

**DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS:  
THE CASE FOR U.S. LEADERSHIP**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN  
HEMISPHERE, TRANSNATIONAL  
CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY,  
DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS,  
AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

OF THE

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## **DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: THE CASE FOR U.S. LEADERSHIP**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE,  
TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY,  
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:48 p.m. in room 419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Marco Rubio, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Rubio [presiding], Gardner, Menendez, and Kaine.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA**

Senator RUBIO. This hearing of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues will come to order.

The title of this hearing is "Democracy and Human Rights: The Case for U.S. Leadership." We are going to have two panels testifying today. The first will feature Mr. Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy; the Honorable Mark Green, the president of the International Republican Institute; and Mr. Kenneth Wollack, who is the president of the National Democratic Institute, all have long and distinguished careers in this field, and we are fortunate to have them here today.

The second panel will include Mr. Garry Kasparov, who is the chairman of the Human Rights Foundation; Dr. Halah Eldosari, a visiting scholar and human rights activist; and Mr. Danilo "El Sexto" Maldonado Machado, who is a Cuban artist and human rights activist. Each of these individuals have suffered some form of oppression, harassment, or marginalization by their governments, and I am confident the stories they will share today will shine a powerful light on those who attempt to violate the human rights and the freedom that every person is entitled to.

We look forward to hearing your testimony. We thank everyone in attendance for being here. I specifically want to acknowledge the leadership of NED's core institutes representing labor and business, Shawna Bader-Blau and Andrew Wilson.

Today, we will discuss a topic which I believe is especially timely not simply because we are at the start of a new administration,

which continues to formulate its foreign policy, but also because a cursory glance around the globe reveals disturbing trends of an authoritarian resurgence threatening human rights and democracy. From Russia to China, from North Korea to Venezuela, authoritarianism is on the rise. Human freedom is under assault, and restrictive new NGO laws are being used to crush civil society. Press freedom is being challenged. Just yesterday, we saw the expulsion of CNN en Espanol from Venezuela, and political dissidents often feel isolated and abandoned while those who repress them do so with seeming impunity.

Many of our historic alliances with other leading democracies are fraying while authoritarian regimes are closely collaborating and empowering other dictators. Some of the world's most egregious human rights violators retain well-paid lobbyists and P.R. firms. They engage in sophisticated expressions of soft power in the media through so-called think tanks and academia and even the entertainment industry. It feels like freedom fighters are constantly playing catch-up.

Earlier this month, Vladimir Kara-Murza of Open Russia was suspected of being poisoned for a second time. I understand that he is now recovering and will hopefully be released from the hospital shortly. He has been a target of the Russian Government for some time.

Later this month, February 27th will be the second anniversary of the assassination of his close ally, Boris Nemtsov, who was murdered in view of the Kremlin after speaking out against Russia's aggression in Ukraine and Vladimir Putin's corruption. We invited his daughter Zhanna Nemtsova to testify today, but she was unable to attend due to prior commitments. I would, however, like to enter into the record a report from her organization detailing the figures of political prisoners in Russia.

[The information referred to above was not available at time of print.]

Senator RUBIO. In the seminal work, *The Case for Democracy*, famed Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky, divides nations into free and fear societies. He writes, quote, "A simple way to determine whether the right to dissent in a particular society is being upheld is to apply the town-square test. Can a person walk into the middle of the town square and express his or her views without fear of arrest, imprisonment, or physical harm? If he can, then that person is living in a free society, and if not, it is a fear society," end quote.

For the Chinese lawyer, the Russian journalist, the Saudi blogger, the Venezuelan activist, the Cuban artist, the Bahraini civil society leader, there is no question they are living in fear societies. Their attempts to freely—and I would add courageously—express themselves are met with harsh and unyielding repression.

Civil rights champion, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., famously said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." As the title of today's hearing makes clear, I believe and I think it is safe to say that Ranking Member Menendez agrees as well that there is indeed a convincing case to be made for strong, principled U.S. leadership in the promotion and support of democracy and human rights globally on this moral imperative alone.

I recognize this is not a universal belief. It never has been, even during the heyday of the Soviet Union, and certainly, it is not now when there is no monolith enemy or single ideological counterpart to the free world.

While the American people remain among the most generous in the world, widely giving to charitable causes both domestically and internationally, altruism or even the moral impetus to stand with the oppressed and marginalized is insufficient motivation for many, especially when they consider our own decrepit infrastructure, our shuttered factories, our mounting national debt, and other priorities here at home.

So for those of who believe in the merits of this work, the burden is on us to make the case for why U.S. foreign policy must be infused with the values at the center of our own experiment in self-governance. It is incumbent upon us to explore and explain why the support of emerging democracies should be a core U.S. national interest precisely because it is a national security imperative, and I hope today's hearing will provide a platform to do so.

We need not abandon any notion of *realpolitik*. I recently read a National Review piece that captured a conversation that Mr. Kasparov had with Czech writer and dissident Vaclav Havel in which Havel noted, "Now and then, you have to negotiate with evil regimes but you do not have to do so without bringing up human rights." Take Ronald Reagan. He negotiated with the Soviet Union about arms control and geopolitics, but he always put political prisoners on the table.

With the previous administration, these issues took a back seat to other geopolitical goals, whether it was greater collaboration with China on climate change and the global economic crisis, the resumption of diplomatic relations with the tyranny in Cuba, or the prospects of a grand bargain with Iran. Dissidents in these and other countries often felt ignored and forgotten by the United States.

My critique is not reserved for a Democratic administration. I raised these issues with our Secretary of State—our new Secretary of State during his confirmation hearing and I am—was concerned and remain so about the way he addressed them. I intend to continue to highlight the importance of democracy and human rights as senior State Department nominees come before our committee for consideration. And as I stated when I voted for Mr. Tillerson, my support of or opposition to those nominees will be based in part on their willingness to make these issues a priority.

I believe it is vital for the Secretary, for his deputies, for senior White House officials, including the President and Vice President, to meet publicly with dissidents and human rights activists, as President Trump and Vice President Pence did last night with Lilian Tintori, the wife of Venezuelan opposition figure Leopoldo Lopez. It is essential that the leaders of the world's greatest democracy issue statements of support and solidarity and, where appropriate, condemnations when grave human rights abuses occur.

I urge the administration to request robust democracy funding for such work in the upcoming budget cycle and to utilize recently passed legislation from the previous Congress, which provides the State Department new tools to advance the cause of human rights

and human dignity, foremost among them, the global Magnitsky Act, which the ranking member was so involved in.

Writing eloquently and ominously in the Wall Street Journal last year, one of our witnesses Mr. Kasparov noted “Globalization has made it easy for the enemies of the free world to spread their influence in ways the Soviet leadership could not have imagined while the West has lost the will to defend itself and its values.” I pray this warning is not borne out of—borne out by reality.

Consider the contrast with Natan Sharansky’s account of being held in an 8 by 10 foot cell in a Siberian prison in 1983 when his Soviet jailers allowed him to read the latest issue of the official Communist Party newspaper. Sharansky recalled the front-page article condemning Reagan’s famous “Evil Empire” speech. And he wrote, “Tapping on the walls and talking through toilets, political prisoners spread the word of Reagan’s so-called provocation.” The dissidents were ecstatic. Finally, the leader of the free world had spoken the truth, a truth that burns inside the heart of each and every one of us.

I believe we are at an inflection point and that the stakes could not be higher, as we will no doubt hear today. We must commit anew to a robust defense of our values because they are not merely American values. Rather, they reflect the yearning of millions of people around the world who live in societies dominated by fear and oppression but who look to the United States of America to champion their cause to full exercise their God-given rights.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses. You have experience in the field and on the ground that will contribute greatly to what can so easily become abstract policy discussions. I turn now over to the ranking member, Senator Menendez.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BOB MENENDEZ,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Mr. Chairman, since this is the first hearing of the subcommittee, I want to say I look forward to working with you on the subcommittee’s enormous breadth and scope of jurisdiction. From the Western Hemisphere to transnational crime to civilian security to democracy and human rights and global women’s issues, we have a lot of ground to cover, and we are fortunate to be able to do so. And I look forward to working with you, as I have on the full committee and in the Senate.

I want to welcome our distinguished guests for both panels. We are honored to have you and very much forward to—looking forward to hearing your testimony. I would like to thank the chairman for making this our first subcommittee hearing of the new Congress. For so many reasons I cannot think of a more important topic: democracy, human rights, and the case for U.S. leadership for this subcommittee and truly for the Foreign Relations Committee as a whole to address.

The United States itself was built on the dreams and deep beliefs of aspirational individuals, those of individual liberty, of inalienable rights, and of a system of governance that treats all individuals equally. This democratic vision led to the creation of a system of government that protects fundamental freedoms that we become



at risk of taking for granted: the freedom of speech, of expression, the freedom of praying however we choose. And we are still perfecting the vision of treating all individuals regardless of gender, identity, race, religion, or creed equally under the law.

In addition to these individual liberties, we enjoy the governance structures that ensure an independent judiciary and three equal branches of government that prevent one person from consolidating power.

I note this foundation of the United States because it has and must continue to shape our world view and drive our foreign policy. Diplomacy is not naked deal-making. There is often no bottom line in carefully crafted, nuanced relationships with foreign countries. Our diplomatic efforts must be driven by these values.

We support democracies around the world because history has taught us too well that democracies that also value the rule of law and individual rights are our best partners and our most reliable allies. For those countries with whom we partner out of strategic necessity and shared security goals, we must always be vocal and active in supporting democratic efforts and independent voices.

It is this moral clarity, this leadership that sets the United States apart. Any suggestions of moral equivalency, that we are somehow on par with dictatorial regimes that kill political opponents, that jail journalists for speaking the truth, and indiscriminately bomb hospitals and slaughter innocent civilians should be resoundingly condemned.

We are here today to give voice to those who have been silenced in their own countries and to better understand how and why America investment into democracy and governance programs furthers our own national security and foreign policy objectives.

Mr. Maldonado, your struggle hits a deeply personal note for me. My family left Cuba in pursuit of the freedoms for which you are still fighting. I have the deepest respect for your courage and your tenacity in the face of brutal repression, of prison, of threats against your family and friends. And I agree with you completely that we must not kowtow to the brutal regime of the Castros, and we should not reward them or their military cronies the benefit of an open relationship with the United States until they release all political prisoners and work to improve the lives of all Cubans.

Dr. Eldosari, I want to say your work and courage have amplified the voices of millions of women not just in Saudi Arabia but also around the world. There is never an excuse for violence against women or treating women less than men. You raise an interesting point about the consolidation of power and the reliance on a system of unfair governance to explain away these heinous crimes against women. There is direct connection between democracy, democratic institutions, and their role in protecting individual rights.

And, Mr. Kasparov, I completely agree with your assessment that the United States and the rest of the world must express moral clarity and stand up against and in support of our allies in the face of Russian aggression. We have now seen firsthand the impact that Russian attempts to undermine our democratic system can have.

Finally, for our first panelists, your work simply speaks volumes for itself. I thank you all for your service, for your commitment to

promoting the values that makes this country great. Both of our main political parties in the United States deeply believe that strong political institutions that uphold the rule of law and promote good governance build stronger countries that form the basis of the international order, and I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Senator RUBIO. Well, we are going to—thank you, Senator Menendez.

We are going to begin with our first panel. Let us begin with you, Mr. Carl Gershman. Thank you for being here today. I am sorry, right to left.

**STATEMENT OF CARL GERSHMAN, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. GERSHMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Your left to right, my right to left.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really want to thank you for holding this very timely and important hearing on the importance of U.S. leadership in supporting human rights and democracy in the world. And I want you to know what a tremendous honor it is for me to be speaking at the same hearing with my old friend Garry Kasparov, with El Sexto, who was just in prison—having him here is such a joy—and with Halah Eldosari, who we know very, very well.

As we know, democracy today is being challenged as never before since the end of the Cold War. The crisis has many dimensions, including the rise of ISIS and other terrorist movements; growing illiberalism in Turkey, Hungary, the Philippines, and other backsliding democracies; 11 years of consecutive decline in global democracy, as measured by Freedom House; and, most importantly, what the letter of invitation to this hearing calls “resurgent authoritarianism.”

An editorial in *The Washington Post* last June defined resurgent authoritarianism as a modern-day version of the totalitarian threat that Winston Churchill decried in his famous Iron Curtain address in 1946. “No longer is it about communism,” the editorial said, “but rather the rise of despots who rule by force and coercion, from Russia to China, across the Middle East and Central Asia, to Latin America and Africa.”

In the past decade, these leaders have become more adept and daring at building a parallel universe to the liberal democratic order. In their construct, state power reigns supreme; political competition is extinguished; civil society elbowed out; and freedoms of expression, association, and belief suppressed. Surprisingly, some of these leaders, particularly in Russia and China, have been wielding a sophisticated and deceptive soft power beyond their borders that is proving more enduring and effective than in the past.

And I want to note, Mr. Chairman, that last year, we published this book *Authoritarianism Goes Global*, which really gives a thorough elaboration of this new phenomenon.

The Congress, through the appropriations process, has called upon NED to develop a strategic response to this new threat, saying that NED is “uniquely positioned” to do so because of its “decades-long experience working in the most hostile political terrain

through the core institutes and its global grants and programs.” Building on work that was already being done through its ongoing grants programs and research activities, in 2016 NED was able to identify and fund startup programs to address six key strategic challenges:

The need to strengthen democratic unity in defense of democratic norms and values that are under assault by authoritarian regimes in international institutions as well as in public attitudes.

Second, the need to foster ethnic and religious pluralism to counter the spread of Islamist and other forms of religious and sectarian extremism.

Third, the need to help civil-society activists and organizations prevail against the concerted campaign by authoritarian regimes to repress and control them.

Fourth, the need to defend the integrity of the information space against efforts by Russia and other authoritarian regimes to use social media and other communications tools to buttress their own power and to divide, demoralize, and even destabilize democratic societies.

Fifth, the need to strengthen the capacity for democratic governance so that new and fragile democracies are able to make progress toward democratic consolidation.

And finally, the need to combat the rise of kleptocracy—or “rule by thieves”—a new and systemic feature of modern authoritarianism that, due to the way kleptocrats use their illicit funds internationally, also has the effect of eroding the integrity of institutions in democratic societies, including our own.

NED’s strategic grants complement its ongoing grants program in some 90 countries, strengthening its response to the formidable and integrated threat posed by the new wave of authoritarianism. We are finding new ways to tie programs together across regions, to stimulate broader international partnerships and coalitions, and to take sometimes isolated innovations and scale them up to a level that makes them more effective.

Remarkably, these programs are reaching brave activists who are fighting for fundamental rights in some of the harshest political environments. These activists include North Korean defectors who are helping to break the information blockade that Pyongyang has used to keep the North Korean people totally isolated.

They include Chinese lawyers who are defending religious freedom and the rule of law against harsh repression that is being urged on by the chief justice of their Supreme Court, who recently called upon provincial judges in China to “show the sword” against the idea of judicial independence.

They include Cubans who are not only fighting for basic rights and political space but who are expanding their support networks by organizing around issues of local citizen concern.

They include Venezuelans who, in addition to their continuing programs to defend human rights and reduce political polarization, are tracking food and medical shortages to help coordinate the international relief agencies’ response to the worsening humanitarian crisis.

And I might note, Mr. Chairman, that last year, we honored Lilian Tintori with our Democracy Award, and when we did, it

showed the immense bipartisan support in the Congress for the struggle in Venezuela.

They include Iraqi activists and members of local councils and governments who are implementing startup efforts to rebuild governance, promote economic development and reconciliation, and build trust at the local level between the community and the security forces in the area—in the areas liberated from ISIS control.

Not least, they include Russian journalists, human rights defenders, and civic activists, many of whom have been declared foreign agents and must defend themselves in court against crippling fines but who still fight for basic rights and take great risks in exposing the kleptocratic practices of Russia's ruling class.

We recognize, Mr. Chairman, that the battles these activists and others like them around the world are fighting will be long and hard. Democracy does not come swiftly or easily. We must recognize that trying to take shortcuts to democracy is as dangerous as relying upon autocrats to preserve stability. Either way, we will reap the whirlwind.

And we should not forget that even when democracy is eventually achieved, it must be defended with eternal vigilance, as Thomas Jefferson once said. It must never be taken for granted, even in our own country.

Those who are fighting for democracy deserve the support of the American people, and through the NED they receive it. They are defending the values we hold dear. They are the ones who will bring real democracy and, through that, lasting stability. In striving to fulfill their aspirations, they are advancing our own fundamental national interests. They are helping us live in a safer and more peaceful world, and for that they deserve our solidarity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gershman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARL GERSHMAN

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this very timely and important hearing on the importance of U.S. leadership in supporting human rights and democracy in the world. As we know too well, democracy today is being challenged as never before since the end of the Cold War. The crisis has many dimensions, including the rise of ISIS and other terrorist movements; growing illiberalism in Turkey, Hungary, the Philippines and other backsliding democracies; 11 consecutive years of decline in global democracy, as measured by Freedom House; and, most importantly, what the letter of invitation to this hearing calls “resurgent authoritarianism.”

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The Congress, through the appropriations process, has called upon NED to develop a strategic response to this new threat, saying that NED is “uniquely positioned” to do so because of its “decades-long experience working in the most hostile political terrain through the core institutes and its global grants and programs.” Building on work that was already being done through its ongoing grants programs

and research activities, in 2016 NED was able to identify and fund start-up programs to address six key strategic challenges:

- The need to strengthen democratic unity in defense of democratic norms and values that are under assault by authoritarian regimes in international institutions as well as in public attitudes;
- The need to foster ethnic and religious pluralism to counter the spread of Islamist and other forms of religious and sectarian extremism;
- The need to help civil-society activists and organizations prevail against the concerted campaign by authoritarian regimes to repress and control them;
- The need to defend the integrity of the information space against efforts by Russia and other authoritarian regimes to use social media and other communications tools to buttress their own power and to divide, demoralize, and even destabilize democratic societies;
- The need to strengthen the capacity for democratic governance so that new and fragile democracies are able to make progress toward democratic consolidation; and
- The need to combat the rise of kleptocracy (or “rule by thieves”)—a new and systemic feature of modern authoritarianism that, due to the way kleptocrats use their illicit funds internationally, also has the effect of eroding the integrity of institutions in democratic societies, including our own.

NED’s strategic grants complement its on-going grants program in some 90 countries, strengthening its response to the formidable and integrated threat posed by the new wave of authoritarianism. We are finding new ways to tie programs together across regions, to stimulate broader international partnerships and coalitions, and to take sometimes isolated innovations and scale them up to a level that makes them more effective.

Remarkably, these programs are reaching brave activists who are fighting for fundamental rights in some of the harshest political environments. These activists include North Korean defectors who are helping to break the information blockade that Pyongyang has used to keep the North Korean people totally isolated.

They include Chinese lawyers who are defending religious freedom and the rule of law against harsh repression that is being urged on by the chief justice of the Supreme Court, who recently called upon provincial judges to “show the sword” against the idea of judicial independence.

They include Cubans who are not only fighting for basic rights and political space, but who are expanding their support networks by organizing around issues of local citizen concern.

They include Venezuelans who, in addition to their continuing programs to defend human rights and reduce political polarization, are tracking food and medical shortages to help coordinate the response of relief agencies to the worsening humanitarian crisis.

They include Iraqi community activists and members of local councils and governments who are implementing start-up efforts to rebuild governance, promote economic development and reconciliation, and build trust at the local level between the community and the security services in the areas liberated from ISIS control.

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Those who are fighting for democracy deserve the support of the American people, and through the NED they receive it. They are defending the values we hold dear. They are the ones who will bring real democracy and, through that, lasting stability. In striving to fulfill their aspirations, they are advancing our own fundamental national interests. They are helping us live in as a free and more peaceful world, and for that they deserve our solidarity.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Ambassador Green, and just for the—so we can get into the questions because I have—we have read your statements. They are extraordinarily well-written. They are in the record. We just—so if you—if there is somehow we could do it in 5 minutes each, that would be fantastic so we can get right into the questions. This is not censorship; this is a democracy hearing. I am just—no, we really want to get talking to you here so—

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARK GREEN, PRESIDENT,  
INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ambassador GREEN. Yes, I will not take it as censorship.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. I appreciate the opportunity to testify, and thank you for holding this hearing.

Mr. Chairman, I will summarize my remarks here today. Really what I am here to argue is that America should support democracy and liberty overseas not only because it is the right thing to do, but as you both alluded, also because it is in our economic and security interests as well.

Here is what I mean: Generally speaking, democracies—citizen-centered, citizen-responsive governments—are more stable because they are more adaptable to change. They tend to be more prosperous, and therefore, they make better economic partners for the U.S. Democracies are less likely to produce terrorists or weapons of mass destruction because they provide outlets for dissent and they allow for diversity of opinion.

Authoritarian regimes on the other hand inherently pose risks to order, peace, and stability. They often give rise to refugees, burdening and even destabilizing their neighbors. They maintain their iron grip on power in part by isolating their citizens from outside ideas and influences, and sometimes that means attacking, directly or indirectly, physically or digitally, democratic neighbors who model the freedoms that authoritarians most fear.

Sometimes pundits point to authoritarian governments as models of stability, but often that stability is a veneer. In fact, these regimes are prone to sudden instability. Because their power is overly centralized in an individual or a small group, when a crisis removes that leadership, it leaves a dark vacuum that attracts the most dangerous elements.

Turning to our work itself, Mr. Chairman, a guiding principle for all of us here is that we should not and indeed cannot impose our democracy on the citizens of other countries. Instead, our purpose is to walk with citizens and political leaders as they blaze their own democratic trail.

Now, our work as evolved greatly over the last several decades. In the wake of communism's collapse, we focused largely on supporting issue-based political parties and preparing candidates in their first real elections. Then our work evolved to assist new governments in being more accountable, effective, and responsive to citizens, particularly traditionally marginalized communities.

Our marginalized communities practice continues through today with initiatives like the Women's Democracy Network, which offers training, mentorships, and networking for women all around the world as they enter leadership. WDN has 16 fully independent chapters and touches 17,000 women in more than 60 countries.

Our latest initiative is Generation Democracy, a network of more than 400 youth organizations. It aims to help young people move from broad passion and idealism to constructive participation in political life.

Mr. Chairman, each of us here today can point to where, working together—and in most places we are working together—we have been able to help citizens and activists on their journey. There is the story of Burma, and ethnically diverse, culturally rich country with nearly unlimited economic potential, but its people suffered for decades under a brutal military dictatorship. Dissidents were often tortured and imprisoned for transgressions as simple as gathering in a group of more than five people.

When IRI and NDI began working there 25 years ago, government crackdowns forced us to operate from just across the border in Thailand, but we were a lifeline to activists and opposition political parties, including Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy. Eventually, in 2013 we were able to open a formal office inside Burma itself. Since then, we have engaged over 200,000 people from 340 organizations, from political parties to local civil society organizations. Twenty percent of all the elected national, state, and regional parliamentarians serving today were actually trained by IRI.

Now, there is no doubt that Burma's civilian-led government has a long way to go. It faces real challenges from a failing infrastructure to disturbing ethnic and religious violence. But given how far they have come, there is every reason to believe that they can be a beacon to the region.

Tunisia is another great example of how American support for democracy can make a difference even in a difficult neighborhood. Despite extreme pressures from outside extremist forces, Tunisia has held successive credible elections, solved problems through compromise, and consistently demonstrated a strong desire to be a U.S. ally.

Immediately after a youth-led revolution chased Ben Ali from power, we all responded quickly to support the voices demanding a say in their country's future. We conducted hundreds of training workshops to develop political parties. We helped civil society representatives foster meaningful lines of communication between government and citizens and we have strengthened Tunisian civil society by networking more than 60 organizations to promote government accountability.

As with Burma, Tunisia faces serious challenges. The government and the economy have been rocked by terrorism, and corruption continues to threaten its rise. We all believe that it is crucial that organizations like ours stay engaged to help them in their journey.

Mr. Chairman, in his famous Westminster address President Reagan told us all that "Democracy is not a fragile flower; still it needs cultivating." Some of the most notable successes in recent years—Tunisia, The Gambia, Burma, Ukraine, and others—offer proof of the difference that U.S.-supported cultivating can make.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Green follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARK GREEN

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, Members of the Committee, thank you for holding this timely and important hearing, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. By way of background, the International Republican Institute (IRI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working in more than 60 countries around the world. We trace our roots back to President Reagan and his unshakeable belief that, “Freedom is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few, but the inalienable and universal right of all human beings.”

## ADVANCING DEMOCRACY IS IN OUR STRATEGIC INTEREST

Mr. Chairman, based upon our three decades of experience, I believe that America should support democracy and liberty, not only because it is the right thing to do morally, but because it is very much in America’s economic and security interests. Generally speaking, democracies—citizen-centered, citizen-responsive governments—are more adaptable to change and are therefore more stable. They tend to be more prosperous, which makes them better trading partners and markets for U.S. goods. Because they tolerate diversity of opinion and allow for dissent, they are less likely to produce terrorists, proliferate weapons of mass destruction, or engage in armed aggression. That makes them better neighbors and makes their regions more secure.

By contrast, authoritarian regimes, over the long run, pose significant risks to peace and stability. They often give rise to refugee populations, burdening and potentially destabilizing their neighbors. In order to maintain their grip on power, such regimes repress their people and seek to isolate their citizens from outside ideas and influences. They attack—directly or indirectly, physically or digitally—those outside their borders that model or represent the freedom authoritarians fear. Finally, because authoritarians are often incapable of meeting the aspirations of their citizens, they are prone to sudden instability. Such regimes are stable, but only until they are not. Since tyrants tend to spend little time or capital on grooming other leaders or fostering responsive institutions, when they are removed by death or crisis, it often opens up a power vacuum that attracts dangerous elements.

## DEMOCRACY IS NEVER “IMPOSED”

Mr. Chairman, it is a basic tenet of our work that we do not, and indeed cannot, “impose” our democracy or national values on the citizens of other countries. Democracy is, after all, government by consent of the governed. Our purpose is to walk with citizens and political leaders around the world as they set out on their own journey towards a more democratic future. As citizens work to strengthen their voice in government, we offer tools to help. As leaders explore ways to learn more about, and respond to, citizen priorities, we offer tools to help.

## DEMOCRACY WORK HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS

Just as the world has changed dramatically over the last several decades, so has the nature of our work. In the wake of communism’s collapse, our focus was largely on developing political parties and preparing candidates to stand for election. In former Warsaw Pact satellites and the Baltic States, for example, we supported pro-reform, pro-democratic political parties which, whether in power or in opposition, helped those countries meet the demands of integrating into NATO and the EU. We assisted them in developing responsive platforms, and taught them the basics of political communications and the marketplace of ideas. Our goal was to help them become productive, contributing members of the transatlantic community.

Since those early days, acknowledging that democratic progress is much more than a single election, our work evolved to address all components of democratic systems. Following elections in those post-communist states, newly-elected leaders needed to continue delivering to citizens after reaching office. Our work evolved to assist governments in being more accessible, accountable, effective, inclusive, and responsive to citizens. As new foreign policy challenges and democratic opportunities arose across the globe—in Asia, Latin America, Africa—we replicated this important work, learning from each experience and sharing approaches across countries and regions.

But it’s not just about what a government can supply, it’s also about equipping citizens with the skills needed to hold their government accountable and to advocate for change. Vital to this work is ensuring that all citizens—particularly traditionally marginalized people—have the skills needed to have a voice in the political process.



For example, we work with Afro-Colombians in Colombia, the deaf in Mongolia, and indigenous leaders in Guatemala and Mexico to help them each amplify their voice in civil society and the public arena.

Perhaps our strongest and best-known initiative in this regard is our groundbreaking Women's Democracy Network (WDN). While we are not a "women's organization" per se, it is our core belief that no democracy can be truly representative if it essentially fails to listen to half its people. No democracy can expect to succeed in meeting today's complex challenges unless it turns to all parts of its citizenry for the leadership it needs. WDN offers political training and mentorships, networking opportunities and workshops on leadership skills, all with an eye towards overcoming the biases and barriers women often face. WDN has 16 fully independent chapters around the world, touching over 17,000 women in more than 60 countries. Our latest initiative to empower marginalized communities is Generation Democracy—a youth-led, global movement of more than 400 member organizations. Generation Democracy aims to help young people move beyond broad idealism into active engagement in political life and policy advocacy.

So what does all of this look like in practical terms? Mr. Chairman, to help illustrate, I'd like to briefly describe the democratic journey of two important countries, Burma and Tunisia. In both cases, it seemed for many years as though democracy would never come. But thanks to the courageous advocacy of everyday citizens and, yes, the support of IRI, NDI and others, tremendous strides have been made.

#### BURMA: FROM MILITARY DICTATORSHIP TO HOPEFUL DEMOCRACY

Burma is an ethnically diverse, culturally rich country with nearly unlimited economic potential. For the last five decades, however, its story has also been a tragic one as a brutal military dictatorship held absolute power. Dissidents were frequently interrogated, tortured and imprisoned for "transgressions" as simple as gathering in a group of more than five people. We began working there 25 years ago, during a period when government crackdowns were commonplace. Despite the regime's brutality, it was still clear that citizens were holding onto their dreams of freedom and their quest for a voice in their own future.

In those difficult years, IRI, along with NDI and NED, worked from outside Burma's border in Thailand, supporting opposition political parties—including Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD). We assisted pro-democracy activists with messaging, strategic communications, and operational capacity building so that their work could be more focused and effective. We also trained activists in the nuts-and-bolts of democratic politics through political party development, advocacy and legal awareness workshops, and technical skills-building to provide activists with the necessary tools to connect with the international community. It's fair to say that for two decades, we were quite literally a lifeline to the democracy movement.

In 2013, pressure from both courageous democratic voices inside the country and the international community led to conditions improving enough for IRI to open a formal office inside Burma itself. Since then, with the knowledge of the national government, IRI has provided direct assistance to support Burma's nascent democracy. We have engaged more than 200,000 people from 340 organizations, from political parties to local civil society organizations. Leading up to the 2015 elections, we trained political party leaders in all 14 states and regions. Civic and voter education activities carried out by our local partners helped prepare 164,000 citizens to vote in those elections. With the help of IRI and others, the 2015 elections were largely peaceful and, under the watchful eyes of domestic and international observers, carried out in a manner most described as "credible and competitive." IRI's work left a lasting impact. Twenty percent of all the elected national, state, and regional parliamentarians serving today and 10 percent of all of the women candidates who ran in 2015 were trained by IRI.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, one credible election does not make a vibrant democracy. While the country has made remarkable strides in recent years, the civilian-led government still faces serious challenges, from a decrepit infrastructure and failing education system to disturbing ethnic and religious violence. On the democracy front, we continue to implement United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded programs to support to political parties, civil society organizations, women leaders, and Members of Parliament through workshops, trainings, and targeted consultations. Democracy is still fragile and governing institutions are still underdeveloped. In short, the country's new democratic leaders need our continued help.

Several months ago, one of our staff members, who was born and raised in Burma and was a prominent activist in Burma's early democratic movement, returned to

his home country 40 years after his first arrest for his pro-democracy activities. He had endured a month of interrogation, torture and solitary confinement. After his release, he told his interrogators, “You cannot destroy my heart—my mind is separate. You can beat me—any part of my body, but you cannot touch my heart.” When he told us he wanted to go home after 16 years with us in the U.S., he said “I want to give my final days to my people.”

#### TUNISIA: DEMOCRACY IN A “DIFFICULT NEIGHBORHOOD”

Tunisia is one of the most promising democratic stories of recent times—an example of democracy taking root in a “difficult neighborhood.” Despite extremist pressures from outside forces, Tunisia has held successive credible elections, solved problems through compromise, and consistently demonstrated a strong desire to be an ally to the United States. While the country’s leaders would be the first to say that their democracy is still fragile, they also take great pride in the progress they’ve made on a journey along which many others in the region have stumbled. A stable, democratic and prosperous Tunisia could serve as an example to the rest of the region of how to build a society that is less vulnerable to extremism.

Prior to 2011, Tunisia was an unsettling place. Our staff traveled there several times in the early 2000s and were accustomed to being followed from meeting to meeting by government security. The Ben Ali regime, consisting of his Democratic Constitutional Rally party, the Ministry of Interior and its associated security organs, controlled nearly every facet of public life. Fear of persecution meant that discussions in cafes and restaurants occurred in hushed voices, if they occurred at all.

That all changed in 2011 with the youth-lead revolution that chased Ben Ali from power. Following the demise of Ben Ali’s tyrannical reign, IRI quickly responded by mobilizing an in-country presence and operation. Since then, we have conducted hundreds of training workshops to develop political parties. We have deployed international election observation missions for each national election. We have taught Tunisian civil society how to open and sustain channels of communication between government and citizens—particularly those historically marginalized groups, including youth, women and citizens in the interior. We have helped government officials develop policies and legislation that respond to citizen priorities. Finally, we have assisted Tunisia’s national government ministries develop improved internal coordination and communications mechanisms, working across multiple ministries to organize initiatives such as the National Youth Congress.

It’s hard not to be impressed by how Tunisians have put the tools and training we have provided to work. More than 20 Tunisian national ministries are now participating in the inter-ministerial working group mechanism established with IRI’s help. We are seeing signs of a multi-party political system that appreciates the importance of public opinion research. The National Youth Congress is well on its way to producing a citizen-developed comprehensive national strategy to support youth. We have strengthened Tunisian civil society by networking more than 60 organizations into a national initiative that promotes government accountability.

Make no mistake: much work remains to be done in Tunisia. Public trust in government institutions is low. While corruption has only recently become a policy priority, it has been a festering problem ever since the 2011 revolution. The country is wrestling with the challenges of decentralization and devolution of power, and still lacks a clear vision of what responsibilities local elected officials will or should have. As with Burma, it is crucial that the U.S.—and organizations like IRI and NDI—remain engaged. Their path towards a vibrant democracy still has twists and bumps, and we should continue to walk side by side on that journey.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

In his famous Westminster address, President Reagan told us all that “democracy is not a fragile flower; still it needs cultivating.” Some of the most notable successes in recent years—Tunisia, The Gambia, Burma, Ukraine and others—offer proof of the difference that U.S.-supported “cultivating” can make.

For the reasons I stated earlier—both values-based and strategic—advancing democracy and liberty should be reinforced as a priority in American foreign policy. That means such issues should not be relegated to side meetings when the President sees world leaders, but instead should be a topic (if one of many) at the “main event.” Furthermore, as President Reagan often did, President Trump should reach out to civil society leaders to both learn about the challenges they face and to demonstrate solidarity.

Finally, within our country’s foreign assistance framework, I would encourage the administration to ensure that our tools for supporting democracy and liberty remain strong. In the long run, our nation’s investments in global health, nutrition and in-

frastructure around the world are unlikely to succeed if the governments with whom we partner lack strong, citizen-centered institutions.

America's most effective foreign policy is one that taps into all the sources of our strength and mobilizes all our tools of leadership. Military might is irreplaceable; economic vitality makes so much possible. But our core national values—democracy and human liberty—and our willingness to foster and encourage them in others, are a critical tool in shaping an often turbulent world. We need to ensure that this tool is as sharp as ever during the challenging times we all see.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Ambassador.

Mr. Wollack.

**STATEMENT OF KENNETH WOLLACK, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL  
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. WOLLACK. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, thank you for inviting NDI to present our views on these important issues.

The notion that there should be a dichotomy between our moral preferences and our strategic interests is really 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 in 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—

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Wollack, is your microphone on just for purposes of our transcripts? Try it now.

Mr. WOLLACK. They generate refugee flows across borders. They are places where terrorists are harbored and illegal drugs are produced.

As Tom Carothers of the Carnegie Endowment points out, “In most of the dozens of countries where the United States is employing diplomatic, economic, and assistance measures to support potential or struggling democratic transitions—from Cambodia, Indonesia, and Mongolia to El Salvador, Kenya, Nigeria, and Venezuela—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 or massive refugee flows.”

We have learned that in this interconnected world what happens for good or for evil within the borders of nations has global impact. Contrary to that famous tagline in tourism marketing, what happens, let us say, in Kyiv or Cairo does not stay there.

We have experienced a decade of democratic recession, with a decline of political rights globally. Authoritarian regimes 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. These regimes are also using new tools to disrupt elections and democratic systems beyond their borders. At the same time, new fragile democracies are struggling to meet rising expectations, and even established democracies have been beset by growing citizen discontent with the performance of their democratic institutions.

Yet there is another more positive 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 is the best system. Nascent African democracies of Ghana, Cote 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 Korean, and Mexico—have continued to make strides in both consolidating their democracies and maintaining steady economic growth. And 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 intergovernmental organizations, as recently occurred in The Gambia.

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. Ukraine undoubtedly continues to face grave challenges, including economic dislocation and corruption, not 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. According to NDI's research, 86 percent of Ukrainians believe it is important or very important that their country is democratic. This is truth whether respondents live in the east or the west and regardless of political affiliations. Ukrainians feel strongly that they will not give up their right to determine their own future even if doing so would bring peace.

And with outside encouragement and support, Ukrainians can point to concrete achievements. These include the emergence of new political parties that have national reach and are focused on citizens they represent rather than the oligarchs who would fund them. Brought together by NDI in partnership with European institutions, party factions of the Parliament are overcoming deep fragmentation to agree on procedures that will make it easier to build consensus around future reforms.

At the local level, citizens are participating in decision-making in large numbers. In our programs alone, more than 45,000 citizens have engaged directly in the national reform process and more than 1.3 million have been reached by television. These are the kinds of bottom-up changes that, given time and continued support, can put down deep democratic roots.

In the midst of massive humanitarian crisis and refugee flight in Syria, another story of democratic resilience is unfolding. In liberated territories across Syria, citizen groups are prioritizing community needs and local administrative councils are responding by providing critical services. These democratic subcultures can become a model for the country's future once the conflict subsides. More than two dozen NDI governance advisors are working each day in 34 of these locations helping to advise local groups and councils and bringing them together to solve problems. Courageously and successfully, these groups and councils have challenged extremists

who 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 Al-Assad and the jihadists, 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 stepped 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.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wollack follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KENNETH WOLLACK

Chairman Rubio, Ranking member Menendez and members of the Subcommittee, 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 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. The cost for the United States in this effort has been relatively inexpensive. Foreign assistance is only about 1 percent of the total U.S. budget; and democracy assistance represents just 4 percent of our foreign aid.

As Tom Carothers of the Carnegie Endowment points out, “In most of the dozens of countries where the United States is employing diplomatic, economic, and assistance measures to support potential or struggling democratic transitions—from Cambodia, Indonesia, and Mongolia to El Salvador, Kenya, Nigeria, and Venezuela—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.”

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, such as Tunisia, or are engaged in either political reforms or liberalization—as is the case in Morocco, Jor-

dan, Lebanon and Algeria—are better able to address economic challenges, and threats from extremist ideologies and groups. As President Kennedy once 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. 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 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 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.

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. These misinformation campaigns use 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 disrupts 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.

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. 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. In Africa, for example, only three heads of state between 1960 and 1990 relinquished power voluntarily or after losing an election; since 1990, that figure stands at more than 40. 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 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 DDoD attacks.

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, intergovernmental organizations, other nongovernmental groups, along with individual practitioners. 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.

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 kids 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.

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 nondemocratic 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.

My colleague, Mark Green, at the International Republican Institute will speak on the progress being made in the transition process in Burma/Myanmar and Tuni-



sia. I would like to point to democracy support efforts in two other 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 2 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 6 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.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you all for being here, and I will begin with a broad question that I get all the time and I would love to give you all the opportunity to address it. And here is how it goes when I talk about democracy. They will say to me, while these are bad people—Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Qaddafi in Libya and the like—but in the end they were—they killed terrorists and so were we not better off just having these autocrats stay in power in these countries than the vacuum and the chaos that we now see in Syria and in Iraq and in Libya and in other places, in essence, the argument that there are places in the world that can never be democratic for whatever reasons they point to, cultural or otherwise. Why would we not prefer in those parts of the world to have stability? Is that not in the national interest of the United States to have strong autocratic leaders who can control these elements in those societies that could be radicals and the like? Are we—is that not more important than promoting democracy, particularly in nations who do not have a tradition of Western democratic values?

And I would ask whoever wants to go first, but that is one of the fundamental challenges I get every time that I talk about promoting democracy.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Mr. Chairman, if I can maybe first take a crack at that. I think we have to understand that authoritarian regimes are the main source of instability in the world today. They are the ones who are responsible for kleptocracy, for corruption, for refugees. They acquire weapons of mass destruction against international treaties. Democracies do not go to war against each other, and the United States—it is never—its opponents are not democracies. Its opponents are antidemocratic countries.

And there are other—authoritarianism is the main source also of state failure, and they also—the people, sometimes even when they are removed, they try to disrupt democratic transitions and make it very, very difficult for transitions to succeed.

So I think that the idea that we can achieve stability through somehow partnering with authoritarians is a very dangerous hope, especially because they also—the authoritarian regimes, in repressing civil society and not giving people a voice, they really do leave extremist movements as the only alternative. People we support in these societies are struggling and they are struggling against great odds, but it is often that these autocratic governments prefer to have extremist oppositions because they think it legitimizes them in the same way that you are hearing this argument, that they are the ones that can defeat the terrorists.

I think it is a very dangerous solution. I think we have learned in the past that we cannot rely upon these such regimes for stability. And even though democracy is long and hard and difficult, if we can build civil societies, strong civil societies in these coun-

tries even when these countries are authoritarian, they will have a much better chance of a stable democratic transition when that time comes, as it inevitably will because these regimes will not be able to modernize, they cannot reform, and ultimately, they will fail.

Ambassador GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to associate myself with Carl's remarks. I think he has actually captured it very well.

I guess what I would add to it, as we talked earlier, President Reagan gave this speech at Westminster that essentially launched all of us. And even in those days, so back in the early '80s, there were some who argued that parts of the world could not handle democracy, somehow they did not culturally have the ability to have democracy and protection of human rights. And he very eloquently called that cultural condescension or worse. And I agree.

When we talk about some of these countries, those who say that they somehow should not have democracy, it is demeaning. We should actually ask the people involved and what it is that they want, their own desires, their own aspirations. So much of this comes through courageous everyday citizens in the face of this brutality and repression that stand up under great peril for the cause of democracy.

Secondly, something that Carl said I think is very, very important and that is this myth of stability. Stability is, in these cases, often but a veneer because you get pent-up despair raging, and you do leave these citizens oftentimes very little choice but to resort to some of the extremism that we all point to as being so very, very dangerous. And you look at the inherent damage that these countries do in the region, whether it is giving rise to extremist movements, whether it is causing flows of refugees that overwhelm democratic systems around them. There is not no cost to the existence of these regimes.

Mr. WOLLACK. Mr. Chairman, I would just add a couple points. These regimes, so-called stable regimes, seem stable until they are unstable. And since they have not created any institutions, they have not created a social contract with the people, once they fall, they leave in their wake instability and conflict.

It is interesting in the Middle East region, if you look at those regimes that are stable and enjoy a degree of legitimacy that are confronting many of the challenges that exist in the region, those regimes that are either going through a democratic transition in the case of Tunisia or engaged in reform or liberalization, which is true in Jordan and Morocco, Lebanon, perhaps to a lesser degree but still liberalization in Algeria, these are the regimes that are better able to confront extremism, better able to engage citizens in the political process with all the challenges that they are faced. So if you look at the region those are the places that are better able to handle the refugees, better able to handle conflict, better able to handle the expectations of citizens.

And the answer is reform. The answer is liberalization. The answer is not autocracy and repressive regimes and a continuation of regimes that do not have a social contract with the people.

Senator RUBIO. And I just want one more quick question because—Senator Kaine has now arrived and the ranking member

has questions. So, this is also broad. In order for us as a nation to be credible advocates and champions for democracy and freedom and liberty, we have to—it begins with our own example here at home. In essence, if we were a nation that did not have those principles and had not lived them for over two centuries, it would be difficult for us to be the champions of that abroad.

And my perspective on it is that a lot of times in the coverage of our—in—and I obviously want your perception on it, but broader than that, and sometimes in the coverage of our modern political process, people talk about several things that are going on. Obviously, we had a very divisive election cycle. The last 4 weeks have been vibrant in the political debate in this country. And I see, despite all of that, institutions that are working. I see a United States Senate where the minority party has exercised its rights under the rules to force the Senate to take all the time available to it for these debates on these issues. I have seen the media continue to report as they see fit in a free society, irrespective of political pressure, criticism on both sides of the equation. I see a court system that stepped forward and, despite whether you agree with the decision or not, exercised its role.

I see two people on this panel that—one who ran for Vice President, one ran for President and neither one of us won. Senator Menendez was too wise to undertake such an endeavor, but the—neither one of us went to jail. Both of us are sitting here today.

Is not some of this—despite all this coverage out there about the intensity of our political debate in this country, is not this something we should celebrate in some ways in comparison to what happens in other parts of the world where you do not see these things happening for one simple reason, and that is the other—the people who are not in power in those countries, they do not get to protest, they do not get to come back to the Senate and work, they do not get to slow a debate up, they do not get to vote on the Senate floor, they do not get to go in the press and criticize whoever they want. They get to go to jail, they get poisoned, they die, they go into exile. Is not this something that in the end should be looked at as a strength and not a weakness?

Mr. WOLLACK. I think, Mr. Chairman, that former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban once said that democracy eventually does the right thing but only after exhausting all the alternatives. But the point is that democracies have a self-correcting mechanism because of checks and balances, because of citizen engagement, because of different branches of government.

I would only say that, overseas, I think there is a deep recognition of the institutions that exist in this country. We have problems, we have challenges like everybody else, but in many of the countries where we are operating there are those who would say we wish we only had the problems that you have and we wish we only had the challenges that you have.

So—but we all recognize that there is today an international solidarity network among small-D democrats around the world. We have a responsibility to each other to help each other, and they recognize, however, that ultimately, systems like this, with all their flaws and all their difficulties, is better than all the alternatives.

Ambassador GREEN. Mr. Chairman, I served as Ambassador to Tanzania, and I was there on the election night, the McCain/Obama election, and we had TVs in many parts of the country so that people could watch. They could watch the spectacle of the peaceful transfer of power. And we made sure that they all saw Senator McCain's concession speech, which was beautiful, eloquent, very special, and something that we thought was important for our African audiences to see the fact that there were not tanks rolling in the streets. And it was something that made an important difference.

Secondly, when we do go around and talk about democracy in other countries, I think it is also important that we begin with humility. And so when I talk about democracy in other countries I say, look, I am not saying that we have all the answers. I am saying maybe we have made all the mistakes, and maybe you as a friend of our country do not have to make the same mistakes that we have made throughout our history. We are on a journey just like you. Perhaps we are a little further ahead, but we are still on the journey and we have not arrived.

Mr. GERSHMAN. Let me say this, Mr. Chairman, you know, we are living in a different period right now. This is not the Cold War anymore; it is a much more complex world. You yourself referred to that at the beginning. It is hard for people to understand what the threats are that we face. In addition, we live in an era now of social media, which is having a very, very interesting but disruptive effect. And we know also that foreign powers like Russia, as I said in my testimony, are using social media in their own way with fake news and fake platforms, controls to divide, to demoralize, even to destabilize. So we face these new conditions.

And then you have a further problems of political polarization, of dysfunction, and this is reflected in polling data, which we published in our Journal of Democracy, which showed decline in support for democracy, especially among young people. Their parents are more supportive of democracy than they are, and their grandparents are even more supportive. So there is no memory of the threats that democracy faced in the 20th century. And you have these problems that are then exacerbated.

And democracy is a messy process. It takes time to get things done. Social media has conditioned people to want very instant solutions to problems, so there is kind of a demoralization that some people have. And I think it is one of the greatest challenges that we face is to how to really revive democratic conviction. It is not going to be easy. And it is not really our mission because the Congress has given us an international mission.

But I believe—and I have said this in many talks that I give in the United States—that we need to connect young Americans with activists abroad who are giving their lives for freedom. They need to know who these people are. They need to partner with them. They need to work with them. And we have a large, large education job to do.

And so I agree with you. Yes, there is a lot of success that we can point to. We have to make it better, we have to solve our problems, and then we have to educate people more about the difference between the kind of messy pluralist democracy you are

talking about and the corrupt and oppressive dangers of an authoritarian system.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are some thought-provoking questions.

I will just say to you that I did not run for President because I am not as young or handsome as you or as witty and charming as Senator Kaine.

[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. So I am fulfilling my role here in the Senate—

Senator KAINE. You just put up two low hurdles.

[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. I do not know about that. You see what I mean?

[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. On a serious note, you know, I was listening, Ken, to your testimony, as well as all of yours, and you said something that, you know, was galvanizing for me a moment, that a decade, a decade of democratic recession, what do you attribute that to?

Mr. WOLLACK. Well, I—

Senator MENENDEZ. If you put your microphone on so that the recorder here can have it.

Mr. WOLLACK. Yes, I think that there are two—maybe more than two but I will point to two sort of phenomenon. The first is that over the past, I think, decade there has been what is called authoritarian learning. Autocrats used to be isolated from each other, isolated from their people. And there has been a learning curve for these autocrats, much more sophisticated. Laws that are passed in one country to curtail independent activism, let alone opposition activity, a law will suddenly appear in another country 3 weeks later. There is now a network of autocrats who are learning from each other and now are trying to actively seek to curtail the spread of democracy in other countries. So that is one.

Second, I think that new fragile democracies inherit the legacies of their nondemocratic predecessors: poverty, disease, inaction, lack of political participation, apathy. And when the new democratic institutions do not deliver, meet the expectations of their citizens, one of two things happen. Either they go to the streets, which is not where public policy issues should be addressed, or they will vote for a populist nondemocratic leader who will turn against civil society and the opposition.

So that is why not only do I think it is important for us to support small-D democrats in nondemocratic environments but why we have to support new democracies to help them sustain—build and sustain democratic institutions.

Bronislaw Geremek, the former foreign minister of Poland, said democracy does not necessarily go from triumph to triumph. And we have learned that democratic process—progress is not linear. And so it requires, I think, sustained engagement by the international community broadly and the United States in particular.

Senator MENENDEZ. In that regard, let me ask you, you know, as we will face budgetary issues here and the new administration and

how they think about the appropriate use of monies for foreign diplomacy, foreign aid, and democracy and human rights development, I want to establish here for us for the record part of—as I understand your challenges in communicating your successes because, you know, there is a lot of effort to be metric-driven. Not all this is so easily metric-driven certainly in the short term. But nonetheless is that your programs rely on a certain amount of discretion. And can you share with the committee in a way that does not undermine that but nonetheless what makes your programs effective? Why should the United States taxpayer be ultimately supporting your initiatives?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Mr. Chairman, I think the basic feature of what it is that we do is this is not top-down. This is bottom-up. I mean, what has to be recognized is that there are people around the world who share our values. They may not be at this moment a majority in their countries, but they are fighting for our values. And what NED does is demand-driven. It is bottom-up. It is not we are going in there and we are going to engage in social engineering or top-down imposition of democracy. And I think that makes it extremely both effective and cost-effective in terms of the way we do our work.

And there is a spirit about it—and then we do other things in addition to try and provide them with financial help or training. We link them together. They learn from each other. We engage in actions of international solidarity when people are in prison, we—the event we had for Lilian Tintori and the others who are imprisoned in Venezuela, and we do that every year.

We have to think of new ways to provide them with support, and those are not expensive. And I think it is the spirit of the institution that really explains its success and the fact that we connect with people on the ground.

Ambassador GREEN. If I could add to that, you are correct; it is difficult to measure sometimes the metrics of progress and success, but there are shining success stories, as we mentioned each of us in our opening remarks, in places like Tunisia and Burma, The Gambia, Nigeria last year. So there are certainly success stories worth holding onto.

But I would also suggest this country is wonderfully generous in terms of its investments overseas dedicated to lifting lives and building communities. Global Health, PEPFAR, these are tremendous programs. In the long run it is hard for me to see any of those investments being truly sustainable unless you have in those countries where the investments are made citizen-centered, citizen-responsive institutions with the capacity to continue the mind to make these sustainable. So I think it is also a crucial part of making sure that our other investments are well spent and are sustainable and have a lasting impact. So I think when we fail to address issues of governance and political systems, I think we put our other investments at risk quite frankly.

Senator MENENDEZ. It seems to me that places in the world without hope for political participation, economic opportunity, or even the ability to provide basic safety for their citizens ultimately creates the intersection between the citizen security, refugee migration, democracy, and/or the lack of democracy and the rule of law,

which is incredibly important to U.S. companies that ultimately want to go abroad and make investments. And when they do, they want a rule of law or a system that ultimately will honor their intellectual property rights, that will honor their contracts, that at least they will have a level playing field. So there is a very tangible element to this as well.

Let me ask you finally two separate things. One is when the United States established relations with Burma, the Obama administration laid out a set of metrics. It basically said you want to have a better standing with the United States, you want to have a relationship with the United States, you have to release Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the opposition. You have to hold legislative elections. You have to permit the U.N. special rapporteur on human rights to come in, among other things. And all of those things eventually developed themselves to be a reality.

I think of Cuba or I think of Malaysia, and should we not be looking for the—is that not a template for—we should be looking for from these countries?

Mr. GERSHMAN. I agree completely, and frankly—this is my own personal view; I do not, you know, speak for policy—but we have not done that with Cuba with the opening—I mean, the real critical thing I think more important than the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States is the normalization of relations between the Cuban Government and the Cuban people. And that has not been done. And we had a lot of leverage in that situation. I do not think it was adequately used.

We are not using that leverage today in the Balkan region. I have just written something about that. I think it is a bomb that is about to explode, and the reason is because we have prioritized stability over democratic reform. And it is the absence of democratic reform which is giving Russia all the opportunities to exploit the divisions in the Balkans between the Serbs and Croatians and the Albanians and so forth. But it is becoming—this was the dominant issue in the '90s. It could come back again. And our analysis is it is because the international community has prioritized just stability and not reform, and so it is an explosion waiting to happen.

So, yes, I think we have to use the leverage that we have. We do not always have that leverage, but we have to use the leverage that we have consistently to try to encourage openings in situations.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and fascinating testimony and questions.

One of you used the phrase a few minutes ago in response to Senator Rubio small-D democracy solidarity network, that there is either such a thing or needs to be such a thing. And I have also been struck with—I do not know, is it a lack of self-confidence or something in the democracies of betraying the virtues of the model, the authoritarians are nothing if not self-confident. They are feeling very, very good right now. And they are in all different parts of the globe. And I had not thought about this learning curve issue



and the sharing of best authoritarian practice, but I guess that is part of what is going on.

I mean, what is the status of any democracy solidarity network, you know? And on this committee and on the Armed Services Committee we deal with military alliances like NATO, but that puts the military issue in a prime position, which means the democracy promotion is always secondary. In fact, it is kind of looked at with suspicion if you lead with military first.

So talk to me about what network there is or what network should there be around the world that would link the disparate democracies, the mature, the nascent, which are now in all parts of the globe. That is great, but what more could we do so that that network would be stronger?

Mr. GERSHMAN. Mr. Chairman, there are a lot of networks, and I am sure Ken and Mark will talk about some of them, but there is an intergovernmental network, which is called the Community of Democracies. It so happens that the U.S. now has the presidency of this. It is a network that was created in 2000 by Madeleine Albright and Bronislaw Geremek of Poland. They meet biannually at the ministerial level, and they are supposed to meet in the United States in September. The current administration has actually inherited the U.S. presidency of the Community of Democracies from the previous administration.

And we have had meetings to prepare for the creation when that ministerial meeting takes place of a new global association associated with the community of parliamentarians where they would organize multi-partisan democracy caucuses in their respective parliaments and they would meet within the parliamentary network to be an instrument for sharing democratic practices and also for global solidarity.

At the nongovernmental level, the NED has created something called the World Movement for Democracy. We had the founding assembly of the World Movement for Democracy in India in February of 1999. We wanted to do it in a non-Western country to really make the point that democracy is not a Western value but it is a universal value. At that meeting the great philosopher Amartya Sen gave one of the most important statements on democracy, democracy as a universal idea at that meeting.

And the World Movement continues to be active. It has solidarity networks in different regions. I have just learned that the youth network of the World Movement for Democracy in Latin America, headed by Rosa Maria Paya, is going to be giving its Paya award to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States in Cuba so the Secretary General is going to be visiting. These are how these networks operate. There are networks in Asia, which are engaged on a regional basis but then they meet globally, and the next assembly of the World Movement will be in Senegal in spring of 2018.

Ambassador GREEN. Just very briefly to add to that, something that I thought you were going to touch upon, which I think is important and we have not really gotten to, when the question was asked about why is it that democracy is perceived to be in decline, I think one of the factors is that authoritarians—first off, they do feel self-confident, but they also have tools at their disposal. And

disinformation and propaganda on an expansionist level that we have not seen for many, many years I think is pushing back. And I do think it is something that we in the community of democracies—I am not talking about the formal organization but the community—really have to work hard to push back against because I think it is causing tremendous erosion of confidence in democracy in a number of places in the world, and I think it is a significant problem and challenge for us.

Mr. WOLLACK. I will just add to that, Senator Kaine, I think when we—the endowment and our institutes began 30-some years ago, there were few networks around the world and this was an American enterprise for IRI and NDI. We were in a sense patterned after the Germany party foundations, which played such an important role in Spain and Portugal during the 1970s. But today, there has been a sea change in terms of networks. You have had traditionally the international networks of political parties—social democratic, liberal, Christian democratic—that represent 450 parties in 150 countries. You have new initiatives like the open government partnership that now includes 70 countries and about 50 parliaments and 180 civic organizations around the world. You have a global network of 4 million domestic election monitors around the world that help each other. You have intergovernmental organizations now that have adopted democratic charters, the most recently being the African Union, which is one of the reasons why there was regional intervention in the case of The Gambia.

So these networks now exist. This is no longer an American enterprise. This is really an international enterprise. And I think, given the challenges that we have all talked about, what it—it is a call to action to reinvigorate many of these networks to meet some of the challenges that we are facing today.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much.

Senator RUBIO. Do we have any further questions from our members?

We want to thank all of you for being here today, for your statements, for meeting with me earlier in the week, for answering our questions.

We want to move on to our second panel, but we are grateful for the work that you are doing and we thank you again for your time. And you may receive written questions from members on the panel, and I would encourage you to answer those so they can become part of our record.

We will now seat the second panel.

Senator RUBIO. I want to thank the panelists for all being here. We are going to start with Mr. Maldonado Machado. I was reminded that all three of the Senators here today speak Spanish so you might not even need a translator, but for purposes of the public record, we are going to have that translated. And we thank you for you being here.

Make sure that the microphone is on for—

Senator RUBIO. [Speaking foreign language.] Can someone—the microphone?

**STATEMENT OF DANILO “EL SEXTO” MALDONADO MACHADO,  
CUBAN ARTIST AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST**

Mr. MACHADO. Thank you, Marco. Thank you, Bob. Sorry for do not speak English. Thank you, everybody.

[The following statement was delivered through an interpreter.]

Mr. MACHADO. Thank you for the opportunity to amplify my voice to denounce the situation of human rights violations of where I come from, Cuba. I am 33 years old and I have already served four sentences for the only reason that I have criticized the Cuban dictatorship: through my art.

In Cuba, freedom of speech by artists is prohibited by Article 39 of the Constitution. According to this, “Artistic creation is free, provided that its contents is not contrary to the revolution.” This means that the work of artists such as myself and my colleagues Gorki Aguila and Tania Bruguera, which is critical of the dictator—dictatorial regime of the Castro brothers, is illegal in Cuba. For that reason, I served 2 years when I was 18, 1 year when I was 24, 10 months at age 31, and most recently, 2 months at the age of 33.

Now, I will refer to the last two occasions in which I was in prison. On Christmas Day 2014, as part of a performance, I attempted to release two little pigs on the streets of Havana, both painted in green, one with the name of Raul and the other with the name of Fidel. I called that performance “Animal Farm in memoriam in honor of Gorge Orwell.” This cost me 10 months in prison. During that time, I was tortured physically and psychologically by the dictatorship to the point that I declared myself on hunger strike and even considered the possibility of letting myself die in prison as a result.

After 10 months and without previous warning, I was released and driven to my house from prison. Until today, I have not been served any notice of pending criminal charges, nor have I been summoned for any type of trial. At that time I was released following my protests and my hunger strike in prison, and constant denunciations by my mother, my sister, my grandmother, friends, and international institutions such as the Human Rights Foundation, the Cuban American National Foundation, Amnesty International, et cetera.

These same friends and others came together again this last time I was in prison. I was in a maximum-security prison in Havana for the simple crime of not having expressed any sadness over the death of dictator Fidel Castro. On the night of December 26, when his death was announced—Fidel Castro’s death was announced, I was awakened by calls from friends and my sister. I dressed quickly, and when I left my house, I could surely perceive fear as the streets became emptier and more silent.

So that day, I began to think over how many atrocities and how many crimes against humanity had been committed in more than 56 years by brothers Fidel and Raul Castro. So I went out to the streets to shout, “Take the streets, the murderer died, the mare died.” I walked about a mile, took transportation to the other side of the city, and walked for a mile for a while celebrating until my

video that went viral on social media was transmitted live as the only celebratory event in the city of Havana and on the island.

In the video, by assuming my identity as a free person in a country controlled by a totalitarian dictatorship, I took the risky decision of graffitiing the wall of the hotel where Fidel Castro's troops were quartered for the first time in Havana almost 60 years ago, armed and without a democratic election. I did that following the example of the great Vaclav Havel, the artist and former President of the Czech Republic, who advised all those who, like him, had to live under communist totalitarianism, to live in truth, to stop pretending that the reality imposed by the regime by force is genuine. Upon the death of Fidel Castro, this notion would have meant that I should feel sad for the death of the dictator, as was pretended by thousands of people for fear of repression on that day.

That day, after walking through the city, I returned home. I was tired and went to bed when I was awakened by a noise at my door that made me worry. Then, I saw a patrol car with a policeman and two other men in plain clothing, when I saw the owner of the house handing them the key to my door. In the process I was able to call my fiancée, Alexandra Martinez, and I said, "Call everyone; they are taking me prisoner." The two of them threw themselves at me without even identifying themselves verbally, and I received only insults and blows from these characters because, according to them, I had disrespected Fidel Castro.

And so I was taken to the police unit of La Lisa as they continued to hit me even after I got off, which did not stop my cries of "Murderers, yes the mare died, and good thing." When in the unit, I asked: Do you know me? Have I done something to you? If I have not committed any crime, why do you beat me for my way of thinking? To which they only claimed, "The laws support us."

This time the cost was 55 days in prison. At this time, I once again suffered physical and psychological torture, preventing me from seeing my family and my fiancée. I was transferred to six consecutive detention centers, including the high-security prison Combinado del Este. Also at this time I was deprived of the right to be represented by a lawyer since my pro bono international attorney, Kimberly Motley, who had tried to visit me in Havana, was arrested and immediately deported from Cuba.

Combinado del Este is a horrendous high-security prison where only the most dangerous prisoners are sent. The roofs were rife with leaks, the 6 by 4 square meter cells were overcrowded for 36 people and bunkbeds for three were arranged in order to avoid the leaks. During the day, the lights were off and although it was daytime, the sunlight did not penetrate the bars. On one occasion my jailers tried to terrorize me by threatening that at any time they could take me to the yard to execute me by firing squad. I was very worried because—by this because I knew that could easily happen given the record of the hundreds if not thousands of political prisoners they have executed by the dictatorship.

I had to undergo all this abuse and humiliation for not shedding tears and for graffitiing "He's gone" when an assassin died, one who, with his brother, the current president of Cuba Raul Castro, never allowed a different party than the one that he created at gunpoint.

The Castro brothers and their family own all the newspapers, radio, TV, and the only telephone company in Cuba, which is the only one allowed to supply internet. These men have remained in power during almost 60 years not only giving orders to massacre Cubans such as those aboard the tugboat *Trece de Marzo* but also various attempts against Oswaldo Paya Sardinias' life and his eventual murder, as well as that of Laura Pollan. The Castros not only divided all Cubans but also made exiles of them, many of whom are in this country.

The Castros contributed high numbers of mercenaries and arms to the wars of Angola, Ethiopia, under the command of the Soviet Army, the FARC in Colombia, and guerrillas in Venezuela in the '60s and in last two decades have support the dictatorial Chavista regime, which today has plunged their people into hunger and oppression.

I want to close my presentation requesting two things to the people and the Government of the United States. First, we request solidarity for the cause of democracy in Cuba given that we have suffered a regime that does not allow democratic elections for almost 60 years. The world should give us solidarity and should ask Raul Castro for a plebiscite and democratic elections in Cuba. And secondly, I ask the people and Government of the United States to pressure Raul Castro's regime to release the thousands of political prisoners existing in my country.

Due to the totalitarian system we Cubans live under, at least 85 percent of the present prison population would be considered innocent in any democratic country and would have never been sent to prison. We Cubans on the island are hostage of the Castro brothers' regime and the life of all Cubans, particularly artists, opponents, and dissidents, are under permanent danger at the hands of the repressive dictatorship. Once again, we need the solidarity of the United States and the support of all people in the world.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Machado follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANILO "EL SEXTO" MALDONADO MACHADO

Thank you for the opportunity to amplify my voice to denounce the situation of human rights violations of where I come from, Cuba. I am 33 years old and have already served four sentences for the only reason that I have criticized the Cuban dictatorship through my art.

In Cuba, freedom of speech by artists is prohibited by Article 39 of the Constitution. According to this, "artistic creation is free provided that its contents is not contrary to the Revolution."

This means that the work of artists such as myself and my colleagues Gorki Águila and Tania Bruguera, which is critical of the dictatory regime of the Castro brothers, is illegal in Cuba.

For that reason I served 2 years when I was 18; 1 year when I was 24; 10 months at age 31 and most recently 2 months at the age of 33.

Now I'll refer to the last two occasions in which I was in prison. On Christmas Day 2014, as part of a performance, I attempted to release two little pigs on the streets of Havana, both painted in green, one with the name of Raul and the other with the name of Fidel. I called that performance "Animal Farm in memoriam" in honor of Gorge Orwell.

This cost me 10 months in prison. During that time I was tortured physically and psychologically by the dictatorship to the point that I declared myself on a hunger strike and even considered the possibility of letting myself die in prison as a result.

After 10 months without previous warning, I was released and driven to my house from prison. Until today I have not been served any notice of pending criminal charges nor have I been summoned for any type of trial.

At that time I was released following my protests and my hunger strike in prison, and constant protests by my mother, my sister, my grandmother, friends, and international institutions such as the Human Rights Foundation, the Cuban American National Foundation, Amnesty International, etc . . .

These same friends and others came together again this last time I was in prison. I was in a maximum security prison in Havana for the simple crime of not having expressed any “sadness” over the death of dictator Fidel Castro.

On the night of December 26, when his death was announced, I was awakened by calls from friends and my sister.

I dressed quickly and when I left my house I could surely perceive fear as the streets became emptier and more silent.

That day I began to think over how many atrocities and how many crimes against humanity had been committed in more than 56 years by brothers Fidel and Raul Castro.

So I went out to the streets to shout “Take the streets, the murderer died, the mare died.” I walked about a mile, took transportation to the other side of the city, and walked for a while celebrating until my video, that went viral on social media, was transmitted live as the only celebratory event in the city of Havana, and on the island.

In the video, by assuming my identity as a free person in a country controlled by a totalitarian dictatorship, I took the risky decision of graffitiing the wall of the hotel where Fidel Castro’s troops were quartered for the first time in Havana almost 60 years ago, armed and a without democratic election.

I did that following the example of the great Vaclav Havel, the artist and former president of the Czech Republic, who advised all those who, like him, had to live under communist totalitarianism, to LIVE IN TRUTH. To stop pretending that the reality imposed by the regime by force is genuine. Upon the death of Fidel Castro, this notion would have meant that I should feel sad for the death of the dictator, as was pretended by thousands of people for fear of repression on that day.

That day, after walking through the city, I returned home. I was tired and went to bed when I was awakened by a noise at my door that made me worry. Then I saw a patrol car with a policeman and two other men in plain clothing, when I saw the owner of the house handing them the key to my door.

In the process I was able to call my fiancée, Alexandra Martinez, and I said, “Call everyone, they are taking me prisoner.” The two of them threw themselves at me without even identifying themselves verbally and I received only insults and blows from these characters, because according to them, I had disrespected Fidel Castro.

And so I was taken to the police unit of La Lisa as they continued to hit me even after I got off, which did not stop my cries of “Murderers, yes the mare died, and good thing.” When in the unit I asked: Do you know me? Have I done something to you? If I have not committed any crime, why do you beat me for my way of thinking? To which they only claimed “the laws support us.”

This time the cost was 55 days in prison. At this time, I once again suffered physical and psychological torture, preventing me from seeing my family and my fiancée. I was transferred to 6 consecutive detention centers, including the high security prison “Combinado del Este.”

Also at this time I was deprived of the right to be represented by a lawyer since my pro bono international attorney, Kimberly Motley, who had tried to visit me in Havana was arrested and immediately deported from Cuba.

Combinado del Este is a horrendous high security prison where only the most dangerous prisoners are sent. The roofs were rife with leaks, the 6 by 4 square meter cells were overcrowded for 36 people and bunk beds for 3, arranged in order to avoid the leaks. During the day the lights were off and although it was daytime the sunlight did not penetrate the bars.

On several occasions my jailers tried to terrorize me my threatening that at any time they could take me to the yard to execute me by firing squad.

I was very worried by this because I knew that could easily happen given the record of the hundreds if not thousands of political prisoners executed by the dictatorship.

I had to undergo all this abuse and humiliation for not shedding tears and for graffitiing “He’s Gone” when an assassin died, one who with his brother, the current president of Cuba, Raul Castro, never allowed a different party than the one he created at gun point.

The Castro brothers and their family own the three newspapers, radio, TV, the only telephone company in Cuba which is the only one allowed to supply internet.

These men have remained in power during almost 60 years not only giving order to massacre Cubans such as those aboard Tugboat 13 de Marzo but also various attempts against Oswaldo Paya Sardiñas’ life and his eventual murder, as well as

that of Laura Pollán. The Castros not only divided all Cubans, but also made exiles of them, many of whom are in this country.

These characters contributed high numbers of mercenaries and arms, to the wars of Angola, Ethiopia, under the command of the Russian Army, the FARC in Colombia, and guerrillas in Venezuela in the 60s and in last two decades have supported the dictatorial Chavista regime, which today have plunged their people into hunger and oppression.

I want to close my presentation requesting two things to the people and the government of the United States. First, we request solidarity for the cause of democracy in Cuba, given that we have suffered a regime that does not allow democratic elections for almost 60 years. The world should give us solidarity and should ask Raul Castro for a plebiscite and democratic elections in Cuba.

And secondly, I ask the people and the government of the United States, to pressure Raul Castro's regime to release the thousands of political prisoners existent in my country. Due to the totalitarian system we Cubans live under, at least 85 percent of the present prison population would be considered innocent in any democratic country and would have never been sent to prison.

All Cubans are hostage of the Castro brothers' regime and the life of all Cubans, particularly artists, opponents, and dissidents, are under permanent danger at the hands of the repressive dictatorship.

Once again we need the solidarity of the United States and the support of all people of the world.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Machado.  
Dr. Eldosari.

**STATEMENT OF DR. HALAH ELDOSARI, VISITING SCHOLAR  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST, WASHINGTON, DC**

Dr. ELDOSARI. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Rubio and Ranking Member Menendez—

Senator RUBIO. Can you turn on the microphone? I am sorry.

Dr. ELDOSARI. Sorry.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Dr. ELDOSARI. Thank you for the kind invitation. So my name is Dr. Halah Eldosari. I am a visiting scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, DC. My research and writing examines gender, health, and laws in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf States. My focus is on violence against women and advocacy for women's rights. My statement today aims to inform on the restrictions imposed on the citizens' ability to promote their rights in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy where political parties, unions, independent civil society organizations are prohibited by law. There is no penal code, and judges liberally rely on personal judgment to decide on cases based on the concept of "ta'azir," which is an Islamic law concept that allows an individual judge to decide on a suitable punishment at his own whim when no clear description of the act or the punishment is specified in Islamic scripture. It is not uncommon to find irrelevant historic Islamic incidents or quotations taken out of context to justify irrational punishments against the critics or activists.

For instance, in the case of Ala'a Brinji, he is an imprisoned Saudi journalist. His sentencing document lists some of those historical sayings to justify sentencing him for 7 years in prison, followed by an equal term of travel ban merely for tweets in which he called for religious freedom, revocation of blasphemy laws, support for other human rights defenders and support for women driving.

The unchecked authority of the King is enforced by law and the appointed religious clerics. In the last few years, several laws and regulations were issued to classify acts of promoting human rights, such as questioning public policies or religious norms, as acts of terror or as cybercrimes.

In the last few years, I came across numerous statements filed by the prosecutors against peaceful critics, activists, and writers which described their human rights advocacy as “disobedience to the ruler,” “inciting the public against the ruler,” or “disrupting the public stability.” For instance, all the members of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association, along with other reputable activists, have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms under such charges for promoting a constitutional monarchy, religious tolerance, and the rule of law. This is particularly concerning as it curtails citizens’ ability to comment on public policies such as the role of Saudi Arabia in regional conflicts or the recent impact of the economic reforms. Several writers and economic analysts were recently silenced for critiquing the economic reforms’ impacts.

In 2013 I submitted a report on the situation of women’s rights in Saudi Arabia to the U.N. Human Rights Council listing recommendations to reform the nationality act, the political and economic participation of women, revoking the ban on women driving, implementing measures to protect women’s rights and women against violence, abolishing the male guardianship system. And none of these recommendations were implemented.

In addition, I have joined women activists in 2013 in a campaign to revoke the driving ban by sharing videos of ourselves driving inside Saudi Arabia on social media. The campaign brought global attention, but the government responded negatively. Women activists were detained, defamed in local newspapers, had their cars confiscated, and two women were imprisoned for 72 days and then placed under travel bans for several months merely for requesting to cross the United Arab Emirates-Saudi border in their cars.

Last August, I had written a petition to the King, which was signed by 15,000 Saudi men and women to request abolishing the guardianship system from the state’s regulation. An activist friend in Riyadh delivered it to the King. The male guardianship system is made of policies and customary norms in which officials require women to obtain the approval of a male relative—usually a husband or a father or even a son—to access education, work, travel, marriage, or get a release from prison. It limits women’s autonomy and safety from abusive guardians.

I personally have written several letters to support Saudi women seeking asylum in other countries to escape their guardian’s abuse. Last year, I lost track of three Saudi sisters whom I have helped who fled the country and stayed in Malaysia to escape the sexual abuse of their guardian and who were forcibly returned by a private Saudi force to Riyadh in a case similar to that of young man who fled religious persecution to Malaysia before forcibly returned.

The World Bank ranked Saudi Arabia as the highest country in the legal restrictions imposed on women’s economic participation among 170 economies. None of the objectives planned for the Saudi vision can be reached without women’s full participation in the workforce. Saudi women have created a daily hashtag on Twitter



to end the guardianship system, and today, it reached its 225th day without a response from the state. Instead, a young woman who supported the campaign was arrested for months and she has published a public apology for participating in the campaign in the local newspaper upon her release. Local newspapers also reported the sentencing of a Saudi man to 1 year in prison and a penalty of \$8,000 for promoting the campaign by placing posters on local mosques.

In supporting the civil society in Saudi Arabia, several approaches were successful. The discussion of punishments on activists of top European officials with the King were very useful for our activists. Media coverage of Saudi affairs informed the public and compensated for the censored media inside our country. Most importantly, I find the vocal and material support for international community for prisoners of conscience as key for the crucial role they play in advancing political and economic reforms, accountability, gender equality, and religious tolerance.

Currently, Saudi Arabia leaders are keen to secure economic and defense alliances with the U.S., and this represents an ideal opportunity to promote sustainable political and civil reforms contrary to the notion that it may alienate U.S. allies.

And thank you for the opportunity to include my perspective on this issue.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Eldosari follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. HALAH ELDOSARI

Dear Chairman Rubio and Ranking Member Menendez, thank you for your kind invitation. My name is Dr. Hala Aldosari, I'm a visiting scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington DC. My research and writing examines gender, health and laws in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf States with a focus on violence against women. I'm an advocate for women and human rights in Saudi Arabia and have participated in a range of activities, including, campaigning, researching, lecturing, writing and public speaking on various platforms. I created an online website as a resource on women's rights and violence against women. My statement today is an attempt to inform the subcommittee on the restrictions of citizens' ability to promote their rights in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy where political parties, unions, independent civil society organizations are prohibited by law. There is no penal code and judges liberally rely on personal judgment on deciding cases based on the concept of "ta'azir", an Islamic law concept that allows an individual judge to decide on a suitable punishment at his own whim when no clear description of the act or the punishment is specified in Islamic scripture. Activists and concerned citizens struggle to provide a legal basis for their advocacy in the current legal system. It is not uncommon to find irrelevant historical Islamic incidents or quotations, taken out of context, in the statements of the prosecution or the decisions of the judges to justify irrational punishments against critics or activists. In the case of Ala'a Brinji, an imprisoned Saudi journalist, his sentencing document lists some of those historical sayings to justify sentencing him for 7 years in prison followed by a travel ban of equal duration merely for tweets in which he called for religious freedom, revocation of blasphemy laws, support for other human rights defenders and support for women driving. When the international community raises concern over the irrationality and arbitrary nature of the rulings against activists and critics, the authorities argue that they followed the due process, but fail to mention the false concept of justice employed to justify these rulings, even under Islamic principles.

Saudi Arabia's political system places the King as the ultimate guardian in which unconditional obedience is expected from citizens. The unchecked authority of the King is enforced by law and the appointed religious clerics. In the last few years, several laws and regulations were issued to classify acts of promoting human rights, such as questioning public policies or religious norms, as acts of terrorism or as cybercrimes. In the last few years, I came across numerous statements filed by prosecutors against peaceful critics, activists and writers which described their human

rights advocacy as “disobedience to the ruler”, “inciting the public against the ruler” or “disrupting the public stability”. None of these acts resemble recognizable crimes, yet Saudi authorities have used them to lock up peaceful activists for up to 15 years. All members of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association, along with other reputable activists, have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms under such charges, including promoting a constitutional monarchy, religious tolerance and the rule of law. This is particularly concerning because it curtails citizen’s ability to comment on public policies affecting every citizen, such as the role of Saudi Arabia in regional conflicts or the recent impacts of the economic reforms. Several writers and economic analysts were banned from travel, repeatedly brought to investigation, suspended from writing or from their jobs, or sentenced to prison terms for expressing concerns over the consequences of political or economic decisions. The result is that citizens’ engagement in the civil and political life of their country has been seriously compromised by fear of government reprisal and repression.

In 2013, I submitted a report on the situation of women’s rights in Saudi Arabia to the U.N. Human Rights Council. The report listed recommendations, made by Saudi activists in the past, such as reforming the nationality act, improving the political and economic participation of women, revoking the ban on women driving, implementing measures to protect women against violence and abolishing the male-guardianship system that controls women’s lives.

However, none of these recommendations were implemented. In addition, I’ve joined women activists in 2013 in a campaign to revoke the driving ban by sharing videos of ourselves driving inside Saudi Arabia on social media. The campaign brought global attention, but the government responded negatively. Women activists were detained, defamed in local newspapers, had their cars confiscated and two women were imprisoned for 72 days and then placed under travel bans for several months merely for requesting to cross the UAE–Saudi border in their cars. I worked, along other women activists, with Human Rights Watch on updating their 2008 report on the male-guardianship system. This is a system of policies and customary norms in which officials require women to obtain the approval of a male relative, usually a husband or a father, to access education, work, travel, marriage or get a release from prison. The system limits women’s autonomy when their guardians refuse to provide the required permission or when guardians abuse their power over women for personal benefits, such as in forced/ early marriages for dowries or in taking the woman’s salary to allow her to work. Women who live with abusive guardians are at a particular risk because of the vast authority granted to guardians on many domains in a woman’s lives. I have personally written several letters to support Saudi women seeking asylum in other countries to escape their guardians abuse. Last year, I lost track of three Saudi sisters who fled the country to Malaysia to escape the sexual abuse of their guardian and who were forcibly returned by a private Saudi force to Riyadh, in a case similar to that of young man who fled religious persecution to Malaysia and was forcibly returned to Riyadh. In a recent report by the World Bank, the number of legal restrictions on women in Saudi Arabia is the highest among 170 economies. It is therefore not surprising that women’s unemployment in Saudi Arabia is the lowest globally and the recent economic proposals to transform the Saudi economy such as Vision 2030 or the National Transformation Plan have not revoked any of these restrictions or barriers. The household income would be drastically reduced as a result of the enforced austerity measures, and will not likely to be avoided by 2020 without women’s full participation in the work force. Last August, I have written a petition to the king which was signed by 15000 Saudi men and women to request abolishing the guardianship system from the state’s regulations, and an activist in Riyadh delivered it to the King. Saudi women have created a daily hashtag on twitter to end the male guardianship system listing personal narratives and refuting the religious basis for it based on the writings of reputable Islamic figures. The hashtag reached its 225th day today without a response from the state. Instead, a young woman who supported the campaign was arrested for months and was likely forced to publish a public apology from participation in the local newspaper upon her release. Local newspapers also reported the sentencing of a Saudi man to 1 year in prison and a penalty of \$8000 for promoting the campaign by placing posters on local mosques.

In supporting the civil society in Saudi Arabia, I found that several approaches were successful. First, we have seen that the interventions of top officials from EU countries with the King as successful in reducing some of the punishments of activists. In addition, media coverage and analysis of Saudi issues raised awareness among the Saudi public on key issues which were largely uncovered in the local media. Most importantly, I find the vocal and material support of the international community for the prisoners of conscience is key because of the crucial role they play in advancing local discourse on political and economic reforms, accountability,

gender equality and religious tolerance. I would also like to hint that contrary to the common notion that public statements may alienate U.S. allies, I find that the keen and active interest of Saudi Arabia leaders in securing economic and defense alliances can be ideal opportunities to promote human rights reforms. I thank you for the opportunity to include my perspectives as part of the ongoing discourse on promoting human rights.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you so much.  
Mr. Kasparov.

**STATEMENT OF GARRY KASPAROV, CHAIRMAN, HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION, NEW YORK, NY**

Mr. KASPAROV. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me here today. Thank you very much, Ranking Member and members, for your nice words about my work. It is especially nice to hear such kind words compared to one U.S. Congressman who has recently said that Putin is not so bad because Garry Kasparov is still alive.

And I am also glad to be here in the Senate on the record because it seems I am one of the few prominent Russians who is not in contact with the White House.

[Laughter.]

Mr. KASPAROV. As one of the countless millions of people who were freed or protected from totalitarianism by the United States of America, it is easy for me to talk about the past, to talk about the belief of the American people and their leaders that this country was exceptional, and had special responsibilities to match its tremendous power, that a nation founded on freedom was bound to defend freedom everywhere.

I could talk about the bipartisan legacy of this most American principle, from the Founding Fathers, to Democrats like Harry Truman, to Republicans like Ronald Reagan. I could talk about how the American people used to care deeply about human rights and dissidents in far-off places, and how this is what made America a beacon of hope, a shining city on a hill. America led by example and set a high standard, a standard that exposed the hypocrisy and cruelty of dictatorships around the world.

But there is no time for nostalgia. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, Americans and America have retreated from those principles, and the world has become much worse off as a result. American skepticism about America's role in the world deepened in the long, painful wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and their aftermaths. Instead of applying the lessons learned about how to do better, lessons about faulty intelligence and working with native populations, the main outcome was to stop trying.

This result has been a tragedy for the billions of people still living under authoritarian regimes around the world, and it is based on faulty analysis. You can never guarantee a positive outcome, not in chess, not in war, and certainly not in politics. The best you can do is to do what you know is right and to try your best.

I speak from experience when I say that the citizens of unfree states do not expect guarantees. They want a reason to hope and a fighting chance. People living under dictatorships want the opportunity for freedom, the opportunity to live in peace and to follow their dreams. From the Iraq War to the Arab Spring to the current

battles for liberty from Venezuela to Eastern Ukraine, people are fighting for that opportunity, giving up their lives for freedom. The United States must not abandon them.

The United States and the rest of the free world has an unprecedented advantage in economic and military strength today. What is lacking is the will, the will to make the case to the American people, the will to take risks and invest in the long-term security of the country, and the world. This will require investment in aid, in education, in security that allow countries to attain the stability their people so badly need. Such investment is far more moral and far cheaper than the cycle of terror, war, refugees, and military intervention that results when America leaves a vacuum of power. The best way to help refugees is to prevent them from becoming refugees in the first place.

The Soviet Union was an existential threat, and this focused the attention of the world and the American people. The existential threat today is not found on a map, but it is very real. The forces of the past are making steady progress against the modern world order. Terrorist movements in the Middle East, extremist parties across Europe, a paranoid tyrant in North Korea threatening nuclear blackmail, and, at the center of the web, an aggressive KGB dictator in Russia. They all want to turn the world back to a dark past because their survival is threatened by the values of the free world, epitomized by the United States. And they are thriving as the United States has retreated. The global freedom index has declined for 10 consecutive years. No one likes to talk about the United States as a global policeman, but this is what happens when there is no cop on the beat.

American leadership begins at home, right here. America cannot lead the world on democracy and human rights if there is no unity on the meaning and importance of these things. Leadership is required to make that case clearly and powerfully. Right now, Americans are engaged in politics at a level not seen in decades. It is an opportunity for them to rediscover that making America great begins with believing America can be great.

The Cold War was won on American values that were shared by both parties and nearly every American. Institutions that were created by a Democrat, Truman, were triumphant 40 years later thanks to the courage of a Republican, Reagan. This bipartisan consistency created the decades of strategic stability that is the great strength of democracies.

Strong institutions that outlast politicians allow for long-range planning. In contrast, dictators can operate only tactically, not strategically, because they are not constrained by the balance of powers, but they cannot afford to think beyond their own survival. This is why a dictator like Putin has an advantage in chaos, the ability to move quickly. This can only be met by strategy, by long-term goals that are based on shared values, not on polls and cable news.

The fear of making things worse has paralyzed the United States from trying to make things better. There will always be setbacks, but the United States cannot quit. The spread of democracy is the only proven remedy for nearly every crisis that plagues the world today. War, famine, poverty, terrorism, all are generated and exac-

erbated by authoritarian regimes. A policy of America first inevitably puts American security last.

Global American leadership is required because there is no one else, and because it is good for America. There is no weapon, there is no wall that is more powerful for security than America being envied, imitated, and admired around the world, admired not for being perfect, but for having the exceptional courage to always try to be better.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kasparov follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GARRY KASPAROV

My thanks to Chairman Corker and to Senator Rubio for inviting me to be here today.

As one of the countless millions of people who were freed or protected from totalitarianism by the United States of America, it is easy for me to talk about the past. To talk about the belief of the American people and their leaders that this country was exceptional, and had special responsibilities to match its tremendous power. That a nation founded on freedom was bound to defend freedom everywhere. I could talk about the bipartisan legacy of this most American principle, from the Founding Fathers, to Democrats like Harry Truman, to Republicans like Ronald Reagan. I could talk about how the American people used to care deeply about human rights and dissidents in far-off places, and how this is what made America a beacon of hope, a shining city on a hill. America led by example and set a high standard, a standard that exposed the hypocrisy and cruelty of dictatorships around the world.

But there is no time for nostalgia. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, Americans, and America, have retreated from those principles, and the world has become much worse off as a result. American skepticism about America's role in the world deepened in the long, painful wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and their aftermaths. Instead of applying the lessons learned about how to do better, lessons about faulty intelligence and working with native populations, the main outcome was to stop trying.

This result has been a tragedy for the billions of people still living under authoritarian regimes around the world, and it is based on faulty analysis. You can never guarantee a positive outcome—not in chess, not in war, and certainly not in politics. The best you can do is to do what you know is right and to try your best. I speak from experience when I say that the citizens of unfree states do not expect guarantees. They want a reason to hope and a fighting chance. People living under dictatorships want the opportunity for freedom, the opportunity to live in peace and to follow their dreams. From the Iraq War to the Arab Spring to the current battles for liberty from Venezuela to Eastern Ukraine, people are fighting for that opportunity, giving up their lives for freedom. The United States must not abandon them.

The United States and the rest of the free world has an unprecedented advantage in economic and military strength today. What is lacking is the will. The will to make the case to the American people, the will to take risks and invest in the long-term security of the country, and the world. This will require investments in aid, in education, in security that allow countries to attain the stability their people so badly need. Such investment is far more moral and far cheaper than the cycle of terror, war, refugees, and military intervention that results when America leaves a vacuum of power. The best way to help refugees is to prevent them from becoming refugees in the first place.

The Soviet Union was an existential threat, and this focused the attention of the world, and the American people. There existential threat today is not found on a map, but it is very real. The forces of the past are making steady progress against the modern world order. Terrorist movements in the Middle East, extremist parties across Europe, a paranoid tyrant in North Korea threatening nuclear blackmail, and, at the center of the web, an aggressive KGB dictator in Russia. They all want to turn the world back to a dark past because their survival is threatened by the values of the free world, epitomized by the United States. And they are thriving as the U.S. has retreated. The global freedom index has declined for 10 consecutive years. No one like to talk about the United States as a global policeman, but this is what happens when there is no cop on the beat.

American leadership begins at home, right here. America cannot lead the world on democracy and human rights if there is no unity on the meaning and importance of these things. Leadership is required to make that case clearly and powerfully.

Right now, Americans are engaged in politics at a level not seen in decades. It is an opportunity for them to rediscover that making America great begins with believing America can be great.

The Cold War was won on American values that were shared by both parties and nearly every American. Institutions that were created by a Democrat, Truman, were triumphant 40 years later thanks to the courage of a Republican, Reagan. This bipartisan consistency created the decades of strategic stability that is the great strength of democracies. Strong institutions that outlast politicians allow for long-range planning. In contrast, dictators can operate only tactically, not strategically, because they are not constrained by the balance of powers, but cannot afford to think beyond their own survival. This is why a dictator like Putin has an advantage in chaos, the ability to move quickly. This can only be met by strategy, by long-term goals that are based on shared values, not on polls and cable news.

The fear of making things worse has paralyzed the United States from trying to make things better. There will always be setbacks, but the United States cannot quit. The spread of democracy is the only proven remedy for nearly every crisis that plagues the world today. War, famine, poverty, terrorism—all are generated and exacerbated by authoritarian regimes. A policy of America First inevitably puts American security last.

American leadership is required because there is no one else, and because it is good for America. There is no weapon or wall that is more powerful for security than America being envied, imitated, and admired around the world. Admired not for being perfect, but for having the exceptional courage to always try to be better. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you for being here. I am going to allow—Senator Kaine, do you need to—okay.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you all for your incredible testimony. And I am just going to take a moment, Mr. Chairman, and I will excuse myself with our recorder here. I will give you the synthesis of what I said but I do not want to proceed without saying this to Mr. Maldonado Machado.

[Speaking foreign language.]

Mr. MACHADO. Gracias.

Senator MENENDEZ. [Speaking foreign language.]

So I appreciate your testimony, and I wish that more of our colleagues were here to be honest with you, because even those who somehow have this romanticized idea of what the Castros are all about, even those who applaud the engagement that we have had with the Castro regime, what bothers me is not that. That is America. It is a different point of view. What bothers me is that they never talk about the Danilos Machados of the world. They do not talk about the Marta Beatriz Roques. They do not talk about Berta Soler and a large number of individuals who are the Vaclav Havels, the Lech Walesas, the Aleksandr Solzhenitsyns of Cuba.

And for some reason the world is focused on human rights and democracy in other places but somehow cannot rivet its attention on the very abuses that they feel so compelled to say from the highest mountaintop about any other place in the world, but when it comes to Cuba, there is this indifference.

And so while I disagree with my colleagues on some of the policy views, I—at least I would hope that they would be voices, as they are so eloquently in other parts of the world, to speak about those who struggled inside of Cuba, as you do.

I heard your petition, but I am wondering in what concrete way would you want to see the United States Government act to help you, as an artisan, as a citizen be free to perform your art, to say what you wish, to have your colleagues be able to do the same?

What would you want us to actually—if you could, if you could say to us do this, what is it? What would it be?

Mr. MACHADO. First of all, I want to thank you. You can help us the way you are doing now. But if these people have been violating human rights for almost 60 years, if you went after Pablo Escobar or bin Laden more recently, why these people are still there in power. It does not matter how you can help me but how you can help 12 million people while they are trying to escape.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes. You said—in the interpretation you said why are they not before a tribunal, which is an interesting view. Let me ask you this. Do you believe that the United States should insist that before there is any further deepening of this relationship that there be a call for free and independent elections?

Mr. MACHADO. No doubt about it.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you believe that we should say to the Castro Regime that before there can be any deepening relationship all political prisoners must be released?

Mr. MACHADO. For sure. For sure.

Senator MENENDEZ. I could go on but we have other important witnesses. But I really appreciate you giving a presence, a young man who has spent a good part of his young life in prison, beaten simply because he was seeking to do those things that we in America take for granted. It is just amazing to me. And I hear nothing about that in terms of our State Department and our engagement. So I hope things will change.

Dr. Eldosari, let me ask you, how is it can we best—you know, we often hear, you know, in response as we talk about human rights and democracy, whether it be in Saudi Arabia or other parts in the Arab world about—well, you do not understand the culture, you do not understand history. I respect culture and history but I cannot imagine that anything can be legitimized to put women in the plight in which they are in. How would you have us approach the issues of human rights and democracy and the role of women particularly and their rightful role as a human being in terms of the fulfillment of their rights? What do you think would be the most constructive way?

Dr. ELDOSARI. One of the main important things is to recognize that there are voices within those regimes, within Saudi Arabia and other places, which actually require those demands, which actually fight for those demands. So it is not foreign. It is not against the culture. It is not against their beliefs. So the justification presented by those regimes, as this is culturally irrelevant or culturally inappropriate is not correct.

The other thing is that there is a huge diversity in the Islamic world, in the Muslim world, in the Arabic world in which places where women—like, for instance, in the United Arab Emirates, women have been now part of the armed forces and the air forces and the commercial planes. So there are precedences where other Muslim countries, where other Arab countries have allowed women and men very much have an equal opportunity without relevance to cultural appropriation or not.

So I think that should be brought into the discussion and end all of the movements that are happening, the organic movements and the grassroots movements within Saudi Arabia. There are great di-

iversity in the number of people so we have women and men on the campaigns that I have participated in whether it is for a municipal election or for driving or for allowing—for removing the guardianship system or for the defense of the prisoners of conscience.

We have religious scholars, really intellectual scholars who have argued for those things from the perspective of Islamic schools of thoughts. So I think there is room and leverage to pressure, especially now, that these things are appropriate since there are voices that demand those things within those countries. And by supporting those voices and those demands, many of those voices are based on Islamic justifications as well. We can elevate the role of—not only of human rights but the role of Islamic diversity that is so much hijacked by the states.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Kasparov, at one time I thought I could be a great chess master, so—and I do enjoy playing the game and I think it is extraordinary. And I appreciate the work that you do and your foundation to use it as a vehicle to create critical skills for children in schools. So I appreciate that.

But I want to ask you about—as much as I would be engaged in asking you about some of the great opening gambits, I want to ask you about Russia in the context of, you know, very often, in a different context than I asked the doctor, some argue that Russia is different, that history and the people themselves are conditioned to authoritarian rule, that Putin, these people claim, provides firm leadership, coupled with a vision of greatness, of Russian greatness that appeals to ordinary citizens and that the path to greatness requires sacrifices and the return to the greater Russia.

How does one frame—and you were in Russia and unfortunately, you—because of what was going on and your activism, you had to come to the United States. How does one frame the narratives so that Russia's greatness includes a respect for human rights?

Mr. KASPAROV. Thank you very much for this question because it comes back and forth. This is one of the arguments I hear in many talk shows that, you know, certain countries, they just simply do not fit democracy. And Russia, of course, you know, is one of the samples. So the country is doomed to live under authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, which is—you know, as we look at history, as Russia had very short periods of democratic rule, but at the same time we can look around the world and we will find places where, you know, divided nations demonstrated that democracy performed much, much better than any other form of governance.

Let us look at Korean peninsula. Is it is the same nation, divided on the north 38th parallel and one side we have a concentration camp, a gulag with 20 million people that is trying to sell, you know, it is the nuclear blackmail to feed its own people and to prevent, you know, massive famine and potential revolt. On the other side we have 40 million of the—living in democracy and most vibrant economies in the world. We can talk about two Germanys, divided Germanys, also Taiwan and China.

And even now going back to Russia, let us not forget Russia and Ukraine, never close, maybe it is not as close as two Koreans, but still, when you look at Eastern Ukraine, you could see that many people who leave there, they are all ethnic Russians. They grew up



in the same country called Soviet Union. Even after 1991 there was no border so they could go from—there is a hike up the coast. And there is a fact that is being committed by many of Putin's apologists that most of the fighters in the Ukrainian army today, they are ethnic Russians because they are fighting for their right to choose and to live in a free country because they know exactly what to expect in Putin's Russia.

And, you know, it is—in my view the fighting between Russia and Ukraine could be viewed as the kind of geopolitical showdown, historical one, of the Kyiv's Russia, which was, you know, part of the European culture and the Golden Horde. So the Asian succession unfortunately dominated Russia for centuries.

And one of the things, you know, followed the comments in the first panel is that Ukrainian, like Russia, in 1994 experienced a peaceful transition of power. So the current—the President then, Leonid Kuchma, lost elections and, you know, peacefully he was replaced by his successor Leonid Kuchma. So with all credit given to Boris Yeltsin, he failed the ultimate test of peaceful transition of power. Instead of following, you know, proper electoral procedures, he picked up a successor. Some would say, you know, it could be Boris Nemtsov but Yeltsin made the wrong choice, and we are now seeing the consequences.

So I do not believe that people in Russia are just doomed to live under the shadows of dictatorship, and many of us fought. Some of them, you know, were even killed. Many of them are in prison and even more are like myself. I live in exile. But the future of Russia is—belongs to the famine of the civilized democratic nations, and we can look at the current economic situation in the country. It is one of the richest countries in the world that is living in terrible conditions. We can see the steady deterioration of living standards. The economy is in free-fall, and that is why Putin, as every dictator, he is now—he has replaced domestic news by his aggressive foreign policy. If you follow Russian news and Russian talk shows, they do not talk about Russia. They talk about Ukraine, Syria, Israel, United States, blaming the world for all the hardship.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Kasparov, if I could lead off from that as well, it is—and if you disagree with any of the statements I am about to make as it leads into my questioning, you will tell me. Number one, as I—Vladimir Putin at this point has amassed more power in his hands than any leader in Moscow since Stalin in the '50s.

Number two, there was—less than 10 years ago were—there were still—there was still political resistance that we could see expressed, whether it was through rock bands, political parties, demonstrations. That has steadily eroded, and it is a result of his willingness to exile, murder, and jail political opponents. And so you have no doubts that Vladimir Putin has ordered the murder and the jailing of political opponents.

I also do not believe you have any doubts that he has directed the targeting and the killing of innocent civilian women, children in Aleppo and in other parts of Syria.

I ask all that and lay that context out because we are—we have now had two administrations who believed that somehow this is someone we could work with and create some sort of a strategic geopolitical partnership, and the new administration has also expressed a willingness to potentially pursue this sort of geopolitical partnership with Vladimir Putin, despite all these things we know about him. And I am interested from your perspective, what would the impact be on our credibility, on America's standing in the world, and in, quite frankly, our national security but in particular I want you to opine on our credibility and our standing in the world as a nation who promotes democracy and liberty and the rights of all people. What would it do to our standing if, despite all of these things that we now know, we somehow enter in a geopolitical deal with Moscow in which we are willing to overlook all these things and the sovereignty of nations like Ukraine in exchange for their supposed cooperation in Syria? What would the impact be on America's standing in the world if we go into a deal with a criminal like this?

Mr. KASPAROV. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with everything you said about Vladimir Putin and his regime. I think it is important to emphasize that the United States and Putin's Russia—let me emphasize Putin's Russia—have no common values, no common ground, and no common interest. It is a false narrative that unfortunately is being pushed by some people in this country and in Europe that Vladimir Putin could be an ally in a war against terrorism. Terrorism has been—I would not say invented but nursed by KGB decades ago, and now we could see that in Syria ISIS has been used by Bashar Al-Assad's butcherous regime as an excuse for the atrocities that they committed against their own people.

Again, it is a long story to find out whether, you know, KGB infiltrators had influenced within ISIS. I believe so. But what is most important that we could see that Assad's forces never fought ISIS and Putin always looked, you know, for ISIS as a good reason for him, an excuse to enter Syria.

So the problem is, you know, that if you make one concession to Putin's regime, they will look for more concessions. They do not look at comprises as a search for common ground. It is a sign of weakness, and they will push on forward.

You mentioned two administrations, Bush 43 administration and Barack Obama administration. I could also mention that one of the earliest mistakes was made even by Clinton administration while in 1995. Bill Clinton was empowered by the bipartisan resolution of the U.S. Congress to demand Boris Yeltsin to stop the first transaction of Russian nuclear weapons to Iran, and he could threaten and actually could pull out financial aid, which was crucial. Unfortunately, he decided against doing it.

So—but if Clinton administration or Bush administration could be somehow forgiven because they looked at Russia as a country that was making, you know, first steps towards democracy, the last 8 or especially the last 4 years, you know, I think it is the—this shortsighted policy cannot be excused because those were the years where Putin accumulated all the power and moved from any form of cooperation into the open confrontation.

Ten years ago in Munich he delivered a speech which cannot be interpreted otherwise but he challenged the West in a Munich security conference. And by the way, he follows almost religiously to what he said there, challenging American power and making United States as a prime target for his domestic propaganda.

If United States enters any kind of deal at the expense of its traditional democratic allies or the countries like Ukraine that are heroically fighting against Putin aggression, that will be a very deep wound in the reputation—global reputation of the United States because it will be seen as the clear case of hypocrisy, and it will undermine U.S. attempts to promote democracy worldwide. And it—by the way, it will not stop Putin from moving further because, again, for him it will be a sign of weakness and he will try to exercise even more power because his domestic propaganda is based exclusively on the confrontation with the United States and the free world.

Senator RUBIO. The—you are a long-time observer and perhaps know firsthand and have seen the tradecraft of the KGB and now the Putin government. As you see reports about their active measures in the United States elections beyond simply some just—you know, just say, well, this is all about trying to reach a particular outcome, in your opinion beyond just the outcome of the election of somebody winning, somebody losing, deeper than that, what is the reason why Vladimir Putin's government would seek to undertake active measures in which they weaponize leaked illegally accessed information for purpose—and then strategically placing that information in the press? What at the end of the day—were they trying to go beyond that—undermine the credibility of American democracy, sow chaos, instability? What is the thinking that goes behind that sort of action?

Mr. KASPAROV. Vladimir Putin is targeting democracy as an institution. Undermining democracy and of course United States is the most lucrative target for a KGB agent. He believes that he could destroy any hopes for democratizations in Russia or in other countries of un-free world. He has been doing the same things in Europe. He has been steadily attacking democratic institutions in the U.K., now in Holland, in France, and Germany, in Italy, elsewhere because for him it is a great opportunity to use, what an irony, technology invented in the free world, the freedom of speech to undermine the very institutions that are protecting our freedom. And he is not going to stop because for him it is a natural way of extending his powers since he wants chaos. Chaos helps him to promote his clandestine agenda, and chaos prevents unified front of European nations and the United States and Canada and other democratic nations in the world to stand against Putin's aggression.

Senator RUBIO. Dr. Eldosari, you said in—on October 10th to the BBC's Arabic Service that "The problem with the Saudi legal system is that it deals with the lives of people in the 21st century with the mentality of the 7th century." I was hoping you could elaborate further for those who might read the transcripts of this hearing or be watching at some point. What did you mean by the they are dealing "with the lives of people in the 21st century with the mentality of the 7th century?"

Dr. ELDOSARI. A very good example is considering any critics of the state, any critics of the policies as disobedient to the ruler. This idea of a ruler as the guardian, as the ultimate guardian is very much foreign idea, and it is an idea that has been—and aspired by early historical examples that does not have any relevance to the social contracts or to modern work. And if any act could be interpreted by any citizen as a disobedience to the King, that is a good ground to punish this person either by flogging or either by sentencing. There is no penal code in Saudi Arabia.

There is no written codification of what does it mean to have a certain crime and what is the kind of punishment. As I have just mentioned, the ta'azir, which is the authority given to judges by certain Islamic schools of thoughts to decide on punishments according to their own whim is something that is threatening for the due process. Often, when Saudi Arabia is challenged by the international community and asking for a rationale or justification for the punishments enforced on activists, they bring forth the idea of the due process.

We are having courts, we are having lawyers, we are having trials, but the whole philosophy of what is a criminal act is absent. So you could just go to jail like all the members of the Civil and Political Rights for demanding that should be—that there should be a social contract with very—with much of checks and balances for the authority of the ruler. If you demand that in Saudi Arabia, you are sentenced for 11 years or 15 years in prison and—followed by equal duration of travel ban.

So this is what I have meant that this kind of mentality that does not really coincide with any definitions of human rights, this kind of mentality that treats any act of expression of opinion or expression of religious beliefs as an act of terror, as an act of insult against Islam to protect their power. Basically, the religious institutions and the legal institutions are there to protect the status quo rather than to implement justice, and this really is apparent from the wide variance of sentences that people experience from even the same judge.

Senator RUBIO. In our hearing for Secretary of State, then-nominee, now-Secretary of State testified in response to my questions about Saudi Arabia that we needed to account for cultural differences that existed, that perhaps is the reason why this is still in place and it would take a little longer than it would in other places. Is—in your opinion, is the condition of the general population, in particular, women and how they are treated under Saudi law and by Saudi leadership, is that a result of some sort of a cultural affinity or is that basically a system of political control disguised as a cultural principle?

Dr. ELDOSARI. Yes.

So the total obedience that is demanded from citizen to the rule of the King, basically the absolute authority to the King that is unchecked by any balances or measures, this is the same authority that is granted to men over women in a family. And the massive support that we amassed in the male guardianship campaign, it is a social campaign, and the massive, you know, support from religious scholars as well who came out and said that these practices

are not found in Islam under—or precedence in Islam that actually contracted these ideas. And these ideas are fairly new.

So in the lives of people in the '60s in Saudi Arabia, there was no ban on women to travel on their own. It was an invented state regulation because of a certain incident that happened. So all of those restrictions that were imposed on women to refrain women from participating in the public meaningfully or to acquire, you know, equal opportunities in the workforce or in education or to decide on their own lives or marriages are very much an invented, you know, interpretation of what should be a different scenario.

If really the diversity of Islamic schools of thoughts and the diversity of people have been expressed, then this is something that we have witnessed from a number of people of all backgrounds that have joined the campaign to express online and in writings.

Senator RUBIO. My last question, Doctor, is because of your activism, because of your testimony here today, because of the words you have expressed and the work that you have done, what do they say about you in Saudi Arabia?

Dr. ELDOSARI. Well, I think one of the things that we learn to do—I am sure there are mixed feeling—

Senator RUBIO. By the government, I apologize.

Dr. ELDOSARI. Well, I do see my name coming in the formal print media and in online defamation campaigns all the time and the names of other people who are doing the same. And similar to my distinguished colleague here, I think that we learn to work without thinking of things beyond our control. We tend to uphold our values and our principles and try to do the best of the resources that we have, ideas like what the government would think of is not of an importance I think to people in Saudi Arabia more than to secure the public interest and to make sure that their rights are safeguarded and guaranteed.

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Maldonado, there was a school of thought in American politics that the best way to advance the cause of human rights and freedom in Cuba is to allow for Cuba to be flooded with American business and travelers but in particular American business, that if somehow there were more economic interaction between American corporations and the Cuban Government, which controls the entire economy, that that would somehow lead automatically at some point to political freedoms and some form of representative government. Do you share that view, and has that been your experience over the last 2 years or 2 1/2 years since the change in policy? We now see a large number of chambers of commerce, business interests traveling to Cuba and interacting with the Cuban Government. Has that led to any political opening for people such as yourself or others who disagree with the government? And do you believe that somehow economic interaction with the United States in and of itself will lead to democracy without additional pressure? The microphone.

Mr. MACHADO. Oh, sorry. This will have some impact if the United States could demand that they could pay their own workers in their U.S. companies. Otherwise, it would be more of the same as all foreign companies in Cuba have experienced during the long years in which the state is like a middle man between the company and the Cuban workers. So the Cuban Government is paying their

workers, \$20, \$25, \$30 a month for doctors and workers in Cuba, which is earned by an American worker in a couple of hours.

Senator RUBIO. But so—and the—the fundamental question that people continue to pose is that we should somehow separate the political opening from the economic debate. Is it your view that we need to be doing more to empower civil society, create obviously attention to the cause such as people such as yourself, that in essence, if we could focus on the political and the freedom, that that would then create a free Cuban people who could decide an economic model for themselves and for their country?

Mr. MACHADO. Well, that is rather difficult because, you know, if it is only political, they could remain as owners of the economy and continue as any other transition of power to themselves.

Senator RUBIO. It is fair to say that the Cuban Government across its holding companies, controlled by sometimes military figures in the government, basically control the vast and overwhelming majority of the Cuban economy?

Mr. MACHADO. Yes. Well, American citizens know the cost of opening some sort of business in Cuba. Mr. Alan Gross is an example. There should be requirements to the Cuban Government that Americans investing in Cuba should be respected. Their policies should be respected to do their business, to conduct their business with all their rights. Maybe that would be a way to reach—another way to reach freedom.

Senator RUBIO. The resistance in Cuba, the people like yourself who are not just demonstrating against the oppression and the tyranny but also who aspire for a freer and more democratic Cuba where people are represented, when this opening happened with Cuba that included all the celebrations that we saw about it, yet we saw such little mention of the plight of those such as yourself and others, what impact did that have on the psychology, the morale of those such as yourself who are still suffering?

Mr. MACHADO. Businesses continue to open but there is still that middle man that will distribute the profits and will pay the Cuban workers very, very small salaries and keep the profit for themselves.

Senator RUBIO. So the bottom line is what American business interests need to know is that an economic opening to Cuba is not necessarily an economic opening with the Cuban people. It is an economic opening to do business with the Cuban Government, who then uses it as an additional form of control over the Cuban people?

Mr. MACHADO. Exactly. Exactly.

Senator RUBIO. My last question is, since the opening of the U.S. Embassy and our designation of the once consulate to embassy, have the personnel there, including the charge d'affaires and others in charge of that facility been supportive of you, reached out to you, interacted with you?

Mr. MACHADO. Sometimes we are called by phone. I was invited to the Fourth of July celebration, and I was the only listed artist on venue.

Senator RUBIO. And in—have you ever in your—over the last 2 or 3 years, as several of our colleagues have visited Cuba—Con-

gressmen, Senators—have you ever had any Member of Congress visit you?

Mr. MACHADO. Not to me but certainly when President Obama visited Cuba, he met several—all the dissidents, which was very important—a very important action by him.

Senator RUBIO. After the President visited Cuba and left, what was the government—the Castro government’s reaction to the people who met with him? Was there a—did you notice a change in their behavior after he left? Did they become more repressive after the fact?

Mr. MACHADO. No. Repression has been increased.

Senator RUBIO. My last question. Since December of 2014 when this opening with Cuba was announced, has repression in Cuba increased or decreased?

The INTERPRETER. Say that again, please.

Senator RUBIO. Since December of 2014 when the opening was announced to Cuba from the U.S. Government, has repression in Cuba increased or decreased?

Mr. MACHADO. It has increased because there is also more activism.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, very briefly, one quick question and then a comment.

Do you think that after the openings of relationships the Castro regime thinks that they must change in terms of human rights and democracy or have they already acquired what they want?

Mr. MACHADO. Well, believing that would lead you to think that by releasing “El Chapo” Guzman, he could change his attitude.

[Laughter.]

Mr. MACHADO. Do you think that would be effective? A murderer is a murderer.

Senator MENENDEZ. By the way, a murderer is a murderer. I get it. To your line of questioning, Mr. Chairman, of course in Cuba if you want to do business, you have to do it with Raul’s son or his son-in-law, both high-ranking officials of the Cuban military, both have run the two major entities, one on tourism and its related industry, the other one in agriculture, so not very capable of doing business with the Cuban people and unlocking the freedom of the Cuban people to make money, decide how—get paid directly by U.S. companies, be able to spend that money in a way they want, including hiring some of their relatives or friends and therefore create an economic movement that creates freedom at the end of the day. So I appreciate your line of questioning.

The last thing I want to say, I do not know when you are going back to Cuba, but when you do, I want you to make sure your contacts here in the United States, if you are arrested again, I want you—I think the chairman and I would both want to know immediately through your contacts because the—if there is to be an embassy of the United States in Cuba, or for that fact any place in the world, then it seems to me that in fact there should be a vigorous pursuit of giving assistance to human rights activists, political dissidents, independent journalists who are jailed simply because they peacefully try to express their position.

So I want to do—I hope what we have done in other parts of the world when we did with Walesa and Vaclav Havel and others is

create this light upon the individual that hopefully creates some degree of security for them. The regime does not seem to care much about that, but at some point it has to give, and I just want to—I appreciate you taking the risk to come here and testify because your oppressors get to sit in the back row, but in Cuba you cannot do that. And so to the extent that we can be helpful to protect you, I want to make sure that you know that you are not alone.

Senator RUBIO. My final—and I have to ask you a final question but there is one more. My colleagues, some will wonder, well, if it is such a dictatorship, if it so tyrannical, then why is Mr. Maldonado allowed to travel, come here to the United States and say the things that he is saying. In your opinion, why have they allowed you to be here today and to testify?

Mr. MACHADO. Thanks to continuous movement of protest, the world knows that there are dissidents in Cuba. They removed the permit to travel. In the past, only they could travel. Now, all can travel. I have faced difficulties to leave the country sometimes and by that action being denounced, that prohibition was removed. Maybe they hope that I will not be back.

Senator RUBIO. Well, we appreciate all of you for being here. The record is going to remain open for 48 hours, and I thank you all again for your time and for your brave testimony. And with that, this meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:09 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

##### RESPONSES OF CARL GERSHMAN TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

*Question.* There are various indices, including the Economist Intelligence Unit, that measure the state of democracy in countries around the world. Which of these do you find the most credible and accurate, and why?

*Answer.* The various indices to which you refer exist precisely because there is no consensus on how to conceptualize and measure democracy. Consequently, different methodologies are employed by the principal indices, which include the EIU's Democracy Index, Freedom House, Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), Democracy Barometer, Freedom House, Polity IV, Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI), Legatum, V-Dem, Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), and the UNDP's Electoral Democracy Index.

All such indices share the common problems of establishing a precise and credible definition of democracy; identifying appropriate indicators; aggregating quantitative or numerical data; and subjecting the data to evaluation and judgments (the Freedom House, Polity IV and EIU surveys all rely on expert's qualitative interpretation of quantitative data).

These issues have been the subject of an intense debate amongst academics and practitioners. The attached articles from the NED's Journal of Democracy address some of the key issues.

Since its inception, the NED has been committed to a broad or holistic interpretation of democracy rather than a 'minimalist' definition that privileges elections, hence NED's mission to support "the growth of a wide range of democratic institutions abroad, including political parties, trade unions, free markets and business organizations, as well as the many elements of a vibrant civil society that ensure human rights, an independent media, and the rule of law."

Consequently, and without discounting the value and insights of other democracy indices, Freedom House's Freedom in the World—which adopts a similarly holistic approach (including socio-economic rights within political and civil liberties, for instance) - remains the standard setter for gauging the condition and trajectory of democratic governance and political and civil rights. Through a long-established series of complementary annual reports, Freedom House's analytical team has developed a significant specialization in standardized, multicountry surveys.



By contrast, most of the other indices offer a partial or specialized perspective. The Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), for instance, popular in Europe, assesses some dimensions of political rights and civil liberties in over 100 countries, but its conceptual approach highlights “transformational management” in the context of “good governance.” The relatively new V-Dem (“Varieties of Democracy”—see attached *Journal of Democracy* article), produced by an international academic consortium, by contrast, seeks “to distinguish between seven high level principles of democracy” (Electoral, Liberal, Participatory, Majoritarian, Consensual, Deliberative, and Egalitarian).

While the various indices offer distinctive insights, the principal virtue of Freedom in the World is its accessibility and user-friendly approach—one reason why the Freedom in the World data and supporting narrative reports have become a crucial point of reference for journalists and analysts. That the analysis is provided in a non-academic, jargon-free, clear-minded way is also useful. Moreover, at a time when undemocratic regimes have turned the manipulation of information into an art form and facts are increasingly subject to distortion, the grounded, rigorous numerical scores, succinct narratives, and consistent reporting of Freedom in the World is especially valuable.

*Question.* Further, which factors do you believe are the most important to account for in determining a country’s level of democracy over time?

*Answer.* Measuring democracy is important to the Endowment and other democracy assistance practitioners for several reasons, including:

- gauging the state or quality of democracy in a particular country, region or sphere in order to identify programmatic priorities;
- identifying ‘early warning signals’ of democratic deterioration or relapse;
- program evaluation;
- monitoring compliance with standards (e.g., Millennium Challenge Account).

The NED’s commitment to inclusive democracy (see above) is consistent with the celebrated political scientist Robert Dahl’s widely accepted two-part definition of democracy as requiring at least conelation or compeliion and participation or inclusion (the right to vote, freedom of association, etc.). Consequently, the primary factors of a healthy democracy would include free and fair elections, the right to form political parties, competitiveness and prospects for political turnover or alternation. These institutional prerequisites of democracy, however, require a supportive substructure of secondary factors, such as a robust civil society, free media, independent judiciary, and a constitution with explicit guarantees of fundamental rights.

But the emergence of ‘competitive authoritarian’ or hybrid regimes, which hold elections (albeit flawed) and allow a degree of political space for opposition voices, has highlighted the importance of measuring democracy between elections and beyond formal institutions and procedures. While the minimalist or electoral conception of democracy has prioritized such factors as the integrity of the electoral process and prospects for political alternation, hitherto secondary factors deemed important for ensuring or supporting electoral contestation are becoming primary indicators of the health or quality of democracy, including:

- rule of law and judicial independence;
- transparency and horizontal accountability of state institutions;
- media freedom and pluralism;
- human rights and civil liberties (including minority rights), and
- the autonomy and vibrancy of civil society.

There may be an academic case for prioritizing some indicators of democracy over others, but from a practitioner perspective, the assessment of which factors or indicators are most important in determining a country’s level of democracy over time depends to a large extent on the specific country context and necessarily remains fluid, responsive to trends and events. For example, few would have predicted the corrosion of democratic institutions that is occurring in ‘consolidated’ democracies.

Accordingly, there may be a case for prioritizing factors such as voice/accountability and issues of government effectiveness, especially since democracy’s perceived institutional failures threaten to undermine its appeal and legitimacy.

[The material referred to above can be accessed in the documents referenced in footnotes below.]<sup>1 2</sup>

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RESPONSE OF HON. MARK GREEN TO QUESTION  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

DEMOCRACY DATA

*Question.* There are various indices, including the Economist Intelligence Unit, that measure the state of democracy in countries around the world. Which of these do you find the most credible and accurate, and why? Further, which factors do you believe are the most important to account for in determining a country's level of democracy over time?

*Answer.* Indices that measure the state of democracy can be useful for identifying trends in democratic development across countries and over time. However, it is important to remember that there is no "one-size-fits-all" model of democracy. All democracies are works in progress: they are complex, dynamic, and vary depending on culture and context. For this reason, no matter how comprehensive and well-conceived an index is, it's important to critically assess the measures an index score is based on; to compare those measures with data from other sources (including other indices); and to place improvements or declines in scores in context through in-depth qualitative analysis. That being said, the approach taken by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) indices is useful. Using data drawn from Freedom House, the MCC determines whether a country meets a "hard hurdle" of basic political and/or civil rights, and incorporates additional data from several different sources to assess government effectiveness, transparency and responsiveness. MCC now has a decade of experience applying its democracy measurement approach in a wide range of settings, and their index has become increasingly recognized and accepted, especially in lower-income and lower middle-income countries.

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RESPONSE OF KENNETH WOLLACK TO QUESTION  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

DEMOCRACY DATA

*Question.* There are various indices, including the Economist Intelligence Unit, that measure the state of democracy in countries around the world. Which of these do you find the most credible and accurate, and why? Further, which factors do you believe are the most important to account for in determining a country's level of democracy over time?

*Answer.* There are a number of credible indices on the state of democracy globally and in particular countries. The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, Freedom House's Freedom in the World Reports, and Bertelsmann's Transformations Index are among them. They each are very helpful, though each also has constraints largely defined by the combination of necessarily limited factors they consider and emphases they embrace. It is best to look at a combination of the indices, rather than to focus on just one, and to compare them over a period of years, rather than to accept a 1-year snapshot as definitive. It is also best to look at them together with other indices that are relevant to democratization, like Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, Reporters without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, and the Fraser Institute's Economic Freedom Ranking.

Moreover, an index by nature assigns weight to a particular set of indicators, usually grouped by subject areas, and it then assigns an overall score to each country it considers. There are also important nuances, which highlight the need to consider reports on particular countries and subjects across a number of countries. The U. S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and reports of credible nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations on elections, gender and politics, rule of law development, human rights and other issues are indispensable for understanding the state of democracy and trends of particular countries and globally. The UNDP's Human Development Reports and their related indices are valuable resources when considering global trends.

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<sup>1</sup> "Anxious Dictators, Wavering Democrats," Arch Puddington, Tyler Roylance, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 27, Number 2, April 2016, pp. 86–100. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/614520>.

<sup>2</sup> "V-Dem: A New Way to Measure Democracy," Staffan I. Lindberg, Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, and Jan Teorell, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 25, Number 3, July 2014, pp. 159–169. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/549506>.

There are key principles that underpin democracy, each comprise a number of factors. The principles guide analysis the democratic health of a country's governance, political processes, elections, and broader civic engagements. The three main principles are: inclusiveness; transparency, and accountability.

Inclusiveness is at the core of the social contract between and among citizens, civic organizations including political parties, and government institutions and processes including elections. The democratic norms of universal and equal suffrage and of equality before the law and equal protection of the law embody the principle of inclusiveness. It is essential to realization of civil liberties and economic opportunity.

Transparency is essential for democratic governance. The authority of democratic government derives from the will of the people expressed in genuine elections. Democratic governance depends on citizens exercising their right to participate in government and public affairs beyond elections. An informed vote and informed participation is impossible without sufficient and accurate information about governmental processes, policies and performance. This explains why democratic government is open government, and why citizens have a right to know about government information with only certain narrow exceptions that must provide for their oversight.

Accountability is synonymous with democratic governance. Government in all of its facets must be accountable to the people, and every person must be accountable before the law in a democracy. Accountability encompasses various mechanisms and processes from the functioning of checks and balances among government branches, to the means for citizens to question policy formulation and implementation or lodge complaints, to avenues for examining the functioning of rule of law institutions, to the conduct of credible elections that allow citizens to hold elected officials to account. The principle of accountability is essential to combatting corruption and impunity and is vital to democracy delivering improved quality of life.

The number of specific factors to examine vary depending for example on whether press freedoms, women's participation, economic justice, or electoral integrity are the subject of democratic inquiry. In each case the analysis should be guided by evaluating how basic democratic principles are being respected.

