the Chinese. It's propagated by authoritarian leaders all over the world. Hun Sen of Cambodia, Duterte—the majority of the news about them are generated by bots.

So this is now a tool that everybody is using. Some of it external threats, some of it done internally by non-democratic forces.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Ken.

Eliot.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me say to all three of you again that I so much admire the good work that you do and the organizations you all represent.

They are three outstanding organizations, and those of us who have been on this committee for many, many, many years are very aware of the fine work you do.

So I want to reiterate that and thank all three of you.

Mr. Chairman, before I ask my question, I would like unanimous consent to enter into the record a document by the Democracy in Europe Working Group, signed by over 64 former administrations officials and Members of Congress, democracy experts, and human

rights activists, which lays out growing concerns regarding democratic backsliding in Europe.

Chairman ROYCE. Without objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to ask my first question involving something I said in my opening statement and I've been saying for the past year and a half on this committee, as have we all on both sides of the aisle.

That's the budget that's, woefully, inadequate.

Let me start with you, Mr. Gershman. We understand the critical importance of the NED's work and that of NDI and IRI around the world.

The budget proposal for fiscal year 2019 requested a $67 million for NED, which is a 60 percent cut from the amount, which is $170 million that Congress has appropriated yearly since fiscal year 2016.

Not only did the fiscal year 2019 budget of the administration gut NED's funding, they also took aim at Congress' funding of your four core institutes—again, NDI, IRI, the Center for International Private Enterprise, and the Solidarity Center.

Let me ask, what effect would the drastic budget proposal have on your ability to fund democracy activities and if the budget became law what would have to be cut and how do you prioritize when the needs are so great?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Thank you very much for that question.

There are, obviously, two fundamental problems with the OMB budget request for fiscal 2019—the amount and separating us from the four institutes.

And both of these are devastating. I don't even want to get into now what we would have to cut. They're devastating—utterly devastating. It would virtually kill the whole program, and it's based upon, in my view, just a failure to understand what we do and the value of what we do.

And I should point out to you, Congressman Engel, that we are in close touch with the NSC, with OMB, to try to talk about these issues. It's partly an educational process. It's also political, and to try to explain why NED is both effective and cost effective, I think, because we have a multi sectoral structure. It's also labor and business that is part of this in addition to our political parties, with the civil society groups that the NED supports directly, which is a broad and extremely effective and also cost-effective operation—cost-effective because we are not imposing things on people. We are supporting bottom-up processes. We are responding to demands that are on the ground, finding the best groups and helping them.

And so this is something that works and I think Congress understands this. As I look around this committee, Congress understands that this is something effective, and in a way, we've always been an institution of the Congress.

I look at Dante on the wall and Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde, Ben Gilman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. You people have understood what this is all about from the very, very beginning.

But we do have a problem now in terms of explaining this and educating a new generation who don't necessarily have the same history, and this is something we have to do, and things like we did last night when we brought these leaders of four North Korean

NGOs to the Congress and got them around so people could meet them to see what they do with the defector organizations—North Koreans who've defected from North Korea who are now working both to rescue people and also to reach into North Korea with information, breaking down the communications blockade—the information blockade that the regime in North Korea has established. When people understand this in concrete terms and see how far small grants can go in assisting people who are on the front lines of the struggle for freedom, I believe we are going to get that support and we just have to keep fighting that.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Several formerly democratic countries, as I mentioned in my opening statement have moved in a decisively autocratic direction over the last several years. From Turkey to Venezuela to Russia, authoritarian leaders are diminishing democratic space, squelching the free press, and undermining the independence of their judiciaries.

So let me ask Mr. Twining and Mr. Wollack—can your organizations function in these and other countries which have backslid so far? Is there ample latitude for effective employment of democracy promotion in places like these?

Mr. TWINING. Sir, there is. Some of the work has to be offshore. Obviously, all of it is in very tough conditions. We also need to play a long game. I mean, I will give you another example.

You mentioned some back slipping. But in Malaysia, IRI has been working with the opposition there since 2002. Malaysia was essentially a one-party majoritarian state. The ruling party had ruled since 1957. It had gerrymandered all the districts, given itself every advantage. But in this last election a month ago, the opposition won for the first time in 60 something years, and that was an example of playing the long game, right.

We, the United States, supported a democratic opposition that is now in charge of this very strategic country right there on the front lines of the South China Sea, right there on the front lines of the Islamic world's intersection with the rest of Asia, and that's good for America.

So we look at a country like Russia and we see a leader who looks very strong but, frankly, who is very brittle and, frankly, quite insecure, and we know that Russians would like to have a choice and a different future—a much more European and prosperous than he can offer them.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Wollack.

Mr. WOLLACK. Let me just say, operating in the so-called semi-authoritarian regimes in which you have the forms of democracy. You have elections. You have political parties. You have civil society groups, some media, but in fact one party, one individual, one family controls all aspects of society and all political institutions.

In many of these places, this is the most challenging environment to work and what we do is we work in these environments with civil society, with political actors and find reformist elements within the ruling elite and work with them.

Sometimes, however, we become the canaries in the coal mine. When the governments want to crack down, fear any diffusion of

political power, we become the victims of that along with those on the ground in places like Azerbaijan and places like Russia.

And as Dan said, we have begun to work offshore in these places using long-distance learning, bringing people out. We use technology so they can share information among themselves, and sometimes, in places like Belarus, you can reach more people this way, too, where literally hundreds of thousands of people are being reached by these methods.

But it's a challenge. But things change. Nothing is constant. In Armenia, for example, now there is a welcoming and an opening for the international community to return, to help institutions—newly-created institutions, helping the government reform, to communicate. And so, ultimately speaking, we play the long game in all of this. We understand that this is a process. It's not a destination and democracy isn't linear. But I think there have been many places where we were not welcome but we have returned as openings took place.

Chairman ROYCE. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel, for your leadership in holding this important hearing.

Ted and I, in our Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, held a similar hearing last year when we heard from IRI and NDI, who are with us today, as well as from IFES and Freedom House, and these organizations make up four major implementers of U.S. democracy and governance assistance.

I am grateful to each and every one of them as well as to NED for their constant efforts not just in the Middle East but every place where freedom and human rights are under attack.

One of my biggest concerns is the increasing amount of collaboration between repressive regimes as dictators and their accomplices get together and they share best practices and techniques for crushing dissent.

We see it in places like Egypt where Sisi is using similar tactics deployed in other countries and implementing choking restrictions on NGOs on foreign aid and the media and we see it in places like Nicaragua, and thank you to all of you who have brought that up, where the Ortega regime is not only executing Cuba's play book but staying in close contact with its operatives to co-opt institutions and repress the Nicaraguan people. And this collaboration problem is only going to get worse in the years ahead. I am concerned that we either aren't recognizing it or we are failing to give it the attention that it deserves. We cannot afford cuts to democracy and governance programs right now or, when it's appropriated, fail to implement programs because of directives from the White House or Embassies abroad.

So I have two questions for the panel. What can you tell us about our Embassy in Lebanon's decision to cancel or refuse to renew U.S.-funded projects in the lead-up to the election and what impact do you think that had?

And on Nicaragua, despite being designated for democracy, much of our aid ends up funding programs barely related to democracy and governance, if at all.

What is your experience with U.S.-funded aid projects in Nicaragua and how can we do better?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WOLLACK. In the case of Nicaragua, we have been working there for the past 5 years—well, going back to earlier times but in our latest effort we have been working on youth leadership programs and have worked with more than 8,000 youth on a very extensive course work and academies to develop youth engagement, and while, obviously, we are not training people to engage in revolutionary activities or regime change, obviously, youth is playing a prominent role in the demonstrations that are taking place now.

Our programs, and I believe the programs of IRI, have been supported by both the NED and USAID, and it think that there is a commitment on the part of USAID to continue this effort.

It's a very tense and difficult time right now, but I think there is a commitment. In terms of the Lebanese elections, we were in Lebanon for the elections with an international observer delegation.

This was funded by the National Endowment for Democracy. Funding was not available by USAID but the State Department and the Embassy and the USAID mission were quite supportive of that effort when we were in-country and the work that we did preceding the election.

Mr. TWINING. So, Congresswoman, my predecessor, Mark Green, is running USAID and Mark brings the insight, which I don't think is that surprising, but which apparently is an insight that if you don't have some decent governance and some institutions, most U.S. foreign assistance is not spent well in those countries.

All these academic studies have been done showing that most development assistance, when it goes to corrupt kleptocratic badly-run countries, is wasted. It goes into elite pockets, et cetera, as you know.

So another way to think about this democracy in governance work, whether it's in Nicaragua, whether it's in Lebanon, whether it's elsewhere, is that it basically offers you a real return on the other investments one is making in that country—that America is making in that country, and that if you don't have decent governance and some degree of democratic rule of law, you're not going to get very far with all your other efforts at engagement whether they're military, whether they're business, et cetera.

In Lebanon, I will just say that another way to think about this work is there are lots of other foreign powers seeking to meddle and subvert and determine outcomes.

We are not trying to determine outcomes. The work we are doing in the democracy community is to create a level playing field so the people's choice actually comes out in a vote or in a political process.

But, gosh, in Lebanon you had the Saudis, you had the Iranians—I mean, you had all of these actors working to influence outcomes and that's something Americans should reflect on is we need a level playing field.

Mr. WOLLACK. I should just add one thing and that is that Hugo Chavez once famously said that he was not the cause—he was the result. He was the result of failed political institutions in Venezuela.

It wasn't that there were insufficient civil society organizations. The political parties, the legislature, were seen as being out of touch and corrupt, and often times when that happens and there's a crisis of confidence in political institutions, people either go to the streets or they vote for a populist leader who promises easy answers to very complex issues.

And so the question in these places—and Venezuela used to be the teacher of democracy in the hemisphere—so the question becomes how do these institutions reform and modernize, and not that they're going to be the most popular institutions in the country but how do you avoid a crisis of confidence—how do you engage citizens—how do you promote women's political leadership, marginalized communities, youth engagement—all these things that give people a stake in the system. And that is the challenge for political institutions in every region of the world.

Chairman ROYCE. We go to Mr. Brad Sherman of California.

He yields to Mr. Greg Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I just am delighted to have these three gentlemen before us today, congratulating Mr. Wollack on 35 years of great service to our country. I've been with NDI on various election-monitoring missions and seen the great work that you have done.

Mr. Twining, and I've known what IRI is doing and I've seen what you're doing specifically in Colombia with African-Colombians and working with the Ban Kata and making a difference in developing democracy there.

And Mr. Gershman, I am a former board member at NED so I've seen firsthand the work that you and your dedication and the bipartisan board of NED collectively working together to try to make sure that we have a better world for all of us.

So I thank all three of you and the organizations that you represent and have led for your work and your dedication to our country and to our world, because it is really, really, really needed and I thank you very much.

Unfortunately, I am concerned about the data and I know that you all have put a positive spin on it, which is what you do, to try—because you're trying to make sure the world is better.

But I think Congress has gotten it right, when I look at Congress and what they have put together—there's an appropriation of $170 million for NED. But yet, the administration's budget was $67 million, as Mr. Engel has talked about. That gives me grave concern.

In fact, when I look at the fact that the current administration, the Trump budget has slashed all democracy-promotion funding by more than half, I see the State Department has been just about hollowed out, and we hope that Mr. Pompeo can bring back some of those individuals in the workforce.

And then there's a proposed massive international affairs budget—their budget is being cut. I think that the committee gets it. I know that the chairman of this committee gets it. I know the ranking members and many others—we are going to work collectively together to make a difference because we understand the work that you do.

I think with Mr. Gershman, who indicated that education is important now because of a different generation and different folks

and, unfortunately, a different administration also, so I think—and part of that, as I travel particularly in Europe, as I am the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats and I've gotten folks coming back and forth, I've been hearing a lot from our European allies that the President's embrace of strongmen and shunning of democratic allies and his attacks on our own democratic process and institutions, it's damaging us. So but maybe what we can do—and I will start with you, Mr. Wollack—could you please address the difference between your work, democracy promotion, and meddling, because some say that what we are doing is meddling and getting involved.

Can you explain the difference between those things?

Mr. WOLLACK. Well, this has been part of the Russian propaganda campaign as well. Russia, as the United States is, is a member of the OSCE—the Organization for Security and Cooperation and Europe.

The OSCE was established based on democratic principles that all member states must abide. So when we are working in countries, particularly in that region of the world, Congressman, we are working under the principles established by the OSCE, which require members states to adhere to those principles.

Our engagement is not to spread falsehoods. It's not to create fake news. It's not to try to disrupt the process. It's not to try to spur conflict in countries.

What we are trying to do is promote the principles, values, processes, and institutions that are enshrined in an intergovernmental organization and our work is to try to help people engage in the political process.

It's to help people monitor the political process, which is their right. It's about engagement, it's about monitoring, and it's about helping promote the integrity of the process.

Russian efforts are exactly the opposite. It's designed to subvert a process in these countries and try to skew outcomes and it's a little bit like a doctor—one doctor who prescribes poison to a patient and another doctor who prescribes lifesaving medicine to a patient.

I mean, they're both being prescribed by a doctor but one kills and one, hopefully, helps to cure.

Chairman ROYCE. We'll go to Mr. Rohrabacher of California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I am perplexed by some of the testimony today and I will have to say that over the years one of the greatest things I've been proud of is Ronald Reagan's making human rights and democracy a major, major part of his administration's goals.

But let us remember that Westminster speech—I remember it very well—I worked in the speech writing department during that time and I am not taking credit for the speech, however—let me note that.

But in pursuing democracy and human rights and, basically, we needed to make sure that we did not and it was very clear that we did not take away and work against those regimes that were imperfect or had problems—democratic problems in a way that it would result in strengthening the Soviet Union and permit Com-

munist governments to exist where flawed, not maybe authoritarian governments.

In fact, Carl and I know very well your former boss, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, who was one of my great heroes and still is, differentiated between authoritarian and totalitarian governments.

And what I think what we've gotten so far away from Jeanne Kirkpatrick, what we have are policies that undermine democratic governance, and to the benefit of what is our major threat today.

Ronald Reagan wanted to use, and what worked, was make sure we supported democracy and human rights to defeat the major threat of the day, which was Soviet communism.

All right. Today, radical Islamic terrorism is the major threat to Western civilization today, and if we end up undermining governments like in Egypt—undermining Egypt right now, as imperfect as General Sisi is, if we end up with a government that is controlled by radical Islamic terrorists we have done a great disservice to our people and to the world.

We can speak of all these cliches—we all believe in those phrases that our Founding Fathers came forth and put forth to the countries and the people of the world—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness given to all human beings.

We believe in that. But if we are so arrogant that we interfere with other people's democratic process because they are flawed and it results in more radical Islamic terrorism or Chinese hegemony, they we have done a disservice to the world and I see that creeping into our policies.

I don't know why Indonesia was selected. Isn't our involvement in the Indonesian Government—isn't that meddling? I mean, Indonesia has a somewhat democratic government, and I see these complaints coming from all over the world now about how—did we or did we want involve ourselves heavily to undermine the democratically-elected government of Yanokovych in Ukraine? And what did it bring us? It brought us turmoil and conflict—that if we would have waited and let that government be elected, because of its flaws unelected, we would not be this situation today where the world is more likely to go into conflict because of that. I don't believe the Russians would have invaded Ukraine had we not arrogantly involved ourselves to overthrow that democratically elected government in Ukraine.

And what we need to make sure is—we had a comment about the Arab Spring. I will tell you this about the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring may have brought more threat to this world than freedom.

I remember very well the Shah of Iran, who was, yes, had a very flawed government. But you know what? We should have stuck by the Shah of Iran and it would be a more peaceful world and a world with more freedom in the world had we stuck with the Shah of Iran rather than cut him off at the knees.

And we see that with Mubarak in Egypt. When we cut Mubarak off, we ended up with a government leader who was a follower of the Muslim Brotherhood.

These things—look, if we are Americans we believe in freedom and we believe in democracy. But we better make sure that we—you know, what Ronald Reagan did when he gave that West-

minster speech. We cannot permit that to allow the greatest enemy of freedom and democracy to come to power in various countries.

So I've had my say. I know I am making everybody mad at me but I had to say it.

If the chairman will allow, you certainly will have any amount of time you want to respond what I just said.

Mr. GERSHMAN. I feel like, if I may, I can call you Dana and Ambassador Kirkpatrick will be Jeanne in this discussion, because this is a discussion among ourselves and it's a long discussion.

Jeanne Kirkpatrick wrote that article back in 1979, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," where she made the distinction you're talking about.

Different period now, and Jeanne was a member of the IRI board—very close friend when the NED was created and she supported completely what we did and I think she did because what we do is very pragmatic. Dictatorships and double standards are based upon the idea that maybe there are only two choices, and I think what NED does is it offers a third choice and it offers a third choice by trying to work with whatever openings exist in authoritarian countries to move them toward democracy.

And my great fear, Congressman, is that if that doesn't happen they will become targets for anti-democratic elements. And I gave a talk, which I would like to share with you, recently to the Potomac Institute on Democracy and Terrorism where I think that—and I quote an Israeli scholar in that talk on terrorism who says that the best way of fighting terrorism is through democracy, and there's a lot of evidence for that.

And what I fear, I spoke about this in the talk—is that the way Sisi is opposing the Muslim Brotherhood and the extremists is actually making the problem worse.

In the prisons where ISIS and the Muslim Brotherhood are recruiting it's making the problem worse, and the example I gave in contrast to what Egypt is doing is Tunisia.

In January, we ran an article by two IRI people in the Journal of Democracy who were saying that because the revolution in Tunisia did not produce immediate economic benefits for the people it became a fertile recruiting ground for ISIS, okay, and that was a problem.

And I realize that these situations can become problems, but what Tunisia has done now—and I refer to this in my testimony—it's both fighting terrorism and controlling terrorism—there have been no terrorist incidents in Tunisia in the last 3 years—but also to deepen and broaden and make more inclusive democracy.

And I think a tremendous step forward in the Middle East's first Arab democracy was taken on the May 6th local elections in Tunisia and where we all were involved in that, which, I think, the majority of candidates were young people in those elections.

And through those types of elections, you have made democracy meaningful to people. You have told them that their voices count, and I think that is the best way, ultimately, to fight terrorism.

I don't disagree with you about the problem of terrorism but you have to be smart in the way you fight it and I think the best way to fight it is by deepening and broadening democracy wherever we can.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Brad Sherman of California.

Mr. SHERMAN. I think we need to avoid a belief that what we do in Washington controls the whole world and everything is all about us. The Shah fell—I am not sure there's anything that happened in Washington that caused that or could have prevented it.

Mubarak fell trying to install a corrupt son to be his successor. I am not sure there's anything that could have happened in Washington that would have preserved him.

It meets the psychological needs of both the Iranians and the Americans to say that in the 1950s we saved the Shah. That massively overstates our importance. But overstating our importance makes us feel good and overstating the degree to which Iran is subject to foreign manipulation meets the psychological needs of many Iranians.

On North Korea, I will ask the witnesses or at least whoever answers first, is there a more repressive regime in the world? Can anyone name one?

Mr. GERSHMAN. No, this is——

Mr. SHERMAN. Okay.

Mr. GERSHMAN [continuing]. The most repressive regime in the world.

Mr. SHERMAN. To what extent do we undercut our credibility by not even mentioning how the North Korean people are treated when our President is in Singapore?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Congressman Sherman, we honored yesterday in the Congress four North Korean groups—groups working on human rights in North Korea and it was a great celebration about——

Mr. SHERMAN. I am not asking about your wonderful organization.

Mr. GERSHMAN. One of the people we honored yesterday was the young man with the crutches who was celebrated during the State of the Union Address. I just want to note that.

Mr. SHERMAN. I am going to ask also Mr. Wollack, does it undercut?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Okay, but what I do want to say is——

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Gershman, it's my time. I am going to ask——

Mr. GERSHMAN [continuing]. In my view——

Mr. SHERMAN. I am going to ask Mr. Wollack to respond.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Okay. But let me just say one more thing. [Laughter.]

Mr. SHERMAN. I am not sure the chairman will give me 3 or 4 extra minutes to allow long responses.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Give me one sentence.

Mr. SHERMAN. If he will, then you're free to continue.

Mr. GERSHMAN. One sentence.

Mr. SHERMAN. One sentence.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Thank you. I don't think any meaningful nuclear agreement is possible without promoting and defending human rights.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Wollack.

Mr. WOLLACK. I think that there has been a sea change in the United States over the last 35 years in terms of our diplomatic missions.

I don't think there is an Ambassador in any country that does not have democracy and human rights as part of his or her portfolio. That didn't exist 35 years ago.

Now, in some places it's not the number-one agenda item.

Mr. SHERMAN. I understand.

Mr. WOLLACK. It may not be the second or third or the fifth.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Wollack.

Mr. WOLLACK. And——

[Crosstalk.]

Mr. SHERMAN. I thank you for your comments, but my question was directed at what physically happened in Singapore. I realize the importance of human rights to the State Department in general.

Mr. WOLLACK. No, no, no. I am—Congressman, all I am saying is that these are organizations who believe——

Mr. SHERMAN. The question wasn't about your three organizations. It was about the President and his entourage in Singapore.

One thing I want to point out is that perhaps the most important thing America does for democracy around the world is to serve as a model for democracy, and nothing would undermine that more than if we fail to have a verifiable auditable paper trail for our own elections, which Congress has yet to fund.

What happened in the year 2000 in Florida and looking at chads would be a minor thing compared to a year 2020 election in which we believe that perhaps a foreign entity or other skullduggery was capable of manipulating the electoral count and that there was no way for us to audit it.

And I want to turn our attention to Yerevan and Armenia. NED has allocated $1.3 million last year. Now we've seen a real move toward democracy. Are you going to do more, given the fluid situation there?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Thank you very much for that question, Mr. Sherman.

Yes. The answer is yes. Our board, which meets later this week, is making Armenia what we call a country eligible for contingency funds, which are funds set aside for new situations and, obviously, what's happened in Armenia is very, very new.

And we—I think there are several priorities that have to be addressed. There are going to be quick elections that have been called in Armenia and those elections have to have integrity to them to give legitimacy to the current Pashinyan government.

There is a Parliament that oversees this and government officials are really new to the governing game. The system has been controlled by a centralized authority for a number of years and so a lot of training will have to be necessary for some of the new government officials.

And then finally, there's going to be a big information war, the kind of issue raised by Congressman Royce, and it is very essential in this period—and this is what the groups that we help are doing—is to get people reliable and independent information so they don't make the judgments based upon the disinformation that

is going to be promoted by the forces that have just been removed from power.

Mr. SHERMAN. Let me, finally, comment that we have to believe in democracy and elections even when we are on the losing side and we can't be for overthrowing a democratically-elected government even if the people doing it are Westernized, waging a color revolution.

If the government was legitimately elected, the fact that it has lost popularity in the capital city should not be a reason for discarding democratic institutions and a government does not fall because it becomes unpopular on a particular day under most constitutions.

I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. We go to Mr. Steve Chabot of Ohio.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Nicaragua appears to be heading in the same direction—off a cliff—as Venezuela and Cuba before that. The brutal thug, Daniel Ortega, has been using lethal force against innocent protestors, having already killed approximately 150 people. Many more have been wounded or been tortured or have just disappeared.

There was a massacre of innocent protestors, many of them women, on Nicaraguan Mother's Day recently—very recently. Progovernment Sandinista mobs and gangs are terrorizing and killing its own innocent people. What can be done to help innocent Nicaraguan civilians who are being brutalized by their own government?

Whoever would like to handle that.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Well, Nicaragua happened almost at the same time as Armenia and they had, so far, very different outcomes. In Armenia, the government withdrew. It was not overthrown.

The Serzh government withdrew and a new government came in and they're going to have elections. In Nicaragua, the church intervened. There was an uprising. The church intervened to try to have a negotiated settlement there and that's fallen apart.

It was the young people especially in Nicaragua—the students—and I was impressed in both Armenia and Nicaragua that a lot of the groups that we were supporting just to do regular training programs, leadership training, information programs—when these events happened, these are people who are in the middle of the struggle. It's not something that we are doing.

It's their struggle. But if you sort of find the most creative and dynamic and dedicated democrats, they're going to be in these struggles when an opportunity comes, and it happened in Nicaragua with the announced reform of the pension system.

It was the spark that led to this uprising. These young people were in the forefront of this struggle and they need continued support and solidarity. There are immediate groups there that need continued support and solidarity.

We have to work with and help the church, which is trying to mediate this conflict and we have to let Ortega know that there really is no future for his regime. He's lost his legitimacy.

A lot of the young people who are in the streets were former supporters of the Sandinistas. He has lost those people and Nicaragua has to move now on a democratic path.

That's going to be a very complicated thing because there needs to be a political strategy developed by the people in Nicaragua to lead to this. There's no real party right now which can offer an alternative to Ortega. They're going to have to do that.

But we just have to continue to support the civil society, media, and other elements that are the authentic democratic elements and that are outraged by the really utter corruption and the undermining of all the so-called claims to democracy that Ortega had.

He's lost his legitimacy. It's time for him to go and we have to sort of see this process move forward peacefully.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

I will move on to another issue. I introduced, and the House passed, the Protecting Girls' Access to Education Act, which would prioritize education, especially for girls who are particularly at risk around the world, in State Department programs.

Could somebody touch on how, in your experience, promoting education among vulnerable populations helps to strengthen democratic institutions?

Mr. Twining.

Mr. TWINING. So, I mean, we are not directly in the education business but could I just pick up your point about girls and women?

Mr. CHABOT. Yes.

Mr. TWINING. It's just really one of the single best variables for determining whether a country will have a successful democratic outcome in institutions is the role of women in political life.

I mean, one of the pathologies of much of the Arab world is that women have been absent from political life in so many ways.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Mr. TWINING. So much of our work in the democracy community revolves around trying to empower women and it's not just about kind of training and mechanics. It's about a mindset change that they do have an equal voice in their country's political life and future.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. I only have a little time left. I want to give you another question, Mr. Wollack, if I can, real quickly.

Last year, Prime Minister Hun Sen expelled NDI from Cambodia. My Democratic colleague, Alan Lowenthal, and I are the congressional caucus co-chairmen of the Cambodia Caucus and we followed the situation very closely.

There's little doubt that next month's elections are going to be a sham. So what do you think is our best response? Is there much hope for continuing to promote true democracy in Cambodia at this point?

Mr. WOLLACK. I think since the 1993 elections in Cambodia it's been a series of coups in the country. The CPP did not accept the results and Hun Sen did not accept the results of the 1993 elections and forced a coalition government, despite losing that election.

In 1997, there was another coup in which the opposition was exiled and the latest actions by the government is the third coup since the U.N.—UNTAC-run elections.

What we can do right now is to, as Carl said, keep a lifeline to civil society organizations on the ground that are trying to engage

as actively as they can under very difficult circumstances and we can continue to provide a lifeline to a legitimate political party that most likely would have won the elections if it had been allowed to compete freely and fairly, and I think one of the reasons why the government went after them is their internal polls showed that they were going to lose the election.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Mr. WOLLACK. So I think we can keep a lifeline both to the leadership of the party, most of which is in exile, and also to the civic groups on the ground.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. My time has expired.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Chabot, getting women more involved in the political sphere and in the economy is something we've been focused on with the hearings in this committee and it's something we will continue to double down.

Mr. WOLLACK. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to make one quick point.

I think that one of the best ways that you can address the issue of women's education and girls and women's enterprises is to get more women elected to leadership positions in political institutions.

There is lots of research that shows when there's a critical mass of women in parliaments and in government, they will address those issues more effectively, and one of the things that NDI and IRI does—they do is to try to help political parties, particularly in parliamentary systems, reform so women have greater leadership roles and are higher up enough on lists in parliamentary systems so they actually get represented in parliaments, and then what you see are changes that level the playing field for men and women in areas of education and business.

Chairman ROYCE. Okay.

We go to Mr. Ted Deutch of Florida.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to all of our witnesses for being here. The work that you do has never been more important than it is today and, Mr. Wollack, I would join my colleagues in thanking you for your dedication to promoting democracy and rule of law and governance and contributions you made throughout a very distinguished career and wish you all of the best in your retirement.

There was a—well, actually, let me ask this question first. We had touched on Kim Jong-un. Could I just ask you to describe the nature of Kim's regime?

Mr. GERSHMAN. This is a personalistic dictatorship. It's a dynasty in the sense that he's the grandson of Kim Il-sung, who created the regime.

There is maybe the issue that has gotten most attention is the Kwan-li-so, which is the prison camp system where there are now 120,000 prisoners. But, as I said last night in remarks I made at the award event for our grantees working on North Korea, I understand that, reliably, about 400,000 people have died in those prison camps. There was, obviously, also mass starvation in the 1990s.

But I consider what's happening in North Korea today, Congressman Deutch, an eroding totalitarian system. When we started our work in North Korea there was a complete information blockade.

There were no North Koreans who were able to get outside. There are now 31,000. The information blockade has broken down. One of the groups who are running unification media group is getting news in and getting news out.

There is a market system now in North Korea because of the collapse of the state distribution system during the famine of the 1990s.

This is an eroding totalitarian system. So we shouldn't give up hope on the possibilities for internal change.

Mr. DEUTCH. Right. So that gets me to my question. When the President had a face-to-face meeting with Kim—the leader of a country where there's been mass starvation, 400,000 dead in these prisons, 120,000 prisoners—and then went on in an interview the next day in response to a question from Brett Baier referred to Kim as a tough guy—he said when you take over a country—a tough country, and you take it over from your father, I don't care who you are, what you are, how much of an advantage you have—if you can do that at 27 years old, I mean, that's one in 10,000 that can do that, so he's a very smart guy.

Brett Baier then followed up and said, but he's still doing some really bad things, and the President said, yeah, but so have other people done some really bad things. I can go through a lot of nations where a lot of bad things were done.

I've got to ask this questions. I have all sorts of questions about Russia and Russia's attempts to meddle. I have all sorts of notes here about the work that you're doing in countries around the world where democracy is at risk.

But how much more difficult is your work—how much more difficult is democracy promotion and standing up for—and standing up against repressive regimes that have 120,000 prisoners where 400,000 have died, where there's mass starvation—how much harder is it when the President of the United States seems to condone the actions of the worst and most brutal dictators in the world?

Mr. TWINING. Sir, I mean, I would just say we've all been in business for 35 years, right, and we are so directly tied to Congress, which was central to the formation of the democracy community institutes. Everywhere I go in the world, I talk about congressional leadership in issues like you were describing right now.

I would also just say I think there's a fundamental insight that most Republicans and most Democrats share, which is that the nature of the threat to the United States from a country like North Korea stems from the nature of its regime.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Gershman.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Mr. Wollack, you're leaving, I mean——

Mr. WOLLACK. There's no solution aside from——

Mr. DEUTCH. Any comments? [Laughter.]

Feel free to speak freely.

Mr. WOLLACK. I think democrats in countries all over the world look to the United States. Oftentimes they do, as Dan said, look to the Congress as the first address because usually it's the Congress, irrespective of administrations, that have recognized their struggle.

Don't forget, it's the Congress that established the NED. It was the Congress that established the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the State Department.

These have been instructional initiatives. My chairman, Madeline Albright, talks about this being Article I time on these issues, and I would agree with that assessment.

I think when American leadership doesn't speak out on these issues, people in these countries do feel more vulnerable. There is no doubt about that.

Yet, these people who are very, very brave people are able also to compartmentalize and they look to international solidarity in a variety of ways.

And so when there is not American leadership in a particular place at a particular time, hopefully, that void can be filled by other engagement, and it's—as I said, and it's not only a particular leader, a particular government. This has waxed and waned over the years.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Wollack, I am grateful, actually, for the responses from all of you. I am heartened by them and I am immensely grateful to the chairman and my colleagues on this committee, Democrats and Republicans alike, who continue to stand up for American ideals in every part of the world.

We need to continue to do that and I would note that the same thing applies to standing up for our own democracy here at home, and I yield back.

Mr. MCCAUL [presiding]. I thank the gentleman.

The chair recognizes himself for 5 minutes.

Mr. Gershman, what a great event last night to honor——

Mr. GERSHMAN. Thank you for speaking.

Mr. MCCAUL. Yes, and for me to present awards to two dissidents who were standing up for human rights in North Korea, and in particular, Ji Seong Ho, who was, as you mentioned, at the State of the Union, in crutches, for me to be able to do that was just an incredible experience, and I want to thank all of you for what you do for human rights.

And I think you mentioned Reagan's speech at Westminster in 1982 where he said the march of freedom and democracy would leave Marxism and Leninism on the ash heap of history, and I think he was right.

But I want to focus on China. I could talk about Russia and I could talk about—I've seen the rise and fall of ISIS under my tenure as chairman of the Homeland Security Committee but now I see the rise of nation states being the bigger threats now—that being Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran.

I had a briefing yesterday in a classified setting on ZTE and Huawei, and their efforts to conduct espionage in this country. I've also seen them in Sri Lanka where they have burdened them with so much debt that they had to turn over a strategic port to the Chinese.

We see the Chinese now in Djibouti for the first time and we see them leveraging the continent of Africa into so much debt that they will be able to eventually take over these countries and exploit them.

They bring in their own workers. They don't even hire the host countries' workers and they export their natural resources in what is this One Belt, One Road policy.

I just want to open this discussion up to the three of you on your perception of the threat of China and what the United States needs to do in response.

Mr. Gershman.

Mr. GERSHMAN. We talk about this all the time. I believe this is the most serious problem and the most serious threat our country faces today. I disagree with Congressman Rohrabacher. I think this is much, much more serious than the problem of terrorism, and it's something that I think our country is beginning to understand.

In March, The Economist magazine had a cover story on China, and the bottom line of the cover story was—and this is a direct quote—"The West's 25-year bet on China has failed."

The bet was that if China was brought into the World Trade Organization, was encouraged to grow economically, it would become a more liberal society and be part of the liberal world order.

The exact opposite happened, and I think, Mr. Chairman, that I had mentioned in my testimony Liu Xiaobo—that the Chinese destroyed him.

In 2006, Liu Xiaobo—he's a Nobel Laureate who died in prison—wrote an essay where he warned against the problem of China rising as a dictatorship, and he mentioned Hitler.

He mentioned the Meiji emperors in Japan. He mentioned Stalin, and he said, this is the danger. This is going to be a threat for liberal democracy around the world. He was then silenced.

But what he was saying then, I think, is now becoming understood by the foreign policy establishment. There was a recent policy article in Foreign Affairs by Kurt Campbell basically recognizing that the old view was wrong—that it hasn't happened that way and that people are now recognizing that we have a new problem. It's a problem with the Belt and Road Initiative, which is not just an economic expansion.

This is intimately tied to China's geopolitical and military strategy precisely to get strategic ports in Sri Lanka or in Maldives because they fall into the debt trap and pay back by leasing their ports. There's the issue of sharp power.

There's the issue of the South China Sea and the violation of the judgement of the international tribunal, which said that they did not have control of those islands. This is now being recognized as the central problem.

We have to get our minds around this and we are really at the beginning of an effort to try to understand how to deal with this problem.

And I just think that as we go forward in thinking about this problem the immediate response is going to be a military, a geostrategic, an economic response. But don't forget the people of China.

Don't forget that there are people like Liu Xiaobo in China who want a different kind of future and when you tighten the centralized power the way Xi Jinping has centralized power there are going to be a lot of unhappy people.

There are going to be splits. We have to not give up on the possibility for democratic change in China and keep findings ways to support them.

I realize I am a great optimist. I am always looking at the positive side in North Korea in every country, but I really deeply believe that this is possible.

I also think, by the way, that we have to keep our eyes focused on the minorities issue, what's happening with the Uighurs. It's not physically genocidal but they've got internment camps, reeducation camps where a million Uighurs are now in those camps.

There should be an outcry in the Muslim world against this. I was speaking with one of our Uighur participants in last night's event about this, how can we get the Muslim world to protest against the repression of the Uighurs.

There's the Tibetan issue. We have to challenge—we talked about this at the December hearing—we have to challenge China, which says that the Dalai Lama must accept the fact that Tibet's been part of China since antiquity, which is not true. China invaded Tibet. Tibet did have an international legal identity.

We have to challenge these things. We have to defend Taiwan. We have to defend Taiwan, which is a Confucius culture and a democracy, and China is very much aware of that.

They would love to eliminate Taiwan or absorb Taiwan. We have to ensure that Taiwan could remain an independent democracy. We also have to defend Hong Kong.

So we have to stand firm with the people who are in these struggles and not let them lose hope.

Mr. MCCAUL. And my time has expired. But I just want to close by saying, I remember reading bin Laden's writings. He projected exactly what their intentions were, and the Chinese—I agree with you—are now the bigger threat and they have telegraphed that by 2025 they will be a world-dominating power both militarily and economically and I think the United States needs to wake up to that fact.

The chair now recognizes Ms. Karen Bass from California.

Ms. BASS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I want to welcome my colleagues from NED and IRI and NDI, and I am a member of the NED board, for my colleagues that are here on the committee, and I have to say the work that NED does around the world is really tremendous, and I had the honor recently of being at the World Movement for Democracy in Senegal.

And meeting people from all around the world who are all committed to fighting for democracy was quite an honor. I wanted to ask each of you if you would talk about one challenge that is facing that in Africa that all of us are very, very concerned about and that's the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

They were supposed to have elections in 2016, and now is supposedly putting the elections off until December of this year, and I don't believe there's been any indication that Kabila has made any commitment not to run and the deteriorating situation there in regard to democracy.

And I wanted to know if you would each speak to the work of each of your entities within DRC and then also what more do you think Congress can be doing.

Mr. WOLLACK. Thank you, Congresswoman.

First of all, I just want to make one comment about the African continent because when people talk about backsliding, people tend to ignore the changing face on the continent.

Between 1960 and 1990 there were four African heads of state that stepped down voluntarily, and since 1990 that figure is over 50.

Ms. BASS. Thank you. I appreciate you pointing that out because we don't acknowledge when there's peaceful transitions of power, which happen frequently, as you have mentioned.

Mr. WOLLACK. And some of the fastest growing economies in the world are in places now that are new democracies on the African continent.

In terms of the DRC, it is a mystery. Nobody knows what is going to happen. What we are trying to do is to work with political parties across the spectrum, trying to promote dialogue and preparations for what everybody expects, or everybody hopes if not expects, in December.

But the big question is going to be Kabila himself. I fear if he makes a decision to run, you're going to see massive social unrest in the country, which not only is going to affect the people of the DRC but it'll have regional implications.

And so the question is, how do you prepare now for a process with the assumption that he will make the right decision—really, the only decision, that he should make and that's what we are all doing—working with civil society organizations to monitor the elections, helping the parties develop sort of the rules of the game for the election, support the election commission and NDI, IRI, and IFES have been working in tandem, identifying what the needs are and then working on the ground and trying to respond to those needs.

Ms. BASS. Thank you.

Mr. TWINING. Congresswoman, could I just add—I mean, that sums up some of our work. But there's a broader dynamic, which is that there are these African success stories. But we had an African leader say to us recently the problem—you look at DRC, you look at South Sudan. These countries aren't just a problem for themselves.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. TWINING. They destabilize the entire—refugee flows, illegal drugs, militias, everything, the whole human trafficking—and that when you think about the African integration agenda, when you think about 1 billion new people coming online in Africa in the next 30 years and what the economic potential of that is versus the darker scenario if those people don't have opportunity—if they are pushed to the political extremes.

We have got to get these almost black holes right, right, that are destabilizing the entire continent, and it's a bigger job than any of us can do. But thank you for the focus on it.

Ms. BASS. Sure.

Mr. GERSHMAN. I just think that more people have died in the Congo over the last 20 years from conflict and the disease and violence associated with conflict than in any other country in the world.

So this is a problem that has to be central to our attention. I would say only one other point. The opposition is going to come from grassroots citizen movements if there is not a free and fair election. There is——

Ms. BASS. Which NED supports.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Just as we've seen in other countries like Burkino Faso, Senegal, in 2012, where they had the uprising—the Y'en a Marre uprising—and you have these citizen movements that are now all over Africa, and they are the leading force that, I think, is going to lead to change in the Congo, and a lot of the groups that we support, you know, are trying to train and educate people in these citizen movements.

Ms. BASS. And let me just say, Mr. Chair, before I move on that we do have a bipartisan bill that we've been working on that I do hope we have a markup on in this committee as soon as possible.

And in walks our chair, Mr. Royce. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. MCCAUL. The chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Yoho.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate you all sitting here. I've had the opportunity to speak with most of you and I've read your stuff over the years. I really do appreciate the work you do in your organizations, and that is to spread the values and ideals that we hold true, and that President Reagan was so great sharing with the rest of the world, and those are life, liberty, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness along with human rights as enshrined and protected in our Constitution.

We have been attempting to perfect it over 200 years through many trials and tribulations, and yet we still don't have it right. So bear with me for a moment.

As you know, the word democracy is used loosely around the world. We have a pretty good understanding here. A democracy is defined as majority rule, or mob rule, and we have a constitutional republic, a republic that uses a democratic process where the majority of votes won in an electoral college system wins and, yes, some countries do have a majority rule by the votes that are cast by the electorate.

So when we talk about spreading democracy around the world, I wonder if we are not spreading the wrong message. If one is to watch our news and you see the constant of our political leaders, all the way up to our President, and they receive it 24/7 that people in America are not happy with our many freedoms, do you see where it gives leaders in other countries pause and casts doubts to its citizens on fighting for what kind of a country they want, or what form of government, like a democracy?

Then a leader like Xi Jinping points to America and points out the flaws of democracies, or Chavez, Castro, or Maduro says they are a result of failed democracies. Or any other authoritarian dictator or thug points to a democracy as a flawed form of government.

Again, is there cause for people or leaders in a country to question what form of government they want? We believe it. We fought for it. We've had it for 200 years.

As you all have said, democracy is on the ropes and it's being challenged, and I think of Mohammad Ali talking about the old rope-a-dope in the boxing ring.

It's something we've had to fight for and it's something that we believe in and we hold these values true. But today there is a paradigm shift going on around the world we have not seen since pre-World War II and there are two dominant players today.

One is us—the United States, with the most successful, and I am going to put democracy in quotes or, more accurately, a republic, that offers those liberties, freedoms, in the pursuit of happiness along with the human rights and self-governance, provided one stays within the parameter of the law, and we honor the rule of law.

These are the rights guaranteed and protected by our Constitution.

And the second being offered is by China and their dictator now for life, Xi Jinping, offering an alternative to leaders around the world. He's not going to offer it to people in another country. He's going to offer it to their leaders.

Their form of socialism with Chinese characteristics and, as we all know, that's communism. Our form of government empowers the people. Empowered people reach their full potential. China empowers the government where the people are suppressed for the benefit of the government.

And so as we go around, doing what you do—and I commend the work you do because it's vital—we have to—we can't back off of it, and no amount of money is going to fix it. You're not going to spread it everywhere in the world.

But if you spread those ideals that President Reagan spoke about, those are innate in every human being on this planet. Those are the things that will win by empowering people to those ideals they know they have, and there's not enough money in the world to do it.

But if you empower those people by working through the NGOs and the things like you guys do and find those leaders that are willing to tie into that, we'll win that every time because you cannot suppress people over and over again because they yearn to be free.

And so knowing what we know, as we talked about earlier, we get asked a lot about North Korea. Yes, it's very dangerous and it's very serious. But it can be dealt with diplomatically, I truly believe, and we are on the road.

You know, a job begun is half done. And the biggest threat we have is that challenge to the form of government that we see challenged today and how do you think the best way we need to go about challenging what we see as the rising dragon out of the East?

Mr. Gershman or Mr. Twining, you are ready there.

Mr. TWINING. I could be quick, because Carl got his shot on China and I was hoping to get mine. [Laughter.]

So it's very interesting with China because the Chinese used to bide their time, keep a low profile. That was the Deng Xiaoping advice.

Mr. YOHO. Right.

Mr. TWINING. Xi Jinping has come out and said actually China can be a model for you, other countries——

Mr. YOHO. Right.

Mr. TWINING [continuing]. And it's the whole suite that, if you're a strongman in another country it's very attractive. It's not just the money. It's not just the one-party system or one-man system.

It's the surveillance architecture. This Orwellian total surveillance state they're building with artificial intelligence and facial recognition and all this stuff.

It's very attractive, as you say, not to people but to leaders. So, I mean, I think first response is we've got to stick with this. Gosh, if there was ever a bad time for America to cede the field, it's not that—this is a bad time to cede the democracy field to other countries, who have very malign intentions.

That's one. Two, your fundamental insight, which, put another way, is that the thing about China and also Putin, they are fundamentally most afraid of their own people.

Mr. YOHO. They are.

Mr. TWINING. Right. We are not. We have a system that is very responsive—totally responsive to our publics and we have regular elections—do monitor that.

These leaders, their strategic Achilles heel is fear of their own publics and I think we should think about the old Reagan message of exploiting that a little.

Mr. YOHO. I would like to get everybody's comment but I am out of time with respect to everybody else. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. So we are going to go to Bill Keating of Massachusetts.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just want to follow up a little bit on Mr. Deutch's question a little bit, and I mean this—I know you want to get away from partisan kind of issues but sometimes you can't.

One of our goals when we go to countries and we are representing the United States of America we are proponents in our own rights, as Members of Congress, on issues like freedom of the press, rule of law, freedom of religion, free elections.

But, honestly, not so much in public conversations but privately we get thrown back in our face freedom of the press—well, what about fake news—what about, you know, business attacks at networks, undermining that from the business concern, which the President has done?

What about rule of law issue where these partisan attacks on enforcement agencies like the FBI or attacks on the judiciary based on the family history and nationality of one of the judges—freedom of religion on exclusionary orders or freedom of elections from statements that 5 million people in our country are voting illegally, or congratulating Putin on his election or even recently the German Ambassador putting his hands on the scales saying that he hopes in Europe that is more conservative winning in the elections, to paraphrase him loosely?

So those are the issues. It's hard for us to do that. Any suggestions?

Mr. WOLLACK. I will just make perhaps one point in this. There is an issue, too. Even though there were NGOs, we are operating

on U.S. Government money, too. And so there is understandable, I think, reluctance to get involved in critiquing the administration's foreign policy.

Mr. KEATING. Okay. Maybe this.

Forget what I just said and pretend it's a hypothetical.

Mr. WOLLACK. But I will tell you that overseas what people admire most about the United States is not a single individual. It happens to be the institutions of this country.

There are many people and many places who would say we aspire to have your problems, because if our leader says something we do not have the option to turn on television and hear that leader criticized in mainstream media. We don't see the courts operating to create some check on the executive. We don't see Congress with the Article 1 powers, the right to subpoena, the right to control the budgets, that can provide another check.

We don't see civil society in a way that can deal with these issues. So I think there's an understanding that there are problems politically. There are problems in this country.

There are problems in lots of other traditional democracies, and the sense of people in these countries that the traditional systems are not responding to their needs.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you. If I could just interrupt for a second, thank you for taking a stab at that. I would say this, too.

Often I preface statements to other countries where we might be a little critical of the way they're operating. I say, you got to understand our country. We criticize ourselves, I said, so what I am doing and what we are doing here, that's us. That's part of our DNA.

So I think it's a great point to point out the fact that, look, we are having our own political differences—but that's what we are about.

So thank you for that. I have another quick question that's really granular, I know, because I just received some correspondence—and we mentioned Nicaragua before and some of the violence.

I had a disturbing communication sent to me with the threats on some Jesuit priests and the clergy that are there.

They're outspoken in many of their doctrines, and there's a Father Jose Alberto Idiaquez, who is a rector there in Central America University in Nicaragua. He's an educator. But his life has been threatened.

Can we do anything as a country to try and deal with those issues where even educational heads—religious heads are just speaking up and their lives are being threatened? Is there something we can do in the U.S. to try and help in that regard at all? Any suggestions, based on your experience?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Throughout the world we are in countries where the people that we work with are being threatened, being killed, and we do everything we can. Congresswoman Bass mentioned the World Movement for Democracy and we have an alert system where we put out alerts which go around the world and we can do that.

The government, presumably has tried to provide training for security services. But you have a corrupt government in Nicaragua, which is actually part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Ultimately, you have got to press for political change there because this system is responsible for killing a lot of dissidents, and organizing these turbas against young people who have their own legitimate criticisms of the government, and I just think we have to mobilize both through official channels, our Government, the international community but also then the private human rights organizations to put pressure on Nicaragua so Ortega realizes he can't get away with this.

And then we have to continue to support the people inside Nicaragua who are fighting for a better way of governing themselves.

Mr. KEATING. My time has expired. I thank you all. Forward some of this information.

Mr. WOLLACK. I would say publicity under these circumstances is the best response, whether it's the OAS, the Human Rights Commission within the OAS, whether it's Members of Congress, whether it's human rights organizations around the world.

That is not an antidote but it provides a degree of protection.

Mr. KEATING. As you may gather, that's why I mentioned it.

Thank you so much. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go to Mr. Ted Poe of Texas.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I wanted to tap my foot and say amen to my friend, Mr. Keating, from Massachusetts, and his comments and his questions.

I want to cover three subjects in 5 minutes so make your answers brief. So if I ask you the time, don't tell me how to make a watch, if you can appreciate it, because you all have a lot of wisdom here.

Globally, what do you personally see is the number-one entity that is a threat to democracy, worldwide? Is it China? Is it Russia? Is it North Korea? Is it ISIS? Is it Iran?

Pick one. Pick the one you think is a threat.

Mr. GERSHMAN. China.

Mr. POE. China.

Mr. GERSHMAN. China.

Mr. POE. Mr. Twining.

Mr. TWINING. China.

Mr. POE. Mr. Wollack.

Mr. WOLLACK. Russia.

Mr. POE. Russia. Russia and China.

Okay. Turkey—it seems to me Turkey is moving away from democratic principles at a rapid rate, everything from Erdogan to security guards coming to the United States and beating up a bunch of Americans and then fleeing the country and Erdogan never, I think, took responsibility for that, and some of the things internally that are happening to what I see democracy in Turkey.

What can we do to help Turkey move back toward a democratic state? Anyone of you want to tackle that? Then I have one more question.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Well, look, they've got elections coming up in less than 2 weeks—June 24th—and those elections could go to a second round. That's very, very important and we should insist that these elections are free and fair and that there's a fair count there, even though the media situation is not fair.

The regime in Turkey—there's a real economic crisis. I think they're worried about that. They want an election soon because they see the economic problems coming later, and so I think if you can help the alternative points of view emerging there—I know that NDI and IRI are both working on that and they may want to say a word. I think what would be very, very helpful.

Mr. POE. Okay.

Mr. TWINING. Just very quickly, I would say if there was some way for us to stabilize Syria—not us the democracy community, us the West——

Mr. POE. Okay.

Mr. TWINING [continuing]. Because he has manipulated anti-Kurdish nationalism inside Turkey to bolster his political standing and hollow out institutions.

Mr. POE. Good point.

Mr. WOLLACK. Support for the democratic center because he's been able to play off the very—the opposition parties and opposition groups over the nationalism issue, and how do you support the democratic center in the country and a large civil society network that are advocating for these checks and balance principles.

Mr. POE. Okay. And the other issue I want to talk about are the three countries of Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia.

All three countries, I think, seem to have the similar issues internally and externally. All three countries are occupied by Russian troops. They're close to Russia and to me it seems like they're kind of on the fence about which way they're going to go.

I met with all three Speakers of the House not long ago in Moldova, and we talked about these very issues. But what is the realistic situation in those three countries today as you see it?

Mr. TWINING. Sir, I lived in Georgia for 3 years before this job. We also have a lot of Ukrainians coming through IRI. I don't think there is a big divide. They want to be part of the West.

They want to lean toward Europe, toward the United States. A Google executive told me that Russia is waging a "total war" against Ukraine in cyberspace. He said it's like Hiroshima and Nagasaki in cyberspace. You just don't see it because it's all these digital assaults on Ukrainian Government institutions, on free media in Ukraine, et cetera.

So I would just reference that I don't think the people are equally divided. Most of the people in those countries want to be part of the modern Western world.

Mr. POE. I was in Georgia the week after the Russians invaded in 2008, and the Russians are still there. Now, I would agree that it's the people that want to move to the West. But the government maybe doesn't seem like it to me that are moving to the West.

But maybe you disagree.

Comments by the other two of you on those three countries—Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova.

Mr. WOLLACK. Yes. I would say Moldova is slightly different than Ukraine and Georgia in this regard. Both—in Georgia, overwhelming majorities are for joining the EU and NATO and a large majority in Ukraine.

Moldova is mixed, and the problem in Moldova is you have a substantial portion that looks East and a substantial portion that

looks to the West but doesn't see the benefits coming from integration, and they view the pro-Western parties as corrupt and out of touch.

And so you have a very divided government. You have a divided population and that can go either way. And so the parties that favor European integration have not been doing a very good job in terms of communicating with the public on the benefits of participation in the EU and they are seeing that there's a crisis of confidence in those parties.

And the question is whether there will be some third way in the country that provides an alternative to these two polar political movements.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Congressman, you wanted a short answer. So in Moldova and Ukraine, in addition to the Russian problem, the critical problem is corruption, and we have to work to support groups who are fighting corruption from the grass roots.

Otherwise, those countries are going to lose population because nobody will invest and people will leave and that's happening even right now.

In Georgia, I would only add one point. We are doing a lot of work right now with a group that's working with the Georgian Church—the orthodox church—and they brought a lot of these orthodox priests here, along with Muslim and Catholic leaders as well, last November. I think it's extremely important to work with the church, to see that they're connected to Europe and connected to the United States.

This is a very important thing we can do, and I hope that when they come again—because they may be coming again—that they can come up to the Congress and meet with you because the church in Georgia I think is a kind of a central institution that could lean to the East but also is now being connected to the West.

Mr. POE. Thank you very much. I yield back. I will yield back. We are out of time.

Mr. WOLLACK. One positive development I would say in Moldova at the grass roots you have hundreds of mayors right now who represent the new reform movement and I think change—I think positive change can come from the bottom up.

Chairman ROYCE. Lois Frankel from Florida.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here and for your work.

And I just want to start out by saying that I believe in our democracy and what you're doing. I think we always have to be mindful of protecting our own democracy.

We have some flaws—the money in politics. We had a flawed ballot in Florida. A few years ago I think we had a FBI director who interfered in the last election.

I mean, these are issues that we have to deal with, and I think something that I just have to raise today, and I don't know if you want to comment, is what we are doing on the border, pulling children out of the arms of families and then putting children in cages, parents not having any contact with their children for months, to me is abominable and just it goes against everything that I know I was raised to believe about a great country.

And I am going to ask you if you want to comment on that. Does anyone want to comment on that?

Mr. TWINING. Congresswoman, I would just say as a dad that I just think about the conditions in Central America in particular that motivate parents to try to come to the United States and how desperate they are because of conditions at the source and how our work, hopefully, can impact that.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you.

And I know we've put you in an awkward situation. You're trying to get funding from a government where if you look awkwardly at the President he'll cut you off at the knees.

Anyway, I don't depend on my funding from him so I can say what I want, and I think his policy at the border is, as I said, is a disgrace to our country.

Anyway, I will move right along to my next subject, which is that I think it's quite obvious that you can't just drop ballot boxes around the world and say oh, come on, have a free election.

There must be infrastructure in place. Actually, it could even be a road, right. It could be water supply. It could be education, health care, projects that give people confidence in a government that's going in the correct direction.

And what I would like to hear, if you could, is comment on the importance of us having, I would say, a global policy that, again, cuts to the State Department where you cut USAID or money to NGOs that help provide the infrastructure to democracies as related to what you are fighting for.

Mr. GERSHMAN. This is bread and butter of what we do, of course.

I would just add, agreeing with what you just said—the issue of free media, which has been of critical importance.

Mr. WOLLACK. People are in a demanding mood. They want to put food on their table and they want the right to have a political voice in a country, and they're not going to give up either one.

And so, therefore, there is a responsibility to respond to that by the institutions in those countries and they deserve and expect and support outside assistance, particularly at these critical times.

People talk about sequencing—that somehow people have to have a certain level of education or the society has to build a middle class before they can have fundamental political and human rights.

That's really not the case. I mean, people, demand both, and we have to respond to both of those desires on the part of people and they both reinforce each other.

Ms. FRANKEL. One more point that I would like to make, because I am going to run out of time, I think one or two of you—I think maybe it was Mr. Wollack, you gave what I believe is a very good presentation—part of your presentation on the role of women and the importance of empowering women to have democracy.

And just, you know, what I have seen, not only in this country but around the world is we have an administration that is trying to, I will say, disempower women in every way possible.

Let me give one specific example in terms of the rest of the world, which is the expansion of the gag rule, which now has basic—and cutting off funding to the U.N. Population Fund, and cutting of health care.

Not—we are not talking about cutting off abortion just—we are talking about cutting off health care to women all over the world, and organizations that fight child marriage and trafficking and so forth.

I would like to hear a comment on that.

And what I see are blank stares, and I think it's very unfortunate because if you think you're going to get democracy in the world, we better empower the women.

And maybe next time we'll have some women over there so I don't get a blank stare when I ask that question.

Chairman ROYCE. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. FRANKEL. I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Would the gentlelady acknowledge we do a fair number of presentations—witnesses before this committee where we actively—myself and Mr. Engel—try to get expertise from women?

It is just a situation right now where the chairman of the NED and the IRI and NDI are male. And so I am just trying to——

Mr. WOLLACK. All I would say, Congressman——

Chairman ROYCE. Yes.

Mr. WOLLACK [continuing]. Is that one of the major efforts of, I think, all of these institutions is to dedicate resources and global efforts to promote women's political empowerment so there are sufficient women in office at all levels so they can address issues like that so these institutions can address issues like that.

We generally don't go in and take positions on policy issues. But if sufficient women are in positions of political power and the only way they're going to do that in parliamentary systems is the gateway of political parties and they have to reform, and if women can get in those political positions those issues will be addressed by these institutions.

Ms. FRANKEL. And thank you. First, I want to say about our chairman, he has absolutely been terrific in terms of trying to advance women's rights all over the world, and I want to thank you for that.

And I know you can't help who's the head of these agencies and no disrespect to the three of you. But I think this is just an example, again, of why it's so important to have women at the table.

Chairman ROYCE. Which——

Ms. FRANKEL. As some people say, otherwise you're going to be on the menu, and I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. But as——

Mr. WOLLACK. Well, at NDI we have a woman at the head of our table and that's Madeline Albright. So——

Chairman ROYCE. Yes. So one of the things we've tried to do in the committee to address this is we have a women's series of hearings, and part of our goal on the committee is to get governments around the world to focus on this.

So but I need to go to Mr. Tom Garrett of Virginia.

Mr. GARRETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Very briefly, I take marginal umbrage insofar as I believe that one who seeks to advance an agenda, whether it's empowerment of women globally or any other agenda, will take their friends where

they can find them and not make political points by virtue of the fact that you all happen to each, I think, identify as male.

Having said that, what I mean is I have worked with great joy with my distinguished colleague, Ms. Frankel, to empower women globally and said repeatedly that I believe that an empowered educated economically-thriving class of women across the world will reduce radicalism and reduce conflict and increase economic opportunity, and I happen to agree with this President most of the time.

So take your friends where you find them, because we are on the same team on this one. Having said that, it frustrates me to know end—I think the chairman might pull his hair out by virtue of my repeated reference of the Vandenberg quote from 1948 that politics should stop at the water's edge.

And I heard criticism of this administration as it related to the discourse that occurred in Singapore by virtue of the fact that there was a failure to mention human rights violations in North Korea.

I would ask you, Mr. Wollack, is there anything we can do about human rights violations that have already occurred in North Korea—the ones that have already occurred. Can we stop them?

If a human rights violation occurred last year in North Korea, is anything that was said in Singapore be influential in changing that fact? That's an obvious question and answer.

Mr. WOLLACK. I don't know the answer.

Mr. GARRETT. Well, I think probably if it's already occurred, unless we have a time machine about which you and I—you know that I don't, it can't be changed, right?

But can we do anything to change human rights violations in North Korea, moving forward—those human rights violations that have not yet occurred?

Mr. Twining.

Mr. TWINING. Yes. You know, I would say if this negotiating process leads to a more open North Korea that creates all sorts of new opportunities.

Mr. GARRETT. Having said that, let me ask you the same question. Can we change human rights violations that have already occurred? Is that possible in the world in which we live, sir?

Okay. And so let me ask you this——

Mr. GERSHMAN. If I may, Congressman.

Mr. GARRETT. Well, I have a finite amount of time. I won't get extra time because I am a new guy and I am about to be out of here in January 2019.

So, Mr. Gershman, with all due respect, I will get to you in a second. I have a good friend who I've worked with a number of months, back when I was in a different mode, who's in the military in South Korea and I was excited at the prospect of a detente, if you will, with the North Koreans.

I would ask Mr. Gershman is the probability of kinetic armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula lower or higher, in your estimation, than it was in December 2016, today, right now?

Mr. GERSHMAN. It's very hard. It depends on how the negotiations go. But when——

Mr. GARRETT. Right this second, is the probability of kinetic conflict lower or higher?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Right this second? Probably lower. Probably lower.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Twining, would you say it's lower than it was in December 2016?

Mr. TWINING. Lower.

Mr. GARRETT. Okay. And is the probability of a North Korean ballistic missile launch lower or higher than it was, say, 1 year ago, Mr. Wollack—today?

Mr. WOLLACK. I would say yes.

Mr. GARRETT. It's lower?

Mr. WOLLACK. Yes.

Mr. GARRETT. Okay. And Mr. Gershman, is the probability of a North Korean nuclear test lower or higher than it was, say, 18, 24 months ago?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Of course it's lower.

Mr. GARRETT. Okay. And so as a result of these things, while this negotiation is far from complete, and I would submit that the North Korean regime from 1950 has a history of making a promise and then breaking a promise, as evidenced by the gaming of President Clinton, who I think had very good intentions in the 1990s when he strode to a microphone and said this North Korea nuclear deal—sound familiar—ends the possibility of nuclear conflagration stemming from the Korean Peninsula—and I think he meant it—but we know that we need to do what I think President Reagan said and that is trust but verify.

Does that sound like an accurate course of action summary moving forward with North Korea?

But we are somewhere where we were not before and I would ask you, Mr. Twining—am I pronouncing that correct? Twining—I apologize.

Do you believe that it undermines U.S. foreign policy as it relates to the Article 2 powers of the executive branch to engage in foreign policy treaties, et cetera, when there are 435 critics in the House and 100 critics in the Senate who immediately go contra, in some instances reflexively, to whatever comes from the executive branch?

Do you think that might undermine the credibility of the negotiating power of the executive branch?

Mr. TWINING. Congress is going to have to do sanctions relief and fund assistance to North Korea if that comes.

I worked in the 1990s for John McCain and we were trying to defund the KEDO framework because we knew North Korea was cheating.

So there is a congressional——

Mr. GARRETT. And so we have an ability—I would close with—and a responsibility that I think this committee generally, across the aisle, does a good job with to be a check on executive power by virtue of speaking when we are in disagreement.

However, the reflexive disagreement with an administration whose near-term goals may seem antithetical to our long-term goals may in fact undermine the accomplishment of the collective long-term goal which I would argue in the case of my distinguished colleagues across the aisle, myself and the President of the United States is peace, stability, and global opportunity—that the path we

choose from point A to point B may vary, but that our overarching goal is very similar.

So with that, I see that my time has expired. I thank the chairman and the distinguished members of the committee and conclude my remarks.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Garrett.

We go to Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our witnesses, not only for being here but for the important work that you're leading.

I think we all recognize that promoting freedom and democracy and protecting human rights is a very important pillar of our work around the world and a very critical part of America's leadership, and as Mr. Gershman said, it's not only morally the right thing to do but it's the smart thing to do because it advances the interests of our country.

And I think there's always been bipartisan support and understanding of that basic principle that democracies are more resilient, they're more stable, they produce better economic conditions and better advance the well-being of all people.

And I think in particular, to respond directly to Mr. Garrett, I think this is actually a moment where Congress has a particularly special responsibility to assert itself in promoting democracy and human rights around the world in the face of what the administration is doing.

And so I want to just spend 1 second on what Mr. Deutch and Mr. Keating had started to focus on, and that is what is the practical impact of an American President who is cozying up to despotic leaders who's praising authoritarian leadership around the world, strongmen? What kind of signal does that send to those who are fighting to advance democracy in very hard places around the world? The lack of meaningful oversight of the corruption of this administration where corruption is such a problem in countries that have emerging democracies or repressive governments?

I am just wondering, as a practical matter, as people are working in various places around the world, what are people saying about the impact of the American—this administration engaged in those activities, engaged in that kind of behavior? Is it making the work more difficult? What's their assessment of it?

And, obviously, Congress has a role to respond to it. We are doing our best to raise our voices. But there has to be some understanding of what the implications are for the people doing the work.

Mr. TWINING. Sir, I would just say I personally use it as an example—democracy is never done, right. We've been at it for 200 years. We are still working on it.

When I go out into the world I talk about our system of checks and balances, our system of congressional oversight, our system of federalism, so that most Americans are actually not being governed from Washington, DC, but by their mayors and state legislatures and governors, et cetera.

So democracy looks different in every country. But I actually think we can take some of the lessons about separation, et cetera, into the world.

Mr. WOLLACK. I would say that it doesn't make our work measurably more difficult. As I said, I think people compartmentalize.

WE don't go overseas to preach the American model and to tell people that they have to support everything that we do in the United States.

We work internationally. We have international partners. We are part of a, really, a democratic solidarity network.

But I think the people we work with always want strong American leadership. They believe in strong American leadership and they would want the United States to speak out on behalf of democracy and human rights.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you.

Mr. Gershman, I am going to ask you to incorporate your response, if you haven't, to my second area that I really want to get to, and that is the current conditions in Burma.

I had the opportunity to be there last November to visit the Rohingya in Indonesia and to visit Myanmar, and I am wondering what we could be doing better to support democratic governance and economic development.

On the one hand, the discrimination and the near genocide of the Rohingya is something which is repulsive and contrary to all of our human rights views and human decency.

And it has been very disturbing to watch the Aung San Suu Kyi government actively really obfuscate and really attempt to deny this ethnic cleansing.

And just wondering what actions we should be taking to address these challenges of democratic consultation and economic instability in Burma while at the same time making it very clear to the world that we understand these atrocities are—cannot continue and that the individuals responsible for it must be held accountable and it must stop.

And I am just wondering if you have suggesting how we should balance that. And then my last question, which I would ask anyone to comment, is suggestions on what we should be doing in Poland and Hungary where we are seeing very significant sliding human rights in free press and I think very challenging on many, many levels and love to hear your thoughts on both those things.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Those are such large and difficult questions but—and I want to emphasize NED is not a policy organization but, obviously, Congress has to grapple with the issue of sanctions on Burma, given what's happened, and it's a very important question.

I realize there may be differences between the House and the Senate but that's something that has to be worked out.

On Poland and Hungary, look, we understand these are problems—these are countries that are members of the EU. There are pressures in these countries especially on independent media and political opposition.

These are the deeply divided countries. But in a sense, we can understand that democracy itself is imperiled today around the world and these are problems that we have to deal with.

These are countries with which we are friendly and I think we have to be able to talk with these countries and not assume that they're inevitably going to go in this direction.

These are still democratic countries and they still have independent media and political oppositions and we have to hope that they will move forward.

I am not going to get to the other questions because the congressman has left. I will end there.

Mr. CICILLINE. You can just finish the answer even if he's——

Mr. GERSHMAN. Well, let me just say one other thing on your first question regarding the statements made.

Nobody that we support is giving up. In other words, I want to leave you and others with the understanding—with the knowledge that there are dynamic forces on the ground in all these countries that we connect to that are energized.

Now, they may be discouraged if there are statements made that suggest where the United States stands. But that could also encourage people to realize that they've got to take their future into their own hands and be more self-reliant, which is also something which can be positive.

But this is not stopping—I think the Congressman who talked about the aspirations of people for freedom and democracy. That is true around the world, and I think it's, in a way, the reason—the central reason why the National Endowment for Democracy and its institutes are successful institutions and can accomplish great things with relatively limited resources, because we are not imposing anything.

We are not asking people to do anything that they don't want to do. We are supporting their own aspirations and giving them some of the tools to realize those aspirations, and I think it should not be forgotten NED was created as an independent institution so that even when you have problems, whatever the problems are with the executive branch, our work continues consistently, and I think that was a brilliant idea and it's in the National Endowment for Democracy Act adopted by the Congress by Dante Fascell in 1983, and I think it was brilliant to give the NED that kind of independence so that we can go forward, regardless of what the policies of the executive branch are at any particular time.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, sir.

Chairman ROYCE. Brad Schneider, Illinois.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, and I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for holding this critically important hearing.

I want to thank the witnesses, first, for your patience staying here this morning, for your work and commitment to democracy here and around the world—for your passion and for your optimism. It's been refreshing to be here this morning with you at a challenging time.

Mr. Gershman, in your remarks and written testimony you referenced that Freedom House, for the past 12 consecutive years has said there's been a decline in civil and political rights.

My first set of questions are around this and anyone can feel free to respond. But what do you see as the key drivers of that decline? Within the context of U.S. policy, what are the risks to the United States? What are the opportunities for the United States? What are our responsibilities?

And I guess the third is how do you see or what do you see the United States role should be in reversing that decline and making sure the democracy that we as a Nation have held so dear and worked to perfect over the entire course of our history has the opportunity to take hold and prosper around the world, which will also benefit the United States?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Well, Congressman, the problems of both external, meaning resurgent authoritarianism, and we've heard a lot about that today, and internal democracy is difficult, and countries have problems of corruption.

Elites can be divorced from their people. These are difficult things, and the Freedom House survey is a reflection of the troubles that we've seen in the world.

But I think it's important to point out that the total number of democracies in the world mushroomed after what Professor Sam Huntington called the third wave of democratization, from about 70 to 125, which is quite remarkable, and we are still having, in a sense, problems absorbing these changes.

Huntington also predicted what he called a reverse wave, the first waves of democratization were followed by the rise of Nazism and communism in the 1920s and 1930s, the breakdown of democracy in the 1960s and the 1970s, the rise of military dictatorships. You then have the third wave, and in a way, a reverse—we don't even know if it's a reverse wave but what they call a recession—whether this was an inevitable part of the process and what I guess what I was saying in my testimony, Congressman, I don't want to be a Pollyannaish optimist but I do see signs that are taking place now in a number of different countries around the world which could indicate that maybe some change is in the offing.

When Reagan gave his Westminster speech it was in 1982. It was a bad time. It was right after the crackdown in Poland, right after the invasion of Afghanistan. We were still reeling from Vietnam.

Sandinistas had taken over in Central America, and Reagan said in that speech in 1982, 10 years before Huntington wrote the book on the third wave, that a democratic revolution was gathering strength in the world.

That's quite remarkable. And so now it's a bad period. I don't know but it's not out of the question that a democratic revolution is gathering strength even as we are looking at all the negative problems.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I pray you're right.

Mr. Twining, I don't know if you want to expand, or Mr. Wollack, you had earlier.

Mr. TWINING. When I think about the youth bulge in key parts of the world, I think only a democratic structure inside countries is going to be able to handle digitally empowered kids with smart phones who want to be politically active and shake their countries' future.

I grew up in Africa as a diplomatic kid in the '80s in the era of strongmen, and all the Africans I meet today, when I travel to Africa none of them wants to live in a country run by a strongman, right.

They want to have a voice and a choice and be active and engaged. That gives me great hope.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. We had a hearing here yesterday about the Middle East and the explosion of the youth there, because the demographics are so important in that context. We need to make sure these kids have hope, that they have opportunity that takes us beyond here.

Mr. Wollack, let me just wish you well in your retirement. We are going to miss you, but give you the last word.

Mr. WOLLACK. I would just say when President Reagan gave that speech, when you look at the world at that time, Latin America was dominated by military regimes. You had military governments in Bangladesh and Pakistan and South Korea, martial law in Taiwan, absolute monarchy in Nepal, Communist government in Mongolia, dictatorships in Philippines and Indonesia.

The lexicon of democracy had not even entered the Middle East. Soviet Communism had reached the borders of western Europe.

It was pretty bleak at the time, and so one has to look at this with some degree of perspective and perhaps a longer arc of history, and when we see things that take place on the ground in places like Malaysia and Armenia and Nicaragua and Slovakia and Guatemala, we see today not only movements on the ground but also you have an international architecture on democracy.

You know, intergovernmental organizations at that time had nonintervention clauses—the OAS, the African Union. Now they have intervened in member states.

So I tend to look at this as a glass half full and we may be talking differently 10 years from now.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. And that's why I reflected on the optimism. I will close with this.

My entire life but, really, the entire history of our country we have been a light to the other nations—a beacon of hope to people around the world, and I think if we are going to see democracy flourish around the world it's imperative that the United States continues to be that.

I am going to close with repeating what Mr. Gershman had in his remarks but it's President Reagan's words—the ultimate determinant in the struggle that's now going on in the world will not be the bombs and rockets but the test of will and ideas—our ideas, if you will—a trial of spiritual resolve, which I think we have, and the values we all in this room hold, the belief we cherish, the ideals to which we are dedicated, and I hope as Democrats and Republicans we can stick to those ideals. We can stand strong and we can be that beacon to the rest of the world.

I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. We go to Mr. Gerry Connolly of Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the chair.

Mr. Twining, for the record, I don't want to live in a country with a strongman either, and I wish Mr. Garrett, my colleague from Virginia, was still here. I find it less than amusing to hear a friend from the other side of the aisle lecture us about criticism of a President's foreign policy because all differences should end at the shores.

That certainly has not been the ethos on this committee. When it came to President Obama, whether it would be Syria or Yemen or Middle East policy or Israel policy or the Iran nuclear agreement or the Trans-Pacific Partnership or the climate change accord in Paris, my friends on the other side of the aisle were quite reflexively critical.

That's their right. But we are now going to exercise our right and we will not be lectured about it because, frankly, now is the time to be speaking up and being heard, given the fact that there are threats to our own democracy.

And I very much appreciate the chairman having today's hearing because there are connections between our values and whether we are living up to them and what we are trying to help other countries do.

And I applaud the IRI and the NDI and, of course, NED for your efforts. I've had the privilege of travelling through the auspices of the House Democracy Project to a number of countries and, frankly, the work both organizations are doing on the ground is so exciting.

You have mobilized young people, older people, to actually express themselves and put their bodies on the line for democratic values, in their own cultural setting, and you have done it well, and it makes you proud as an American to see the work of your folks on the ground.

I wish more of my colleagues could see it because it reaffirms our faith in ourselves but also the aspirations of so many people all over the world, and I think it also reaffirms the fact that democracy is not cultural-bound.

It is a universal desire. It has different expressions. But everybody wants to be free. Everybody wants to be liberated from the yolk of a strongman and to express themselves as they see fit, and nothing does America prouder than the work, frankly, you are doing.

And I don't mean to sound too gushy about it. But if you see it on the ground and hundreds and hundreds of people responding to that call in their own cultural and political context, I think there is a wellspring of democratic yearning.

But we as a country—we, the beacon of that democratic ideal—we've got to be consistent in our own democratic values because when we stray from them, we damage the work you're doing and your folks are doing on the ground.

Mr. Gershman, we are looking at the fiscal year 2019 international affairs budget, which would cut democracy promotion by more than half and cut assistance to the National Endowment for Democracy from $170 million to $67 million.

Earlier, you testified it would have a devastating impact and you'd have to dismantle programs. I want to give you an opportunity to elaborate a little bit.

Mr. GERSHMAN. It's hard for me to imagine, frankly, how we could function under those circumstances, and I could name countries where we couldn't work but——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, why don't we do that?

Mr. GERSHMAN [continuing]. The organization would be devastated.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Are there countries—I remember a few years ago, working with some friends on international democracy and just the threat of budget cutbacks required them to close down programs all over Bangladesh, for example.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Right. And we pride ourselves in understanding that the work is long-term work. Democracy doesn't come quickly and you have to stay at it with people year after year and you build up knowledgeable teams of people—deeply knowledgeable teams of people who know how to work with the institutes and with the NED.

If you cut that it just unravels the whole thing.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, let's just—my last remaining time here I want to focus on here. It has lasting harm, does it not, in both credibility and our commitment to them—there are people putting their lives on the line——

Mr. GERSHMAN. Absolutely.

Mr. CONNOLLY [continuing]. In fighting for democracy in their particular countries, and if we pull the plug because of budget fears or actual budget cuts, what happens to them?

Mr. GERSHMAN. No. I mean, they're dependent on the support that they get in so many different ways.

They're going to continue. But I think we are able to really help them—give them solidarity, give them technical support, give them financial support.

It's a lifeline to them, and they say it all the time—you withdraw that, it's a devastating blow to them. They're not going to leave the scene. They're going to continue to fight. But it's a devastating blow.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And final point—if you're an authoritarian regime looking askance at that activity because you see it as a threat to your centralization and control, the imprimatur of the United States behind that NGO activity matters, does it not? And withdrawing it, effectively, actually makes them prey to that authoritarian regime.

Mr. GERSHMAN. That's true, and that's why I said in my statement when I said, you know, the support of the American people, I take pride in the fact that when we make grants to groups abroad, I take pride that it's with American taxpayer money.

We try to protect that money. We try to make sure that every single dollar is spent well. But I take pride in the fact that that's a demonstration of the support coming from the American people.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, one final point. I want to thank Mr. Wollack. I know he's retiring. He's made an extraordinary contribution to democracy all over the world.

And as he said, there were times it all looked bleak, and hanging in there and never giving up and giving it his all, I just want to tell Mr. Wollack how much all of us appreciate that, and I know there are people all over the world you're never going to meet who also appreciate it.

You have made a lasting contribution, and I know your voice won't be stilled. You're going to be in a different capacity. But Ken, thank you for all you have done.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. We go to Norma Torres of California.

Ms. TORRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, to you and the ranking member for bringing us together for this very important meeting and thank the three of you for doing such great work in representing American values abroad and ensuring that you are building up, as you put it, knowledgeable teams of people around the world that can stand up for themselves and stand up for the injustices that their government bring upon their communities or their countries.

And that is why I want to associate myself with some of the comments that were stated earlier about women—what is going on right here at our southern border.

When a government decides that it is an important policy to rip away a baby that is nursing from its mother and that that is good policy, we have to challenge that.

And this is all I have to challenge that. So as a woman, I hope that the members of this committee stand up and look at their own families and see themselves as that person seeking refuge at our border and how would they feel if they would be separated and torn apart.

There was one person already that committed suicide out of desperation. This is not the American values that you fight for abroad.

We talked about earlier about the number of women in elected office. Less than 25 percent of women are in elected office worldwide, except for the case of Spain, where the Spanish prime minister, Pedro Sanchez, appointed the majority of his ministry 11 women, I believe—11 women and six men. So that brings up their percentage of female representatives to 64.7 percent. Kudos to him.

Now, here in the U.S., this administration as inspired women all over the country to run for local office and the majority of—or more than half of those women running in those elected positions have won.

But we have organizations such as Emily's List that helps to fill the gap and support women where there is no support—where we don't find the support that we need in, one, raising the money that we need; two, getting the support that we need to get into local offices.

Are there other organizations like Emily's List globally that we can point to and help support to ensure that females have a rightful place in the world as we do here in the U.S.?

Mr. WOLLACK. The answer is yes. There are groups in Liberia—that 50/50 group. There are groups in Mexico. All the countries we work there are women's organizations that train other women to compete, to run, to be campaign managers, to be candidates, and in many of these places our organizations support their efforts.

Ms. TORRES. Well, thank you for doing that. I want to urge you to continue to do that as well as working with civil societies. My work has been primarily focused in Central America.

The work of civil society there in the Northern Triangle is critical. CICIG has been under attack. The former attorney general there has been under attack.

MACCIH in Honduras has been under attach. So what more can we do to help these institutions move forward with the good work that they're doing and how can we help you help them?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Well, thank you so much, Congresswoman. I am very moved by what you said and it's also been wonderful to get to know you, and thank you for presenting the reward to Claudia Escobar last year—our democracy award—and she has been a leader, as you know, in the fight against corruption in Guatemala.

The most important thing, I think, that we can do in the fight against corruption in the Northern Triangle is to support civil society and groups that are mobilizing against that, and we are supporting groups in Honduras and Guatemala that are combatting corruption and doing a number of different things.

One of them is promoting political and electoral reforms. They're monitoring state spending both locally and nationally. They're providing reliable and digestible information about corruption to the people so their voice can be heard.

They're engaged in projects to translate citizen protest and sow concrete political proposals for change. They're working to improve the transparency of the selection process for the attorney general in the three Northern Triangle countries and they're even in Guatemala trying now to create a network of businesses committed to anti-corruption efforts.

And finally, working with the Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies, we are working to improve the knowledge and technical capacity of lawmakers on issues of fiscal responsibility.

So it's a broad program and I think the critical thing we have to do is to support groups from the bottom up—put pressure on the governments not to be corrupt.

Ms. TORRES. Which—I just finally want to point to the work the IRI is doing to build up with the mayors—with the local mayors. I know a couple of years ago I had dinner with some of the mayors that you had here that you were training from, I believe, El Salvador.

So I want to—as a former mayor, that work is critically important because these are the people that are on the front line as it relates to Mexican elections right now. These are the people that are losing their lives as candidates in trying to move a different agenda forward.

Thank you so much for allowing me the extra time. I really appreciate you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Ms. TORRES. I am going to miss you miserably. I am just going to keep seeing that every meeting that we have.

Chairman ROYCE. Well, Congresswoman Torres, thank you very much.

And I—look, I really want to thank our witnesses here today because it's truly and exceptional panel that we have, and I am confident that all three of you will continue your major contributions to promoting democracy, your contributions to our Nation's interests for years to come.

And I think the members of this committee learned from you an awful lot today, as we've heard your strong bipartisan support for democracy promotion, for the work of your organizations.

We also heard of the grave challenges to democracy engineered by authoritarian regimes that are systematically attacking democratic societies.

This committee will continue to do all it can through hearings and through legislation to combat these efforts. As Mr. Wollack noted, we as a country are just waking up to these challenges.

They have to be met. So, again, thank you, Carl, Dan, Ken. Thank you very much.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, would you—would yield to me.

Chairman ROYCE. Let me yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ENGEL. Yes. Thank you.

I also want to, again, reiterate to our three guests how much we appreciate your testimony here but, more importantly, the work that you do day in and day out.

We really do appreciate it, and I think you could see by the fact that so many members stayed or came back to make sure there was tremendous interest in having you here and in listening to what you have to say.

So I want to, again, thank all of you for coming and we work very hard, the chairman and I, on this committee. We use the word bipartisan and we use that word because we think this is the most bipartisan committee in the entire Congress.

And what better subject can there be when we are talking about bipartisanship than the work that you three gentleman do, where partisanship stops at the river's edge.

It's so important with—dealing with all these international problems. And so, again, thank you for all your good work.

Mr. Gershman, Mr. Twining, thank you, and Mr. Wollack, as I said before, good luck, and I don't know—you will have a lot of free time. You can come to our hearings here. We'll still work in a bipartisan fashion.

And I just feel that everything that the three of you said was very important and I hope people are watching.

Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. And let's also acknowledge, Eliot, I think, contemplating the work and the risks that your associates all over the world, in countries all over this world are taking, for the goals that you're championing, that we are all—that we all believe in, that works needs to be acknowledged as well.

The level of dedication of those out there in the field day in and day out. So thank you, and we stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:55 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

# APPENDIX

## Material Submitted for the Record

**FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE**
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

**Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman**

June 14, 2018

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov):

**DATE:** Thursday, June 14, 2018

**TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

**SUBJECT:** Democracy Promotion in a Challenging World

**WITNESSES:** Mr. Carl Gershman
President
National Endowment for Democracy

Mr. Daniel Twining
President
International Republican Institute

Mr. Kenneth Wollack
President
National Democratic Institute

**By Direction of the Chairman**

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.*

# COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Thursday* Date *06/14/2018* Room *2172*

Starting Time *10:07 AM* Ending Time *12:55 PM*

Recesses [ ] ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to )

Presiding Member(s)

*Chairman Edward R. Royce*
*Representative Michael McCaul*

*Check all of the following that apply:*

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

***Democracy Promotion in a Challenging World***

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*See attached.*

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*N/A*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] No [ ]
*(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)*

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

***IFR - Ranking Member Eliot Engel***

***SFR - Representative Gerry Connolly***

***QFR - Representatives Christopher H. Smith, Brad Sherman, Ann Wagner, and Dina Titus***

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *12:55PM*

Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

*FULL COMMITTEE HEARING*

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| | Brendan Boyle, PA |
| X | Dina Titus, NV |
| X | Norma Torres, CA |
| X | Brad Schneider, IL |
| | Tom Suozzi, NY |
| | Adriano Espaillat, NY |
| X | Ted Lieu, CA |

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE ELIOT L. ENGEL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

April 4, 2018

## Democracy in Europe Working Group

## Statement of Principles

We have come together out of alarm that the erosion of democratic principles and weakening of democratic institutions among some of our European allies is putting at risk U.S. peace, security, and prosperity. Respect for the rights and liberties of all citizens is the essential foundation of any democracy. It is currently being assailed by illiberal and authoritarian forces, both internal and external, that are weakening the transatlantic community and NATO alliance. This threat must be met head on.

We speak out, not as Democrats or Republicans, but as citizens committed to the core principles of democracy. It is these principles that make states strong, peaceful, and constructive partners. We come together connected by our shared values and to safeguard the security and interests of the United States.

For decades, the United States has benefited from its commitment to preserving and restoring democracy and liberty in Europe. Together with our freedom-loving allies, we faced and defeated tyrannical adversaries determined to eradicate our way of life. Today, we confront new and resurgent threats. The United States will again need to look to its NATO allies to help counter next-generation autocrats, rogue states, and radical, violent ideologies.

Our adversaries know that America's alliances, built upon a common commitment to democracy, are our greatest strength. Hostile powers seek to weaken the United States by dividing us from our allies, as Russia already endeavors to do, through disinformation and other means. For if our allies no longer share our values, they will have little reason to help shoulder the burden of protecting our interests.

The democratic principles and institutions of our European allies are also being weakened from within. Many democratic societies are engaged in much-needed debates about how best to respond to changing post-Cold War social, political, economic, and technological dynamics. It is the sovereign right of states to set policies that best reflect the will of their people. But citizens' legitimate grievances and countries' real security concerns cannot be addressed by granting governments unchecked powers. Doing so only undermines democratic institutions and individual rights, planting the seeds of tyranny.

We disagree among ourselves on many issues—including immigration, faith, family, and nation. This is as it should be. Respectful debate is the underpinning of a healthy democracy. We agree, however, that only democracy can provide the dynamism necessary to tackle the vexing problems of the 21st century effectively and humanely.

Only when all people have the equal right to participate in the process of governing are political decisions legitimate. However, democracy is not defined by elections alone. Self-government is only possible within a framework that safeguards the rights of all individuals, including minorities, to freely pursue their own vision of happiness. While elections matter, they do not

grant unlimited power to those who win nor are they a license to limit the rights and liberties underpinning democracy.

We urge the U.S. Congress and executive branch immediately to use the full diplomatic voice, tools, and resources at their disposal to continue upholding our commitment to democracy. And we expect that our European allies will hold us to these same standards. Specifically, actions that no democratic state should take include:

- Denying any citizens fundamental political liberties and civil rights;
- Inciting, supporting, or engaging in antisemitism, racism, and other forms of discrimination and hatred;
- Restricting pluralistic expression and free debate;
- Stifling a free and independent media;
- Suppressing peaceful political opposition;
- Constraining civil society;
- Undermining rule of law that is equally enforced and independently adjudicated;
- Eroding the separation of powers;
- Hampering legitimate economic competition, limiting government transparency, or otherwise contributing to corruption;
- Impinging on free and fair elections.

When these bedrock democratic principles and institutions are put at risk, our bipartisan group will call for the U.S. government to take action. Specifically:

- We call on Congress to hold hearings to address Central Europe's growing democracy deficit, its implications for NATO, and the security of the United States. Hearings should lead to appropriate policies, actions, and resources needed for countering this grave threat to U.S. interests.

- We urge the Congress and executive branch to work together to put in place a comprehensive strategy that dramatically increases diplomatic engagement, development assistance, and security cooperation in support of democracy in transatlantic and NATO countries.

We cannot afford complacency. When our shared principles are endangered, so too is our security.

April 4, 2018

## Signatories

*Signatories have joined in their individual capacities. Institutional affiliation is listed only for identification purposes and is NOT an institutional endorsement of the statement.*

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Former Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia, USAID

**Anders Aslund**
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**Rabbi Andrew Baker**
American Jewish Committee

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Co-Chair, Eurasia Program
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**Ambassador Dan Baer**
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**Howard Berman**
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April 4, 2018

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**Statement for the Record from Representative Gerry Connolly**
Democracy Promotion in a Challenging World
June 14, 2018

The global rise of authoritarianism and extremism presents the most formidable challenge to liberal democracy in a generation. In the face of this democratic backsliding, the Trump Administration's response is to retreat from U.S. global leadership by disinvesting in democracy promotion and disparaging our allies while cozying up to dictators. This approach neglects the core values of freedom and democracy upon which our nation was founded, and endangers U.S. interests by allowing adversarial forces to flourish unchecked.

According to Freedom House, more countries have been experiencing democratic declines than gains every year since 2006. The latest *Freedom in the World* report cited significant backsliding in 19 of 29 European countries due to declines in judicial independence, free media and civil society, and functioning checks and balances. President Trump's FY 2019 international affairs budget would slash democracy promotion funding by more than half, and cut assistance to the National Endowment for Democracy from $170 million in FY 2018 to just $67 million. Given the negative global trends of democracy indexes, now is not the time to retreat.

When it comes to raising the issue of human rights and the rule of law, the Trump Administration's silence is deafening. In response to early revisions of the State Department and USAID mission statements last December, I led a letter with 15 members of this Committee expressing concern with language that abandoned the United States' role in supporting democracy and justice around the world. Our constituents believe that all people should enjoy the basic freedoms of speech, expression, and religion, and freedom from tyranny, oppression, torture, and discrimination. American foreign policy should reflect and promote these core values, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because it serves our national interests.

In just the past week, President Trump has given us two images that paint a poignant picture of this Administration's approach to democracy and human rights. In the first photograph, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and our other G-7 allies confront a defiant President Trump shortly before he refuses to sign the Joint Communique and escalates a feud with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, one of our closest allies. In the second image, Trump shakes hands with the murderous North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un against a backdrop of American and North Korean flags. The President's affinity for dictators severely undermines U.S. efforts to pressure oppressive regimes to respect the human rights of their people.

When adequately resourced and supported, U.S. democracy promotion programs can reduce poverty, expand opportunity, and nurture societies that respect fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, facilitate broadly representative government institutions, and minimize corruption. It is through organizations like those represented today that we train the next generation of women political leaders; promote programs that counter violent extremism; provide governance training to communities in liberated areas of Syria; assist desperate refugee families in Jordan and Lebanon; conduct election monitoring in Tunisia; and lend parliamentary support in Iraq and Morocco to ease corruption and empower minority and marginalized groups in the political process. I am a proud member of the House Democracy Partnership, which works with partner countries like Georgia, Sri Lanka, and Mongolia to strengthen democratic legislatures with support from the National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute.

Citizens must be reassured that, at the end of the day, their government is working and working for them. There is no better way to ensure this is the case than by supporting local governments. During my 14 years serving in local government, I was constantly reminded of how immediately one's performance is judged, rewarded, or punished. Local government is where accountability and efficacy are reinforced, and it is an essential building block to any functioning democratic society.

A consistent, effective, and sustained strategy is crucial to reflect our nation's commitment to universal values of freedom and equality, and to treat the disease of oppression and disenfranchisement that has helped foster autocracy and breed violent extremism around the world. The Trump Administration's contempt for the promotion of democracy and human rights, in word and deed, gravely endangers this cause.

**Questions for the Record from Representative Christopher H. Smith**
Democracy Promotion in a Challenging World
June 14, 2018

NOTE: The responses below are provided on behalf of National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI) with respect to funding from the NED, except where a question is specifically directed to one individual.

**Question**:

Would you agree that free speech is a core principle absolutely essential to democracy? If so, what has been NED, IRI and NDI's response to recent legislative steps taken by Western European governments to restrict free speech, which, in this country, would likely be struck down as violative of our First Amendment? For example:

a) Germany's NetzDG law was passed in June 2017, governing the content of social media postings. Social media platforms are supposed to remove "hate speech" within 24 hours or face onerous fines. Are you worried that it will be applied in an overly broad manner?
b) The Association of German Journalists condemned this as "censorship." Have you made any similar criticisms of the NetzDG law? https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-hatecrime/german-hate-speech-law-tested-as-twitter-blocks-satire-account-idUSKBN1ES1AT
c) As reported by the Washington Post, the French nationalist figure Marine LePen was charged criminally for posting images on Twitter showing brutal killings by ISIS fighters. While we may not approve of LePen's rhetoric or flirtations with extremism, debates about ISIS as well as immigration are core political speech. Did your organizations comment on this incident or the French law barring extreme speech under which she was charged, which carries up to three years in prison and roughly $90,000 fine? https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2018/03/02/french-far-right-leader-marine-le-pen-charged-for-tweeting-gruesome-isis-images/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.3a134eb9e19b

**Answer**:

The Endowment and the institutes do not fund democracy programs in established democracies. Nor do we take positions on the internal developments in such countries.

**Question**:

Article 41 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which the United States ratified in 1972, states that those enjoying diplomatic privileges and immunities have a duty "not to interfere with the internal affairs of that State."

The non-interference principle of the Vienna Convention is an important one and one that we have an interest in seeing observed, if not out of a spirit of comity, then out of an expectation that foreign countries would not intervene in our internal affairs – see for example, the concern over Russian interference and meddling.

a) Are NED, IRI, and NDI officers working abroad bound by the Vienna convention?
b) How do your respective organizations view the principle of non-interference?
c) Is there a line which you believe governs your activities that you believe you should not cross so as to constitute interference in the internal affairs of a state?
d) What steps do you take to ensure that your activities do not cross that line?
e) Do you have bylaws or internal regulations that address the issue of non-interference?
f) If so, can you produce them?

**Answer**:

The mission of the Endowment is to support democracy. The NED, as a grant-making organization, funds requests for assistance from indigenous organizations in more than 90 countries that are dedicated to promoting pluralism and accountable governance, as well as funding programs of NED's four core institutes – NDI, IRI, the Center for International Private Enterprise and the Solidarity Center. Our work is guided by President Reagan's vision as articulated in his Westminster Address and which led to the bi-partisan effort in Congress to pass the NED Act in 1983. Reagan's vision was for NED "to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities, which allows a people to choose their own way to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means."

Our work is also guided by international covenants such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and democracy principles established in regional covenants such as the OSCE, the OAS and the African Union.

The Endowment, NDI and IRI are independent 501(c)(3) organizations whose employees are neither diplomats nor government employees of any country and are therefore not subject to Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

**Question**:

Further to the above questions, do you ever hear from parliamentarians and officials from democratic countries who complain that the programs of NDI, IRI, and NED constitute interference in their countries' political process, the favoring of certain parties and political movements over others, or the preferencing of certain issues over others?

a) If so, in which countries have you heard such complaints?
b) How do you respond to such complaints?
c) Does your democracy programming transfer money directly to political parties? What about indirectly?

d) Does your democracy programming transfer money to non-governmental groups that are not political parties per se yet pursue political goals or politically-charged social issues?
e) When you support media in other countries, how do you ensure balance so that one side is not favored over another?
f) Have you been successful in doing that?

**Answer**:

NED and the core institutes do not fund programs targeting established democracies. We have not heard complaints from parliamentarians or officials in democratic countries that programs supported by NED (or with NED funding for NDI or IRI) constitute interference in their countries' internal affairs. As a general rule, we don't transfer money directly or indirectly to political parties.

NDI and IRI work with democratic parties across the political spectrum to provide technical expertise and assistance on organizational development, but that does not include direct or indirect funding. Moreover, we follow the NED guidelines on election support, which prohibit funds from being used to finance campaigns of candidates for public office. Those guidelines are attached.

NED funds NGOs and media organizations. Our funding is pluralistic and encompasses the following topics:

- Promotion and defense of human rights and the rule of law
- Supporting freedom of information and independent media
- Strengthening democratic ideas and values
- Promoting accountability and transparency
- Strengthening civil society
- Strengthening democratic processes and institutions
- Promoting civic education
- Supporting democratic conflict resolution
- Promoting freedom of association
- Supporting and strengthening free markets and independent trade unions

**Question**:

Please identify in sufficient detail, including names of all grantees, dates and purposes of grants, all democracy and related (civil society, media and citizen mobilization) programming and other monies spent in countries in the past three years by NED, NDI, and IRI for the following geographically-representative countries:

a) Colombia
b) Guatemala
c) Democratic Republic of the Congo
d) Nigeria
e) Macedonia
f) Ukraine

g) Philippines
h) Indonesia

**Answer**:

The information requested for NED grant funding over three years is voluminous. We are compiling this information and will send it to you directly. Information about all NED grants, including to NDI and IRI, from 2014 to the present is also available in NED's online database: https://www.ned.org/wp-content/themes/ned/search/grant-search.php

**Question**:

Please identify in sufficient detail all public events (including the names of all panelists/ participants) hosted by NED, NDI, and IRI in past three years on the following countries:

a) Colombia
b) Guatemala
c) Democratic Republic of the Congo
d) Nigeria
e) Macedonia
f) Ukraine
g) Philippines
h) Indonesia

**Answer**:

Please find attached a list of public events related to these countries. You can also find information about NED events on our website: https://www.ned.org/events/.

**National Endowment for Democracy**
*Supporting freedom around the world*

## Colombia

None.

## Guatemala

**Title:** Corruption in Central America
**Date:** October 12, 2017
**Description:** Join us for a discussion of the newly released report, *Corruption: Its Path and Impact on Society and an Agenda to Combat It in the Northern Triangle of Central America*, produced by the Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies (ICEFI), a NED grantee.
The report is a comparative study of the relationship between corruption and democracy in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. While the twin challenges of corruption and impunity are widely understood to undermine confidence in public institutions, the rule of law, and democratic governance, ICEFI's new report moves beyond generalities and highlights the main paths of corruption within each state. The report quantifies the social costs of corruption – for example, highlighting the percentage of different Ministries' budgets lost to specific corruption cases or schemes, and its impact on public goods and services.
We will be joined by Ricardo Barrientos, a senior economist with ICEFI and a contributor to this landmark study.
**Speakers:** Ricardo Barrientos, Senior Economist, Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies
Juan Pablo Guerrero, Network Director, Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency
Janelle Nodhturft Williams, Program Officer, National Endowment for Democracy

**Title:** Freedom of Expression and the Judiciary: Lessons from Latin America
**Date:** August 29, 2017
**Description:** All but one of the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have constitutional guarantees or laws that protect freedom of expression as a fundamental right, and in recent years at least 19 countries in the region have reformed their media laws or regulations to strengthen pluralism. These figures speak to the remarkable progress that advocates of free speech and pluralism in the region have made by building alliances with judicial and legal actors. And yet, the rise of violent attacks on journalists by non-state actors and a resurgence of government harassment of reporters, however, also underscores the fragility of the gains won in press freedoms in the region.
To what extent can judges, lawyers, and other legal professionals in Latin America and the Caribbean provide a strong defense against those who would seek to silence independent media, and what lessons does the region offer to other parts of the world contending with similar threats to pluralism and free speech?

Following the launch of a new CIMA publication, "International Standards for Freedom of Expression: A Basic Guide for Legal Professionals in Latin America," author Silvia Chocarro will lead a roundtable discussion on the role of the judiciary in creating an open media system that complies with international legal norms. Don Podesta, Program Officer at the National Endowment for Democracy, will moderate the discussion, joined by Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and Judge Claudia Escobar, former magistrate of the Court of Appeals of Guatemala.

**Speakers:** Silvia Chocarro, Journalist, and consultant on media and freedom of expression
Judge Claudia Escobar, Former magistrate of the Court of Appeals of Guatemala and National Endowment for Democracy Reagan-Fascell Fellow
Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
Don Podesta, Program Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean, National Endowment for Democracy

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

**Title:** Why Women's Political Participation Matters In The Congo
**Date:** June 28, 2018
**Description:** Despite participating enthusiastically in political and community life in the Democratic Republic of Congo, women hold few public decision-making positions. Many have withdrawn from seeking office or getting involved in public life, even though they are disproportionately affected by the civil wars and the resulting humanitarian crises that have plagued their country for more than 20 years. Women are under-represented or absent from national and international consultations in peacebuilding processes. During her presentation, Passy Mubalama shared her experience as a former journalist and current human rights activist in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. She examined how the current political crisis affects women's rights in the DRC, and why the participation of women in politics and security is vital for the prospects of bringing peace and democracy to the country. Comments from NED Program Officer for Central and West Africa Rudy Massamba followed.
**Speakers:** Passy Mubalama, Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow
Rudy Massamba, Program Officer for Central and West Africa, National Endowment for Democracy
Sally Blair, Senior Director of Fellowship Programs, National Endowment for Democracy

**Title:** Social Media And Support For Free Speech And Democracy In Central Africa
**Date:** June 14, 2016
**Description:** While many countries in Africa face restrictive media environments, the Central African region stands out as a bastion for repression of freedom of expression. The governments of the Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular, make great attempts to stifle the press and

limit free speech in their countries. Despite such repression, however, social media is playing an increasingly important role in activists' attempts to combat the undemocratic tendencies of their countries' leaders. In his presentation, Elie Smith will discuss the ways that journalists, bloggers, activists, and ordinary citizens are harnessing social media to promote free speech and push for democratic change in the Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His presentation will be followed by comments by Pierre Tantchou.

**Speakers:** Elie Smith, Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow
Pierre Tantchou, National Endowment for Democracy
Zerxes Spencer, International Forum for Democratic Studies

**Title:** The Faith-Based Community's Role In Congo's Electoral Process
**Date:** November 10, 2015
**Description:** The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is preparing for an unprecedented electoral cycle that may culminate in its first peaceful and democratic transfer of power since independence. Congo's leading religious leaders, through the Commission for Integrity and Electoral Mediation (Commission d'Intégrité et de Médiation Electorale, CIME), have an important role to play in this process. The recent restructuring of the country's provinces has exacerbated the complexity involved in organizing the upcoming elections. In light of these challenges, please join us for a discussion with civic and religious leaders on ways the DRC's faith-based community can contribute to the success of these elections.

**Speakers:** *Panel I*:
Dave Peterson, Senior Director for Africa, National Endowment for Democracy
Paul Fagan, Program Director for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, McCain Institute
Bishop Ann Mary Swenson, Vice-Moderator, World Council of Churches
*Panel II*:
Rudy Massamba, Program Officer for Central Africa, National Endowment for Democracy
Father Donatien Nshole, Deputy Secretary General, National Episcopal Conference of Congo
Grace Lula Hamba, Agir pour des Elections Apaisées et Transparentes
Bishop David Yemba, United Methodist Church of DRC, Vice Presdient of the Commission on Integrity and Electoral Mediation
*Panel III*:
Mvemba Dizolele, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies
Jacqueline Nembe Luhahi, United Methodist Church of DRC
Stephen Hilbert, Foreign Policy Advisor, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Reverend Andre Milenge Mwenelwata, 2nd Vice President, Eglise du Christ au Congo
Jeanne Hruska, Senior Advisor to the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes and the DRC

**Title:** Premiere Screening Of *The Man Who Mends Women*
**Date:** October 19, 2015
**Description:** Panzi Foundation USA, King Baudouin Foundation United States, the National Endowment for Democracy, Physicians for Human Rights and Women for Women International invite you to join us for a private screening of *The Man Who Mends Women*, the critically acclaimed film by Thierry Michel and Colette Braeckman.
*The Man Who Mends Women* is the moving story of Dr. Denis Mukwege and his work at the landmark Panzi Hospital in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Winner of the Sakharov Prize 2014, Doctor Mukwege is internationally known as the man who not only repairs the bodies of tens thousands of women who have been raped during the 20 years of conflicts in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but works to restore their lives and address the root causes of violence in DRC.

## Nigeria

**Title:** Decaying Institutions: How Corruption Undermines Democracy in Nigeria
**Date:** January 30, 2018
**Description:** In 2015, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari was elected by citizens inspired by his assurances to fight corruption, and his government has since taken steps to keep this promise. Initiatives include strengthening anti-corruption institutions, implementing fiscal reforms, and joining the Open Government Partnership. However, the initial excitement is turning into disenchantment as Nigerian voters realize that, despite Buhari's good intentions, corruption remains deeply entrenched in their country. Recent state and parliamentary elections have witnessed low voter turnout, while public trust in politicians and the state continues to decline. In his presentation, Oludotun Babayemi examined how the structure of Nigeria's political institutions perpetuate corrupt practices. He also offered recommendations on how both domestic organizations and international funders can tackle corruption, including the use of citizen-led initiatives such as Follow the Money. Debra LaPrevotte offered comments.
**Speakers:** Mr. Oludotun Babayemi, Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow
Ms. Debra LaPrevotte, Senior Investigator, The Sentry
Christopher O'Conner, Program Officer for West Africa, National Endowment for Democracy

## Macedonia

**Title:** Stability And Progress In The Western Balkans: Threats, Predictions, Solutions
**Date:** February 1, 2017
**Description:** Decades of international presence and investment in promoting stability and progress in the Western Balkans seem to have paid some dividends. But the full democratic consolidation of most former Yugoslav countries seems like an elusive goal. Political institutions remain weak and dominated by nationalist and populist strongmen who are polarizing societies. Endemic corruption, captured

media, and public frustration plague transitions across the region. These challenges also make regional governments vulnerable to malign foreign influences. Russia, which has been expanding its geopolitical influence across the Balkans and neighboring regions, has already begun to exploit these vulnerabilities. Meanwhile, foreign fighter recruitment remains a threat in the region. Scores of veteran fighters have returned home to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, raising even greater security and radicalization risks, not just to these fragile states, but to the peace and stability of Europe as a whole.
2016 was particularly challenging, witnessing an escalation of domestic crises in key countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, and even Croatia. Neighborly relations have suffered as well. Two decades after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, rhetoric at both the political and grassroots levels increasingly resembles that of the early 1990s. Featuring some of the region's leading practitioners and analysts, this event explored new threats to stability and progress in the Western Balkans, assessed upcoming challenges and opportunities, and proposed ways forward.

**Speakers:** Andrej Nosov, Director, Heartefact Fund & Reagan-Fascell Fellow, National Endowment for Democracy
Goran Miletić, Program Director for the Western Balkans, Civil Rights Defenders
Jasmin Mujanović, Policy Consultant, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung – Dialogue Southeast Europe
Sandra Orlović, former Executive Director, Humanitarian Law Center
Ivana Cvetković Bajrović, Senior Program Officer, National Endowment for Democracy

**Title:** Creating Sustainable Media Systems In The Balkans
**Date:** April 2, 2015
**Description:** Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia all have constitutions that protect their citizens' rights to free speech, expression, and a free press. However, exercising these rights become difficult when defamation lawsuits still persist, journalists are routinely imprisoned, and journalists and media workers face constant threats, physical violence, and verbal attacks by the government and media rivals. The outlets in these countries also face great financial instability, which means many of them rely on government advertising for a large bulk of their funding. This leads to content that is oftentimes skewed towards government positions, as outlets do not want to risk their financial viability with unflattering coverage of government officials and policies. How can independent media thrive when there are a lack of legal and economic enabling environments in these countries? Are journalists doomed to serve as government mouthpieces, and will those who attack and kill journalists face justice? Please join us for lunch between 12:00-12:30. The event will start promptly at 12:30.

**Speakers:** Marija Sajkas, Media Diversity Institute
Milka Tadic Mijovic, Weekly Monitor
Ivana Cvetkovic Bajrovic, National Endowment for Democracy

## Ukraine

**Title:** Mustafa: Film Screening and Discussion
**Date:** May 24, 2018
**Description:** When Mustafa Dzhemilev was named Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for the Affairs of Crimean Tatars in 2014, he gained an official title for the work he relentlessly pursued since the darkest days of the Soviet Union. Dzhemilev, a renowned human rights activist and Soviet dissident, campaigned for the right of return of the Crimean Tatars following their deportation under Stalin. As a result, he spent 15 years in prison camps in the USSR and undertook what remains the longest hunger strike on record – 300 days.
Today, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, Dzhemilev and the Crimean Tatars face renewed persecution. The Russian annexation has been accompanied by numerous human rights violations, including beatings and kidnappings of civic activists. Crimean Tatar activists such as Dzhemilev have been singled out for persecution. As historical leader of the Crimean Tatar National Movement, his new struggle can serve to draw attention to the poor human rights situation in Crimea.
NED welcomed Jorgan Andrews, Director for Eastern European Affairs at the U.S. State Department to make remarks about the current challenges in Ukraine and Crimea. NED also welcomed Ms. Tamila Tasheva from CrimeaSOS, a grantee that received NED support for the production of the documentary film, *Mustafa*. Ms. Tasheva introduced the film and set the stage for an important and memorable conversation between Mustafa Dzhemilev and Paula Dobriansky. NED President Carl Gershman presented Mr. Dzhemilev the Democracy Service Medal to recognize his significant contributions to the progress of democracy around the world.
**Speakers:** Mustafa Dzhemilev, Commissioner for the Affairs of Crimean Tartars, Office of the President of Ukraine
Paula Dobriansky, Senior Fellow at the Future of Diplomacy Project, Kennedy School, Harvard University
Jorgan Andrews, Director for Eastern European Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Tamila Tasheva, Co-founder and Chairwoman, CrimeaSOS

**Title:** Post-Maidan Reforms In Ukraine
**Date:** October 13, 2017
**Description:** Following the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, Ukrainian civil society has engaged in an ongoing campaign for institutional reforms that enhance government accountability and increase transparency. This campaign produced several early victories, such as government agencies tasked with investigating, prosecuting, and preventing corruption. Yet progress has slowed, leaving major goals unfulfilled. The system is fundamentally unaltered. Despite some improvements, Ukraine remains the most corrupt in Europe, according to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index.
Civil society was the main driver of anti-corruption reforms, which were among the most prominent demands of the Maidan. Recently activists have been

experiencing increased government pushback and persecution, which threaten to stall the process permanently. Kaleniuk and Shevchenko will discuss the role civil society has played in the reform process, particularly in designing and deploying anti-corruption tools that have markedly increased government transparency. They will also discuss prospects for furthering reforms and maintaining Ukraine's pro-democratic course.

**Speakers:** Daria Kaleniuk, Executive Director, Anti-Corruption Action Center
Taras Shevchenko, Executive Director, Center for Democracy and Rule of Law, Co-chair, Reanimation Package of Reforms, 2016-2017
Joanna Rohozinska, Senior Program Officer, National Endowment for Democracy

**Title:** Continued Human Rights Suppression in Crimea
**Date:** June 20, 2017
**Description:** Despite the hopes raised by the Euromaidan movement and a decrease in the number of civilian causalities in Ukraine, the last two years have shown backsliding in many areas. The report of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine highlighted that "the situation in the east of Ukraine remains volatile and may develop into a 'frozen conflict', creating a protracted environment of insecurity and instability."
In Crimea, restrictions on public demonstrations, civil society organizations, and the media are routine. This situation is exacerbated by concerted efforts to prevent Ukrainians and international human rights monitors, journalists, and others from traveling to Crimea. Governments, international organizations, and human rights organizations must take steps to bear witness to the on-going tragedy in Crimea and do their best to put a stop to it.
This public event aims at raising awareness about the continued human rights suppression in Crimea since the Russian annexation.

**Speakers:** Tetiana Pechonchyk, Human Rights Information Center (Ukraine)
Olga Skrypnyk, Crimean Human Rights Group
Olga Tarasov, National Endowment for Democracy

**Title:** Ukraine: Can Trustworthy Media Win?
**Date:** April 28, 2017
**Description:** Since the 2014 Maidan Revolution, the media environment in Ukraine has navigated a treacherous path, from countering disinformation campaigns and propaganda to hard-won reforms in public broadcasting and privatization of state-owned local media. Earning and maintaining trust of the public, however, remains a serious obstacle as the state continues to implement media reforms.
With trust in the press going from bad to worse following coverage of Euromaidan demonstrations, a July 2015 report found that 66 percent of Ukrainians were sure that media content was imposed by the media's owners or by the government. Another report found that a full 75 percent of that ownership is non-transparent. Can current reforms win the trust of the Ukrainian public with the promise of independent, objective news coverage? And will it be enough to counter rampant disinformation and propaganda campaigns on both national and local levels?

**Speakers:** Tetyana Lebedyeva, Chair of the Supervisory Board, National Public Broadcasting Company
Katerina Myasnykova, Executive Director, Independent Association of Broadcasters
Joanna Rohozinska, Senior Program Officer, National Endowment for Democracy
Roman Shutov, Program Director, Detector Media
Mark Nelson, Senior Director, Center for International Media Assistance

**Title:** Pushing Back: Next Generation Of Journalists In Eastern Europe And Eurasia
**Date:** April 21, 2016
**Description:** In a media environment characterized by rapid changes in technology, a collapse of the business model for independent media, and growing censorship from authoritarian governments, young journalists face seemingly overwhelming challenges. Yet, a steady group of brave and innovative champions continues to be drawn to the profession, driven by the same pursuit of truth, transparency, human rights, and the sense of adventure that has motivated generations of journalists before them.
Join us for a conversation with some of the leading young journalists of Eastern Europe and Eurasia about their experiences, their perspectives on the role of journalism in their home countries, and what they see in the future of their profession. What motivates them to continue in this increasingly difficult profession? How do they confront the growing threats meted out by hostile governments? How do they deal with the risk and financial uncertainty that goes with being a journalist today?
The Vaclav Havel Journalism Fellowship is an initiative of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and is generously supported by the Dagmar and Vaclav Havel Foundation VIZE97. Inspired by the late Czech leader's belief in the transformational power of free speech and building on RFE/RL's legacy of promoting more open societies through journalism, the Fellowship is targeted at young journalists from countries within RFE/RL's broadcast region.
**Speakers:** Safie Ablyaeva, Ukraine
Knar Khudoyan, Armenia
Ihar Losik, Belarus
Diana Munasipova, Russia
Josh Machleder, USAID
Czech Embassy Deputy Chief of Misison Jaroslav Zajicek

**Title:** Election Observation: How Authoritarian Regimes Muddy The Waters
**Date:** February 18, 2015
**Description:** Since the onset of the post-election popular uprisings known as "color revolutions" that took place in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, authoritarian governments have adopted a range of techniques to undermine credible election assessments by established observation organizations. The methods employed to "muddy the waters" include the suppression of citizen integrity efforts, the mobilization of pro-government NGOs to communicate disinformation about

elections, the creation of authoritarian-backed "zombie" election monitors, and the geopolitical manipulation of intergovernmental election monitoring organizations. Patrick Merloe, Thomas O. Melia, and Jan Surotchak discussed how authoritarian regimes are devising new ways to impede authentic election observation as part of a wider authoritarian effort to create anti-democratic counternorms around the world.

**Speakers:** Patrick Merloe, Senior Associate and Director of Electoral Programs, National Democratic Institute
Jan Surotchak, Regional Director for Europe, International Republican Institute
Thomas O. Melia, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, United States Department of State
Christopher Walker, Executive Director, International Forum for Democratic Studies

## Philippines

**Title:** From Crisis To Governance: Reclaiming The Philippines' Democracy Narrative
**Date:** January 10, 2018
**Description:** Riding a strong populist wave and exerting a brand of crisis, Rodrigo Duterte was elected to power in the Philippines in mid-2016. More than a year into his presidency, Duterte's authoritarian tendencies threaten to undo core democratic gains made in the years following the 1986 People Power Revolution, a peaceful uprising that drew upon the strength of many different groups and helped ignite a wave of similar movements around the world. Capitalizing on popular frustrations over the incremental pace of change, Duterte has attacked a central piece of People Power's main product, the 1987 Freedom Constitution, blaming it for the continuing ills of the country. He has now commandeered the People Power narrative, sounding crisis after crisis and calling for revolution, to serve a core of interest groups close to him, rather than Filipino democracy as a whole.
In her presentation, Maxine Tanya Hamada spoke from her twenty years of experience—working in both the government bureaucracy and civil society—about the cycles of moving from crisis to governance and the importance of reclaiming the narrative of People Power that has been hijacked by Duterte. Hamada also discussed gains made by People Power and what the international community can do to help safeguard Filipino democracy.
**Speakers:** Tanya Hamada, Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow
Brian Joseph, Senior Director of Asia and Global Programs, National Endowment for Democracy

## Indonesia

None.


IRI Events in Response to Questions for the Record

- Colombia: None
- Guatemala: None
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
  - August 12, 2016: "A Conversation with Congolese Diaspora." On Friday August 12, 2016, IRI, with the Department of State's Bureau of African Affairs hosted a roundtable event with members of the diaspora from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The event was the opportunity to discuss the political and situations in the DRC just months before the end of President Kabila's term.
- Nigeria
  - July 6, 2016: "Nowhere to Run: Nigeria's Climate and Environmental Crisis." On Wednesday July 6, 2016, IRI, with the Sheu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation, hosted the screening of *Nowhere to Run: Nigeria's Climate and Environmental Crisis*, a documentary examining the ever-changing state of the environment in Nigeria and the failures in effective, accountable governance exacerbating a dire situation and leading to continued pollution and failure to respond to changing environmental circumstances. A discussion with Jacqueline Farris, Director of the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation, Ken Saro-Wiwa Jr., journalist and author, and Amara Nwankpa, director of the public policy initiative at the Sheu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation, followed the screening, which members of the diaspora and representatives of domestic non-governmental organizations attended.

- March 7, 2018: "A Year Out: Examining the Role of Women in the 2019 Nigerian Elections." IRI hosted several experts to provide a brief context of Nigeria's upcoming elections. They focused on women's political participation in Nigeria and IRI's previous political party work. Panelists also reflected on the 2015 elections and dissected the parties' platforms.

- Macedonia: None
- Ukraine: See NDI response for events co-hosted by IRI and NDI
- Philippines: None
- Indonesia: None

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**NDI Events in Response to Question for the Record**

* Events co-hosted with IRI are noted in bold

a. **Colombia**: None

b. **Guatemala:** None

c. **Democratic Republic of the Congo:** None

d. **Nigeria:** On Thursday, November 19, 2015, NDI, with the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS), held one DC-based public event on Nigeria. With former Ambassador Johnnie Carson moderating, former President Goodluck Jonathan discussed "Presidential elections and democratic consolidation in Africa: Case studies on Nigeria and Tanzania." Aside from NDI staff, representatives of domestic and international non-governmental organizations, journalists, diplomats, civil servants, researchers, members of the Nigerian diaspora, and university professors and students attended the event.

e. **Macedonia:** In November 2017, NDI hosted a working dinner at its Washington headquarters on Macedonia's democratic reform process, featuring the Speaker of the National Assembly of Macedonia (DUI party, which is in governing coalition with the ruling SDSM party), and a leading member of parliament (representing the opposition VMRO-DPMNE party). Other guests included approximately one-dozen representatives of the State Department, USAID, and Washington-based non-governmental organizations.

f. **Ukraine**: In April 2018, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Ukrainian MP Roundtable on Election Law." The purpose of the event was to update participants on election reform legislation under consideration and the political state-of-play on election law reform. Speakers included three Ukrainian

MPs from different parties. Other participants included representatives from USAID, NED-funded organizations, NED, think tanks, NGOs, NDI staff, and consulting firms.

In March 2018, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Briefing on new research on disinformation in Ukraine." The purpose of the event was to brief participants on new disinformation research by country senior director Mary O'Hagan. The speaker was Mary O'Hagan, NDI Ukraine Resident Senior Country Director. Other participants included representatives from NDI staff, NDI board members, think tanks, and foreign embassy staff.

In March 2018, **NDI and IRI** co-hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "The Fight for Institutional Reform and Inclusive Democracy in Ukraine: Perspective from the Samopomich (Self-Reliance) Party." The event was a discussion on Samopomich's position with regards to prospects for meaningful democratic progress, anti-corruption reform, upcoming elections, Ukraine's security, and U.S.-Ukraine cooperation. Speakers included a number of representatives from the Samopomich party, including the party's founder and several MPs. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs, journalists, and foreign embassy staff.

In December 2017, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Ukraine-Lithuania Luncheon." The event served as a discussion on post-Soviet/Euro integration reform from two countries on both sides of the process, as well as an exploration of continued and enhanced cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania. Speakers included NDI's president, NDI Eurasia's director, several Ukrainian MPs, and several Lithuanian MPs. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, think tanks, NGOs, foreign embassy staff, NDI staff, NDI board members, and former US ambassadors.

In November 2017, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Democratic Progress in Ukraine: Implications of the Latest Public Opinion Research Results with NDI Ukraine Senior Country Director Mary O'Hagan." The event was a presentation of NDI's research exploring Ukrainians' attitudes on politics, political parties, the economy, and security. The speaker was Mary O'Hagan, NDI Ukraine Resident Senior Country Director. Other participants

included representatives from NDI staff, USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, think tanks, and NGOs.

In November 2017, NDI hosted its Annual Award Dinner in Washington titled "Democracy vs. Disinformation: Fighting for Facts." The event was a discussion on the threat of disinformation to democracy around the world. Speakers included NDI Chairman, NDI President, CEO of Rappler in the Philippines, Co-Founder of StopFake in Ukraine, Principal Investigator for the Computational Propaganda Project of Oxford Internet Institute, and a U.S. Senator. Other participants included representatives from USG, NED, USAID foreign embassies, think tanks, U.S. Congress, media outlets, consulting groups, and former ambassadors.

In November 2017, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Disinformation vs. Democracy breakfast panel." The event was a panel discussion on the challenges that disinformation presents to democracy. Speakers included senior personnel at POLITICO, Co-Founder of StopFake in Ukraine, Oxford Internet Institute, and Rappler in the Philippines. Other participants included representatives from NDI staff, USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, and NDI board members.

In May 2017, **NDI and IRI** co- hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Ukrainian Security and Democratic Reform: Views from the Samopomich (Self-Reliance) Parliamentary Faction." The event was a discussion with members of parliament from Ukraine's Samopomich (Self-Reliance) party about the party's trajectory and reform goals. The speakers were Ukrainian MPs and faction leaders. Other participants included representatives from NDI staff, USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs, journalists, and foreign embassy staff.

In April 2017, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Reinforcing the U.S.-Ukraine Partnership: Views from a Delegation of Ukrainian Parliamentarians." The event served as a discussion on developments in the Ukrainian parliament, including the status of key reforms, and major issues in U.S.-Ukrainian relations. Speakers included several Ukrainian MPs, including two Co-Chairs of the U.S. Caucus. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, NDI, academic

institutions, think tanks, NGOs, media outlets, foreign embassies, and consulting firms.

In February 2017, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Democratic Reform in Ukraine: Implications of the Latest Public Opinion Research Results." The event served as a briefing on NDI's latest public opinion research. The Speaker was Mary O'Hagan, NDI Ukraine Resident Senior Country Director. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, NDI, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs, media outlets, foreign embassies, consulting firms, U.S. congress, and foreign governments.

In September 2016, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Enacting Sustainable Reform in Ukraine." The event served as a discussion on the prospects for meaningful democratic progress within Ukraine, security issues, and anti-corruption measures within the Rada. Speakers included three Ukrainian MPs. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, NDI, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs, media outlets, foreign embassies, consulting firms, U.S. Congress, and private businesses.

In September 2016, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Democratic Reform in Ukraine and the Road Ahead: Implications of the Latest Public Opinion Research Results." The event served as a briefing on NDI's latest public opinion research. The Speaker was Mary O'Hagan, NDI Ukraine Resident Senior Country Director. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, NDI, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs, foreign embassies, and consulting firms.

In June 2016, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Making Democracy Work: The Politics of Reform in Ukraine." The event served as a discussion with a group of MPs on the prospects of change in the country. Speakers included three Ukrainian MPs. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs, media outlets, foreign embassies, NDI, consulting firms, U.S. Congress, and international organizations.

In April 2016, **NDI and IRI** co-hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Overcoming Oligarchic Management: Views from the Samopomich (Self-Reliance) Parliamentary Faction." The event served as a discussion on the prospects for meaningful democratic progress, early elections, and U.S.-Ukrainian cooperation with members of the Samopomich party. Speakers included several Samopomich MPs, including the Deputy Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada and the Faction Leader. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs, media outlets, and foreign embassies.

In February 2016, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Where we are now: Women and Democratic Transformation in Ukraine." The event served as a briefing on public opinion research findings in Ukraine involving attitudes on women, politics, and gender quotas before and after the October local elections. Speakers included Executive Director for Georgetown's Institute for Peace, Women, and Security and NDI Ukraine's Resident Senior Country Director. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, U.S. Congress, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs, media outlets, NDI, and consulting firms.

In July 2015, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Key Findings from New NDI Ukraine Public Opinion Research." The event served as a briefing on NDI's latest public opinion research in Ukraine. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, media outlets, NDI, NGOs, consultants, foreign embassies, and academic institutions.

In July 2015, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "A Screening of the film 'Haytarma' (Return)." The event served as a film screening with a discussion on the forcible deportation of the Crimean Tatar. Speakers included NDI Eurasia's Regional Director, Chargé d'Affairs of Ukraine in the USA, and President of the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe. Other participants included representatives from USG, NED, NED-funded organizations, media outlets, NDI, NGOs, consultants, and foreign embassies.

In April 2015, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "Breakfast with the leadership of the Equal Opportunities Caucus (EOC) of the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) of Ukraine." The event served as a conversation on

gender issues and the status of economic and political reforms in Ukraine. Speakers included several Ukrainian MPs and members of the EOC.

In February 2015, NDI hosted an event at its Washington headquarters titled "U.S.-Ukraine Cooperation: Views from Ukrainian Parliamentarians." The event was a conference with Ukrainian Members of Parliament, including key committee leaders, on the situation in Ukraine and opportunities for U.S. Ukrainian partnerships. Speakers included First Vice Speaker of Parliament, two Ukrainian MPs, NDI Ukraine's Resident Director, USAID's Deputy Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia, and several representatives from various think tanks. Other participants included representatives from USG, USAID, NED, NED-funded organizations, academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs, media outlets, foreign embassies, NDI, and consulting firms.

g. **Philippines**: Public events over the past three years that involve Philippine actors are: the 2017 NDI Democracy Award to Rappler (November 2, 2017 - Washington DC); the Politico-NDI Panel Event on The Global Threat of Disinformation vs. Democracy (November 1, 2017 - Washington, DC); and the Stop Violence Against Women in Politics Forum (May 9, 2018 - Washington DC).

h. **Indonesia**: None

**Questions for the Record from Representative Brad Sherman**
Democracy Promotion in a Challenging World
June 14, 2018

NOTE: The responses below are provided on behalf of National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI) with respect to funding from the NED.

**Question**:

Over the last several years, in many places around the globe, LGBTQ people have been targeted, rounded up, tortured, and even killed, just for being who they are. We've seen it in Chechnya, Egypt, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and other places. In Africa, we've seen several governments attempt to further criminalize same-sex relations, while in Latin America we've seen transgender women targeted for abuse with far too few perpetrators held accountable.

- What can the U.S. do to ensure that our support for civil society abroad is fully inclusive of LGBTQ people and communities?
- In what ways are your organization's programs contributing to strengthening democratic institutions through the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable communities such as LGBTQ people?

**Answer**:

Democracy is more likely to develop and endure when all segments of a society are free to participate without suffering discrimination or reprisal. Conflict is often driven by the failure to govern inclusively. In many new and emerging democracies, large portions of society are excluded from politics based on age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. NDI and IRI provide technical support to civil society organizations to enhance their operational capacity and ability. Training programs are available to organizations with the goals of defending basic rights, opposing discrimination, and promoting tolerance, pluralism and inclusion. We work to increase the capacities of these communities so that they can defend their basic rights. Likewise, we encourage political parties, elected officials and government agencies to reach out to marginalized populations and take their interests into account.

**Questions for the Record from Representative Ann Wagner**
Democracy Promotion in a Challenging World
June 14, 2018

NOTE: The responses below are provided on behalf of National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI) with respect to funding from the NED, except where a question is specifically directed to one individual.

**Question**:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for hosting this hearing, and thank you to our witnesses for their informative testimonies. As China exports its soft authoritarian, extractive development model and "human rights with Chinese characteristics," our democracy-promotion activities are more important than ever. America excels at helping our partners build capacity, good governance practices, and democratic institutions. And democratizing countries want—and need—us to remain an alternative to Chinese capital.

Mr. Gershman, as co-chair of the ASEAN caucus, I'm interested in hearing your thoughts on the state of democracy in Southeast Asia.

On the surface, it looks like authoritarianism has made significant gains in Burma, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Yet the United States has many staunch allies in the region. How can we use our influence to strengthen democratic voices—like in Thailand, where the military junta claims, once again, that it's nearly ready to initiate a transition to democratic rule?

**Answer**:

I agree that authoritarianism has made gains in in Southeast Asia, though recently there were protests in seven cities in Vietnam challenging two new laws tightening cybersecurity and giving China new privileges in special economic zones. On Thailand, all four NED institutes (NDI, IRI, CIPE, and the Solidarity Center) are active, and NED also maintains a robust small-grants program supporting indigenous civil-society organizations. Since the military coup on May 22, 2014, NED has more than doubled its programming in Thailand, which now supports 21 projects across the country. The groups we support are working despite the crackdown on rights and freedoms, and they're also alert to public unhappiness over election delays and corruption scandals. Restrictions on media and political parties remains in place, though the parties may have more political space in the run-up to elections, which have been tentatively set for February 2019. NED support in Thailand focuses on the following areas:

- Monitoring, documenting, and providing protection against rights abuses.
- Providing avenues for citizens to voice their political views peacefully and engage in dialogue about the direction of their country.
- Fostering civic engagement and political participation by providing mechanisms through which citizens can channel their demands constructively and deepen their practice of democratic principles.

- Bolstering the capacity of civil society voices that have emerged since the coup by fostering more coordination and the sharing of tactics and approaches among the different actors.

**Question**:

Mr. Wollack, I'm glad you mentioned the connection between autocracy and ethnic cleansing, mass atrocities, and state fragility.

I am currently working to kickstart improvements to U.S. crisis response mechanisms, and we should not forget this connection in our democracy promotion programming. You also mentioned Burkina Faso, where the United States has been instrumental in both fostering democracy and preventing violence. What lessons on crisis response can we draw from the Burkina Faso experience?

**Answer**:

Sudden crises of insecurity tend to involve multiple sectors of society, either as drivers or victims. While a military response may be adequate in establishing security in the immediate to short term, the ultimate resolution of the crisis and the societal transformation that follows are strengthened by political, civic and other social actors. In the notable case of Burkina Faso (a country in the Sahel sub-region facing frequent attacks from extremist Jihadists), when a long serving autocrat suddenly fell from power in 2014, civilian actors from civil society organizations, political parties, progressive minded legislators and professional security officers, many of whom in the past decade had exposure to US-sponsored democracy support programming, stepped in to avoid the country falling into total chaos that would have further benefited extremists. One lesson that NDI drew from the Burkina Faso experience, is the need to take a multi-sectorial approach to crisis response management that empowers reform minded individuals who can quickly lay the foundation for the impacted country to establish democratic and representative governance.

**Question**:

We know that China undermines democratic influence in Asia and prevents its spread.

But I think the strength of young Asian democracies like Mongolia, Taiwan, and Indonesia, and democratic gains regionally since 2006, should give us reason to feel optimistic. Mr. Twining, how does the International Republican Institute facilitate connections among young and established democracies in the Asia-Pacific region for mutual strength against Chinese influence?

**Answer**:

IRI utilizes a variety of channels to facilitate connections among young and established democracies and young democratic leaders in the Asia-Pacific. Many of our country programs in Asia take advantage of the abundance of experienced democratic leaders in the region, including government officials, political activists, and civil society and other community leaders, to serve as trainers and mentors for those in closed or newly transitioning countries, many of which are vulnerable to China's efforts to expand its influence in the region. It is IRI's belief that this intra-

regional engagement not only supports democratic development within each country and the region as a whole, but also creates linkages amongst like-minded democrats across the region who are keenly aware of and prepared to advocate and act against the threats posed by China's aggressive influence peddling. Over the coming year, IRI will be launching new efforts focused on documenting and raising awareness about China's activities in this sphere, as well as helping countries in Asia and around the world develop resiliency to counter China's malign influence.

In addition to these explicitly China-focused activities, IRI implements several other programs focused on cultivating and building connections between democratic leaders in the Asia-Pacific. IRI's global youth network, Generation Democracy, has a strong and growing presence in Asia, with 82 members from 17 countries. Generation Democracy provides opportunities for young democratic leaders to engage with and learn from each other at both the regional and global levels, as well as providing technical and financial support for members to design and carry out projects in their communities to increase support for democratic values, foster transparency, and encourage civic engagement. In 2017, IRI hosted Generation Democracy regional academies in both Bangkok and Jakarta, and continues to strengthen the network of young democrats through alumni engagement events and global summits. Through programs like Generation Democracy, IRI is helping shape Asia's next generation of leaders, preparing them to be strong advocates for democratic principles and build resilient institutions that can rebuff China's attempts to export its model of governance and development.

**Questions for the Record from Representative Dina Titus**
Democracy Promotion in a Challenging World
June 14, 2018

NOTE: The responses below are provided on behalf of National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI) with respect to funding from the NED, except where a question is specifically directed to one individual.

**Question**:

This month marks the 30th anniversary of the U.S. establishing an embassy in the country, and Mongolia, entirely surrounded by Russia and China, now boasts some of the highest Freedom House scores in Asia and, according the World Bank, has some of the highest levels of gender equality.

I traveled to Mongolia in 2016, and more recently I have spoken with representatives from the Mongolian government about how supporting their cashmere industry could diversity its mining industry-dependent economy, reduce economic pressures from China, and strengthen its sovereignty. Around 90% of workers in the textile sector are female; and while Mongolia produces nearly half of the global supply of raw cashmere, around 60-70% of Mongolian cashmere is exported to China, so Mongolian processing facilities remain underutilized.

Mr. Twining, I know IRI has an active office on the ground in Mongolia. Are you involved in any programs connected to the cashmere industry? Can you share some of your activities in Mongolia and how you think we can use your best practices as we look at promoting democracy elsewhere under the influences of Russia and China?

**Answer**:

Through its field office in Ulaanbaatar, IRI has conducted programming for the last three years to promote Mongolia as a democratic role model in the region. With National Endowment for Democracy funding, we implement the COMET (Chronicling Mongolia's Experience in Transition) Program, where we document and share Mongolia's experience transitioning to a successful democracy and free market economy through publications and exchanges with other countries. IRI has published three books on Mongolia's democratic history and has translated the first book in the series into Russian and Korean. Under COMET, IRI has hosted Kyrgyz Members of Parliament, Bhutanese Election Commission officials, Cambodian Journalists, North Korean defectors, and Lao civil society leaders to learn first-hand from the leaders of Mongolia's 1991 democratic transition, current emerging leaders, journalists, and business owners on topics ranging from orchestrating student movements, resisting Chinese and Russian disinformation, and improving local governance. Through this program, IRI actually partners with the Gobi Cashmere factory to present exchange participants a positive example of a locally-owned, locally driven business in a post-transition environment. Moreover, not only does Mongolia serve as a model of successful democracy while bordering the regions two largest stalwarts for authoritarianism, it

serves as example where democracy has become part of the national identity to distinguish itself from its neighbors.

**Question**:

I serve as Co-Chair of the Sri Lanka Caucus, and Sri Lanka has also partnered with HDP. I have noticed in working with HDP countries that U.S. assistance plays a critical role in democratic development, especially since foreign assistance to Sri Lanka has focused on strengthening governance, democratic reform, rule of law, and human rights.

Unfortunately, the President's budget includes significant cuts to assistance for these activities in Sri Lanka. At the same time, a recent independent report prepared for the State Department claims China is using "debtbook diplomacy," with Sri Lanka identified as being one of the most vulnerable countries.

Is there more that Congress should be doing to counter Chinese efforts to undermine democracies in Asia and around the world? How can we continue to promote democratic values in Sri Lanka and other areas China is working to exert its influence?

**Answer**:

In this era of globalization coupled with resurgent authoritarianism, China has cultivated economic leverage as a tool for getting others to play by its rules. A growing number of countries, including many democracies, are straining to deal with the projection of authoritarian influence through what the NED's International Forum for Democratic Studies describes as "sharp power". Such influence includes, but is not limited to, the use of manipulative and coercive "debt trap diplomacy" of the kind that is visible in Sri Lanka, and in other settings. In such cases, China blends development work with its geopolitical aims. The corrosive effects of sharp power are not limited to the development realm, however. It is increasingly evident, for instance, in the spheres of culture, academia, media, and publishing. These sectors are crucial in determining how citizens of democracies understand the world around them, but they are also vulnerable to self-censorship. The challenge of China's sharp power is multifaceted, and so must be any response. To address sharp power's corrosive effects, it will require far greater political focus and investment in supporting civil society and more generally reprioritizing defending and advancing democracy and the principles that underpin it.

To address China's growing assertion of power, the U.S. in collaboration with like-minded countries, should support democratic models of governance that are responsive to citizen needs, while protecting individual liberties. This includes strengthening civil society and democratic institutions, such as parliaments and political parties. In Sri Lanka, for example, NDI and IRI are assisting the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) by supporting the participation of Sri Lankan MPs in HDP programs. The Institutes are also working with Sri Lanka's parliament on developing a plan to improve its transparency and enhance citizen participation in Parliament's work, and are assisting governance efforts at the local level.

**Question**:

The President's FY19 budget request proposes a 60% cut in funding to the National Endowment for Democracy, and the State Department's Congressional Budget Justification says that NED grantees will have to compete for federal funding directly from USAID's Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Office and the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor rather than receiving sub-grants from NED. How will this impact NDI and IRI's work?

**Answer**:

This proposed funding cut for FY2019 would represent a drastic reduction in funding for NED and its four core institutes and would negatively impact our work globally. More importantly, the proposal would dismantle the NED structure itself and would remove the long-standing cooperation and coordination among the four core institutes and the NED. Such cooperation and coordination has been the hallmark and the foundation of NED and the core institutes effective and cost-effective approach to supporting democracy.