

**STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED
PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2018**

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2017

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Lindsey Graham (chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Graham, Moran, Boozman, Daines, Leahy, Durbin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy and Van Hollen.

UNITED STATES DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

STATEMENTS OF:

HON. MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

HON. STEPHEN HADLEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

HON. VIN WEBER, CO-VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

HON. JAMES KOLBE, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE

TESTIMONY FROM DEMOCRACY PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OUTSIDE WITNESS TESTIMONY SUBMITTED SUBSEQUENT TO THE HEARING

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you all. The subcommittee will come to order. Today, our hearing is on United States Democracy Assistance. I would like to welcome our witnesses who deserve long, glowing introductions—but you're not going to get one because we got to get on one with the hearing.

We've got Madeleine Albright, Chairman of the Board of the National Democratic Institute and former Secretary of State. Welcome, Ms. Albright.

James Kolbe, Vice-Chairman of the Board of the International Republican Institute. Jim, welcome.

Vin Weber, Co-Vice Chairman of the Board of the National Endowment for Democracy, all around good guy, Republican type.

Stephen Hadley, Chairman of the Board of the United States Institute of Peace. You are going to be in business for a long time.

A lot of peace to be had out there. Former National Security Advisor for President Bush 43.

Thank you, all. Senator Leahy is on the way. The subcommittee provides about \$2.3 billion for democracy programs. I do not know what that is in terms of the total budget but perhaps one-tenth of one percent. Not much. The money is well utilized and we're going to make a case why America should be investing in democracy. The best case I can make is I cannot remember a war between two democracies. So, if you can ever get to democratic stability and democratic institutions rise from the ashes of strong man rule or dictatorships which is very hard to do, you'll find somebody you can do business with who probably won't kill you.

A little bit about this account. We have asked people who benefit from democracy programs to give us their views of the importance of these programs.

"I've always admired the United States for its fundamental values of democracy, freedom and rule of law and so its institutions and people have the ability to help encourage the promotion of these positive principles," said the Dalai Lama.

"The question is what sort of world do we want? I have personally seen the benefits of that strong, inclusive democracies can have and I do not want to see my country, my region, my world turned back. Without the leadership of the United States, there will be others that will fill the void, others that do not share the values of freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom to choose." That is the former Foreign Minister of Mongolia whose name I cannot pronounce, but I agree with everything he said.

The bottom line is I've got a treasure trove of validation from those who have been on the receiving end of democracy programs. North Korean human rights groups, "without the material and institutional support of NED, the National Endowment for Democracy, the North Korean Human Rights Movements as we know it today would not have existed."

On and on and on. What I want the American people to know that your tax dollars are hard to come by, we're in debt but as a nation, we need to stay involved in the world. The world will be involved with us whether we like it or not. I'd like to choose the terms of our involvement. When it comes to terrorism, the goal is to kill the idea, just not the terrorist because you kill a terrorist, you'll get a new one. If you kill the idea, then we win and I think most people do not want to go down the road that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have charted for them. Those who are wishing to say no just need our help.

I am a pretty hawkish guy, but soft power is every bit as important as hard power. How do you hold Mosul, Raqqa, et cetera, if you do not have a soft power component? We will fail and we will be right back at it again. The terrorist offer a glorious death. We need to offer a hopeful life and a hopeful life comes from being able to choose your leaders, resolve your differences in a court that's fair and impartial and be able to speak without fear.

That is what democracy programs are all about. That is why we are having this hearing.

Would you like to say something, Senator Durbin, until Senator Leahy gets here?

Senator DURBIN. Just briefly. The question that comes to my mind, Vladimir Putin is developing some pretty effective tools for undermining democracy. What tools are we developing to undermine authoritarianism?

Senator GRAHAM. Great question and if it is okay, we will just start with our witnesses. Ladies, first.

STATEMENT OF HON. MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Thank you. Chairman Graham and when the Ranking Member Leahy gets here and distinguished members of the subcommittee, and thank you so much for holding this hearing on the importance of U.S. democracy assistance and for inviting me to testify as Chairman of the Board of the National Democratic Institute.

And it's my pleasure to really appear alongside some good friends.

Before I begin, I really do want to pay my deepest respect and appreciation for the vital role this subcommittee has played in sustaining and strengthening the non-military tools of American power. Experience has taught me that diplomacy, development, and democracy are as integral to our national security as defense, which Chairman Graham is really the answer to the taxpayers.

In today's uncertain and dangerous world, we weaken these national security tools at our peril. Nevertheless, there are still some in Washington and elsewhere who believe that promoting democracy doesn't qualify as real foreign policy. They see little connection between fostering democratic practices and hardheaded pursuit of American interests.

But our wisest leaders, Democrats and Republicans alike, have always understood that American foreign policy must be shaped not solely on the basis of what we are against, but also what we are for. And our interests dictate that we should be for a world in which democracy is defended and universal values upheld.

Yesterday marked 72 years since the end of World War II in Europe. At the time I was 7 years old and a refugee living in London all through the Blitz and I was there with my family and I will never forget the elation that we all felt.

In the decades that followed, we learned that democracy's more than just another form of government. It's also a powerful generator of international security, prosperity and peace and that is because while democracy may not provide a guarantee against aggression, it is the best political insurance available.

Governments that are publically accountable rarely start wars while regimes that run roughshod over their own citizens are often indifferent to the rights of their neighbors.

Moreover, in today's world, destabilizing conflicts that threaten U.S. interests erupt more frequently within societies than between them.

And here again, democracies have a clear advantage because they embrace pluralism, encourage tolerance and enable citizens to pursue change in a lawful and peaceful way. It's no coincidence that the hotspots most likely to harbor terrorists and generate waves of refugees are in the areas of the world that are non-demo-

cratic. Meanwhile, democratic nations are more likely to support timely international action to fight terrorism, trafficking and disease.

Democracy also has the best record of fostering the stability, openness and dynamism required for global economic growth, which is itself another important U.S. national security interest.

I've been in many arguments about which comes first, economic or political development. The truth is they go together. Democracy has to deliver because people want to vote and eat.

For all these reasons, the health of democracy is clearly vital to America's interest and my central message today is that promoting democracy is not just right; it is also necessary, smart and cost-effective. After all, foreign assistance is only about 1 percent of the total U.S. budget and democracy assistance represents just 4 percent of that.

The question is how to go about promoting democracy. In any society, building democracy is never easy, never fully accomplished and it's something to be worked on, step by step, country by country, day by day. And that's precisely the philosophy that has guided the National Endowment for Democracy and our four core institutions—NDI, the International Republican Institute, the Center for International Private Enterprise, and the Solidarity Center.

As you know, the NED and the institutes grew out a speech that President Reagan made to the British Parliament, in which he stated and I quote, "Our military strength is a prerequisite to peace, but let it be clear we maintain this strength in the hope it will never be used, for the ultimate determinant in the struggle that's now going on in the world will not be bombs and rockets, but a test of wills and ideas, a trial of spiritual resolve, the values we hold, the beliefs we cherish, the ideals to which we are dedicated." And those words remain true today and the work of the NED and its institute remains vital to our national security.

I've seen the work of these organizations up close. They have developed relationships at the highest levels of government across party lines and at the grass roots and their programs are serving important U.S. strategic interests as are the efforts of the U.S. Institute of Peace.

My submitted testimony includes examples of NDI's positive effect. In Iraq, NDI opinion research is helping us understand what kind of governance Iraqi citizens want in a post-liberation Mosul. In Syria, we are advising local citizens and groups and administrative councils in dozens of community and in Ukraine, NDI and its European partners have brought together all eight party factions in the Parliament to agree on procedures that will make it easier to build consensus around economic and political reform.

As our experience in these countries demonstrates, there's nothing automatic or easy about democratic change but we should remember that the mission of U.S. democracy assistance is not to impose democracy. That is an oxymoron. Democracy is not a product or a service. It cannot be exported or imported. It must grow from within. However, the United States can help plant the seed with democracy assistance and that money is well spent.

Thanks to the tremendous efforts of this subcommittee, the omnibus appropriations act enacted by Congress last week provides full

funding for democracy assistance, but as welcome as this step is, I'm concerned about the future. The so-called "skinny" budget proposal includes steep and arbitrary cuts to the State Department and international affairs' budget which would inflict irreparable harm on democracy assistance, as well as other vital diplomatic and development programs.

At the same time, the cement appears to be hardening on a new global split between democratic and undemocratic forces. The United States must stand with small democrats and not give any encouragement to authoritarians and that means we must uphold both our principles and our interests as we pursue our foreign policy. America's leaders have always needed to weigh a variety of factors when deciding which foreign governments to support. It is sometimes necessary to make alliances of convenience with countries that do not share our values. But even when we make such arrangements, we should never lose sight of our long-term interests. Democracy and human rights must always be a pillar of our national security strategy and part of our bilateral agenda even with those countries where they're in short supply. Without this commitment, American foreign policy would lose its moral compass, it's most compelling claim to global respect and ultimately the support and understanding of the American people.

Make no mistake, shedding our support for democracy would put in jeopardy our long-term economic, political and security interests. We must never forget that freedom is perhaps the clearest expression of national purpose ever adopted and it's America's purpose. Like other profound human aspirations, it can never be fully achieved; it is not a possession; it is a pursuit. And it is the star by which American foreign policy must continue to navigate in the years.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, your ongoing leadership is essential if America is going to continue to lead the roster of democracy champions.

Thank you so very much for allowing us to testify.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy, distinguished members of the subcommittee: Thank you for holding today's hearing on U.S. democracy assistance and for inviting me to testify as Chairman of the Board of the National Democratic Institute.

Before I begin, I want to express my deepest respect and appreciation for the vital role this subcommittee has played in sustaining and strengthening the non-military tools of American power. Experience has taught me that diplomacy, development, and democracy are as integral to our national security as defense. In today's uncertain and dangerous world, we weaken these national security tools at our peril.

I am pleased today to be able to appear alongside three good friends.

When I was in office, Jim Kolbe was a key partner on foreign assistance programs in Congress.

A few years after I left government, I had the opportunity to work with Vin Weber on a Council on Foreign Relations Task Force on democracy in the Arab world.

And more recently, Steve Hadley and I co-chaired the Atlantic Council's Middle East Strategy Task Force, which identified failures in governance as the root cause of the crisis in the region, and recommended that the international community focus more of its efforts on long-term institution building in the Middle East. The kind of support offered by democracy assistance programs and by independent organizations such as the U.S. Institute of Peace is a vital component of the strategy we proposed.

With that in mind, my testimony today will focus on three areas:

- First, the link between the growth of democracy abroad and our security here at home;
- Second, the strategic impact of U.S. democracy assistance programs;
- Third, the role of democracy assistance in addressing the threats and challenges facing America in the world.

There are still some in Washington and elsewhere who believe that promoting democracy does not qualify as real foreign policy. They see little connection between fostering democratic practices and the hard-headed pursuit of American interests.

But our wisest leaders, Democrats and Republicans alike, have always understood that American foreign policy must be shaped not solely on the basis of what we are against, but also what we are for. And our interests dictate that we should be for a world in which democracy is defended and universal values upheld.

The past 70 years provides ample proof that democracy is more than just another form of government; it is also a powerful generator of international security, prosperity, and peace.

Yesterday, May 8, marked 72 years since the end of World War II in Europe. In the years that followed, democracy helped Germany and Japan become integrated into the world economy and evolve into key allies of the United States.

Forty years later, the promise of democracy inspired Solidarity, the Velvet Revolution and other movements that lifted the Iron Curtain and ended Cold War security threats.

The democratic gains that followed in the 1990s inspired the enlargement of NATO and opened the door to EU expansion. They allowed us to work with our neighbors in this hemisphere more closely than ever to broaden prosperity, address social ills, and expand the rule of law. They enabled countries in the Asia-Pacific region—including Indonesia, India and South Korea—to achieve new levels of prosperity and become economic and strategic partners for the United States. And in Africa, the steady growth of democracy has led to improvements in development, health, and security across the continent.

When the Cold War ended, many felt democracy was in command and marching on the right side of history. But in the years since, that sense of euphoria has dissipated. The financial crisis, and growing gaps between rich and poor, have fueled anger and deepened doubts about the capacity of democracy to deliver on its promises. Recent progress in a few key countries and regions has been overshadowed by renewed authoritarianism in Russia, democratic backsliding in places such as Turkey, the rise of illiberal populism in Europe, state collapse in an authoritarian Venezuela, and the breakdown of order in parts of the Middle East and North Africa.

While history's direction no longer seems so obvious, we know that America's security needs will be influenced greatly by whether freedom finds a foothold in nations where democratic forces are being repressed.

That is because while democracy may not provide a guarantee against aggression, it is the best political insurance available. Governments that are publicly accountable rarely start wars; while regimes that run roughshod over their own citizens are often indifferent to the rights of their neighbors.

Moreover, in today's world, destabilizing conflicts that threaten U.S. interests erupt more frequently within societies than between them. Here again, democracies have a clear advantage, because they embrace pluralism, encourage tolerance, and enable citizens to pursue change in a lawful and peaceful way.

It is no coincidence that the hotspots most likely to harbor terrorists, generate waves and refugees, and produce illegal drugs are in areas of the world that are nondemocratic. Meanwhile, democratic nations are more likely to support timely international action to fight terrorism, trafficking, and disease.

It is true that democratic transitions can produce disorder in the short term, but history tells us that over the long term the opposite is true. As the legacy of totalitarianism attests, it is the denial of freedom that points the way most often to civil conflict and war.

At its best, democracy can produce the kind of stability that lasts, a stability built on the firm ground of mutual commitments and consent. This differs from the illusion of order that can be maintained only as long as dissent is silenced; the kind of order that may last for decades and yet still disappear overnight.

Democracy also has the best record of fostering the stability, openness, and dynamism required for global economic growth, which is itself another important U.S. national security interest.

I have been in many arguments about which comes first, economic or political development. But experience has taught us that democracy and development reinforce

each other. Societies grow more quickly and strongly if people are free to express their ideas, market their labor, and pursue a better life.

For all these reasons, the health of democracy is clearly vital to America's interests. And my central message today is that promoting democracy is not just right; it is also necessary, smart, and cost-effective. After all, foreign assistance is only about 1 percent of the total U.S. budget; and democracy assistance represents just 4 percent of our foreign aid.

The question is how to go about promoting democracy. Because in any society, building democracy is never easy and never fully accomplished; it is something to be worked toward, step by step, country by country, day by day.

This is precisely the philosophy that has guided the National Endowment for Democracy and its four core institutes—NDI, the International Republican Institute, the Center for International Private Enterprise, and the Solidarity Center.

As you know, NED and the party institutes grew out of President Reagan's speech to the British Parliament, in which he stated that "Our military strength is a prerequisite to peace, but let it be clear we maintain this strength in the hope it will never be used, for the ultimate determinant in the struggle that's now going on in the world will not be bombs and rockets, but a test of wills and ideas, a trial of spiritual resolve, the values we hold, the beliefs we cherish, the ideals to which we are dedicated."

Those words remain true today.

I am proud to have served as NDI's founding Vice Chair, and after stepping away from NDI for 8 years during the Clinton administration, I became Chairman of the Board of the Institute in 2001—a position I have held ever since.

My experience gives me a unique perspective on how NDI and the other core institutes of the NED have worked to help advance U.S. strategic interests around the world, along with the important efforts of USAID, the State Department's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and the Middle East Partnership Initiative of the Near East Affairs Bureau. I have seen the work of these organizations up close. They have developed relationships at the highest levels of government, across party lines and at the grass roots.

Having worked on these issues in an out of government, I can say that the pluralistic approach the United States has taken to democracy assistance has served it well. 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 on democracy issues is more difficult.

The truth is that while the U.S. Government—including the White House, State Department, Congress, and overseas embassies—must set the tone and provide needed resources for democracy assistance, much of the day-to-day democratic development can and should be carried out, with proper oversight, by nongovernmental organizations, which operate in the realm of people-to-people relations.

Although conducted at a distance from the U.S. Government, these programs serve important U.S. strategic interests.

We see this in Iraq, where NDI has been on the ground for more than a dozen years. In recent months, NDI public opinion research has been identifying what kind of governing structures local residents want in post-liberation Mosul and elsewhere in the country.

This research is critical because experience has shown that military operations to root out terrorism will succeed over the long term only if they are followed by sustainable improvements in governance with institutions that enjoy the confidence of the public. The work that NDI is doing to understand the preferences and attitudes of Sunni, Shia, and minority populations, combined with our work in the field to empower local partners, can help enable those improvements in governance to take root.

The same is true across the border in Syria, where more than thirty NDI governance advisers are working each day helping to advise local citizen groups and administrative councils in dozens of communities across northern Syria. Thousands of consultations and training sessions have been conducted, reaching more than 500 council members and 7,000 civic activists. The growing relationships between citizens and these councils are, under challenging circumstances, improving living conditions and creating a culture of democratic governance.

These civic groups and councils are also directly challenging extremist groups. As one regional observer put it, "you may think Syrians are condemned to an unpleasant choice between Bashar Al-Asad and the jihadists, but the real choice being fought out by the Syrians is between violent authoritarianism on the one hand and grassroots democracy on the other."

In the Middle East and elsewhere, the mission of U.S. democracy assistance is not to impose democracy. That is an oxymoron. Democracy is not a product or a service. It cannot be exported or imported. It must grow from within.

Still, there is no truth to the argument that democracy is not suited to certain regions. Democratic elements are present in every major culture. Similarly, no nation is unready for democracy, because no country is ready for dictatorship.

Yet if democracy is going to take root, we have learned that it must be accompanied by policies that will improve the living standards for the many, not just the privileged few. In short, the institutions of democracy must deliver. People want to vote and eat.

To that end, deepening democracy so that it can deliver tangible improvements to people's lives must become even more of a focus for U.S. democracy assistance.

The stakes for democracy's success are high in Ukraine, where NDI and its European partners have brought together all eight party factions in the parliament to agree on procedures that will make it easier to build consensus around economic and political reforms. The dialogue has taken place in Belgium, France, and Ukraine, and the feedback we have received has been positive. NDI is also supporting local civil society groups and larger national organizations who are pushing for economic and political change, and advocating for more women in elected office.

These efforts are producing results, as citizens without prior experience in activism are participating in decisionmaking in large numbers. Through NDI programs alone, more than 45,000 citizens have engaged directly in the national reform process, including a decentralization process that 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.

There is nothing automatic or easy about democratic change. But American freedom, prosperity and peace depend, in large measure, on whether democratic institutions succeed around the world. That depends, in turn, on America's willingness to continue working with our partners to promote democracy. And that depends on whether the administration and Congress provide the resources required for our most effective democracy-builders to do their jobs.

Thanks to the tremendous efforts of this subcommittee, the omnibus appropriations act enacted by Congress last week provides full funding for democracy assistance and will enable NDI, the other NED-affiliated institutes and other groups to carry on vital work for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Republicans and Democrats alike have expressed strong support for elevating democracy and human rights in our foreign policy, including in a bipartisan letter sent to President Trump last week.

As welcome as these steps may be, there is much to be concerned about regarding the future of U.S. democracy assistance.

The so-called "skinny" budget proposal includes steep and arbitrary cuts to the State Department and international affairs budget which would inflict irreparable harm on democracy assistance, as well as other vital diplomatic and development programs.

At the same time, the cement appears to be hardening on a new global split between democratic and undemocratic forces. On one side is our Community of Democracies, on the other is a Community of Dictators. More than 25 years after the Cold War, we do not want Vladimir Putin—rather than the likes of Havel, Walesa, or Mandela—to point the way to the future.

We must not provide these undemocratic forces encouragement, and that means the United States must not make the mistake of casting aside issues of democracy and human rights when it conducts its foreign policy.

I am nearly 80 years old, without stars in my eyes. I understand that no system of government, not even democracy, guarantees prosperity or peace. Our leaders must weigh a variety of factors when deciding which foreign governments to support. It is sometimes necessary to make alliances of convenience with countries that do not share our values.

Even when we make such arrangements, we should never lose sight of our long-term interests in promoting and sustaining democratic governance, which is ultimately the best guarantor of peace, prosperity and stability. This means democracy and human rights must always be a pillar of our national security strategy and a part of our bilateral agenda, even with those countries where they are in short supply. And that agenda includes the types of programs we are discussing today.

Moving forward, we must remember that the alternative to support for democracy is complicity in the rule of governments that lack the blessing of their own people. That policy would betray those who are most sympathetic to our values and reveal a preference for the sterile order of repression over the rich and self-correcting sus-

tainability of a free society. Such a preference might be expected of leaders from Moscow or Beijing, but not America or the community of democratic nations.

The truth is that our values and our interests are not in conflict with each other. Our principles and our interests coincide, and if we do not act accordingly, we will serve neither effectively. If America is lukewarm or transparently hypocritical in its support for democracy, we will do more damage to our long-term interests than any short-term gains secured by a cynical approach. The more democracy is challenged, the more its champions must insist on its validity as the best system of governments humans have devised.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee: your leadership is essential if America is to continue to lead the roster of democracy's champions. And much depends upon whether we do. Because the defining struggle of the 21st century is not, as many predicted, a clash of religious civilizations; it is instead a competition between democratic and autocratic systems of government.

Our adversaries are determined to exploit democracy's openness, as we have seen with Russia's attempts to interfere in democratic elections around the world. But those who wish to tear democracy down can succeed only if democracy's guardians are too complacent, too divided, too timid, or too stuck in the past to stop them.

The mission for small "d" democrats like us therefore begins with continuing our support for countries such as Ukraine, Burma, and Tunisia that are in the midst of a democratic transition and in need of outside support; but it cannot stop there.

Ultimately, our ability to promote democracy successfully depends on the credibility and appeal of our example. It is hard to persuade others to follow our lead when all they see is gridlock and partisanship. But in a free country, the solution to setbacks can be found—not by bowing to the false gods of nationalism and tyranny—but by building better, more flexible and responsive institutions.

To lead successfully, we must adjust to the ubiquity of social media, the changing nature of the workplace, and the desire that people everywhere have for sources of constancy in their lives.

We must place a priority on ways to stimulate economic growth while simultaneously narrowing the gaps between rich and poor, urban and rural, women and men, skilled and unskilled.

We must work across borders to respond to transnational challenges, including terrorism, climate change, sectarian violence, and too many people chasing too few jobs.

Above all, we must recognize that democracy's unique virtue is its ability—through reason and the kind of open debate that is the hallmark of the U.S. Congress—to find remedies for its own shortcomings.

That job is within our power to do, and we had better get on with it before it is too late.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee: make no mistake, building democracy at home and supporting democratic institutions abroad is the continuation of heroic work. Without this commitment, American foreign policy would lose its moral compass, its most compelling claim to global respect, and ultimately, the support and understanding of the American people. Shedding our support for democracy would put in jeopardy our long-term economic, political, and security interests.

Freedom is perhaps the clearest expression of national purpose ever adopted, and it is America's purpose. Like other profound human aspirations, it can never fully be achieved. It is not a possession; it is a pursuit. And it is the star by which American foreign policy must continue to navigate in the years to come.

I want once again to thank each of you for the efforts you make every day on behalf of our Nation and the principles we have cherished for more than two centuries.

I appreciate deeply the opportunity to testify before you, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you all for taking time out of your schedules to come. Senator Leahy, would you like to say anything?

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY

Senator LEAHY. Mr. Chairman, I want to apologize for being late. I was at another meeting about foreign operations. Everyone of these witnesses is a friend of mine. Secretary Albright, Mr. Hadley and Congressman Vin Weber, and Congressman Jim Kolbe who held the position you presently hold, Mr. Chairman, in the House. Thank you all for being here.

I don't want to sound partisan but I worry when our President calls Vladimir Putin a strong leader or calls Egypt's President el-Sisi a fantastic guy or congratulating Turkey's President Erdoğan on his recent consolidation of power and inviting Philippine President Duterte to the White House, a man who has condoned and even claimed that he himself has committed murders in his country. We see members of religious groups, reporters, activists being locked up.

We have to understand that many times in these societies, they look to us to help them speak out. What happens if we cut these programs as some have proposed? What does it mean for civil society organizations in Russia, Egypt, Venezuela, Cambodia, and so many other countries? But also, what does it say about the United States?

We have so much to be proud of in this country and we have done so much, Republicans and Democrats working to support the best about this country. We're not going to create exact models of the United States around the world. No, but we can bring our principles of democracy and freedom, speech, religion, assembly, and encourage others. I think, as the most powerful, wealthiest nation on earth, we have a moral responsibility to do that. Let the people in those countries decide, but we can help them do it.

Mr. Chairman, you and I have worked together for years on these programs and I'm sure we'll continue to. But, I also want to thank these four. You couldn't have four better voices testifying here today.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Senator Leahy.

Mr. Hadley.

**STATEMENT OF HON. STEPHEN HADLEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD,
THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE**

Mr. HADLEY. Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I'd like to say a word about the role of democratic values in America's foreign policy and what is required for democracy assistance to succeed in today's world.

America has always been about its principles. Its history has been the record of its struggle to realize these principles at home and to advance them abroad. Freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are the very DNA of this Nation. Most every nation on earth was formed on the basis of a common language, an accepted culture, or a shared ethnic identity. America was not. It was formed on the basis of a set of principles that were enshrined in the founding documents, embraced by our citizens, and have attracted immigrants from all over the world. And because the founders of this Nation believed that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were endowed by their Creator to all men and women, these principles applies not just to Americans but to men and women around the world.

Political democracy and free markets were the core of the rules-based international order that America and Europe created in the aftermath of World War II. And every war that America has fought since that time has been fought in the name of advancing the cause of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

America has never accepted the idea that it had to choose between its democratic principles and its interests. This is a false choice. Advancing freedom and democracy in the world also advances American interests. For a world that reflects these principles, is more likely to be a world in which America and Americans can thrive and prosper. And it is also more likely to be a world of peace and security. Nations operating on democratic principles are better able to manage internal conflict so that it does not become violent and tear apart families and communities, undercut economic progress and development, and spark regional and even international violence.

This is why programs to advance social justice, security, and rule of law in fragile states, to foster inclusive societies, and to promote free and fair elections unaffected by electoral violence are so critical. The organizations represented by the witnesses before you today all engage in this important work. It is critical to developing and sustaining durable and peaceful democracies; and, it is critical to avoid the violent conflicts that too often have required U.S. military intervention, with all its attendant costs in lives and treasure.

Let me give you just three quick examples from the work of the U.S. Institute of Peace, whose board of directors I chair.

In Iraq, USIP has brokered peace accords among tribal leaders to sustain the precious gains of our military, intelligence officers, and diplomats. Ten years ago, U.S. Army Colonel Michael M. Kershaw asked USIP to preempt cycles of tribal revenge killings in the Mahmoudiya region, known as the Triangle of Death in Iraq. USIP orchestrated a reconciliation process that helped heal the sectarian wounds of conflict and facilitated a peace agreement that has lasted 10 years.

USIP successfully repeated this process last year in Tikrit, where over 380,000 Iraqis have now been able to return to their homes; in Kirkuk, where 50 tribal and religious leaders recently signed a preliminary peace agreement; and, most recently, in Mosul, where USIP has begun similar work in neighboring communities. I could say a word about what we're doing in Tunisia, also in Nigeria.

This is what USIP is engaged in every day and I want to thank the support of this subcommittee, in 2017, the fiscal year, where USIP will be able to increase its work in Tunisia, Iraq, and Nigeria. Your support will be even more essential in 2018. The OMB's skinny budget has slated USIP for elimination, something I can't understand given the contribution it makes to reducing conflict, saving U.S. lives and U.S. taxpayers' money. So, the support of this subcommittee will be essential to ensure that USIP and the other organizations represented before you today can continue their critical work in support of America's national security and its men and women in uniform.

Traditionally America has sought to advance its democratic principles through these kinds of programs and through partnerships with non-governmental organizations. As you know, a number of these programs are now under attack. Democracy seems to be on the defensive in the world today and freedom on the decline. Part of it is because democracies have failed to deliver as Madeleine mentioned but also it is because the authoritarian states are now mounting a concerted campaign to undermine democratic principles

not only in their states at home but also abroad. There are other factors, which we can talk about.

Question, what is to be done? We should actively support those international organizations like Community of Democracies and the Open Government Partnership that promote democratic norms and principles. Same for organizations like the Organization of American States and the African Union.

We have to recognize that while advancing democratic values abroad, it is very much in America's interest, it is not America's only interest. We have others. We need to have an interagency structure for make tradeoffs.

We should integrate democracy programming in a broader process for addressing and balancing the full range of our interests.

We should certainly reform and make more effective the organizations and programs that promote democratic principles. But deep, arbitrary, and across-the-board cuts in their budgets risks throwing the baby out with the bath water.

We need to support local civil society; we need to empower individual citizens and citizen groups with new communication and social media technologies.

Finally, we need to promote democratic principles effectively abroad and we can only do that if we can show the world that the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law are working effectively here at home.

A positive American example may not cause entrenched authoritarian leaders to see the light but it will inspire their people and will give them hope. We need to show them that the American political and economic system works; we need to overcome our political gridlock; we need to show that our economic system can provide inclusive economic growth that is on a sustainable basis that benefits all Americans. If we fix the American system at home, it will help fix our brand abroad and counter the narrative of authoritarian states that democracy is dead and buried.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. STEPHEN J. HADLEY

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. It is an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to appear before you today—and especially to do so with my friends and colleagues Madeleine Albright, Jim Kolbe, and Vin Weber.

With the permission of the subcommittee, I would like to offer a few thoughts about the critical role of democratic values in America's foreign policy and what is required for democracy assistance to succeed in the world of today.

America has always been about its principles. Its history has been the record of its struggle to realize these principles at home and to advance them abroad.

Freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are the very DNA of this Nation. Most every nation on earth was formed on the basis of a common language, an accepted culture, or a shared ethnic identity.

America was not. It was formed on the basis of a set of principles that were enshrined in its founding documents, embraced by its citizens, and that have attracted immigrants from all over the world. And because the founders of this Nation believed that "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" were endowed by their Creator to "all men [and women]", these principles applied not just to Americans but to men and women around the world.

Political democracy and free markets were at the core of the rules-based international order that America and Europe created in the aftermath of World War II.

And every war that America has fought since that time has been fought in the name of advancing the cause of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

America has never accepted the idea that it had to choose between its democratic principles and its interests. This is a false choice. Advancing freedom and democracy in the world also advances American interests. For a world that reflects these principles, is more likely to be a world in which America—and Americans—can thrive and prosper.

It is also more likely to be a world of peace and security. Nations operating on democratic principles are better able to manage internal conflict so that it does not become violent and tear apart families and communities, undercut economic progress and development, and spark regional and even international violence.

This is why programs to advance justice, security, and rule of law in fragile states, to foster inclusive societies, and to promote free and fair elections unaffected by electoral violence are so critical.

The organizations represented by the witnesses before you today all engage in this important work. It is critical to developing and sustaining durable and peaceful democracies. And it is critical to avoiding the violent conflicts that too often have required U.S. military intervention, with all its attendant costs in lives and treasure.

Let me give you just three quick examples from the work of the U.S. Institute of Peace, whose board of directors I chair.

- In Iraq, USIP has brokered peace accords among tribal leaders to sustain the precious gains of our military, intelligence officers, and diplomats.
- Ten years ago, U.S. Army Colonel Michael M. Kershaw asked USIP to preempt cycles of tribal revenge killings in the Mahmoudiya region, known as the Triangle of Death. USIP orchestrated a reconciliation process that helped heal the sectarian wounds of conflict and facilitated a peace agreement that has lasted 10 years.
- USIP successfully repeated this process last year in Tikrit, where over 380,000 Iraqis have now been able to return to their homes; in Kirkuk, where 50 tribal and religious leaders recently signed a preliminary peace agreement; and, most recently, in Mosul, where USIP has begun similar work in neighboring communities.
- In Tunisia, USIP conducts mediated dialogues to broker agreements among secular and Salafist student unions on university campuses, which are otherwise recruiting grounds for future extremists.
- In Nigeria, USIP is working with local citizens and the governors of the northern provinces to identify key reforms essential for restoring stability and peace to areas torn apart by Boko Haram, sectarian and tribal conflict, chronic poverty, and now acute famine.

Thanks to the active support of this subcommittee, in 2017 USIP will be able to increase its work in Tunisia, Iraq, and Nigeria. Your support will be even more essential in 2018, to ensure that USIP and the other organizations represented before you today can continue their critical work in support of America's national security and its men and women in uniform.

Traditionally America has sought to advance its democratic principles through these kinds of programs and through partnerships with non-governmental organizations. Some of these programs and partnerships have now come under popular suspicion and governmental pressure even from some of America's traditional friends and allies. Democracy seems to be on the defensive, and freedom on the decline.

Certainly part of the problem is that democratic governments, have in too many cases, failed to deliver. Plagued by corruption, cronyism, and lack of competence, they have not provided the level of services, prosperity, or security expected by their citizens.

But we must recognize that a major factor has also been the emergence over the last decade of an active campaign by authoritarian governments to discredit democratic principles both in their own societies and abroad. They offer alternative models of governance based on nationalism, authoritarianism, and state capitalism as better able to provide stability, security, and well being for their people.

There are other factors as well that have contributed to the current disillusionment with democracy. The failure of the Arab awakening in the Middle East and the descent of too many of those states into chaos, carnage, and civil war has played a role. Many citizens of Europe and the United States suffer from a crisis of confidence, uncertain whether democratic principles still work for them.

America's response to these developments has been inadequate. We are currently losing the global struggle between democratic values and authoritarianism.

What is to be done?

We should actively support those international organizations like the Community of Democracies and the Open Government Partnership that promote democratic norms and principles.

We should actively support those regional organizations like the Organization of American States and the African Union whose missions include promoting democratic institutions and principles among their members.

We should recognize that while advancing democratic values abroad is very much in America's interest, it is not America's only interest. Fighting terrorism, countering proliferation, resisting aggression, protecting the homeland, and promoting economic growth and stability are also priorities. In specific situations, trade-offs will have to be made.

So we should integrate democracy programming into a broader process for addressing and balancing the full range of U.S. interests in a specific country or region. Where a lack of democracy represents a threat to fundamental American interests, democracy programming should have increased priority.

We should certainly reform and make more effective those organizations and programs that promote democratic principles. But deep, arbitrary, and across-the-board cuts in their budgets risks throwing the baby out with the bath water.

We should support the growth of local civil society as the bottom-up foundation for democratic societies. But we must not discredit these organizations in the eyes of their fellow citizens or subject their members to harassment, imprisonment, or worse.

We should empower individual citizens and citizen groups with new communication and social media technologies and applications to expose corruption and to hold their governments to account.

We should ensure that U.S. programs and activities cannot be criticized as partisan or favoring one political faction over another. They must be inclusive and available to all who support democratic principles and forswear extremist violence.

Promoting democratic principles is especially challenging when America's traditional friends and allies are the ones cracking down on U.S. programs and partnerships seeking to advance these principles.

Selective public exhortation to adopt more democratic practices certainly has a role. But such public exhortation should also be coupled with public reassurance of American support and concrete steps to help address the legitimate security concerns of these countries. This may make more effective U.S. private encouragement to open up their political systems.

Congress has an important role to play here. As a former NSC colleague recently suggested to me, for a U.S. ally facing a terrorist threat, conditioning security assistance on meeting difficult to achieve human rights benchmarks can be counterproductive. For the United States risks finding itself either having to cut off aid to the government, thereby running the risk of terrorist violence destabilizing the country, or of having to certify that the government is making more democratic progress than is actually the case.

An alternative approach could be for Congress to incentivize positive behavior by identifying the steps it would like to see and then periodically holding public hearings to assess progress. This may better achieve the democratic progress on which peace and stability ultimately depend.

Finally, to promote democratic principles effectively abroad, we must show the world that the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights, and rule of law are working effectively here at home.

Much of the world associates democratic principles with America's political and economic success. If America is performing well for its people, those principles are vindicated. If America is not performing well for its people, those principles are called into question.

A positive American example may not cause entrenched authoritarian leaders to see the light, but it will inspire their people and give them hope.

What can we do?

We can fix the American political and economic systems here at home. We can overcome partisan gridlock. We can show that our political system can reach bipartisan consensus and solve the problems facing the country—whether it is the tax system, the healthcare system, our deteriorating social and physical infrastructure, or exploding entitlement programs. We can show that our economic system can produce inclusive economic growth on a sustainable basis that benefits all Americans.

Fixing the America system at home will help restore the American brand abroad and counter the narrative of the authoritarian states that democracy is dead and buried.

Thank you for your time and attention.

The views expressed in this testimony are those of the witness and not the U.S. Institute of Peace.

STATEMENT OF HON. VIN WEBER, CO-VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Chairman Graham and Senator Leahy and I'd like to say a special greeting to an old colleague from the House, Senator Durbin. It's nice to have a Midwesterner up on the dais. It's a great pleasure to be able to be here today. I've been on the board of the National Endowment for Democracy for 16 of the last 17 years, including 8 years as chairman. Our chairman, Judy Shelton, is not able to be with us today so I'm substituting for her.

On the 20th anniversary of the NED board, I had the honor of introducing President Bush and I sent word to the White House that a good Republican was going to be introducing the President and I was at his disposal. I'd say anything he wanted me to say and the word came back, "The President says keep it short." So, I will follow that advice today as well, Mr. Chairman, as my colleagues have already said a good deal of what I would have to say.

We are proud that the subcommittee has recognized that NED is uniquely positioned in their words to lead a strategic response to the grave threats facing democracy in today's world. With funds provided by the subcommittee for this purpose, NED has begun to implement the response to these threats, among them the subversion of the information space by Russia and other autocracies, the repression of civil society, the rise of violent extremist movements, the growing influence of kleptocratic regimes, and the failure, sadly, of democratic transitions in the Middle East and other regions.

In its enumeration of NED's unparalleled institutional assets, the subcommittee has rightly noted NED's decades of experience in tackling the toughest political challenges, its core institutes, and its global grants program and activist networks. I want to emphasize this asset of the NED. Secretary Albright talked about the work we do through the four core institutes but it's worth re-emphasizing again. It's the vision that this subcommittee has supported and the vision of President Reagan's original speech, we work through core institutes affiliated with the Republican party, the Democratic party, the AFL/CIO and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—business, labor, Republicans and Democrats. I think that's especially worth noting today as we go through a period in the political life of our country where everybody seems to be talking about disunity and partisan polarization, that on these issues of support for democracy and human rights around the world, they should serve as a great source of unity for our country.

The American people should know that this subcommittee, this Congress are standing together regardless of partisanship behind the fundamental values that have made us so great as a country.

While NED is of course subject to congressional oversight, its mission is not to advance a particular U.S. policy or an agenda made in Washington. It is to help build the institutions of a free

society that will make it possible for people “to choose their own way, develop their own culture, reconcile their own differences through peaceful means,” as President Reagan said in his famed speech which has already been referenced, to the British Parliament.

Since NED was founded more than three decades ago, aiding democracy has become we believe a bedrock principle of America’s approach to the world supported by administrations of both political parties and consistently by the Congress and members of Congress of both political parties because it advances America’s most important interests and also affirms our highest ideals.

There are some who believe that we have to choose between defending our resources and affirming our values. As Steve said a minute ago, they pose a false and dangerous dichotomy; our interests and our values are mutually reinforcing, as is maintaining both our military strength and our moral vision.

Mr. Chairman, I have a number of testimonials from people that we’ll submit for the record. It’s worth noting that in almost all cases these are people that are not only fighting a political fight but in many cases putting their lives on the line.

If we cease supporting such brave people, our country will lose contact with its roots and values, and the result will be devastating for our national interests and our moral identity. So, with your help, let us carry on with this worthy and essential work.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. VIN WEBER

I want to begin by thanking you, Senator Graham, and Ranking Member Leahy for holding this important hearing today. Speaking on behalf of the National Endowment for Democracy and its new board chair, Judy Shelton, I also want to thank the subcommittee for its unwavering support of NED and its mission. We’re proud that the subcommittee has recognized that NED is “uniquely positioned to lead a strategic response” to the grave threats facing democracy in today’s world. With funds provided by the subcommittee for this purpose, NED has begun to implement the response to these threats, among them the subversion of the information space by Russia and other autocracies, the repression of civil society, the rise of violent extremist movements, the growing influence of kleptocratic regimes, and the failure of democratic transitions in the Middle East and other regions.

In its enumeration of NED’s unparalleled institutional assets, the subcommittee has rightly noted NED’s decades of experience in tackling the toughest political challenges, its core institutes, and its global grants program and activist networks.

I want to call attention to an additional asset that accounts for NED’s success, and that is its nongovernmental character. NED’s independence has enabled it to respond quickly and effectively to rapidly changing problems. It also makes it possible for NED to connect directly to the brave people who are at the cutting edge of the democracy struggles in the world.

While NED is of course subject to congressional oversight, its mission is not to advance a particular U.S. policy or an agenda made in Washington. It is to help build the institutions of a free society that will make it possible for people “to choose their own way, to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means.”

Those words, Mr. Chairman, were spoken by President Ronald Reagan’s in his famed address to the British Parliament that launched the National Endowment for Democracy. June 8 will mark the 35th anniversary of that seminal speech, when President Reagan declared that “We must be staunch in our conviction that freedom is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few, but the inalienable and universal right of all human beings.” NED embodies that core American belief.

Since NED was founded more than three decades ago, aiding democracy has become a bedrock foundational principle of America’s approach to the world. Such work enjoys that standing because it advances America’s most important interests and also affirms our highest ideals.

There are some people who believe that we have to choose between defending our interests and affirming our values. They pose a false and dangerous dichotomy, since our interests and values are mutually reinforcing, as is maintaining both our military strength and our moral vision.

President Reagan spoke to this issue in the Westminster Address with great eloquence and force. "Our military strength," he said, "is a prerequisite to peace, but let it be clear we maintain this strength in the hope it will never be used. For the ultimate determinant in the struggle now going on for the world will not be bombs and rockets, but a test of wills and ideas, a trial of spiritual resolve: the values we hold, the beliefs we cherish, the ideals to which we are dedicated."

These words continue to resonate today, especially among the people on the front lines of the struggle for democracy who benefit from NED's support.

Here's what a few of them have said in messages prompted by this hearing:

- The leader of the Al-Tahreer Association for Development, a key Iraqi NGO working to rebuild trust and governance in Mosul after the horrors of ISIS, wrote that they could not have carried out their successful projects without NED's "financial and emotional support."
- Leila Yunus, the human rights defender in Azerbaijan and a recipient of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize, has urged Congress to "not only sustain but expand the work of NED" as repression has increased and other foreign donors have pulled out.
- The Rev. Benjamin Yoon in South Korea has written that "Without the material and institutional support of NED, the North Korea human rights movement as we know it today," of which he is considered to be the founder, "would not have existed." He emphasizes that such support remains essential to "bringing justice to the North Korean victims."
- Khalil Parsa, the Afghan anti-corruption activist who survived an assassination attempt last October and who will receive NED's Democracy Award on June 7, has written that NED's assistance "is a lifeline for civil society groups that raise awareness on good governance and on a daily basis fight the rampant corruption that is a lethal threat to Afghanistan's security and political stability."
- And the Dalai Lama has written that NED's "work on the promotion of freedom is vitally important given the current volatile situation in many parts of the world and the threat these pose to peace and freedom."

Mr. Chairman, if we cease supporting such brave people, our country will lose contact with its roots and values, and the result will be devastating for our national interests and moral identity. So with your help, let us carry on with this worthy and absolutely essential work.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES KOLBE, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD,
THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE**

Mr. KOLBE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After listening to my colleagues on this panel, I'm inclined to note that it's not that everything that needs to be said hasn't been said. It's just not that everybody has said it yet. So, I'll plunge in and say a little bit more perhaps of the same sort of thing.

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy, and Members of this subcommittee, thank you for holding this timely and important hearing today, and for this opportunity to testify. Mr. Chairman, your leadership and the work of this subcommittee has been crucial in advancing America's foreign policy priorities, particularly in keeping deeply ingrained values of democracy and freedom on the forefront of our foreign policy agenda.

I'm privileged to appear here today with this distinguished panel as Vice-Chairman of the Board of the International Republican Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, democracy assistance organization that is active in more than 80 countries around the world. Of course, Mr. Chairman, the organizations represented here at this table today, are not the only ones working around the globe to keep the flames of freedom and democracy alive and I would be remiss if I did not mention at least one on whose board I am privileged

to serve, Freedom House. Now, in its 76th year, it has provided assistance to more than 3,000 human rights' defenders, religious minorities and civil society groups in more than 100 countries, often at great peril to their own staffs.

The challenges we face here today are diverse and often quite daunting. In the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the spread of democracy seemed almost inevitable. We saw dramatic gains on the democracy front not only in the former Eastern bloc, but across the world and came to believe that somehow this was inevitable—the inevitable course of events for all countries. It didn't turn out that way, however. For the past decade, there has been a steady and disturbing increase in backsliding by transitioning countries, and a consolidation of power by authoritarian regimes worldwide, a condition well documented in Freedom House's annual Freedom in the World report.

The fact is undemocratic and authoritarian regimes almost always undermine peace and stability over time. Self-interested, aggressive or reckless policies often promote mass migration and tragic conditions for refugees. In fact, when you consider those trouble spots in the world today, the root of the problem almost always lies with, or is exacerbated by, authoritarian governments. Recent years have also brought increased pressures on U.S. resources and budgets. American taxpayers have every right to demand a return on the investment of their tax dollars.

Mr. Chairman, as a former appropriator and chairman of this same subcommittee in the House of Representatives, I sympathize with the tough choices you face in this subcommittee—balancing competing interests, setting funding priorities, and at the same time assuring that taxpayer dollars are wisely spent.

The development sector needs to be able to demonstrate the value of taxpayer investment in these programs. While disaster relief is a crucial aspect of our international aid, we must also invest in programs that enable other governments to solve and prevent on their own, crises like famine, natural disasters, or acts of aggression. A governance-focused strategy, which supports the development of citizen-centered government and core institutions of democracy, is the embodiment of the adage that “if you give a man a fish, he will eat for a day; but if you teach a man to fish, he will never go hungry.”

History shows us a clear link between democratic government and stability. Democracies are more adaptable to change, more stable, and tend to be more prosperous. As President Reagan recognized during the Cold War, our ability to support the spread of truly citizen-centered government is one of the most powerful tools we possess to achieve American interests.

For more than 30 years, IRI has been helping to lay the foundations for democratic governance, creating the conditions for governments to become more citizen-centered and thus more stable. Although IRI's global reach is significant, of course we're not able to work in every country that is in need of assistance, but our successful programs in each continent provide powerful examples of best practices to their neighbors and the wider region. IRI's program in Tunisia is helping strengthen the transparency and communications capacity of the government to increase citizen input and im-

prove government response to citizens' concerns. In Mongolia, IRI partnered with local governments to combat corruption and consolidate democratic gains. And in Central America, IRI's programs enhanced citizen security by bridging the gap between citizens and their local and national governments.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, when President Reagan articulated his vision of democracy assistance in the same speech to the British Parliament at Westminster cited by Secretary Albright some 35 years ago, he argued that "democracy is not a fragile flower; but still it needs cultivating." As events in recent years have shown, much ground can be lost without determined "cultivating." The threat to democracy is on the rise, and support for those who are seeking to protect and nurture its growth is needed now more than ever.

At IRI we see some avenues to strengthen and improve our approach to this mission. Let me just cite three of them. One, incorporating democracy and governance as a central component of our assistance packages and tying foreign aid to progress on this criteria would be a step in the right direction. The Millennium Challenge Corporation has demonstrated the effectiveness of this type of governance-centered approach.

Second, our approaches to funding the implementation of democracy and governance programs can be more consistent. All too often, elections are seen as the driving force of democracy and governance. In reality, it's what happens between elections that matters most, when campaigns end and governing begins.

Lastly, I want to comment on the instrument we use to implement democracy and governance programs. Acquisition mechanisms are appropriate for procuring goods or services. However, unlike projects aimed at building physical infrastructure or the distribution of goods, acquisition mechanisms are inherently unsuited for projects aimed at building human capital, teaching skills, building best practices. A more tailored approach is required, and I urge you to provide oversight into how democracy and governance programs are being procured to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent in the most efficient and results-oriented manner.

Let me conclude by quoting Secretary Mattis, a quote that has been often repeated. When asked whether the international development budget is helpful to national defense, he said, "If you don't fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately. So, I think it's a cost benefit ratio." Investing in democratic governance isn't about patting ourselves on the back or feeling good; it's a clear matter of delivering results that best serve U.S. interests and maximize the return on taxpayer investment. It is my hope that this marriage of principle and pragmatism will endure in our foreign policy, and will be reflected in our approach to international development. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JIM KOLBE

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy, members of the subcommittee, thank you for holding this timely and important hearing today, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. Mr. Chairman, it is no exaggeration and certainly not a

gratuitous compliment to note that your leadership and the work of this subcommittee has been crucial to advancing America's foreign policy priorities, particularly in keeping the deeply ingrained values of democracy and freedom on the forefront of our foreign policy agenda.

I'm here today as a member of the board of the International Republican Institute (IRI), a nonprofit, nonpartisan, democracy assistance organization that is active in more than 80 countries around the world. Along with the other organizations represented here today, we trace our roots back to President Reagan and his unshakeable belief that, "Liberty is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few, but the inalienable right of all mankind."

I've been asked to address some of the challenges and opportunities facing the field of democracy assistance. While we all acknowledge there are significant challenges to our ability to support democracy worldwide, we at IRI see opportunities to invest in a governance-centered approach to international development that fosters greater stability worldwide and yields a greater return for the investment of American taxpayers.

CHALLENGES

Let me begin by addressing the challenges, which are diverse and, in some cases, quite daunting. In the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the spread of democracy seemed almost inevitable. We saw dramatic gains on the democracy front not only in the former Eastern bloc, but across the world and believed this was somehow the inevitable upward trend for all countries. It didn't turn out to be that way, however. For the past decade there has been a steady and disturbing increase in backsliding by transitioning countries, and a consolidation of power by authoritarian regimes worldwide.

The reasons for this development are complex, but the recent trend towards U.S. disengagement and "leading from behind" has been at best, unhelpful. At worst, it has encouraged the boldness with which despots like Vladimir Putin have cracked down on dissent at home and pursued aggressive and destabilizing policies abroad.

The fact is, undemocratic and authoritarian regimes almost always undermine peace and stability over time. Self-interested, aggressive or reckless policies often provoke mass migration and tragic conditions for refugees. This has a destabilizing effect on regions and threatens economic stability. We are currently seeing the consequences of such actions unfold in the Middle East, where the Assad regime—aided and abetted by the Kremlin—has precipitated a global refugee crisis on a scale not seen since World War II. We see different challenges in Asia as the world grapples with the totalitarian regime in North Korea. In fact, when you consider the most troubled spots around the world, the root of the problem almost always lies with, or is exacerbated by, authoritarian government.

Recent years have also brought increased pressure on U.S. resources and budgets. American taxpayers have every right to demand a return on investment of their tax dollars—and it's entirely understandable that some would question why their hard-earned money should be spent solving problems in other countries.

OPPORTUNITIES

Mr. Chairman, as a former appropriator and chairman of this same subcommittee in the House of Representatives, I sympathize with the tough choices you face on this subcommittee—balancing competing interests, setting funding priorities, and at the same time assuring that taxpayer dollars are wisely spent. We live in a dynamic world that presents an evolving array of threats, challenges, and opportunities. In the current funding environment, these pressures are particularly intense, and I commend the balance you have been able to achieve on this subcommittee.

The development sector needs to be able to demonstrate the value of taxpayer investment in their programs. While disaster relief is a crucial aspect of our international aid, we must also invest in programs that enable other governments to solve and prevent crises like famine, natural disaster, or acts of aggression on their own. A governance-focused strategy, which supports the development of citizen-centered government and the core institutions of democracy, is the embodiment of the adage that "if you give a man a fish, he will eat for a day; but if you teach a man to fish, he will never go hungry."

The previous administration took the approach of integrating democracy and governance programs into all development programs. While I applaud the support of a governance-focused strategy, I think a different approach is needed. Democracy assistance and governance programs require a specialized skillset—and more importantly—commitment to mission, that organizations like NED, IRI and NDI have.

More than these organizations being in the business of advancing democracy and democratic institutions, it's the reason for existence.

History shows us a clear link between democratic government and stability. Democracies are more adaptable to change, more stable, and tend to be more prosperous. They make better allies and are more dependable trading partners. Because they tolerate diversity of opinion and allow for dissent, they are, generally speaking, less likely to produce terrorists, proliferate weapons of mass destruction, or engage in armed aggression.

As President Reagan recognized during the Cold War, our ability to support the spread of truly citizen-centered governments is one of the most powerful tools we possess to advance American interests. It wasn't just guns and butter that defeated communism—the inability of the communist dictatorships to understand and respond to the needs of their people made those systems fundamentally unstable.

It is because these fundamental beliefs and core values are part and parcel of who I am and what I believe, that I respectfully submit to the Secretary of State that promotion of democracy and freedom must remain central components of our foreign policy. They must be an integral part of our objectives and of our foreign assistance programs.

IRI: A GOVERNANCE-CENTERED APPROACH TO DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

For more than 30 years, IRI has been helping to lay the foundations for democratic governance, creating the conditions for governments to become more citizen-centered and thus more stable; to become more reliable international partners in trade and diplomacy; and ultimately, to reduce the need for costly U.S. interventions.

Although IRI's global reach is significant, we of course are not able to work in every country that is in need of assistance—but our successful programs in each continent provide powerful examples of best practices to their neighbors and the wider region.

IRI's program in Tunisia is helping strengthen the transparency and communications capacity of the government to increase citizen input and improve government responsiveness to citizens' concerns. Today, Tunisia is proving that, although difficult, democracy may just be possible in a historically troubled region. In Mongolia, IRI partnered with local governments to combat corruption and consolidate democratic gains. Today, Mongolia (which became a democracy just 25 years ago) is being held up as an exemplar of how to avoid backsliding into undemocratic practices. And in Central America, IRI's programs enhancing citizen security by bridging the gap between citizens and their local and national governments is helping to build safer and more resilient communities, and helping to mitigate uncontrolled migration to North America.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee—when President Reagan articulated his vision of democracy assistance in a speech to Westminster Palace 35 years ago, he argued that “democracy is not a fragile flower; still it needs cultivating.” As events in recent years have shown, much ground can be lost without determined “cultivating.” The threat to democracy is on the rise around the world, and support for those who are seeking to protect and advance it is needed now more than ever. If the United States retreats from fighting for these objectives, the world will become even more unstable.

At IRI we see some avenues to strengthen and improve our approach to this mission:

- Incorporating democracy and governance as a central component of our assistance packages and tying foreign aid to progress on those criteria would be a step in the right direction. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has demonstrated the effectiveness of this type of governance-centered approach in maximizing the impact of international development investment. MCC includes a “hard hurdle” of basic political and civil rights into the front end when they evaluate potential compact countries. Through the life of a development compact, democracy and governance remain as a mandatory measurement for continuation of the compact. This approach acknowledges and builds into the process—in a formal and transparent way—the importance of governance to the success and sustainability of development aid.
- Our approaches to funding the implementation of democracy and governance programs can be more consistent. All-too-often, elections are seen as the driving force of democracy and governance work—but in reality, it's what happens be-

tween elections that matters most. That's when campaigns end and the hard work of governing begins.

—Lastly, I want to comment on the instrument we choose to implement democracy and governance programs. There are instances when an acquisition mechanism is appropriate for these programs—for example, procuring goods or services for government-to-government support. However, unlike projects aimed at building physical infrastructure or the distribution of goods, acquisition mechanisms are inherently unsuited for projects aimed at building human capital—teaching skills and building best practices. Human development and human systems are complex and you need the flexibility and tailored approach of an assistance mechanism to have a sustainable impact. I urge you to provide oversight into how democracy and governance programs are being procured to ensure that tax payer dollars are being spent in the most efficient and results-oriented way.

America's most effective foreign policy is one that taps into all our strengths. When General Mattis was asked whether the international development budget is helpful to national defense, he said "If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately. So I think it's a cost benefit ratio." Investing in democratic governance isn't about patting ourselves on the back or feeling good—it's a clear matter of delivering results that best serve U.S. interests and maximize the return on taxpayer investment. It is my hope that this marriage of principle and pragmatism will endure in our foreign policy going forward, and that this will be reflected in our approach to international development.

INCREASING THREATS TO U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, all. We will do 5-minute rounds of questions and answers if that is okay with everybody. It seems to me that military budgets, foreign policy, and developmental-aid budgets should be based on the threats, not just made up numbers. Mr. Hadley, you were the National Security Advisor for President Bush 43. What is the threat matrix like right now for America? Is it growing or lessening?

Mr. HADLEY. Well, if you had a threat matrix or a geo-political volatility index, I would say that it's pretty much as high as it's been in maybe my lifetime.

Senator GRAHAM. What about you, Secretary Albright? Do you agree with that?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I do agree. I think that things are out of kilter in a lot of places and we are facing threats and I do think that they need to be met by all the tools in the toolbox, not just the military but also diplomacy.

Senator GRAHAM. Do our two Congressmen, former Congressmen, do you agree with that assessment?

Mr. WEBER. I certainly agree with that assessment very strongly. I think that the threats—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, will do.

Mr. WEBER. Yes, will do. Yes, is what you get, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Mr. KOLBE. Yes.

U.S. ASSISTANCE AND SOFT POWER

Senator GRAHAM. Okay, good. You are a quick learner down there. So, do you agree with me that in light of the threats of which I agree with, reducing the State Department budget by 29 percent would do a lot of damage to soft power?

Mr. HADLEY. Yes.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you agree with me that soft power is essential in winning the war against radical Islam and many other threats we face?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Yes.

Mr. KOLBE. Absolutely.

Mr. HADLEY. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. If we tried to cut the military budget by 29 percent, people would go crazy. Do you agree with that?

Mr. HADLEY. They would and should.

Senator GRAHAM. My point is if you believe the military is essential to defending the home land, the question you have to answer: what about the other side of the equation? I believe that soft power based on my visits to the Mideast with 42 or 43, I can't remember, I've seen wars get better; I've seen them get worse. I've seen the benefits of soft power. I believe that the proposed 2018 budget basically destroys soft power as we know it and I hope we're wise enough to push back. Now having said that, is it fair to say that the State Department and any other organization can be run more efficiently? Do you see chances to reform the way we do business in 2018?

REFORMS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I do think that always it is useful to review and see what is efficient and what isn't. But I have to say I am worried about the fact that it takes an awful lot of time to reorganize and takes away time from what diplomats should be doing aside from the fact that it would be nice to have some diplomats named so they can go and be in these countries and work on soft power and represent our country.

Senator GRAHAM. Congressman Kolbe, you mentioned that procurement and acquisition is a way to reform, to save money.

Mr. KOLBE. Yes, I think that there is a—significant gains can be made in doing some reforms in the acquisition. I might add also to your last question that while reorganization is important, I would not favor putting USAID to become simply a bureau of the State Department. I think then it becomes a political arm instead of the arm that it is today of our development assistance and democracy assistance.

Senator GRAHAM. So I agree with the idea that if you want to reorganize or reform the State Department, count me in. Twenty-nine percent is not reorganizing and it is not reforming; it's gutting. Now, let us talk about the other aspect of what the State Department's all about which is protecting those who are engaged in representing our country in very dangerous places. Secretary Albright, what is your concern in terms of our security footprint for our diplomats if we reduce the State Department by 29 percent?

SECURITY FOR DIPLOMATS

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I think it is of great concern because we do know that being a representative of our country and an ambassador in the embassies, it's a dangerous job. I think people feel that it's some fancy job where people just go to receptions. The truth is and Secretary Tillerson recently stood in front of the Wall and the State Department commemorating those ambassadors who had died in

the course of serving our country. And, this is something that I feel very strongly personally because everybody who knows me knows I loved being Secretary of State, except on August 7, 1998, when our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were blown up and there was a commission that looked at what had happened there and as a result of that, we had to increase security in our embassies in a way that protected not only the ambassadors in the embassies but creates an issue about how much goes for security and how much goes for programs. So, you can't rob Peter to pay Paul and then rob Paul also. And that is what worries me about a budget that doesn't have both money for programs and for security.

U.S. GLOBAL PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE

Senator GRAHAM. Final question, Mr. Hadley. If we enacted a 29 percent cut to the State Department, the cost of security and other concerns, our footprint in the world would be dramatically smaller at a time when it should be larger. Do you agree with that general proposition?

Mr. HADLEY. I do and I also am concerned that once you cut it back, I don't think it's easy to restore. If I could just make one other point. If you look at our experience in the war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan, the problem has never been killing the bad guys or clearing the territory of terrorists. It has been after we cleared it, working to stabilize those areas so that the terrorists do not come back and that of course requires the soft power of diplomacy, development and other things. That's where we have failed. If that's where we have failed, that's the time where we need to relook and maybe even expand. We've got to do that in a more sensible, smart and successful way.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. Senator Leahy.

IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRACY PROGRAMS

Senator LEAHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Albright, you and I have known each other for a long time from your days in the White House when I was a new Senator here and on through to your time as Secretary of State. And I think I can state your position fairly by saying that defending freedom of expression and democrat institutions is a long-term investment, not a short-term investment. Is that correct?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. That's absolutely.

Senator LEAHY. I think of a number of times when you take a couple of steps forward you may go back one and a half. Can you give me some examples, perhaps when you were running the department, where our democracy programs made a tangible difference, when aid to a foreign government or to civil society paid off in some significant way?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. There were a number of places where there was a huge difference that was made by democracy programs. In the Balkans for instance, after we had been there militarily in terms of trying to help them figure out how to resolve their differences and work together and then establish and work to establish a rule of law. That also takes a very long time as was said.

I also think that there were programs and one that I think is very important and has come to fruition recently is Plan Columbia,

which was something that had a variety of aspects to it, was a bi-partisan—supported in a bi-partisan way in Washington and then worked very hard in order to establish an economic program and a political program. And I think—and it's an example frankly of something that takes a while to take root and that is a very important program. So, I do think there are others and in the Middle East also, in Lebanon and a variety of places. I think the hard part frankly is that things do backwards at times and therefore, it is important for us to be present and to know the people that we work with and to establish the kind of trust and confidence with the local partners that we have and it is—it takes a while. And I think that we should admit that which is why cutting all of a sudden is a breaking of trust and will make it difficult, as Steve said, to put back together.

Senator LEAHY. You mentioned Plan Columbia. A few weeks ago, we were talking with victims of the FARC and victims of the Colombian military. We saw the two steps forward, one, and three-quarter steps back at times. But I remember what President Santos said to the bi-partisan delegation I had taken there, which was to not give up hope. The arc has been forward, and all were concerned that the United States might say, "Okay, we've been there done that, let's go on to something else." I think Mr. Hadley you've seen that. We discussed similar things when you were with the Bush administration. Maybe I should ask this of all three of you: what would it do to your organizations if we were to cut 30 to 50 percent from democracy programs, and secondly, has anybody from the new administration sat down with any of the four of you to discuss what you would do with more or less funding?

IMPACT OF CUTS TO DEMOCRACY PROGRAMS

Mr. HADLEY. I have not been contacted on that. I think one of the problems is that it's my sense from the outside is the way it's being done is kind of top down from OMB. And I think the sensible way to do it, take the State Department for example, Secretary Tillerson nominated by the President, confirmed by the Senate, he's the person you look to run the Department of State. I would think he should be given some time to get to know his department, understand his department, make some recommendations about how to strength which will probably involve some cuts but ought to also involve some plus ups. Let him bring that to the Congress of the United States and have a conversation about how to make sure that these non-military aspects are used as efficiently and effectively as we can because the security in these areas ultimately is going to depend on the success of those kinds of programs.

Senator LEAHY. Do the rest of you agree with that?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I do think that it's important to understand what is really happening and I—you asked both of you whether this was, you did Chairman Graham, in terms of how dangerous the world is. I think time is passing here and everybody says it's early for making some decisions and some strategy for what the administration is doing. Soon, it will be too late and so I think it's very important in fact to have these kinds of discussions because unless you have some idea about what is going on in terms of the department

and what various people do, I'm kind of worried about time passing. And so, I would be delighted to be contacted by somebody.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I do recall going to the Balkans with Secretary Albright and President Clinton during that time.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Thank you. Senator Moran.

EXAMPLES OF SOFT POWER

Senator MORAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you and the ranking member for having this hearing and thanks to our distinguished panelists for joining us. I've said on the Senate floor and in an op-ed piece to Kansans back home that soft power, would use a different word than that in speaking about this, is necessary to avoid additional military actions or to reduce the need for military actions around the globe. Are there specific examples that I can point to, that you could point to me that I can then indicate to those I'm speaking about where our diplomacy, our assistance, food aid and other things have made a difference such that you believe we prevented the need for military power to be utilized?

Mr. HADLEY. Senator, the example I used about Mahmoudiyah which was now 10 years old, a peace agreement arranged under the auspices of the USIP that has held for 10 years. The effect of that was dramatic in terms of the casualties being suffered by the Tenth Mountain Division. They fell by a factor of, you know, five or six times, and also allowed those forces to be withdrawn so that the peace was kept with a smaller number of people. So, that's a savings of lives, a savings of resources; and the cost of that operation I think, correct me if I'm wrong, about \$1 million dollars. And that's kind of what the military spends about \$11.5 million a day in Iraq during that timeframe. So, it's good value. That's the point. I think it's—we make a mistake calling it soft power. There's nothing soft about it. You know what our diplomats are doing, what our USIP people and our facilitators, they're risking their lives.

Senator MORAN. Right.

Mr. HADLEY. These are in conflicts zones. There's nothing soft about that. Maybe we ought to talk about the military and non-military but I think soft is not an adequate description of the risks they run. Thank you.

FAMINE AND FOOD AID

Senator MORAN. Let me focus a minute on food aid. There are famines around the globe. I think there's a desire on the part of many Americans to respond. Part of the challenge we face are the civil authorities or military authorities in the countries where there are famines not allowing non-governmental organizations into their country, not allowing assistance. What is it that we do, why do countries behave in a way in which they deny us the ability to save lives and how do we respond to get a different result?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I think that this is where diplomacy comes in actually is to have ambassadors in those countries that are able to explain that we're not going in there to occupy and that is part of it. But I also think that we need to understand that the famines are partially being created by desertification and climate change and also by governments that want to starve their people. I think

that's part of the issue and therefore, it's important to have contact with nongovernmental organizations in those countries and try to show that starving people then create the mayhem that then leads to worse things. I also do think that Americans are the most generous people in the world. Our only problem is that we have a short attention span and so I think that what needs to happen is that we need to understand that these are problems that are out there for a very long time. I do think, however, in those four particular countries, we have the most amazing operation in AFRICOM which is a command that in fact is a way of dealing and it's exactly what Steve was saying in terms of cooperating of the civil and the military together in order to make a difference in a particular country.

Senator MORAN. Congressman.

Mr. WEBER. Senator Moran, I would just, it's pointed out to me, Amartya Sen, the Nobel laureate, has said that "there's never been a famine in a democratic country with a free media."

Senator MORAN. I appreciate your saying that. I point that out that our ability to—I don't know—I guess that's the point that needs to be made if I can say it in my own words although not as articulate as who you quoted. The ability to have a democracy when people are starving doesn't exist. Is that a fair summation of that?

Mr. WEBER. It's much more difficult.

Senator MORAN. Much more difficult. I want to compliment Chairman Graham and the ranking member and this subcommittee. Nearly a billion dollars in food aid, famine assistance was included in the fiscal year appropriation bill. That's a great development. Our subcommittee on agriculture funded Dole McGovern Food Program, Food and Education program. Our appropriations process for fiscal year 2017 I think resulted in significant opportunities for help for people around the globe and enhances the chances that democracy will survive or are created and reduce the chances that our military's actions are necessary. So, Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for your efforts in regard to trying to feed people around the world.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, let it be known to the people of Kansas if Senator Moran had his way, all the farmers in Kansas would feed everybody in the world.

Senator MORAN. Well said.

Senator GRAHAM. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy and thank you to all four of our wonderful witnesses who've dedicated decades of your lives to the service of democracy in the United States. The four institutions represented here, National Endowment for Democracy, NDI, IRI and U.S. Institute for Peace are all significant resources in our work to advance our values in democracy around the world and I look forward to standing with you in support of them in this coming appropriations process. I think the Senate and this subcommittee in particular has to grapple with the trends that are transforming our world and describe how the United States should engage to defend our interests, support our allies, and advance our values. This should hopefully be a bi-partisan and constructive conversation and one where we

can help contribute to shaping the agenda of the new administration. And I intend to relentlessly support programs such as yours that advance the values of democracy, human rights, rule of law as well as our vital interests. It was said I think most concisely by you, former Congressman Weber, there are some people who believe we have to choose between defending our interests and affirming our values. They pose a false and dangerous dichotomy since our interests and values are mutually reinforcing as is maintaining our military strength and our moral vision. All of you said some variation of that and I just want to thank you for your leadership in doing so.

Let me focus on one specific program that's a window I think into the larger question we're all facing. The Young African Leaders Initiative is just one example of many young leaders' programs or people-to-people programs or human resources programs. This one was created in 2014 to invest in the next generation of African leaders and I've witnessed firsthand how 3,000 Africans that have been reached through YALI have formed an active network across the continent that's advancing good governance, human rights and entrepreneurship while creating a network of grass roots allies in strategically important countries. How are leadership exchange programs like YALI a cost-effective measure to promote democracy and governance? Congressman Kolbe, you I think specifically referenced in your testimony human resources as something hard to procure effectively. Why is it a poor choice perhaps for President Trump's proposed budget to eliminate a lot of the work of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs that would affect a wide range of sort of youth and partnership programs? Mr. Chairman, I'll submit for the record three different letters of support for YALI. I'd welcome comments from you, Congressman Kolbe, or any other members of the subcommittee on why these people-to-people programs are particularly effective and why this one in particular might be worth defending. Congressman.

[The letters follow:]

Monday, May 8, 2017.

Hon. Chris Coons,
U.S. Senate,
127A Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR COONS,

We urge you to fully fund the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and its flagship program, the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. The current draft of the President's fiscal year 2018 budget proposes significant cuts to the U.S. Department of State and its Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). If enacted, these cuts could devastate YALI, which directly benefits American colleges and institutions who host these young leaders each year.

For American businesses to grow, it's critical that we increase exports, and Africa—with its largely pro-American population—represents one of the most promising emerging markets. For example, in just the last 10 years, Nigeria surged from the world's 52nd largest economy to the 20th, ahead of Australia. We need to strengthen economic ties between the U.S. and Africa so that Americans can take advantage of this opportunity. Programs like the Mandela Washington Fellowship, part of the Young African Leaders Initiative, bring future African business, civic and government leaders to the U.S. to engage and build the kind of relationships, business practices, and democratic governance we need for U.S. businesses to enter these emerging markets successfully and create more jobs here at home.

Our companies have benefited tremendously from YALI in a variety of ways, including hosting Fellows who provide valuable insights on taking advantage of busi-

ness opportunities in Africa, and sending our own staff to the continent to launch new enterprises. Over 3,000 YALI Fellows are currently on the continent—many inhabiting influential political and economic positions. These sympathetic government and business leaders represent a growing network of future trading partners. From our personal experience, this Fellowship is truly a two-way exchange with tremendous benefits for the United States.

We hope that we can count on your support in ensuring the Fellowship's continued success. A strong, prosperous, democratic Africa aligned with the U.S. will ensure our national strategic interests for decades to come. Investing in people who will help drive this change, while boosting exports and creating jobs here in the U.S., is an effective approach that speaks to American values and interests.

Sincerely,

Deloitte
AGCO Corporation
Black & Veatch
Africa Venture Partners
Corporate Council on Africa
Creative Associates
Oracle Corporation
DAI

DLR Group
Integrated Solar Technologies
International Green Structures
Visa Inc.
Symbion Power
Premise Data Corporation
Shea Yeleen
Sheladia Associates

Monday, May 8, 2017.

Hon. Chris Coons,
U.S. Senate,
127A Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR COONS,

Over the course of the last three administrations, the U.S. Congress has advanced U.S. interests in Africa through transformative programs. The African Growth and Opportunity Act helped to move the U.S. relationship with the continent from that of donor-recipient to one of mutual benefit and gain. The President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) not only helped to stabilize key parts of Africa but made it possible to think about an AIDS free generation. Congress has invested in other important programs such as Feed the Future, Electrify Africa and the President's anti-malaria initiative.

The Young Africa Leaders Initiative (YALI) and its flagship program, the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, is an important addition to these bipartisan programs that will help to transform Africa's future and deserves your support. YALI excels at attracting Africa's best and brightest young men and women for leadership development at American universities in civic leadership, public management and entrepreneurship and business. YALI is a cost-effective investment in economic development, the deepening of democracy and strengthening civil society.

Over 3,000 Mandela Washington Fellows and more than 450,000 YALI network members are now on the African continent. Many already are in positions of influence—and this number will only increase as these dynamic young leaders continue to advance in their careers. These leaders represent a growing network of allies, who will shape Africa's future—and strong ties to these young leaders is all the more crucial as China and others dramatically increase their cultural and educational exchanges across Africa. The fact that 64,000 Africans, from every country in sub-Saharan Africa have applied for 1,000 Mandela Washington Fellowships this year alone is a clear signal of YALI's impact and relevance.

The current draft of the President's fiscal year 2018 budget proposes major cuts to USAID and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs—the two parts of our government responsible for the program. If enacted, these cuts could devastate YALI and undermine the increasingly significant role that the program plays in advancing American national security interests in Africa.

We urge you to support the continuation of the YALI and the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. A strong, prosperous, democratic Africa aligned with the United States and led by a dynamic network of emerging lead-

ers who share our values is in our strategic national interests, now and for decades to come.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Thomas Pickering, former Under Secretary of State and former Ambassador of the United States to Israel, the United Nations, the Soviet Union, Nigeria and El Salvador

The Honorable Robert Mallett, former Deputy Secretary and Acting Secretary of Commerce, and President & CEO, Africare

General Kip Ward, former Commander, United States Africa Command (AFRICOM)

The Honorable Johnnie Carson, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and former Ambassador of the United States to Uganda, Zimbabwe and Kenya

The Honorable Hank Cohen, Former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Senior Director for Africa at the National Security Council and Ambassador of the United States to Senegal

The Honorable George Moose, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, former Ambassador of the United States to Senegal, Benin, and the United Nations in Geneva

The Honorable Dr. Chet Crocker, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

The Honorable Earl Gast, Former Assistant Administrator for Africa, U.S. Agency for International Development

The Honorable Vivian Lowery Derryck, former Assistant Administrator for Africa, U.S. Agency for International Development

The Honorable Mark Bellamy, former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, former Ambassador of the United States to Kenya and former Director, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

The Honorable Michelle Gavin, former Senior Director for Africa, National Security Council and former Ambassador of the United States to Botswana

The Honorable Don Gips, former Ambassador of the United States to South Africa

The Honorable Phil Carter, former Ambassador of the United States to Cote d'Ivoire

Mr. Grant Harris, former Senior Director for Africa, National Security Council

Dr. Whitney Schneidman, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

Mr. John Prendergast, former Director for Africa, National Security Council

Monday, May 8, 2017.

Hon. Chris Coons,
U.S. Senate,
127A Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510.

DEAR SENATOR COONS,

We urge you to fully fund the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and its flagship program, the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. The current draft of the President's fiscal year 2018 budget proposes major cuts to USAID and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. If enacted, these cuts could devastate YALI, which directly benefits American colleges and institutions who host these young leaders each year, including the University of Delaware in your State.

The Young African Leaders Initiative invests in the next generation of leaders across the Continent. By providing training in leadership, management, and entrepreneurship that can help future leaders elevate their own communities and countries, the U.S. helps these communities help themselves while building long-term relationships that benefit the United States. It is critical to America's safety and economic strength to engage with young leaders from around the world, who are poised to take over influential roles in government, civil society, and business.

Over 3,000 Mandela Washington Fellows and 450,000 YALI network members are now on the African Continent. Many already are in positions of influence, representing a growing web of allies, who will shape the future of Africa—and want to work with the United States instead of other geopolitical competitors seeking to exert influence.

The Fellowship also gives our faculty, students, and local community members the opportunity to better understand people from different countries and cultures across Africa, home to some of the world's fastest growing economies. In a world where academic research and professional engagement increasingly occurs across borders, that's not just a feel-good experience—it's an essential 21st century business skill.

Finally, the Fellowship brings direct economic benefits to our communities. Each participating institution receives \$150,000 in Federal funds, which they match with an additional \$100,000. This money is then invested back into the local community through expenditures on lodging, meals, and services, which support local jobs.

From our personal experience, this Fellowship is truly a two-way exchange with tremendous benefits for the United States. We hope that we can count on your support in ensuring the Fellowship's continued success. A strong, prosperous, democratic Africa that is aligned with the U.S. will ensure our national strategic interests for decades to come.

Sincerely,

Appalachian State University (North Carolina)	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey (New Jersey)
Bridgewater State University (Massachusetts)	Skyline College (California)
Dartmouth College (New Hampshire)	Texas Tech University (Texas)
Drake University (Iowa)	The Presidential Precinct (Virginia)
Drexel University (Pennsylvania)	University of California, Davis (California)
Duquesne University (Pennsylvania)	University of Delaware (Delaware)
Florida International University (Florida)	University of Iowa (Iowa)
Georgia State University (Georgia)	University of Maine (Maine)
Indiana University (Indiana)	University of Minnesota (Minnesota)
Kansas State University (Kansas)	University of Notre Dame (Indiana)
Lehigh University (Pennsylvania)	University of San Diego (California)
	Wagner College (New York)

EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman and Senator Coons, I think you're absolutely right. I think these programs are effective. At IRI, we have a very effective, for example, Women's Democracy Network, which is worldwide where we bring together women leaders from around the world to share ideas and concerns and we hope to help them in their own countries to build networks, grass roots networks. So, I think these kinds of programs are very important and the one you cite in Africa is just one example of many that these different organizations represented at this table have been supporting over the years.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I think the people-to-people programs are essential and they create a network of understanding and education by really dealing with each other. I also think that the young leaders, very important in terms of the youth, are one of the—people call it the youth bulge. I prefer to call it the youth surge, is really going to make a difference in countries if in fact we have the capabilities of talking to them, working through the cultural exchange programs and then developing a network that is supporting.

I also hope, not to kind of cross too many lines, that there are enough—that we allow students to come to the United States. I'm a professor. It makes a big difference to be able to have foreign students in classes. It benefits the American students and so I think that's part of what we need to be doing in terms of networking and

exchanging and developing new leaders that know each other. NDI also has a women's program.

Senator COONS. This particular program partners with 20 different American universities to bring young leaders to the United States for a period of months, but there are many others within this larger bucket. I just picked this particular one to talk about. Mr. Hadley.

Mr. HADLEY. You know one of the things about this is a lot of these fragile states are places with very youthful populations and they can be a terrific resource. There's a program that I heard about when I was in Kaval, Afghanistan, to take a conflict resolution course and put it into a university to teach young people. You know a lot of conflict comes because of unresolved local disputes about land, water and all the rest. So, you teach these kids conflict resolution skills. They actually go home into their communities and they start resolving conflicts and cutting across tribal and sectarian lines. It's now going to be put in other universities throughout Afghanistan. This is what we call sort of bottom up peace building. It's a huge opportunity and especially in these youthful countries, it's an enormous resource. And of course, by doing that, they learn the principles of democracy, freedom, rule of law and all the rest. So, it's a terrific opportunity for us.

Senator COONS. Thank you. As has been mentioned, elections are not the only thing we need to support in order to support democracy. I think these are the sorts of programs that help build the fiber of non-governmental organizations, civic organizations and contribute to the sustainment of democracy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this important hearing.

Senator DURBIN [presiding]. Thank you very much. I certainly support diplomacy, soft power, as a viable alternative to military, something that we should expand and explore. But, I'd like to address the issue of the toolbox, Secretary Albright, that you mentioned, because I do believe the toolbox is changing when it comes to achieving goals short of military action. There's no subtlety in Vladimir Putin's goal to undermine the democracy of the United States and other Western leaders. It's been certified by our own intelligence agencies that they made an attempt to do that in this last election for President of the United States. There's some evidence that they tried it in France and will try it in other places. The tools that Putin is using are not diplomacy or soft power as we defined it. What he's using are fake news, cyber-attacks, shady business dealings, dark campaign money and up-to-date social media. And he's using them with some impact, certainly in our country and other places. The question I have is when it comes to our side promoting democracy, preserving democracy, are our tools changing? Are they reflecting this century and what is needed now in a positive and legal context to deal with Putin and his tools?

DEMOCRACY PROMOTION TOOLS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Mr. HADLEY. No. We've got to get back into this business in a 21st century way. You know, we thought at the end of the Cold War that, you know, freedom, democracy and free markets had swept the table and was the only alternative really out there. And what we've learned in the last 10 years is that the authoritarians

have struck back with a comprehensive and new set of tools and we sort of went out of that business and we need to get back into that business. It's one of the things I think this subcommittee can take the real lead on in pushing the administration to start defining what is the toolset we need. If I could make one other comment, Senator you mentioned soft power as alternative to the military. It is true certainly in conflict avoidance but it is also a partner of the military in zones of conflict and I would like, Mr. Chairman, if possible, if we could insert in the record "Will the COINDINISTAS Rise Again?", which is really a wonderful telling of the cooperation between our military and these non-military assets in Afghanistan and Iraq and it is the case why we need to invest—

[The information follows:]

SUBMITTED BY HON. STEVEN HADLEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

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WILL THE COINDINISTAS RISE AGAIN?

PURGING THE COUNTERINSURGENCY LESSONS OF THE IRAQ WAR FOR FEAR OF STRIKING A POLITICAL NERVE WOULD BE A MISTAKE—AND H. R. McMASTER KNOWS BETTER

(By Zach Abels)



U.S. Army soldiers in Mosul, Iraq. Flickr/U.S. Army

IN LATE 1986, a 34-year-old declared doctrinal war on the U.S. Army. With the stroke of a pen, one anonymous major set in motion a bureaucratic insurrection that, decades later, would subsume a cabal of battle-hardened revolutionaries and reshape American warfare. It was the opening salvo, the beginning of a story that ends with a maverick warrior-scholar running Donald Trump's ramshackle National Security Council.

That winter, *Parameters* featured an article under the byline Gen. John R. Galvin. But Galvin was not the true author; he had delegated the writing to his assistant, an imperious major putting the finishing touches on his Princeton PhD. David H. Petraeus relished the task.

Warfare is "no longer fought simply by the military," he wrote. "It now encompasses entire populations . . . and its outcome depends more and more on their collective will, what Clausewitz termed 'the popular passions.'" Petraeus pilloried

the Army for its parochial obsession with firepower and conventional combat. He was warning of chinks in the armor. Unlike the brass, he did not see insurgency, terrorism and guerrilla warfare—"small wars"—as aberrations. Scholarship and a penchant for disruption fueled his diatribe. Petraeus dismissed the efficacy of merely killing rebels and touted the strategic logic of addressing "contentious, long-ignored, but popular issues tied to key facets of national life." At bottom, war is a human endeavor.

His self-described "ramble" called into question the Army's capacity to adapt. Military leaders "don't look up very often," he observed, so distracted are they by the day-to-day slog. Petraeus worried that the dearth of critical thinking would exact a heavy toll. "Let us get our young leaders away from the grindstone now and then, and encourage them to reflect on developments outside the fortress-cloister," he concluded. "Only then will they develop into leaders capable of adapting to the changed environment of warfare and able to fashion a new paradigm that addresses all the dimensions of the conflicts that may lie ahead."

Today, his critique rings prophetic. America's post-9/11 invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq restored "insurgency" to national-security parlance. The ensuing conflicts were messy and slow. They laid bare the limits of the military instrument and the bankruptcy of conventional doctrine. Vicious, resilient insurgencies unleashed by the Taliban, Iran-backed Shia militias, Al Qaeda in Iraq and, later, the Islamic State have imprinted haunting images on the American psyche.

Trump rode those very waves of fear and angst into the White House. The public's hunger for closure pales in comparison with its thirst for blood. Over and over again, Trump bewitched voters with promises of consigning ISIS to the fires of hell, without repeating the mistakes of the Iraq War. But evicting insurgents from their strongholds will not suffice. The president cares deeply about optics; he can't afford for the next ISIS to take root on his watch. Remember when candidate Trump accused Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton of cofounding ISIS? The attack ads would write themselves. Only an enduring victory will do.

IF ANYONE can help the president realize that objective, it's his national security advisor, Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster. McMaster first came to prominence in 1997, when he turned his PhD dissertation into a book. In *Dereliction of Duty*, he excoriates the joint chiefs of the Vietnam War era for not expressing dissent with enough conviction. McMaster always aspired to speak truth to power. The Iraq War turned principle into deed.

It was during the Iraq War that the chain reaction triggered by Petraeus's ghostwriting reached a climax. Along with James N. Mattis—now Trump's defense secretary—a cast of erudite field officers and a clutch of civilian intellectuals, McMaster and Petraeus reengineered the way the United States thinks about warfare. They revolutionized a U.S. military culturally predisposed to the status quo. They changed the Government's most obstinate bureaucracy from within. They proved that America's storied warfighters, peerless though they are in dispatching conventional foes, are alone no match for the insurgencies that have metastasized throughout the Middle East. McMaster, Petraeus and their fellow rabble-rousers were dubbed "COINdinistas," a tribute to the figurative insurgency they launched in order to teach the U.S. Government how to fight literal insurgencies.

The Iraq War was their crucible. It crystallized for them that defeating insurgents rests on a symbiosis between soldier and civilian, between killing and rebuilding. In February, 121 retired flag officers, Petraeus among them, reaffirmed that precise belief in a letter to Congress. They averred their "strong conviction that elevating and strengthening diplomacy and development alongside defense are critical to keeping America safe." They turned Mattis's own words against him. As the head of Central Command, he once said, "If you don't fully fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition." Historically, that's a bipartisan sentiment, verging on gospel.

So when the White House announced in mid-March that it aimed to enfeeble the State Department and USAID, and extinguish the United States Institute of Peace, it's no surprise that national-security pundits across the political spectrum struggled to suppress the invective bubbling beneath the surface. Some tempered their rage to inveigh against the president's "skinny budget." Many are summoning the ethos of liberal internationalism. The more compelling rejoinders, though, are speaking to the countless ways in which Trump's budget would damage America's cold, hard material interests. Because it would. It would jeopardize what every elected official claims to treasure without reservation: America's shimmering coffers and legendary warfighters. The sheer symbolism of Trump's proposal, regardless of its plausibility on Capitol Hill, speaks volumes. Its shockwaves will reverberate and linger.

The White House's budget outline marks the apex of a string of contradictions. The President's relationship with the military is perplexing. Retired four-stars head his Homeland Security and Defense Departments, and an active-duty three-star sits atop his NSC. Trump likes being seen in the company of generals, though some suspect he's using them as props. His ostensible deference didn't stop him from publicly blaming them for the botched Yemen raid and subsequent death of a Navy SEAL. In the greater Middle East, Trump has empowered his commanders, but hasn't provided a semblance of strategic vision—what's the endgame?

The administration's disconnect between military action and political outcome is palpable. Officers in the field have been authorized to call in air strikes without permission from more senior officials. On April 13, Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr. dropped the "mother of all bombs" on an ISIS tunnel complex in remote eastern Afghanistan. It was the most powerful non-nuclear weapon ever used in combat and, reportedly, employed without White House signoff. But it's not just Trump who's guilty of confusing tantalizing explosions with sound foreign policy. Cable news worked itself into a frenzy, obscuring the difference between tactics and strategy, one awestruck chyron after another. Few paused to ask: what's stopping another 100 ISIS fighters from replacing those killed?

"We have to start winning wars again," the President exhorted on February 27. Days later, he pledged to "give our military the tools you need to prevent war and, if required, to fight war and only do one thing. You know what that is? Win. Win! We're gonna start winning again." The irony is tragic and comedic, in equal measure. A few weeks later, Trump proposed a budget that would deprive the military of the exact tools he promised them. He seeks to cripple the civilian agencies that consolidate combat success into political victory. Military power divorced from diplomacy cannot win conventional wars. In small wars, raw firepower is even less decisive.

If Trump were to succeed in budgetarily castrating the civilian agents of U.S. foreign policy, he would harm national security. In Iraq, where the administration has escalated the fight against ISIS, he would render the efforts of servicemen and women less consequential, their triumphs fleeting. Mosul will fall. What happens the day after? Sunni and Shia, Arab and Kurd, are unlikely to find peace overnight. Killing bad guys does not a foreign policy make. Without a concerted strategy of security, diplomacy and development, popular passions will once again engulf Iraq. Déjà vu of the worst kind—the kind that sucks American soldiers and dollars right back in.

No White House official is more keenly attuned to this dystopian fate than McMaster. No national-security professional exerts more influence in the new administration. "H. R. knows firsthand the value of diplomacy in bringing conflict to a conclusion favorable to the United States, at the minimum possible cost in lives and dollars," retired Lt. Col. John Nagl told me. "H. R. knows that in his bones." Nagl is no ordinary combat veteran. A COINdiniasta of the highest repute, he possesses unique insight into McMaster and is unencumbered by chain of command. "It must gnaw at his innards," Nagl said of his friend, "that the administration he is serving is attempting to do this kind of damage to institutions that are so important to the security of our great Nation." He was uninterested in mincing words: "These ideas are asinine."

And that's the most confounding paradox of them all: that H. R. McMaster could possibly acquiesce to something so flagrantly antithetical to the American way of war he fought so hard to transform. He knows that "small wars" is a misnomer. When a president fantasizes about short, winnable wars with military-only solutions, young men and women pay for that mistake with their lives, and taxpayers with their wallets. It beggars belief that the strategist of a generation could be complicit in a national-security policy unmoored from common sense.

TWELVE YEARS after decimating an entire Republican Guard tank formation without loss, Herbert Raymond McMaster returned to Iraq. It didn't take him long to discover that the pitched battles he and John Nagl waged against Saddam Hussein in 1991 had gone the way of the musket. This was a different sort of war.

As the director of Central Command's advisory group in 2003, McMaster visited every brigade in Iraq. When he came across the 101st Airborne Division in Mosul, he was pleasantly surprised to find Maj. Gen. Petraeus experimenting with counter-insurgency. The two hadn't spoken in a while. Six years earlier, Fred Kaplan recounts in *The Insurgents*, McMaster's intellectual honesty caught Petraeus's eye. Both officers had written their PhD dissertations on the Vietnam War. Petraeus chose not to publish his for fear of insulting the commanders who held sway over his career; McMaster did not share that compunction. *Dereliction of Duty* bears the subtitle "Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies

That Led to Vietnam.” Not exactly subtle. Petraeus was an aide to the chairman of the joint chiefs at the time. He called McMaster and instructed him to reach out directly should he ever come under fire for what he’d written. The need never arose, but after reconnecting in Mosul, they stayed in touch. McMaster would experience his own watershed soon enough.

It was the spring of 2005, and Tal Afar was in shambles. Colonel McMaster arrived at the helm of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment to find the city, 35 miles from the Syrian border, beset with sectarian violence. Iraqi and foreign-fighter jihadists, along with elements of the local Sunni population, ran riot. Al Qaeda in Iraq, ISIS’s forebear, targeted the minority Shia with heinous violence, the kind of theatrical brutality all too familiar today. A Shia police force fanned the flames with indiscriminate reprisal killings. In *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq*, Ahmed S. Hashim recalls that “Tal Afar looked like one of those forlorn humanoid settlements on a distant and barren planet in the outer reaches of the solar system.” On multiple occasions, the U.S. military ousted the insurgents. But each time they came back. The city became an insurgent sanctuary, a convenient support base for launching attacks on Mosul, which markedly deteriorated after Petraeus’s departure.

In the April 10, 2006 issue of the *New Yorker*, George Packer painted a vivid picture of McMaster’s pioneering operations in Tal Afar. On his own initiative, McMaster employed classic counterinsurgency tactics in a bid to “clear, hold, build.” (Among the books McMaster assigned his regiment before deploying was *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, by John Nagl. Combatting insurgency is “messy and slow, like eating soup with a knife,” T. E. Lawrence wrote in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.) Clearing and holding went well enough. He collaborated with the 82nd Airborne and special-operations units to dispossess the jihadists of their strongholds. He ordered his soldiers to establish neighborhood outposts and to dismount their armored vehicles while on patrol (shifting the emphasis from protecting themselves to protecting civilians); to curtail gratuitous night raids (which embitter and alienate); to use minimum necessary force when possible (to avoid collateral damage); and to treat the locals with a dose of dignity and compassion. “Every time you treat an Iraqi disrespectfully, you are working for the enemy,” he instructed. Trust yields intelligence, and intelligence saves lives. James Mattis, McMaster’s current counterpart at the Pentagon, adopted a similar philosophy as commander of the First Marine Division in Anbar Province during the early years of the war. Tom Ricks documented Mattis’s “first, do no harm” approach in *Fiasco*, a 2007 Pulitzer finalist.

Building was another challenge entirely. McMaster worked to restore basic services, stood up a local security force and encouraged municipal workers to return by paying their wages. He rather shrewdly funneled reconstruction funds through tribal sheikhs. Appearances matter; people were more likely to welcome the return of order and infrastructure if they could plausibly deny affiliation with the American occupiers. Sowing trust among the locals proved most daunting. “When we came to Iraq, we didn’t understand the complexity—what it meant for a society to live under a brutal dictatorship, with ethnic and sectarian divisions,” McMaster told Packer. The Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi understood the complexity. Under his leadership, Al Qaeda in Iraq had brought Tal Afar to the brink of civil war. Zarqawi’s brand of terror was calculated and effective. McMaster knew that if he couldn’t find a way to end the cycle of revenge killings, his regiment’s progress would evaporate. Taking death squads off the street was but a Band-Aid.

And then the rubber met the road. As Packer observed, “Shiite sheikhs accused the Sunnis of tolerating the presence of terrorists, and Sunni sheikhs accused the Shia of making unwarranted generalizations about them.” McMaster tasked an exceptionally competent squadron commander with reversing Zarqawi’s damage, through diplomacy at the community level. Lt. Col. Chris Hickey had to become an expert in tribal politics overnight—in his words, “to switch the argument from Sunni versus Shia, which was what the terrorists were trying to make the argument, to Iraqi versus *takfirin*.”

This mismatch is representative of so many failures throughout the occupation. A soldier was forced to play a role better suited to an anthropologist. In *The Mission*, Dana Priest illustrates how, by the turn of the century, the United States had become over-reliant on its military to carry out a broadening set of objectives, at the cost of the State Department and its “shriveling” resources. In 2006, Praeger reissued David Galula’s 1964 book *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, with a new foreword by John Nagl. The French counterinsurgent argues that the responsibilities of the soldier, the policeman and the civil servant are drawn into a state of mutual dependence by COIN’s inherently political character.

The position McMaster put Hickey in wasn’t uncommon. Before he was a COINdinita, Peter Mansoor led the First Brigade, First Armored Division. “I was

a brigade commander on the ground in 2003—4 and almost never saw a representative of the Coalition Provisional Authority. We desperately needed civilian expertise to help us with reconstruction and to reform the local governments,” the retired colonel told me. “There are certain aspects of counterinsurgency that really only civilians can provide.”

Nagl had a similar experience. “I became a Sunni-Shia religious, cultural and political expert—‘expert’ in quote marks!—on the fly because there was nobody else to do it,” he lamented. “When I was on the ground in Iraq trying to untangle tribal politics, I was despondent that I didn’t have help from the State Department, USAID or anybody. And I became convinced that investment in diplomats would literally have saved my soldiers’ lives.”

Even more comprehensively than Petraeus in Mosul, McMaster supplanted chaos with stability in Tal Afar. His accomplishments were hailed as a wild success. And rightfully so. His was the first systematic counterinsurgency operation of the Iraq War—conducted, as Kaplan points out, “with total independence from headquarters”—at a time when the mere utterance of the “i-word” invited opprobrium. But Tal Afar was one city, and McMaster one man. The insurgents cleared from one town would simply move to another, creating a “balloon-squeezing phenomenon” that prevented security from improving country-wide. It’s what Galula called an “accidental mosaic.” Furthermore, the very nature of military deployments precludes the kind of continuity that might have seen McMaster achieve more in Tal Afar. He got his orders and moved on. On February 22, 2006, Al Qaeda in Iraq blew up the Al-Askari Shia shrine in Samarra. The jihadists got the civil war they wanted.

Back in Washington, the war of ideas Petraeus sparked in 1986 was coming to a head. After years of surreptitious politicking, chain-of-command bending and painstaking intellectual salesmanship, Petraeus and McMaster were finally making inroads. In September 2006, Petraeus installed McMaster and Mansoor into a secret advisory group the joint chiefs had assembled to rethink Iraq. The “council of colonels” was afforded the opportunity to dispense with ceremony and tell the most senior officers in America’s military the hard truths they couldn’t countenance: Iraq was roiled in an *insurgency*. Clean victory and hasty withdrawal were pipedreams. Killing the enemy would not be enough. Only an injection of new commanders, resources and doctrine could salvage the crisis. Meanwhile, a network of influential experts, scrupulously cultivated by Petraeus, was working to convince President Bush to sign off.

They were on the cusp. Petraeus and his cadre of doctrinal disobedients put pen to paper. On December 15, 2006, they published FM 3–24, the COINdinistas’ true statement of purpose. The paradigm-shifting counterinsurgency field manual, which cites McMaster’s exploits in Tal Afar and Mattis’s in Anbar Province, turned the American way of war upside down. It codified hearts-and-minds COIN. Corporals and lieutenants would have to unlearn much of what the military had taught them. An insurgency’s center of gravity is the civilian population. The public is the prize; win them over and the insurgents lose support. FM 3–24 made its authors look more like agents of change than petulant insubordinates. They had broken free of the fortress-cloister.

Bush finally acceded: America wasn’t going to kill its way out of this morass. A month after the field manual’s release, the president pinned a fourth star to Petraeus’s shoulder, gave him charge of all U.S. forces in Iraq and green-lit the surge. Petraeus named Mansoor his executive officer and tapped McMaster to lead his strategic-assessment team. The COINdinistas were insurgents no longer.

THE SURGE’S abiding relevance lies not in the operational realm but in the conceptual. It drew military and nonmilitary personnel into a state of mutual dependence, made protecting Iraqi civilians a central mandate and confronted the conflict’s political accelerants. Killing insurgents was subordinated to a new directive: making sure their ilk couldn’t return.

“We had a lot of military power on the ground to fight the insurgency,” Mansoor told me. “What we lacked was a robust, complimentary civilian effort to solidify the gains that the soldiers and marines were making on the streets of Iraqi cities and towns.” So General Petraeus and Ryan Crocker, the new ambassador in Baghdad, embedded provincial reconstruction teams (PRT) in combat units, filling their ranks with staff from USAID and the Departments of State, Agriculture and Justice. PRTs deployed to the front lines to tackle the socioeconomic drivers of the conflict. Soldiers and civilians put themselves at risk to secure and rebuild communities.

The surge gave warring factions breathing space, a narrow window for political accommodation. Stop shooting, start talking. But security provision alone couldn’t bring them to the table. In *The Counterinsurgent’s Constitution*, Ganesh Sitaraman argues that in small wars, the counterinsurgent must initiate reconstruction in the

midst of the conflict. “Counterinsurgency embraces a bottom-up approach,” he writes, “that grows organically from the local conditions and context: the population’s capacities and needs, their traditions and preferences. Organic reconstruction reframes warfighting as village-building.” Sitaraman sees reconciliation programs as “weapons of war, instruments of lawfare that can be designed to reduce or even eliminate the insurgency.” At the height of the surge, an Army combat brigade and a civilian organization that Donald Trump now wants to defund put that theory to the test. Together, they weaponized reconciliation in the “Triangle of Death.”

Mahmudiya District, Baghdad’s ethnically mixed southern doorstep, earned its bleak moniker during the early years of the war. Assassinations, public beheadings, improvised explosive devices and armed banditry punctuated virulent sectarian warfare. “Not one man in a hundred will stand up to a real killer,” James Mattis once remarked to the author Bing West. “It’s ruthlessness that cows people.”

Col. Michael M. Kershaw was told a year ahead of time, far longer than usual, that his brigade would deploy to Mahmudiya. Early on in his preparation, he realized that “this was fundamentally a problem of counterinsurgency.” But it was not, contrary to the assumption I voiced to him during our interview, McMaster’s operations in Tal Afar that brought him to this conclusion. He wasn’t terribly chagrined at my mistake.

Kershaw and McMaster, it turns out, go way back. They were in the same West Point class, where they played rugby together and shared a course on revolutionary warfare. They were both company commanders in Iraq during the Gulf War. When Kershaw attempted to dabble in counterinsurgency in Afghanistan in 2003, McMaster noticed. Kershaw was leading the First Ranger Battalion in Kunar Province and discovered “the futility of trying to pick these guys off.” McMaster flew in and received a briefing from Kershaw’s second-in-command. When McMaster took COIN a few steps further in Tal Afar 2 years later, Kershaw was tracking his progress.

Kershaw and the Second Brigade of the Tenth Mountain Division arrived in Mahmudiya in August 2006. From the beginning, he said, he was determined to “harness something that would outlast our tour of duty.” The Triangle of Death’s new counterinsurgents manned neighborhood outposts, with an eye toward restoring community security. Special operators killed and captured Al Qaeda and its foreign fighters. Kershaw’s deputy, Lt. Col. John Laganelli, told me he worked to bring agricultural and economic-development capabilities into the region, “to create some form of normalcy for the people.” Meanwhile, the “Awakening” had moved from Anbar Province and was sweeping across Mahmudiya. Local Sunnis began betraying Al Qaeda, electing to supply the U.S. military with intelligence in exchange for pay and promises of safety.

In Kershaw’s telling, plenty of tribal leaders wanted to talk, but the Second Brigade was struggling to consolidate the ink dots of “awakened” locals into a big-picture compromise. There were too many moving pieces, too little trust: “We were trying to navigate an archipelago of societal islands. The campaign was like an island-hopping exercise.” And Kershaw was, by all accounts, the Army’s resident authority on south Baghdad. “I was the Mahmudiya expert,” he said matter-of-factly. “But man, I went to public school in east Texas. I could only scrape the surface. The language barrier. The culture barrier.” Someone in Kershaw’s orbit coined the term “sheikhpalooza” to denote the unproductive theatrics that characterized the military’s sit-downs with tribal leaders.

By the summer of 2007, the Second Brigade had expelled Al Qaeda and bloodied the remaining insurgent groups. A promising, yet tenuous, calm took hold. Fearing regression, Kershaw’s embedded PRT connected him with the United States Institute of Peace, a congressionally funded peacebuilding outfit—which the colonel “knew nothing about,” he’s still embarrassed to say. When he met with USIP staff in the Green Zone, “a lightbulb went off,” he told me. “Their set of capabilities was something we could not get elsewhere. They had Iraqis who could actually run the negotiations between the sheikhs. They could seat Iraqis with Iraqis.”

USIP’s objective, in its view, was to preempt revenge. Orchestrate a reconciliation process capable of suturing the ethnosectarian wounds the jihadists had wrought. Kershaw saw USIP in a utilitarian light: just as he turned to special-operations units to kill and capture irreconcilables, he turned to USIP to reconcile the rest. “Those were desperate times. We were looking for anyone with value added.” Desperate they were. There were almost 2,200 IED incidents during the Second Brigade’s 15-month tour. Fifty-four soldiers were killed in action. Kershaw was eager to maximize the returns on his soldiers’ costly investment. He didn’t need FM 3–24 or media-savvy Petraeus to teach him about civil-military innovation. But the new field manual and Petraeus’s public championing of counterinsurgency, Kershaw

told me, did give his brigade the cover it needed to engage deeply with the people of his sector and keep Al Qaeda on the ropes. (McMaster actually came down to Mahmudiya during Kershaw's deployment to visit his old friend and exchange ideas.)

USIP tapped into its reservoir of Iraqi intermediaries, whom the institute had for years been working with and training in conflict management. They worked closely with the Second Brigade to map out Mahmudiya's intricate fault lines and volatile power centers. Which individuals and which clans were best positioned to convince their tribes to negotiate with bitter enemies? Kershaw's soldiers went to great lengths to protect and shuttle USIP personnel—one such escort was struck by an IED. Sarhang Hamasaeed, USIP's current director of Middle East programs, went out of his way to emphasize the complementary dynamic between the institute and the military. USIP wasn't exactly in a position to rid Mahmudiya of Al Qaeda, he told me, but neither was the Army equipped to rebuild social cohesion.

USIP marshalled its acute expertise and capitalized on its ambiguous providence. Despite having "United States" in its name, the institute was able to disassociate itself from the oft-reviled occupation (in Kershaw's opinion, USIP's Iraqi-led approach allowed it to function like "an NGO we fund as a front"). All the while, it was leveraging its pedigree in diverse corridors of power. Kershaw was constrained by chain of command; USIP was not. The institute collaborated with the State and Defense Departments to secure buy-in from integral power brokers at the municipal, provincial and national levels. Despite a hostile reception, USIP was able to extract an endorsement from officials in Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's inner circle.

USIP meticulously cultivated a web of local mediators and Triangle of Death stakeholders. The resulting delegation possessed unparalleled insight into the competing interests and hidden motives of the aggrieved parties. USIP and its delegation turned their attention to Mahmudiya's exiled Sunni leaders. Without them, the entire enterprise would grind to a halt. Post-Saddam Iraq had devastated their livelihoods and forced them to take refuge in Amman, Jordan. They held America responsible. Young firebrands and other radical elements in their tribes vied for influence. Some espoused sectarian warfare. Both Rusty Barber, USIP's chief of party in Iraq at the time and an architect of the peacebuilding initiative, and Colonel Kershaw described the links between these exiles and Mahmudiya's insurgents in cryptic terms. At the very least, Barber told me, they "were capable of operating as spoilers to any agreement they were left out of." They "definitely had blood on their hands," Kershaw said.

Among the delegates USIP recruited for the Amman mission was Ali al-Mufraji, a 35-year-old general in the Iraqi army. He was the most senior Iraqi military officer in Mahmudiya and, in Kershaw's experience, "the real power behind the throne," a reference to the local Shia government. When Sens. Lindsey Graham and John McCain visited the sector, Kershaw suggested that they meet with Mufraji. In Amman, the one-star general's job was to convince the exiles of the initiative's viability, especially on security grounds. A Shia married to a Sunni, Mufraji's pragmatism helped shift the tenor of the talks, which were nearly derailed by suspicion. The most formidable source of agitation was the widespread detention of Sunnis haphazardly branded as terrorist accomplices. Mufraji brandished his laptop, popped open a spreadsheet and revealed the status of tribesmen in custody. His candor and transactional efficiency fostered trust. The exiles accepted the project's merits and, later, convinced Mahmudiya's senior tribal leaders to participate in a Hail Mary dialogue. In a letter dated August 23, 2007, Kershaw credited USIP with "creating an atmosphere where real communication could take place" and implored the institute to see the project through.

Months of ground work were to culminate in a conference at Baghdad's Al-Rashid Hotel. The Army provided organizers and participants with transportation and employed robust measures to protect the hotel itself. Rusty Barber told me that General Petraeus personally redirected funds to the reconciliation process.

The 3-day conference began on October 16. USIP crafted the format and agenda. The institute's Iraqi facilitators conducted the proceedings. They instructed participants in mediation techniques without besmirching their traditions. A few verbal altercations boiled over, but were promptly cooled. By day two, the community leaders had reached consensus on goals and corresponding action items, which USIP channeled into a draft accord overnight. On the third day, pugnacious debate over the final text yielded "Mahmoudiya: Cornerstone for Peace and National Accord," a concrete framework for the reconstruction of the district. Thirty-one Shia and Sunni tribal leaders, so recently warring, signed the document in view of Iraqi and foreign press. The pact's symbolic value wasn't lost on Kershaw. To him, its impact was simple: "It legitimized the 'Awakening.'" *Stop shooting, start talking* was officially socially acceptable. Al Qaeda had lost its local base of support.

Violence declined precipitously. The 101st Division's Third Brigade, which replaced Kershaw's, lost a single soldier during its deployment. The Army trimmed its presence from a brigade combat team of 3,500 to a battalion of 650. The entire USIP project cost American taxpayers around \$1.5 million, roughly the price of a single Tomahawk cruise missile. On February 11, 2009, Petraeus praised "USIP's on-the-ground peacebuilding efforts" in a letter to the Office of Management and Budget. In it, he singled out the Mahmudiya initiative as "a striking success story." The pact has endured the Arab Spring and the rise of ISIS. It holds to this day.

THE INTENTION here is not to wax poetic about how the mighty COINdinistas injected 30,000 troops into Iraq, saved the day and galloped off into the sunset. Petraeus has been mythologized too often. The military historian Douglas Porch, Petraeus's harshest critic, titled his scathing polemic *Counterinsurgency Myths*. Even sympathetic observers point to Petraeus's preoccupation with his own glory and his cunning in spinning self-serving narratives.

Nor is it reasonable to paper over U.S. killing. Brought back to Iraq to oversee strategy during the surge, McMaster was vehement that some insurgents had too much blood on their hands to be politically accommodated. Under Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, Joint Special Operations Command took scores of these irreconcilables, including Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, off the battlefield. But McChrystal opted for the scalpel whenever possible. His kill-and-capture missions were designed to be discriminate. Collateral damage would only breed more terrorists.

Besides, controlling territory is not the jihadist's only concern. Al Qaeda and ISIS inflict the deepest wounds on the virtual battlefield. A suicide bombing at a market has little military value; it resonates as "propaganda of the deed." ISIS recruits foreign fighters and radicalizes homegrown terrorists online. Viral, emotive images are its weapons of choice. And as Graeme Wood argues in *The Way of the Strangers*, ISIS's weaponization of theology cannot simply be dismissed as a bastardization of Islam.

Mending social cohesion in Iraqi communities, therefore, is only part of the story. Suffice it to say, the combination of the surge and the "Awakening"—the widespread Sunni uprising against Al Qaeda, underway before Petraeus took over—dramatically reduced violence. From 2004 to mid-2007, more than 1,500 civilians died every month in Iraq. By December 2007, that number plummeted to 500. From June 2008 to June 2011, around 200 civilians died every month.

The military could not occupy Iraq forever. America failed to establish a sustainable political order before withdrawing. Communities lacked closure, and tensions gestated. Maliki's overt hostility toward the Sunnis stoked discord and violence. ISIS exploited these divisions, co-opted Sunni tribes who once fought alongside the Americans and, in short order, routed the Iraqi army. In June 2014, ISIS declared a caliphate over a broad swathe of territory. At its peak, it controlled 40 percent of Iraq.

In Washington, reluctance to intervene understandably found voice. The Iraq War scarred America. Words like "quagmire" are never far from the lips of those who advocate for retrenchment. The Iraq War is as politically corrosive as ever, a reliable dog whistle that incites rabid denunciations of hegemonic overreach and paternalistic democracy promotion. But Iraq is more than just a trope. The decision to invade, among the worst foreign-policy blunders in U.S. history, and the prosecution of the war are two different things. Conflating counterinsurgency with the neoconservative worldview—just because they have Iraq in common—is reductive. Petraeus and McMaster did, in fact, make common cause with neocon stalwarts like Eliot A. Cohen and Frederick W. Kagan as they labored to convince President Bush to change tack. They were playing the hand they were dealt. Neocons broke Iraq; Petraeus and McMaster were tasked with putting it back together. Trump himself seems amenable to this sentiment. In March, he told Haider al-Abadi, Iraq's moderate prime minister, "We shouldn't have gone in, but certainly we shouldn't have left."

Jettisoning the lessons of the Iraq War for fear of striking a political nerve would be feckless. Gaslighting the COINdinistas would be cataclysmic.

DONALD TRUMP is in an unenviable predicament. He's got to defeat ISIS and prevent its resurgence, with a footprint small enough to repel allegations of interventionism. The Pentagon wants to retain U.S. forces in Iraq for years after Mosul is recaptured. "I believe it's in our national interest that we keep Iraqi security forces in a position to keep our mutual enemies on their back foot," Defense Secretary Mattis told Senate leaders in late March. "I don't see any reason to pull out again and face the same lesson."

The White House has since delegated new authorities to the Defense Department to decide how many troops are deployed in the war against ISIS. Two Pentagon offi-

cialists made clear to me that Operation Inherent Resolve is a conventional military affair. Adrian J. T. Rankine-Galloway, a Pentagon spokesperson, used some version of “supporting role” five times in our brief exchange. I asked about the day after Mosul falls. “The Government of Iraq is responsible for governance and security matters within its territory,” the Marine Corps major responded. A second Pentagon official, this one senior, spoke to me on condition of anonymity. “Once ISIS is defeated, you still have sectarian tensions and divisions. That’s where soft power comes into play,” the official said. Gutting civilian agencies, like Trump has proposed, would “hinder the U.S. ability to prevent insurgencies before they happen.” Surely there’s some middle ground between full-tilt counterinsurgency and what Major Rankine-Galloway referred to as “supporting local partners as those forces liberate territory from ISIS control.”

The lessons the COINdinitas took from Iraq in the 2000s extend beyond that time and place. In *Waging Insurgent Warfare*, Seth G. Jones conducts an empirical study on the 181 insurgencies that took form between World War II and 2015. Insurgency prevention across the board, he demonstrates, hinges on ameliorating local grievances, “particularly ones associated with low per capita income, ethnic polarization, and religious polarization.” Washington isn’t going to “fix” Iraq in one fell swoop. But Trump cannot afford to defund the organizations doing a measure of good. Michael Singh, managing director at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, was once responsible for George W. Bush’s national-security policy toward the region stretching from Morocco to Iran. “How we defeat ISIS is just as important as whether we do,” he told me. “We need to leave behind conditions in Iraq both for effective local governance and stable regional geopolitics. It will be worth taking our time to get this right.”

If America is going to prolong putting uniformed men and women in harm’s way, dipping deeper and deeper into the war chest, common sense demands that the administration maximize their impact. If America is going to help Iraq break the endless cycle of sectarian violence—undoubtedly, a prerequisite for hindering an embarrassing ISIS comeback—it will have to find a cost-effective, palatable means of translating battlefield triumphs into political progress. What Trump needs is a force multiplier. Regrettably, the White House’s recent budget proposal sentenced to death an indispensable variable in that equation.

Seven years after Mahmudiya, the United States Institute of Peace executed another unlikely scheme, in the northern city of Tikrit.

Tikrit in 2014 was like Tal Afar in 2005, but worse. Ravaged by calculating jihadists, Saddam Hussein’s ancestral hometown collapsed on itself. ISIS has a vested interest in instability; internecine violence is basically insurgent catnip. Camp Speicher had been home to a few thousand Iraqi military cadets before ISIS weeded out 1,700 Shia, slaughtered them and dumped their bodies into mass graves. It released photos and videos to adorn its sickening propaganda. The Speicher victims represented 20 southern tribes, from 9 provinces. By the time a hodgepodge of Iraqi Security Forces and Iran-linked militias ejected ISIS from Tikrit in April 2015, the massacre had been seared into Shia memory.

Civil war seemed inevitable. Shia from the south marched north to avenge their sons. The immediate aftermath of ISIS’s expulsion saw a wave of looting and lynching. Had he been asked, McMaster could’ve scripted the conflagration to come, like an omniscient playwright. In Act One, the Shia conflate every Sunni with a pulse with ISIS and its war crimes. The Sunnis are too busy accusing the Shia of making blatant generalizations to offer nuance. In Act Two, revenge killing begets revenge killing. Tikrit’s displaced locals do not return. No Sunni trusts the overwhelmingly Shia security forces, least of all the militias. In Act Three, the Shia militias use disproportionate force to restore order, falling just short of war crimes. In Act Four, ISIS returns to Tikrit and hoists its black flag. This time, more Sunni tribes than before acquiesce. They’ve come to hate Baghdad more than any jihadist.

McMaster the playwright would’ve been within his rights to anticipate such a bitter tragedy. He knows the motifs inside and out. But in the case of Tikrit, he would’ve been wrong.

Tikrit was the first major Sunni city retaken from ISIS. USIP’s intensive monitoring paid dividends; months before the battle concluded, the institute was already reckoning with the brewing storm. USIP mobilized an intervention team with its network of Iraqi facilitators. Well versed in the fine contours of Tikrit’s tattered social fabric, the team convened a series of meetings in Baghdad. Sarhang Hamasaed, the institute’s Middle East director, helped design the Tikrit initiative. He likens revenge killing to an improvised explosive device. It hides in plain sight and can detonate at any moment, triggering cascading violence. That violence, he told me, becomes “the cleavage that ISIS exploits,” its fundamental sustenance.

The goal of the dialogue was to dispel notions of collective blame, to introduce nuance. But the situation was “way too hot” to immediately bring the Tikriti Sunnis accused of complicity face to face with the southern Shia mourning their children. USIP dubbed these parties the “inner circle.” What the mediators needed was an “outer circle.” Their homework on local power dynamics bore fruit. They identified viable enablers and probable spoilers. They carefully selected an outer circle of tribal leaders who exerted strong influence over the inner circle. Sunni and Shia a heartbeat away from war gathered under one roof. USIP’s Iraqi facilitators ran the show. (“At the end of the day,” Hamasaeed told me, “you want the Iraqis to have the credibility and the know-how to do this on their own.”) Compelling anecdotes challenged dangerous prevailing narratives. Not every Sunni, it turns out, abetted ISIS. They too lost loved ones. Some Sunni tribes put themselves at risk to protect Shia from the jihadists.

USIP brought crucial stakeholders into the fold. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the most revered Shia cleric in the world, sent two representatives. Sistani’s blessing conferred moderation. The office of the prime minister, meanwhile, cleared 400 Sunni families of ISIS collusion, allowing them to return home. The disputants struck a bargain virtually unprecedented in tribal tradition. According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, “In front of more than 30 satellite TV channels, Tikriti tribal leaders denounced the Speicher massacre, blamed IS, and vowed to help Iraqi security forces identify and capture individual culprits within their own tribes, and help identify mass graves.” It was more than a rhetorical coup; the prospect of justice was coming into relief. Bereaved Shia families received moral and financial compensation from Baghdad. In exchange, hundreds of thousands of displaced Tikritis were given a right of return. Monitors were dispatched to the area to deter reprisals.

USIP’s plot was not, alas, a miracle cure for all that ails Iraq. Salahuddin Province and Tikrit, its capital, have recently suffered a number of suicide bombings, in part, the result of ISIS feeling the squeeze in Mosul. And the provincial governor seems to have gone rogue. Under a new policy, authorities are forcibly displacing and detaining hundreds of families accused of ISIS ties. Hamasaeed readily acknowledges USIP’s limits. “We can cut into the communal tensions the militias want to exploit,” he told me. “But we cannot end the militias.”

And yet, in Iraq, “it could be worse” has currency. NPR reported that Tikrit has “confounded expectations,” observing the city center “bustling with life.” The *Wall Street Journal* described a degree of normalcy and saw “no signs that local resentments are going to turn violent.” Tikrit University has reopened, and most of its 23,000 students, including Shia from the south, are back in attendance. Over 90 percent of Tikritis displaced by ISIS have returned home. And Shia forces are not summarily executing Sunnis with power drills, as was the case during the worst years of the Iraq War. USIP’s follow-up work is ongoing. It has implemented Justice and Security Dialogues in Kirkuk, Baghdad, Karbala and Basra, which are intended to build trust between security forces and the locals they serve.

The real test comes down to resilience. When ISIS or the Shia militias spill blood, are there vehicles of redress strong enough to dissuade victims from reacting violently to attacks designed to provoke just that?

Despite the caricature of a tree-hugging think tank that does nothing but write earnest policy reports, USIP has actionable comparative advantages. In Tikrit, USIP advanced core components of McMaster’s Tal Afar agenda, but with less money. The institute runs lean. Its annual budget of \$35.3 million wouldn’t register as a rounding error at the Pentagon. The entire Tikrit project cost around \$1 million. In contrast, anti-ISIS operations run the military \$11.2 million a day.

John Nagl considers USIP a “combat multiplier,” insofar as its specialists “understand cultures and tribal and local politics more deeply and more instinctually than anyone but the very best and rare American soldiers.” And it’s not restricted by limited deployments. Peter Mansoor lauded the institute’s “staying power.” When the Defense and State Departments move on to the next crisis, he said, “USIP stays behind for a longer-term commitment.” Its longevity allows it to accumulate relationships and granular expertise. Moreover, USIP isn’t beholden to the Embassy’s chain of command. Its staff can maneuver around the country to places where neither the State Department nor USAID is permitted.

The institute has shed the baggage of the American occupier, and is respected among Iraqis for not having an agenda. Michael Knights is a foremost expert on Iraqi security affairs. Although he’s distinctly military-centric in his analysis—“I’m not a soft-security person,” he told me—he considers USIP “very credible in Iraq.” I spoke to him not long after he delivered Senate testimony on the future of U.S. policy in Iraq. Visibly disillusioned by inefficient foreign-aid delivery, he sees in USIP a potential viable model: “If the U.S. Government could throw some resources

at some genuine Iraqi-led organizations—even if USIP were the conduit—it could have a big impact.”

USIP also maintains access to the highest levels of the Iraqi Government. “When you come to Washington and you see that thing,” Knights said of USIP’s glassy, Lincoln Memorial—facing headquarters, “you know that you’re somewhere powerful. It has prestige, and prestige matters a lot in a place like Iraq.” In the past 7 years, the institute has hosted Iraq’s prime ministers on each of their visits to Washington.

By the end of our interview, Nagl was effusive. “USIP prevents wars from happening and ends them sooner, on terms more favorable to the United States. It keeps American soldiers alive,” he announced slowly. “USIP understands how wars end.”

“WE’RE DOING very well in Iraq,” President Trump recently extolled. “Our soldiers are fighting, and fighting like never before.” In March, U.S.-led air strikes killed more civilians than in any other month since the anti-ISIS campaign began in 2014. A single March 17 attack reportedly killed as many as 200 Mosul residents, and the U.S. military “probably had a role.” Razing ancient cities with women and children still inside—not what most would consider “doing very well.” Rubble and cinder play well both in jihadist propaganda and on CNN, but for inverse reasons. Not to worry: the President has assigned Jared Kushner the Iraq portfolio.

Incoherence is a staple of the administration’s foreign-policy messaging. UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, for instance, declared that Washington would not “focus on getting Assad out” 10 days before telling Jake Tapper, “There’s not any sort of option where a political solution is going to happen with Assad at the head of the regime.” In the interim, Trump fired 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at a Syrian air base in retaliation for the regime’s gruesome chemical attack on civilians.

U.S. policy in Iraq is equally discordant. “As a coalition, we are not in the business of nation-building or reconstruction,” Secretary of State Rex Tillerson recently said. “We must ensure that our respective Nations’ precious and limited resources are devoted to preventing the resurgence of ISIS and equipping the war-torn communities to take the lead in rebuilding their institutions and returning to stability.” Empowering Iraqis to take the lead is fine and good. But passing the buck on reconstruction is a sure-fire way to guarantee an ISIS resurgence. “A short-term approach to long-term problems,” Colonel McMaster wrote of America’s post-9/11 wars in 2008, “generated multiple short-term plans that often confused activity with progress.”

The President’s bomb-only approach belies echoes of Sisyphus. Trump may inadvertently sentence America to a lifetime of boulder pushing. Higher and higher the military rolls the insurgent boulder up the hill. Just when the summit is in sight, the boulder falls to the bottom. And so on, for eternity.

A few glimmers of hope, however, may be squeezing through the cracks. Weeks into his presidency, Trump replaced his ethically challenged national security advisor, Michael J. Flynn, with a man once responsible for rooting out corruption in Afghanistan. McMaster now appears to be wresting control of the National Security Council from the White House’s toxic ideologues. Steve Bannon’s permanent seat on the Principals Committee has been revoked, while the director of national intelligence and the chairman of the joint chiefs have had theirs restored. McMaster has relocated Flynn’s deputy, K. T. McFarland, to Singapore. He’s poached Dina Powell, one of the few Trump aides with government experience. Most encouraging, he’s hired a scholar named Nadia Schadlow. Both John Nagl and Peter Mansoor sang her praises, independently and unprompted. Schadlow’s new study hit the bookshelves right around the time Trump was releasing his draconian budget blueprint. The subtitle of *War and the Art of Governance* is alone cause for cautious optimism: “Consolidating Combat Success into Political Victory.”

It would be a mistake of epic proportions to purge counterinsurgency’s underlying principles for fear of conjuring images of failed nation building. Yes, a full-blown counterinsurgency do-over is as unviable as it is imprudent. But throwing out the baby with the bathwater would be folly. USIP is but one example of diplomatic effort complementing military sacrifice. Good policy need not be bad politics. At bare minimum, Trump has an obligation to uphold his campaign promises to protect core U.S. interests in Iraq, which he has, more or less, reduced to “ISIS bad. Iran bad.” Emboldening moderates in Iraq is consistent with one of the President’s favorite talking points—hedging against Iranian subterfuge. Like ISIS, Iran feeds on sectarian strife and political dysfunction. Michael Singh, the former NSC official, made an emphatic point of this. “An unstable, conflict-ridden Iraq,” Singh told me, “will inevitably be a vector for Iranian power projection, just as Syria, Lebanon and Yemen have been.”

If he had the incentive, Trump could advance a deft Iraq policy without violating the nebulous tenets of “America First.” He could don a veneer of pragmatic national-security ethos and proclaim, with something approximating conviction, that ISIS will never again be allowed safe haven. If he were to revise his “skinny budget,” he’d have at his disposal a blend of military and nonmilitary assets uniquely equipped to render Iraq inhospitable to the insurgents who have cast such an indelible shadow over the American homeland. By funding that recipe’s civilian ingredients and disabusing himself of a “bomb the shit out of ‘em” mentality, the president could secure lasting bang for a shoestring buck. In other words, H. R. McMaster must teach Donald Trump how to eat soup with a knife.

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Note: This article has been updated since its original posting.

Senator DURBIN. If I could follow through on the 21st Century toolbox, what we’re learning in campaigns trying to win the hearts and minds of a majority in each of our States is that you better be on top of social media. If you’re still playing by the old rules of television ads and radio ads and the like and old polling, you’re missing it and you’re likely to lose. So, when it comes to your efforts in your agencies, are you now in the 21st Century social media world when it comes to promoting and preserving democracy?

Mr. WEBER. Yes, Senator Durbin, I would just say, first of all, you all appropriated a special strategic fund for us about \$25 million and the types of questions you’re raising are exactly the things that we’re trying to spend that money on, how to combat exactly the problems that you cited and do so in a way that is keeping up or getting ahead of our opponents around the world. We also try to combat fake news, phony media and all that stuff by helping the development of local media. We think that’s a central part of our function is to help empower people to develop genuine free media with real messages and real news and run by local people. So, we’re trying our very best to keep up and ahead of that problem. But, it’s a problem.

Senator DURBIN. Congressman Kolbe.

Mr. KOLBE. Yeah, Mr. Chairman and Senator Durbin, I have just been noted that IRI, International Republican Institute, has a program called The Beacon Project that is funded through some grants through these agencies that you fund and it’s a partner in Europe to counter Russian propaganda and it uses social media as its major component. So, we are trying. I think we can do better but we’re working to stay ahead of the curve.

Senator DURBIN. The analogy I think back to is Radio Free Europe, Radio Martí where we couldn’t rely on the official origins of news and information in various countries and therefore had to super-impose our own message above it. I don’t know if that is an analogy for social media today but it might be necessary if you’re dealing with adversary when it comes to news sources.

Mr. KOLBE. It’s just so much more diverse today.

Mr. HADLEY. We’d be delighted if the members of the subcommittee would come down to USIP and we can brief you on Peace Tech Lab which is trying to use social media, communication technology, big data and data analytics to try to empower peace builders to deal with conflict in this bottom up way. It’s the new frontier.

Senator GRAHAM [presiding]. For the record, we had \$100 million set up in the last—the fiscal year 2017 budget to deal counter Russia, to help front line states deal with the threats they have from Russia, cyber and other areas. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, let me say, my answer is yes to all of those questions that you asked the panelists so just to be clear. I want to follow up on this a little bit because I think it's one of the real significant challenges that we face today. And I had a chance with Senators Murphy and Johnson to meet with the Prime Minister from Georgia and some of the other Georgian officials who were here yesterday and they were talking about this very issue and one of the things I asked them was whether it was helpful to have something like Radio Liberty that can continue to broadcast into Georgia to set the record straight on what the facts are and they said, yes. In fact, that's very helpful and we would like more. We would like more opportunities to counter that Russian propaganda and yet as we look at the—what we know about the budget proposal coming out of this administration, they would zero out the Broadcasting Board of Governors and those programs. So, I think we need to look at what has worked and what is working as we think about what we need to continue to fund.

GLOBAL WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

Mr. Hadley, I want to ask you about the Institute of Peace which has done critical work on women's participation and I can pose this question to Secretary Albright as well. But, can you talk about how important it is to continue to support the efforts to empower women around the world?

Mr. HADLEY. One of the areas that USIP has gotten into is focusing on the role that women play in building peace and in fighting violent extremism. And I'll just give you two examples in a program called Women Preventing Extremist Violence in Nigeria and Kenya in 2013. It was launched in 2013. It convenes grass roots women's groups to detect and counter early stages of radicalization in the communities. In some sense, to talk to their kids and to monitor their kids and see when one seems to be going in the wrong direction. They've created dialogues. They've tried to create trust and cooperative environments with local law enforcement to try to nip incipient extremists before they go wrong. This is just an example. There are a number of similar organizations and activities that USIP is doing in this space. It's an important one.

Senator SHAHEEN. So, Secretary Albright, how important do you think it is for us to continue to support the efforts of global women's issues that has been started in the State Department?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I think, Senator, it's absolutely essential because we know that societies are more stable when women are politically and economically empowered. And what NDI has been doing for some time now is developing a whole system for supporting women in terms of running for office and learning from each other. And I was just in Mexico last week to meet a group of women that NDI had supported in terms of enlarging the number of women that not only run but also changing the laws so that 50 percent of people running need to be women. So, it requires that kind of support.

The other part though is nothing ever is simple. What has happened is there continues to be violence against women who do run for office. And so, NDI has also been working with the United Nations in order to try to make sure that that is dealt with internationally and the economic empowerment I think is important and also we just gave an award to a group of women in Central African Republic that are able to work across various tribal groups and different ethnic groups. And so, I think it's essential. Women are actually pretty good about talking to each other.

Senator SHAHEEN. That's right. And that's progress that it's nice to see in long-established democracies like France, right? I was very pleased to hear President Macron say that he wanted to recruit 50 percent women candidates for the Parliamentary elections so I think we could take a page out of that book here in America. Secretary Albright, let me also ask you and this is really for anybody, you've all mentioned the importance of our principles and our values as we do work around the world. So, in terms of encouraging democratic movements in Russia and in other autocratic countries, what message did it send when Secretary Tillerson visited Russia recently and he did not meet with civil society groups?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Senator, I think it is very important for America always to make clear who we are and not take direction from authoritarian governments as to with whom we meet or do not meet. And in the past, Secretaries and various visitors have met with groups and we do not need to take direction in that particular part. I also am concerned if we do not keep our values and our principles top. You don't have to—it doesn't have to be the first thing you say to a leader or do it in a press conference, but it has to always be on the agenda. And even in places that we disagree with their government as I mentioned, we can never not speak about it and we do need to meet with the civil society groups because they gain strength from that and we're not trying to subvert their government. We are trying to show that a more stable government is one where people can express their views.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you all very much. Oh, Mr. Hadley.

Mr. HADLEY. Senator, if I could just say one word perhaps in defense of Secretary Tillerson. You know one of the questions is what do you do publicly and what do you do privately in terms of this advancing human rights. And I think it's—while I would not have made the choice he made, I would have met with civil society groups in Russia, it is interesting that they have been successful in getting some long standing human rights cases released in Egypt and China. So, let's give it some time. It does seem that they are working behind the scenes and that they're getting some results. And again, it's this issue of how much do you do publicly, how much do you do privately.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you and thank you all very much.

Mr. WEBER. Senator, can I quickly make—we have submitted to the record a program called Malam Darfur funded by the NED in Sudan which goes to your point. It talks about organizing and training women peace ambassadors with great success. I think you'd find it interesting.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thanks very much.

Senator GRAHAM. Senator Van Hollen then Murphy.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank all our witnesses for your service to our country and your testimony here today and I think you have all made the points very well that Senator John McCain outlined in his op-ed piece in the New York Times, the integral relationship between our values and our foreign policy interests which travel together in so many places.

Mr. Kolbe, Congressman Kolbe, good to see you. You mentioned you were on the board of Freedom House and a little while ago, I think about a week ago, I had the honor of making a few opening remarks at Freedom House when they released their report on the state of freedom of the press in 2017. And if you take a look at the introduction by the President of Freedom House, Michael Abramowitz, it was a pretty clear statement about the threat we see today. And the title of it is "Hobbling a Champion of Global Press," and Mr. Abramowitz starts out by writing, "Never in the 38 years that Freedom House has been monitoring press freedom has the United States figured as much in the public debate about the topic as in 2016 and the first months of 2017." He then goes on to talk about the growing threat to the press in places like Russia, China and other places around the world, but then writes, "But it is the far-reaching attacks on the news media and their place in a democratic society by Donald Trump that fuel predictions of further setbacks in the years to come." He goes on to point out that President Trump has borrowed a term that was popularized by the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin when Donald Trump labeled the news media "the enemy of the people." This is in the introduction to the report. And he concludes and I quote "that," well first he goes on to point out he thinks the United States is pretty resilient, that we will withstand many of these attacks, but points out the negative impact this will have on our ability to speak with any moral authority overseas and the impact it will have. And he goes on to conclude and I quote, "A greater danger is that the United States will stop being a model and aspirational standard for other countries. When political leaders in the United States lambast the media, it encourages their counterparts abroad to do the same."

So, my question for each of you is that when the person who is supposed to be leading the free world attacks the press in the ways that we've seen, does that give greater license to other leaders, especially authoritarian leaders around the world to clamp down on press freedoms in their country? Madam Secretary.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Senator, I am deeply troubled by the whole question of all this because one of the things that happens, I do travel abroad an awful lot. I'm still a diplomat and I find it hard to criticize my own country when I'm abroad. But I've been asked this question and the power of our example here is wrong because in fact people do say to us when I talk to them about their freedom of the press, they say, "Yeah, what about you guys?" And I think that I know a lot of people, there's always this cliché, it's not the example of our power but the power of our example. In this particular way, the power of our example is damaging and I hope very

much that we are able to rectify this because it is very hard for us to go and tell other countries what to do and the press is the basis of a free society and that is something that we talk about when we travel abroad, how to establish the rule of law, what's the role of different institutions and the media is absolutely central. A free media that is able to speak out on behalf of the people.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Any other comments on that point? Mr. Kolbe.

Mr. KOLBE. Well, just without—since you addressed the Freedom House, without wading into the political debate here, I would say that a free press is absolutely essential and we do set the example in the United States in so many different places and in so many different ways. And it's very important that the United States maintain its strong commitment to not only democracy but the specifics of it, including freedom of the press. I think we have a lot of resilience in this area but I think that we need to make it—we need to be a good example for the rest of the world.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Congressman Kolbe. The reason I raise Freedom House is because I think all of us on this panel know it has the reputation of being a nonpartisan organization speaking out whether you have Republican administrations or Democratic administrations. The difference is now we have a great departure in what has been a bipartisan tradition in how the United States speaks about these issues. And so, it is important to I think look very carefully at the impact our statement and example has around the world.

Mr. KOLBE. I can assure you the debates within the board are very lively on that topic.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I'm sure of that. Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for your laser-like focus on this issue of figuring out the right sides of our toolkit as we try to protect our interests internationally. I think that's the right discussion to be having and I think most of our panelists have hit the nail on the head by recognizing that the rest of the world has changed their toolkits and the challenges facing the United States have changed and we still sit here with essentially the same balance between military tools and non-military tools, one that coming from a state that makes a lot of the things that we supply to the military still seems pretty out of whack when you have twice as many people working in military grocery stores as you have diplomats in the entirety of the State Department.

But, I think this focus we're having today on democracy assistance is really important because, you know, a lot of our constituents are hyper confused about how we approach democracy assistance abroad. I'm all for it. I understand the value of it and the example that the United States sets but just help me explain how we should explain the places where our interests in democracy promotion and our interest in advancing our own security depart, right? It seems as if sometimes we are willing to speak out for democracy when authoritarian regimes are weak or when authoritarian regimes are operating contrary to our interests. But when authoritarian regimes are strong and they are operating in accordance with our interests, we're not so interested in talking about de-

mocracy. Egypt for a long period of time would be on that list. Today, Saudi Arabia would certainly be on that list. Do we just admit that there are times when democracy isn't that important to us and just make that clear advertisement that sometimes like with the Saudis we have more important irons in the fire or do we try to explain away why we seem to pay attention to it in some places and not in other places? People notice this, right? I mean it's not that people don't notice that we seem to care a lot about democracy and undermining authoritarian regimes in some places but not in other places. How do we deal with that? I understand—and I accept that it may be an inevitable aspect of our foreign policy but you guys have thought a lot about this. How do we explain that?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEMOCRACY PROMOTION ABROAD

Mr. HADLEY. I would say we've got to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time and we should always be talking about democracy and freedom even in situations where we have other interests that we're dealing with in the country. It depends a little bit how you do it, how much you do publicly, how much you do privately. I tend to think that some of the countries we have most difficulty are some of our traditional friends and allies and you have to accompany a little public prodding, some private counseling about democracy but also putting our arm around them and showing that we stand with them and help them solve some of these states that have real security challenges that need to be addressed. I would argue oddly enough that we need to—the problem is even more acute with strong authoritarian states. Look at what Russia is doing now. They are challenging democratic principles and our paradigm at home and abroad in a very active campaign and that is very corrosive to America's role in the world and to the kind of world we're trying to build. We need to have not just be talking about democracy; we've got to have a conscious strategy for how to counter what they're doing and to get more on the offensive about democracy promotion because we're losing this debate. We're losing it.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I agree. We have to remember who we are and that the world is counting on us, or the people of the world in terms of speaking up. I have to say Steve and I have just done a project together on Middle East and we were in both in Egypt and in Saudi Arabia and talking about to them in terms of their evolution and development that they have to open up, understand what kind of a system they need in terms of allowing themselves to operate in the 21st Century. But I do think that we never can forget who we are but I do think that it's an issue of how and where. I have spent quite a lot of time actually telling some really nasty people that they needed to change and I do think if we don't do that, then we are not true to what this country is about. But it isn't always done in exactly the same mechanism. I also agree with Steve, we have to push back on what the Russia's are doing. The Russian mode now is to try to make sure that democracies don't function and I think that we have to make absolutely sure that we strengthen our friends and allies in terms of what needs to be done for them to be able to exist side by side and be able to

push forward. So, I think we can't just decide that what the Russians are doing that's their business. It's our business.

Senator MURPHY. I appreciate your call for consistency. I think that double standard that sometimes we reinforce here, people notice it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you all. If having hearings is pushing back against Russia, we're pushing back but it's going to take more than that. It's going to take some money; it's going to take some action; and to our subcommittee, to our witnesses, you've really helped the cause of justifying a pushback against a budget cut that would be devastating. I know these are tough times. I want to rebuild the military but not by destroying the State Department. To the extent that we can reform the State Department and save money by being more efficient, modernize the State Department, count me in. But the tools in our toolbox would be dramatically diminished if the 29 percent cut were enacted and quite frankly, we need to modernize our toolbox and that's going to take some transitional funding. The Institute of Peace is a good investment from my point of view. All of your organizations I know very well, IRI, NDI. Vin, you've done a great job being the chairman of the board of NED. \$2.3 billion is a lot of money where I come from but in terms of the Federal budget, it's a very small amount in terms of what we get for it. It's a great return on investment, maybe one of the best in the entire Federal budget.

Secretary Albright, thanks for coming. I know you're a busy lady. You could be almost anywhere in the world and that's true of all of you and I appreciate your coming here today. We'll take your counsel and advice and we'll try to work with administration to get a budget that recognizes who we are as a people, that soft power sometimes is not soft. That's a good way of saying it, Mr. Hadley. People representing our country in the State Department and other nongovernmental organizations are very much in danger. These four operating bases, these Provincial Reconstruction Teams that I visited in Iraq and Afghanistan are some of the most dangerous places you could be. They deserve our respect and our support as much as our men and women heroes of the military.

I'd ask the subcommittee Members to submit questions for the record until Friday the 12th by 5 p.m.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator GRAHAM. We have two hearings coming up, May 23, on U.S. assistance for the Northern Triangle of Central America and June 13, the President's fiscal year 2018 budget request for the 150 account.

Thank you all. The subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:59 p.m., Tuesday, May 9, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of Chair.]

TESTIMONY FROM DEMOCRACY PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AL-TAHREER ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

April 24, 2017.

RAHMAN K ALJEBOURI, *Senior Program Officer,
Middle East & North Africa,
National Endowment for Democracy (NED),
1025 F Street, NW, Suite 800,
Washington, DC 20004.*

DEAR MR. ALJEBOURI,

Althareer Association for Development would like to thank NED (National Endowment for Democracy) for supporting its projects in institutional improvement, building democratic leadership, and policy making. Our cooperation with NED started about a decade ago through which we have worked on several activities to support peace and democracy in Iraq.

After ISIS took over control in Mosul, our organization lost its office and most of its resources. At that time we were struggling to survive rather than helping the people in our affected society. NED's support gave us the hope to reestablish our work and grow bigger than before. Now, we have two licensed offices in Kurdistan region: Erbil and Dohuk from which we took initiatives in several ambitious projects. Throughout the past years and with the help from NED, we created partnerships with more than 7 other international organizations. In 2013, our association was recognized by UNAMI (United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq) as the best Iraqi NGO working in the field of human rights. In terms of building democratic leadership, our association has worked in several projects in the four governorates affected by ISIS, Nineveh, Saladin, Al Anbar, and Diyala. Our strategy in this regard includes four stages: observe youth leadership, attract them, engage them in workshops to improve their skills, and provide them with the support to take initiatives to help their societies. Following this strategy, our organization substantially helped in founding 15 volunteering groups who are actively working in the four governorates. In terms of policy making, we have held several conferences and workshops to gather the leaders of the society (professors, tribal leader . . . etc.) in Nineveh and other regions. In these conferences discussions are initiated with the Iraqi Federal Government and the international society through the embassies and UNAMI. Such activities were effective in making clear policy targeting peace in the society and rebuilding the trust between the government and the society and among people themselves. Our association have worked on several other projects while many more are still in our plan waiting for more support to start.

We would like to show our gratitude to NED again. We could not have accomplished all of these successful projects without their financial and emotional support. In the same time, we are looking for more support and cooperation between our organizations to build peace and democracy in our society.

Best Regards,

ABDALAZIZ YOUNIS ALJARBA,
Executive Director.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR IRAKLI ALASANIA, FORMER MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF GEORGIA 2012–2014, AND MR. SHALVA SHAVGULIDZE, FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT 2011–2016

Since Georgia got independence in 1991, myself and other likeminded people around me, have been tirelessly fighting for the democracy building in the country. After we saw that individual effort wasn't enough to save young democracy to fail, in 2009, I, along with my fellow friends established a political party Free Democrats, which till today continues to fight for the consolidation of democracy in Georgia. Since day one, IRI Georgia's support has been instrumental in developing party structure and its capacity to become a strong voice in Georgia's political life.

Georgia had its first peaceful transfer of power in fall 2012 after parliamentary elections. But, the challenge of making Georgia a democratic state did not end there.

In fact, it remains a work in progress and continues to have vast political polarization and democracy promotion remains as important now as it did then. Democracy doesn't happen overnight or even over a single election and transfer of power.

Political culture in Georgia remains immature. Approximately 80 percent of the voting Georgian population was born during Soviet rule and a large part of their lives spent in the communist system. To them it's not what they can do for political parties but what can parties—usually financially—do for them. It's important for democracy promotion be there for the young generation but for them as well. Political parties in Georgia not only face the challenge of these voters, but also problems with fundraising and access to media.

Georgia and its emerging democracy faces many challenges and no one would like to see its democracy fail more than Russia. In the past 4 years the country has seen a noticeable growth in the use of soft power and Russian propaganda and the first pro-Russian party of Alliance of Patriots being present in the new parliament. It is vital that pro-democratic parties continue to strengthen and grow and that comes from the help of organizations like the International Republican Institute.

In July 2016 when I was Chairman of the Free Democrats party, I had the opportunity to meet with [then] Secretary Kerry. We not only spoke about the upcoming parliamentary elections but also democracy promotion in Georgia. It was then I personally asked for increased financing of IRI (and NDI) in Georgia. The democratic process has started, but not yet finished we need intuitions like IRI to work with political parties to ensure the political environment is open and competitive. This is especially important when talking about political pluralism. In 2016 the ruling party obtained almost 70 percent of all party donations. In order for others to continue to grow and develop it's of the utmost importance to have continued assistance from IRI and other democracy development institutes.

SHALVA SHAUGULIDZE,
Chairman, Free Democrats.

IRAKLI ALASANIA,
Founder, Chairman in 2009–2012, 2014–2017, Free Democrats.

[From the Washington Post, Opinions, Feb. 24, 2016]

IN RUSSIA, HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS NEED WESTERN AID MORE THAN EVER

(By Ludmilla Alexeeva)

Ludmilla Alexeeva is chair and a founding member of the Moscow Helsinki Group.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rebirth of Russia. One of the most remarkable features of that rebirth was the rapid creation, after 70 years of Soviet repression and atomization, of Russia's vast, vibrant and effective civil society. The history of the human rights movement in Russia is also the story of my life, because I was a dissident in the Soviet era and today proudly chair the Moscow Helsinki Group, the oldest human rights organization working in Russia.

In the 1990s, our country was poor, and rights groups could find hardly any funding in Russia. We were fortunate to have Western donors who supported our work. Even as Russia got back on its feet, thanks largely to a dramatic rise in oil prices, it still wasn't easy to find financial assistance in Russia for human rights work. There were many reasons for this, not least of which was that potential donors did not want to risk the Kremlin's wrath by supporting potentially sensitive causes. And let's face it, human rights work can be sensitive.

During Vladimir Putin's 15 years in power, the Kremlin has attempted to cast human rights values as alien to Russia—especially in the wake of events in Ukraine 2 years ago. Criticism of the government has come to equal disloyalty or, worse, treason. Under a law adopted in 2012, more than 100 groups that receive even small amounts of foreign funding have been branded “foreign agents”—which in Russia can only mean “traitor.”

It's not only that the Kremlin and state-controlled media have poisoned the public mind against independent groups in this way. There are also real legal consequences for leaders of civic groups, including up to 2 years in prison if they refuse to comply with the law. Dozens of groups are tied up in lawsuits with the government. Many have had to close. The Justice Ministry recently accused Memorial, a

leading human rights organization, of using foreign funding to harm Russia and asked the Prosecutor General's Office to investigate.

Another part of this anti-foreigner witch hunt was last year's law banning "undesirable" foreign organizations that supposedly undermine Russia's defense, security or constitutional order. But the real target is still Russians: Those of us with ties to these "undesirables" risk up to 6 years in prison. The aim is to isolate us and deepen the divide between Russia and the West.

It wasn't long before Russian senators asked the Prosecutor General's Office to ban 12 organizations as "undesirable." The list included donors who helped Russian groups get off the ground 25 years ago and remain a crucial source of support to this day. First the National Endowment for Democracy was banned, followed a few months later by the Open Society Foundations. The MacArthur Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation were also on the list and decided to stop their Russia work, citing the increasingly hostile political climate. I could not have been sadder. These foundations had done so much to help my country.

Now only a pitifully small number of donors remain willing to continue funding human rights work in Russia. It's easy to understand that. All donors want to see results from their investments, but what results can be expected here, when a new kind of iron curtain seems to be lowering? Who wants it on their conscience if the leader of a group they are supporting is imprisoned, or worse?

Several years ago, my organization stopped accepting foreign funding because I felt I couldn't ask my team to take the risks that came with the label of "foreign agent." But I fully support my colleagues in the human rights movement who have courageously withstood the legal and political onslaught.

I don't have answers to the hard questions. But I refuse to abandon hope.

So do the hundreds of activists who are putting everything on the line—their freedom, their families—to continue human rights work in Russia. They're fighting for the values that attracted Western aid in the first place. Donors need to find ways to support them. Surely they have faced bigger challenges elsewhere in the world. Surely the project of defending freedom in Russia is worth pursuing while there are Russians willing to stand up for it.

At a meeting a few months ago, I asked Putin directly to repeal the ugly "foreign agents" law. I told him that the government should not accuse us of something for which we are not guilty. He has not yet acted on my request. Call me foolish, but I can still hope. If I were to meet today with all the Western donors who have invested in human rights in Russia, I would praise them for the confidence they had in us 25 years ago, at the hopeful beginning, and plead with them not to abandon their Russian partners now that the going has gotten tough.

Read more on this topic:

The Post's View: Russia cracks down on an important voice for human rights

Carl Gershman : Russia's crackdown on civil society shows the regime's weakness

Vladislav Inozemtsev: Putin's self-destructing economy

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<http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/8/russians-exiled-back-to-the-kitchen.html>

RUSSIANS EXILED BACK TO THE KITCHEN

The Kremlin is trying to create a paternalistic relationship between the state and its citizens

August 19, 2015 2:00AM ET

(by Svetlana Gannushkina)

On July 28, Russia designated the National Endowment for Democracy, a Washington-based nonprofit, which has supported human rights and civil society groups in the country, as "undesirable" and banned it.

The clampdown is reminiscent of life before the fall of communism. In the Soviet era, the kitchen was considered a safe place to congregate, speak freely and exchange ideas away from prying neighbors and without fear of reprisal. The ongoing crackdown on pro-democracy groups may force Russians back into the kitchen.

Relations between the Russian Government and the people are strained amid a growing sense of mistrust. Local nongovernmental organizations are being deemed “foreign agents” and their international sponsors are seen as “undesirable.”

“The activities of the foundation present a threat to the constitutional order, national defense and security,” the Prosecutor General’s office said in the statement announcing NED’s ban. But what exactly are these activities that pose such a grave threat to Russia?

I am grateful to NED, which over the last decade has supported my work at the Civic Assistance Committee (CAC) and Memorial Human Rights Center. Both centers provide legal and social assistance to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. NED has also provided partial support to CAC’s Education Project, which aims to prepare migrants for exams in Russian language and history and to improve access to education for the children of migrants. Learning the national language and adapting to a new society poses no threat to Russia. And the Russian courts have affirmed that children of migrants should have unfettered access to education.

On June 15, a District Court in Tver, Russia, ruled in favor of two children who had been excluded from school because they were undocumented, arguing the schools’ mandate is to educate children, not to check their immigration status. On Aug. 10, the Ministry of Education finally concurred that schools must enroll children regardless of their immigration status. (Both suits were brought by CAC on behalf of the plaintiffs.)

At the same time, we are also fighting the government’s proposed eviction of CAC’s center for adaptation and education of refugee children from its premises in Moscow.

NED has sustained our education work for many years. But without funding, we will have to rely on volunteers to continue this work. NED has also provided funding for CAC’s anticorruption project, which produced expert analysis on existing and draft laws’ potential for corruption. Russian enemies would probably want to see corruption spread across the country, but NED has supported efforts to fight it using Russia’s own anti-corruption law. Had the project’s recommendations threatened Russia’s national security interests, CAC would not have received a state-funded presidential grant to pursue the same goals.

Russian authorities believe that if foreign organizations are financing the activities of Russian nonprofits, the financiers control the content and the outcome of the projects.

At the root of the current crackdown is control. Russian authorities wish to create a paternalistic relationship between the government and its citizens. As in the Soviet times, they want to ensure that the people are dependent on those in power. If citizens see the state as feeding them and caring for them, they will come to recognize its ability to give or take away those benefits at will.

He who pays the piper, orders the tune, Russian President Vladimir Putin and other government officials have repeatedly said regarding foreign funding of human rights groups. The recent clamp down on local NGOs and their foreign backers is simply an extension of this logic. In other words, Russian authorities believe that if foreign organizations are financing the activities of Russian nonprofits, the financiers control the content and the outcome of the projects. Perhaps their view of Russian civil society’s autonomy is rooted in the authorities own behavior. Putin’s administration finances organizations that engage in pro-government propaganda, such as Nashi and the anti-Maidan movement.

It is disingenuous and disheartening to suggest that foreign actors would buy off Russian human rights activists for 30 pieces of silver. I come from a family with a long history of serving Russia and its people. My grandfather, Peter Gannushkin, was a famous psychiatrist, who lectured in Europe and could have easily emigrated after the revolution. But he chose to stay and dedicated his life to treating patients and teaching students, irrespective of political positions.

My grandmother’s brother, Evgenii Klumov, was also a doctor and went to treat chronic diseases in Belarus under difficult conditions during World War II. He remained in his post during the German occupation and helped the partisans, risking his life. Toward the wars end, the retreating Germans shot him and his wife after he refused to flee with them. In February 1944, he was posthumously awarded the order “Hero of the Soviet Union,” the highest honor bestowed by the Soviet state. My father built Tupolev airplanes and was awarded a government prize. The rest of my family did not receive such honors, but they too taught, treated, built and defended this country.

This is true for many of my colleagues within the Russian human rights community. Ultimately, the state’s harassment and intimidation will not stop our work. We will have to restructure some aspects of our advocacy, but we will endure. Some Russians may go back to the kitchen and work there. We cannot. Right now 60 mi-

grants and asylum seekers, who need urgent services, are waiting for me in the corridor. And they will not fit in my kitchen.

Svetlana Gannushkina is a mathematician and human rights activist in Russia. She is chair of the Civic Assistance Committee, director of Memorial's Migration Rights Network and has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera America's editorial policy.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. SHARIFA SHIRZAD ALLAHDAZ, PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEMBER, KABUL PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN

I have an interesting trajectory in my career in social work and politics. During the time of the Taliban, when I was only 13, I ran 32 home-based classrooms in my neighborhood in the western part of Kabul city. Years later, as the head of Turkmen Valley Youth Association of Ghorband District of Parwan province, I knew that it would be very difficult to educate myself and run for the Provincial Council elections in 2009. I truly gained a lot of skills from the Campaign School that NDI held in the lead up to those Provincial Councils elections. I am here now as a member of the Provincial Council because of the Institute's workshops and conferences. I remember how the techniques and skills that I learned from workshops and conferences helped me to compete against very strong rivals in my district.

When I was elected to the Kabul Provincial Council, I felt that I entered into a highly important role to serve my people. Every day, I learn more about politicians, civil society organizations, governance trends and challenges. Being in politics is not easy, particularly for women in my country, but I always keep in mind the people that supported and voted for me.

I am grateful to the international community—specifically, very thankful to the U.S. Government and its partners such as NDI—for supporting Afghan women. I am particularly grateful for their technical support and training programs on women's participation in political process—for instance, for parliamentary elections, provincial council elections and special quotas for women in provincial councils and parliament. NDI provided training sessions and workshops impartially and equally to all candidates, both independent and from political parties. I often think that if there was no international community support and if the women's quota was not brought up by the international community, what would we have to allow a minimal level of involvement in politics? What would be the condition of women in politics in Afghanistan?

After the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, the international community—and particularly the intervention of U.S. Government assistance—was a good thing towards positive change in our society. The assistance brought many changes in all sectors throughout the entire country including education, human rights, the economy and economic opportunities for women. But I wished to see how to better harmonize the efforts of both the Afghan Government and international community, and how to keep these sustainable. To support transparency and ensure that international aid for development is not wasted, I request that the international community have strict policies for evaluation and monitoring. I also request that the international community, especially the U.S. Government, assist in maintaining security in our country. Security helps us succeed in our development and rehabilitation efforts.

The international community should continue to support democracy in this country. We are still facing a lot of obstacles, and I am concerned about the upcoming parliamentary elections. There are still major gaps to fill to support women in Afghanistan. The international community should continue to help women gain skills and knowledge and strengthen their voices.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY DAVID BAKRADZE, THE AMBASSADOR OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED STATES

The International Republican Institute has been actively engaged with Georgia since 1998 supporting its democratic development by vigorously improving Georgia's democratic institutions, and helping create a multiparty democratic environment in Georgia. IRI has also helped to substantially level the playing field for elections through bolstering local and regional institutions in Georgia. IRI's engagement in developing a multiparty democracy, supporting the improvement of the electoral

process and increasing the involvement of women and youth in ongoing political processes has been indispensable.

Today, Georgia's democratic development serves as an exemplar to the region and the world. The Georgian people are the main heroes of this story—making hard sacrifices and committing to a constructive path for the future—but American support through IRI and other organizations is crucial to our success. IRI's strong involvement with Georgia throughout the years demonstrates the organization's vital importance to creating a long-lasting tradition of democracy and responsible governance in Georgia.

More specifically, in terms of helping develop multi-party democracy, IRI maintains strong relations with all major political parties and supports them as they develop their regional party structures, build and improve their intra-party democracy, and enhance the professional skills of their members. Furthermore, IRI develops training modules, conducts trainings/seminars, and provides technical support according to the individual needs of parties. In addition, IRI helps candidates prepare for elections by providing trainings on election campaigning, media relations, public speaking, door-to-door campaigning, and also supports the elected officials by providing them information on their duties and responsibilities.

In support of improving electoral processes, IRI has been crucial in monitoring elections in Georgia through an international election observation mission, and providing recommendations to the government on the improvement of the existing electoral system. Furthermore, IRI conducts the training of trainers on electoral issues in order to prepare party trainers, who later train their respective party representatives for elections. The IRI-trained trainers taught around 55,000 party observers and representatives throughout Georgia for the most recent 2016 parliamentary elections. Through these activities, IRI supports the improvement of the entire electoral process in Georgia. IRI also has deployed short-term international observation missions for the 2013 Presidential election, both rounds of the 2014 local elections and international long and short-term observation missions for both rounds of the 2012 and 2016 parliamentary elections. These efforts have helped share tangible proof of Georgia's improvement with the wider world.

Additionally, IRI's work with youth and women to help them develop policy awareness and strengthen their positions in party structures is of enormous importance. Specifically, the goal of IRI's women's programming is to support women's participation in politics and their development as political decision-makers. This program empowers and strengthens the party women organizations, enhances their skills necessary to propose and lobby for measures that will altogether increase women's participation in national parliament and in local councils. Furthermore, IRI supports Georgia's youth by organizing TV debates in which all major party youth members participate and debate various important issues. Many of the debate alumni have become active politicians and have successfully run for parliament.

IRI's work around the world is not just a noble endeavor to bring the best practices of democracy to some societies while helping other young democracies stand strong on their feet, create their own history of democratic development, and flourish and progress toward a better future. In fact, IRI's engagement with Georgia has long surpassed that initial phase, and has become critical for Georgia's democratic consolidation—a strategic imperative for the Georgian Government and nation. Georgia's substantial democratic achievements that stand out in the region and beyond may be partially attributed to IRI's active promotion of democracy in Georgia.

In view of the considerable impact produced by the activities of IRI in Georgia for almost two decades, we believe all Americans should be proud of the hallmark work done by this organization in the country. IRI's efforts proved to be significant for overall change, and made a key difference by helping domestic political parties broaden their appeal; and by assisting Georgia's thriving civil society to ensure responsive governance by imparting global knowledge and experiences. We fully expect that IRI will be able to continue its work to strengthen democratic institutions and political parties in an impartial and balanced manner.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE BOUGAINVILLE WOMEN'S FEDERATION

April 21, 2017.

Ms MADELEINE ALBRIGHT *Chairperson,*
National Democratic Institute.

Re: Democracy assistance in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea

In mid-2015 the Bougainville Women's Federation was a recipient of financial and technical support from the United States Agency for International Development to mount a citizen-led, region-wide, nonpartisan election observation project. Through USAID's development partners, IFES and the National Democratic Institute, BWF gained valuable know-how for strategic, operational, and systematic deployment of an election observation effort.

Held in May for the election of the region's president and members of the House of Representative, BWF deployed 62 male and female long-term and short-term observers in 29 of the 31 constituencies. They observed the campaign and 2 of the week-long polling days, which covered 136 polling events that yielded close to 1,000 voting day reports.

In those elections, BWF and partners IFES and NDI made several recommendations to improve voter registration and verification processes, voter education, candidate nominations, political campaign, accounting of political and electoral finance, and the conduct of the voting and counting, etc.

As this is written the candidate nomination process for the PNG National Election has started here in Buka. Yours truly was reminded of the good work we had done with our partners back in 2015. BWF is currently rolling out the voter education program picking up from the outcomes of election observation in 2015. Communities are speaking highly of this awareness as most of them particularly those living in the very remote areas of Bougainville. In past they did not know the importance of elections and choosing a good leaders. Most importantly they now understand the secrecy of voting and their democratic rights to vote for whom they think fit. In the past the head of the family makes the decision for the family.

BWF has skilled community trainers in the 43 community government. Because of multiple elections occurring in Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, it is very important for the people of Bougainville to fully understand the election processes to ensure the importance of maintaining the integrity, transparency and legitimacy of the process is well understood by voters, particularly those who missed out in formal education.

Election observation has also increased BWF's awareness of the political and electoral environments and has supported the federation's strong, albeit nonpartisan, push for the involvement of women in politics and governance.

To conclude the observation paved a way by creating a foundation for the organization and those who participated particularly the youths whom we continue to engage in community awareness, becoming polling officials and recognising their potential leadership skills back in the village.

The voter education has also created a good and respectful working relationship with the OBEC and the community leaders.

Thank you again NDI for your support.

Very sincerely yours,

BARBARA TANNE,
Executive Manager.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR (RET.) MARTIN BUTORA

(Advisor to the President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska (from 2014); Slovak Ambassador to the U.S. (1999–2003); Advisor to President Vaclav Havel (1990–1992); Co-founder of Public Against Violence movement in Slovakia (1989))

Bratislava, April 28, 2017.

DEMOCRACY AT RISK: THE NEED FOR U.S. RE-ENGAGEMENT IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND ITS EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD AND THE ROLE OF NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

DEAR SENATORS, MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE,

Let me express my appreciation for having an opportunity to share my thoughts and perspective on the importance of continued U.S. involvement in coping with both external and internal threats to democracy.

We live in times when threats to Western-style democracy are in peril worldwide. The causes for it are multiple, often mutually intertwined. The rise of populist anti-establishment, anti-American, anti-EU political forces in Europe and elsewhere; attacks on international rule based order and Euro-Atlantic democratic community by Russia's destabilizing policies; resurgence of nationalism and growing skepticism towards globalization; the increase of conspiracy theories; the upsurge of "post-truth era"; decline of trust to mainstream media.

It is not only times of "liquid modernity" as well as times of "liquid anger"—it is also an era of liquid uncertainties, liquid fears. During the Cold War, the world has been facing a horrible threat—cataclysm caused by devastating effects of nuclear war. Though such an outlook was desperate, the danger was evident, understandable, and one-dimensional. Today, growing pile of troubles is scattered, dispersed and disseminated in various forms, various dangers, pains, disturbances, in different and numerous failures, declines, regressions.

All in all, we seem to live in a period when democracy experiences "a sinking wave". Declining trust in democratic procedures and institutions is not only a threat to vitality of democracy as "the only game in town"—it can have serious security consequences.

In this situation, besides domestic efforts to cope with these challenges, for pro-Western democratic actors in Europe and its neighborhood a revitalized partnership with U.S. players and institutions is of critical importance. In this context, democracy assistance is not about "regime change"—rather, it is about promoting and sustaining democratic rule as a crucial pillar, defense and guard against authoritarian temptations, "populist Zeitgeist" and widespread Russian interference.

National Endowment for Democracy has a long history of providing such assistance. In the period of resistance—and I limit myself only to help offered to Czechoslovakia, and later, Slovakia—NED was a supporter to Charter 77 and the Czech and Slovak dissidents and human rights activists, to initiatives publishing samizdats. In 1989, the "year of miracles" and shortly afterwards, NED, through National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute, supported the successful efforts of Civic Forum and Public Against Violence in the first free elections. In the following years of building democracy, NED supported initiatives and projects that have been carrying ideas and legacy of Vaclav Havel, such as People in Need or Forum 2000.

NED has been helping Slovakia in its road to democracy in the 90s when local NGOs entered struggle against the non-democratic practices of then Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar and his government. With the parliamentary elections in September 1998, a platform of NGOs launched the civic campaign known as OK 1998 to increase citizens' awareness about the elections, to encourage them to vote and to guarantee a fair ballot through independent civic supervision. Dozens of NGOs organized educational projects, cultural events, concerts, and discussion forums and issued publications, video-clips and films. Hundreds of volunteers across the country attracted thousands of concerned citizens to election-related events. In this period, NED supported many of the first and leading Slovak NGOs and think tanks in the 1990s, like the Milan Simecka Foundation, Institute for Public Affairs, People and Water, Pontis, MEMO 98, Civic Eye, and lots of others. The campaign contributed to the record 84 percent turnout, and the Meciar's cabinet was ousted. NED was the crucial funder of the "Rock the Vote" and associated civic campaigns around the 1998 and 2002 elections.

In the following years, NED helped NGOs like Pontis, People in Peril, and others to carry out their crossborder programs in the Balkans, Belarus, etc. aimed at sharing successful Slovak experiences with our partners abroad. These programs continued with INEKO, MESA 10, and others.

After 2005, when Slovakia “has matured” and projects inside the country could not be supported, NED has involved Slovak NGOs in regional programs. NDI has conducted a regional Roma program that included Slovakia and had a Slovak office.

During the next period, after the Maidan protests and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, NED began reengaging in Central Europe to monitor, spotlight and counter internal (political polarization, extremism, corruption) and external challenges (Russian disinformation and influence) to the democratic gains made after 1989. This work is being done on a regional basis and includes Slovak partners such as Institute for Public Affairs and Globsec. NED support Globsec’s “Information War Monitor for Central Europe” and other programs against Russian disinformation.

Over the last three decades, civil society in Slovakia has created a uniquely rich, diverse and flexible network of forms, organizational schemes, initiatives and ideas, which have moved society forward. It has built up an intellectual foundation for societal reforms, provided a mechanism for control of power, helped the country to become a part of democratic Euro-Atlantic community, defended the interests of various groups of citizens, offered useful services, joined in resolving environmental, social and health problems and reacted to the needs of communities, towns and regions of Slovakia. Despite a complicated heritage of undemocratic conditions, backwardness and discontinuity, civic actors and volunteers managed to engage and motivate a broader public because they offered understandable, acceptable concepts of freedom, solidarity and activism, which were in line with democratic modernization and which broke down the prevailing ethos of civic helplessness, as well as the tendency toward preferring the promotion of individual interests instead of the public good. They have exhibited an outstanding ability to weave together meaningful activities, engage in social campaigns, find ways to help socially excluded groups, engage local elites in useful, pro-social activities in many fields and find support for all of it both at home and abroad. They have expanded social capital and improved the quality of life in Slovakia. And in spite of persistent troubles with financial sustainability, they present an important and influential voice in current struggle to preserve democratic order in Slovakia, to avoid backlash, to challenge populist and autocratic tendencies in some other Central European countries. It is also thanks to Slovakia’s civil society that the country is doing relatively well in recent Freedom House report monitoring decline of freedom.

And it is beyond any doubt that this was possible also with the help from abroad and assistance provided by National Endowment for Democracy.

DEAR SENATORS,

In July 2009, a group of Central and Eastern European public figures, including former presidents Valdas Adamkus, Emil Constantinescu, Vaclav Havel, Michal Kovac, Alexander Kwasniewski, Vaira Vike-Freiberga and Lech Walesa, wrote an open letter to the Obama administration.

They—or allow me to say “we”, as I belonged to 22 signatories of this letter—expressed our gratitude to our American friends: “U.S. engagement and support was essential for the success of our democratic transitions after the Iron Curtain fell twenty years ago. Without Washington’s vision and leadership, it is doubtful that we would be in NATO and even the EU today.” We also added, that our nations “have worked to reciprocate and make this relationship a two-way street”, been engaged alongside the United States: “We have been among your strongest supporters when it comes to promoting democracy and human rights around the world.”

However, the letter continued, “twenty years after the end of the Cold War, we see that Central and Eastern European countries are no longer at the heart of American foreign policy. Indeed, at times we have the impression that many American officials have now concluded that our region is fixed once and for all. Many on both sides assume that the region’s transatlantic orientation, as well as its stability and prosperity, would last forever. That view is premature. Central and Eastern Europe is at a political crossroads and today there is a growing sense of nervousness in the region. The current political and economic turmoil and the fallout from the global economic crisis provide additional opportunities for the forces of nationalism, extremism, populism, and anti-Semitism across the continent but also in some of our countries.”

The letter also expressed worries about Russia: “Our hopes that relations with Russia would improve and that Moscow would finally fully accept our complete sovereignty and independence after joining NATO and the EU have not been fulfilled. Instead, Russia is back as a revisionist power pursuing a 19th-century agenda with 21st-century tactics and methods. Vis-a-vis our nations, it increasingly acts as a revisionist one. It uses overt and covert means of economic warfare, ranging from en-

ergy blockades and politically motivated investments to bribery and media manipulation in order to advance its interests and to challenge the transatlantic orientation of Central and Eastern Europe.”

At that time, arguments did not find fertile grounds and our recommendations remained unaccomplished. The policy of reset prevailed.

Five years after this letter, in 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, expanded its propaganda, involved intelligence services in influencing politics in other countries. And we all see the current scope of Russia’s actions and policies to undermine Western democracies. An attack on one is an attack on all—this rule should be applied in coping with this threat.

And a part of developing a stronger transatlantic response to Russian interference in democracy is to support activities of NED.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CAMBODIA NATIONAL RESCUE PARTY

If Americans seek to effectively drive resources towards its values, there are few better avenues than direct assistance to democratic actors abroad. The case of Cambodia clearly demonstrates that U.S. democracy assistance actualizes American democratic values in concrete terms. Relatively small investments in technical projects, like election observation or political party training, have disproportionately significant outcomes in the integrity of democratic processes abroad.

Since the early 1990s, Cambodians have tirelessly advocated for their democracy. Political activists, labor unions and civil society organizations have ensured our budding democratic system has remained intact despite decades of increasingly autocratic leadership. Our determination has endured against great odds, though the country now faces a crucial test: the 2018 national election.

The election is the first legislative poll since 2013, when the ruling Cambodian People’s Party was nearly unseated by the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party, the party I now lead. The votes came within a historically close margin, and mass protest followed revelations that the election may have been fixed. The revelation was the direct result of civil society’s diligent election observation efforts, efforts that may have been impossible without United States support. The technical and material assistance provided by USAID empowered Cambodians to identify irregularities in their electoral process. It empowered Cambodians with reliable evidence and renewed conviction that their democracy can serve them better.

U.S. assistance has strengthened Cambodian activists and organizations far beyond election cycles. Through organizations like NDI, U.S.-supported programming has maintained a critical momentum behind civic engagement efforts. Trainings for party officials and candidates from less represented groups, particularly women and youth, have prepared hundreds for political leadership in our emerging democracy. Most recently, NDI’s direct campaign consultations with Cambodian political parties have not only improved the CNRP’s voter contact strategy; each has strengthened the integrity of the multi-party process.

In a global environment in which democratic values are increasingly under threat, U.S. democracy assistance has never been more critical to the actors benefiting from it. The resilience of Cambodian organizations and their global peers depend on it.

[This statement was submitted by Kem Sokha, President.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CAMBODIA NATIONAL RESCUE PARTY

Since 1992, NDI has greatly contributed to the democratization of Cambodia with its training programs centered on four important components of a system of democratic governance:

POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT

The work NDI did was particularly relevant as for more than half a century, Cambodian politicians and people had known only one-party and autocratic systems of government. The concept of rule of law was totally alien to most Cambodians, they had been so used to the rule of violence. What has helped our Party the most over the 20+ years that it grew up to become the main and only opposition party in Parliament, is NDI’s party organization programs such as its Training Program on Women and Youth Caucuses and on Party Integrity.

FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

In a former communist country where oppression and intimidation of the population are still widespread, the mere presence of U.S.-based organizations such as NDI has been essential in progressively encouraging voters, candidates and other players to exercise their rights to free and fair elections. NDI's Civic Education on Elections Programs and Candidate Debate Programs succeeded in allowing many people to better understand the importance of free and fair elections. Other activities of NDI such as its Electoral Monitoring or its Voter Registration Audits¹ brought to light fraudulent practices on voting day or during the voter registration period respectively.

DECENTRALIZATION

NDI convinced our party leadership that our party would be more efficient if leaders at each level of the organization were elected by their grassroots members and responsible for their own budget. As a result of the process of internal decentralization that started in 2004, our party today is decentralized by province, each province being totally autonomous even on important issues such as leaders/candidates selection, fund-raising and budget spending.

In parallel to party internal decentralization, and as our party started being represented in locally-elected councils from 2002 on, NDI offered training programs on Strengthening Local Governments.

ACCOUNTABILITY

A very helpful program of NDI was the Constituency Dialogue Program, that created from 2004 to 2015, a range of opportunities for elected Members of Parliament to directly listen to and interact with their constituents. Most of the 340 such Constituency Dialogues organized in 12 provinces were radio broadcast nationwide. Given the de facto monopoly of the ruling party over Cambodia's mass media, this kind of program is important in terms of making the playing field more even.

Overall, the role played by NDI since 1992 as seen by one of the most active stakeholders, has been of utmost importance for promoting democracy in Cambodia.

[This statement was submitted by TIOULONG Saumura (Ms), MP, Vice-chair of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

I founded Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM) sometime in the end of 1997 when Milosevic's regime had still firmly been in place in the former federation of Serbia of Montenegro ("Federal Republic of Yugoslavia"). CEDEM actually was the first think tank established in Montenegro and was a kind of experiment at the time. Our goal was to create an institute for promoting democracy in the country whose regime was in fundamental conflict with democratic values. The situation in Montenegro was complicated and dangerous as its government had just been broken with Milosevic and had to maneuver on the brink of the potential conflict.

Until the mid-1998 we struggled in financing our projects. Then our contacts with NED completely turned the situation in favor of CEDEM's future work. NED decided to support some of our key projects and it was a decisive breakthrough for the CEDEM's mission. From that moment on CEDEM established itself as the most serious think tank in the country for decades to come.

NED also opened an avenue for CEDEM to the World Movement of Democracy and thus CEDEM became one of its founding organizations. It connected us with most active democracy defending organizations not only in the Central and Eastern Europe, but also in different part of the world. Later on CEDEM developed its division for public opinion surveys that by time became the most reliable one in the country and proved it in many elections in the 1990s and 2000s. It was possible only by building on the solid base previously established by NED staunch support.

One of the most important moments in CEDEM's cooperation with NED was the support provided to Serbian civil society organizations and political activists in resisting Milosevic regime after NATO intervention in the FRY in 1999. We have al-

¹Four Voter Registration Audits were conducted in the local elections of 2007 and 2017, and in the national elections of 2008 and 2013.

ways been proud for at least a small contribution in depriving Serbia and our region of Milosevic's authoritarian regime.

After accepted to serve as Montenegrin ambassador to the U.S. in 2010 I had to quit my work in CEDEM and the same is today when I'm serving as the nation's foreign minister. But, when remembering my days in CEDEM I always have in mind that we could have never gonna make it without substantial role NED played in our work. It is what have made me and my former colleagues in CEDEM, NED's friends forever.

[This statement was submitted by Prof. Dr. Srdjan Darmanovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH, TRANSPARENCY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY (CRTA)

After more than 15 years of democratic transition, Serbia is still an emerging, fledgling democracy. With the lack of democratic culture, unestablished system of checks and balances, and floundering oversight and accountability institutions, the concentrated executive power continues to pervade and influence all segments of society, remaining out of the reach of public scrutiny and engagement. In such an environment the space for growth and spreading of undemocratic and authoritarian tendencies remains open, posing a serious threat of democratic reversals in the country.

While the path of democratic change is not linear and easy one, it requires a strong effort, commitment and persistence, and openness to learning from developed democratic societies and challenges they stumbled upon on their democratic path. Democratic assistance and partnerships are of the utmost importance in supporting the democratic development through maintaining achieved stability and improving the quality of democratic processes.

Being an active civil society advocates committed to strengthening democratic processes and opening up the institutions in Serbia's volatile and turbulent political environment, we at the Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA) are well aware of the importance of democratic assistance in bringing the knowledge, tools and mechanisms that help establish the building blocks of democracy. Support from the National Democratic Institute proved to be invaluable in raising our understanding of how democracy works in practice, as well as capacities to utilize the best models and approaches for influencing democratic changes. In a situation where citizens continue to lose trust in institutions and lack opportunities to engage and act as agents of change, the most recent National Democratic Institute's support to CRTA's election observation mission Citizens on Watch was crucial in safeguarding the integrity and democratic character of the elections, and protecting citizens' voting rights. It proved that democratic assistance provides a critical framework for advancement and promotion of core democratic values and principles, particularly in an environment where the potential for regression rises with many challenges to democracy.

While we need to act now towards furthering democratic progress that would yield long-term benefits for generations to come, the democratic assistance and support through the transfer of know-how, best practice models and examples will be crucial for strengthening the rule of law and democratic governance, and building the democratic culture in which citizens are free, have the power to engage and fully exercise their democratic rights.

As there is no magic wand to pave the way to democracy, partnership with true friends of democracy certainly brings an optimistic prospects on our journey to establish the democratic culture in Serbia. Recognizing that democratic transition is long and demanding process, we hope that our partners will stand by our side in our commitment to bring about a self-supported and self-respected democracy to Serbia, as the National Democratic Institute has done with true dedication in previous years. We believe that only through sincere partnerships, mutual learning and flow of knowledge in both directions would we be able to make Serbia more receptive to democratic change and allow democracy to thrive.

[This statement was submitted by Vukosava Crnjanski, CRTA Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHINA AID IN SUPPORT OF NED

April 17, 2017.

DEAR HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE,

As a NED grantee for the past decade, China Aid can testify with absolute confidence that the continuing U.S. assistance through the funding effort of the NED is critical to our work and to advancing democratic values, religious freedom, and access to justice in China.

The NED grant has enabled and empowered us to advance religious freedom and rule of law in China by taking up cases for legal defense, engaging rule of law (ROL) trainings to grassroots leaders and cultivating a new generation of Chinese human rights lawyers.

As a result of our NED funded projects on rule of law training and legal defense support in the past 10 years, we have fostered a number of positive changes:

- We have helped many people and groups with legal representation, including secular human rights activists and Chinese religious believers of every sort (and, recently, members of government sanctioned religious groups). We now receive increasing numbers of reports of persecution and other rule of law violations from China, along with requests for legal assistance for persecution victims.
- We have played a key role in persuading, training, protecting and supporting members of the Chinese bar who handle human rights cases. Besides the Weiquan lawyers of “Gao Zhisheng” generation, more and more younger human rights lawyers and defenders are emerging inside China such as Wang Jun, Chen Tianshi, Lin Qilei, Ms Xiao Guozhen and Zhang Kai in Beijing, Si Weijiang in Shanghai, Liu Weiguo in Shandong and Sui Muqing, Chen Wuquan in Guangdong. We work with and support others like them.
- We have learned to take up cases in the earliest stages of development—and often can do so because we have sources of information regarding persecution developments at region, village and area levels.
- More and more international and domestic media outlets are interested in exposing religious and pro-democracy cases, and we regularly provide information to them—and to Congress and the U.S. Government—about these cases.

As the conditions on religious freedom, rule of law and human rights have deteriorated since President Xi Jinping took power, more than ever, Chinese rights defenders and citizens are counting on the United States to back their bold efforts in defense of these universal democratic values that we hold so dear. Whether China cherishes or despises these values will determine the security of our children and grandchildren in the 21st century. For this reason, democracy assistance should be treated as a critical component of U.S. national security interests. Thank you.

[This statement was submitted by Bob Fu, Founder and President of China Aid.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CITIZENS’ ALLIANCE FOR NORTH KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS

Honorable Members:

The Citizens’ Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR) was established on May 4, 1996 in Seoul, Republic of Korea as the first non-governmental organization in the world devoted solely to promoting human rights in North Korea. At the time of our founding, the organization faced several challenges both domestically and internationally.

In the mid-1990s, the international community did not pay much attention to the seriousness of the North Korean human rights situation, partially because of a lack of credible information and testimonies coming out of the country and partially because no international network existed to advance such a cause. Domestically, the progressive government’s policy of engagement and warming relations with North Korea meant that advancing the cause of North Korean human rights and democracy was viewed as hostile to the North Korean regime and counter to the policy of rapprochement. This created obstacles not only to NGOs that wanted to focus on this issue, but also rendered it impossible to create a domestic public discourse that would pressure South Korean government to advance this issue vis-à-vis North Korea.

Having no support domestically or internationally, it was the U.S. that first recognized the necessity and legitimacy of the North Korean human rights cause and pro-

vided us with crucial assistance. In 1999, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) reached out to NKHR to help us both financially and with building an international network that would be able to carry out the work on North Korea. Without the material and institutional support of NED, the North Korean human rights movement as we know it today would not have existed. The material support of NED has always constituted the only sustained financial assistance that allowed NKHR and other South Korean NGOs to expand its work on North Korea.

It was the support of the NED that enabled us to organize the first international conferences, bringing the plight of the victims and human rights violations in North Korea to the attention of the world. Consequently, we were able to establish relationships with organizations and government officials around the globe, including the Late President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic, who was an avid supporter of the burgeoning North Korean human rights movement. With NED support, the first journals produced by NKHR with testimonies and articles documenting abuses in North Korea were distributed in South Korea, USA, Japan and institutions worldwide at a time when little other reliable information on North Korean human rights situation existed.

Most importantly, the NED's support allowed NKHR to begin targeted advocacy work at the United Nations alongside an international network (initially mostly U.S. individuals and NGOs) that was built during the Conferences. Such advocacy resulted in early successes, such as the appointment of the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in North Korea in 2004. Finally, in December 2012, the NKHR staff and two victims of political prison camps in North Korea met with Navi Pillay, then U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights to convince her Office to prioritize work on North Korea through the establishment of the U.N. Commission of Inquiry (COI) for the DPRK. Her call for the COI after the meeting allowed NKHR and its network to convince many states that such Commission should be established.

The successful establishment of the U.N. COI was the culmination of the ground-work laid by almost two decades of advocacy, alliance-building, and distribution of materials for growing public awareness of the need for a North Korean human rights and democracy movement. Without specialized and on-going support of many South Korean and American organizations, the COI would not have come to fruition in order to create its milestone report. Significantly, the COI's call for referral of the North Korean leadership to the international criminal justice mechanism for crimes against humanity committed by the regime has been a great success in the arena of North Korean human rights. That call has also been carried forward by the same network that has been built with the U.S support since 1999.

Many NGOs and foreign governments recognize the North Korean human rights movement as a success story. This is the greatest testimony to the unwavering support of the U.S institutions that first recognized the importance of this issue. At such an important time when the movement has finally gained international momentum, continued U.S. support is crucial to accomplish the goal of promoting human rights and democracy in North Korea and bringing justice to the North Korean victims.

[This statement was submitted by Benjamin Hyun YOON, Founder and Honorary Chairman.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN CAMBODIA (COMFREL)

To Cambodian politicians, civil society organizations, and activists alike, the U.S. is seen as a model for our emerging democracy. The liberal democratic values and civil rights upheld by U.S. institutions is the kind of government Cambodian actors have been advocating for since the early 1990s. Our democracy has faced countless obstacles in the decades since, though the resiliency of the Cambodian democrats has been amplified by U.S. support year after year. This support has never been more crucial than now.

I am the executive director of the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL), an organization that has witnessed the impact U.S. support for democracy abroad can have. In 2013, USAID supported the audit of the Cambodian voter list, exposing several irregularities that compromised the election's outcome in favor of the ruling party. The evidence provided the basis for several electoral reform recommendations. Many of these recommendations were adopted by the National Election Committee.

U.S. support is likely to have an even greater impact in 2017 and 2018, as Cambodians head to the polls in the upcoming local and national elections. With USAID

funding, NDI has provided technical and material support for COMFREL's voter registration audit, which found significant improvements in the voter list over the previous cycle. This direct assistance is critical in building a cautious confidence among Cambodians in the integrity of their elections, and thus in the possibility of a vibrant and effective democracy in our country.

U.S. support for Cambodian democracy goes well beyond its financial assistance or technical consultations. It is a source of inspiration. It communicates to principled democrats in Cambodia and around the world that democracy is worth advocating for. As Cambodia readies itself for the fast approaching elections, and the uncertain result that will follow, its civil society depends on the continued commitment of the U.S. to advocate for the integrity of the process. Without it, the future of Cambodian democracy may become increasingly uncertain.

[This statement was submitted by Koul Panha, Executive Director, COMFREL, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CONFERÊNCIA EPISCOPAL TIMORENSE (CET)
OBSERVATÓRIO DA IGREJA PARA OS ASSUNTOS SOCIAIS (OIPAS)

April 26, 2017.

Ms. MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, *Chairperson,*
National Democratic Institute.

Re: Democracy assistance in Timor-Leste

In 2007, for the first time, Timor-Leste had a nonpartisan national organization to observe the presidential and parliamentary elections. We have been able to do so through the support of some organizations, such as the United States Agency for International Development, through USAID-NDI and other organizations such as AusAid, Canada Fund, UNIFEM, PROGRESSIO Timor-Leste and Caritas Japan. A coalition for the monitoring of general elections, KOMEK (Koligasaun ba Monitorizasaun ba Eleisaun General, in Tetum), was composed of 16 civil society organizations. The observers were all young men and women and were present at all polling stations. But before that, they were trained, so they watched the elections and made a good report.

In the general elections held in mid-2012, OIPAS (Church Observatory for Social Affairs, in Portuguese) received help from USAID through IRI and AusAid to observe the elections. It had the opportunity to mobilize around 1,800 observers, made up of young men and women for the presidential and parliamentary elections. Observers were trained and received the credential card from the Technical Secretariat of the Electoral Administration, in Portuguese (STAE) to observe the elections and were present at all polling stations throughout the territory.

For this year's presidential election, which was held on March 20, 2017, OIPAS received USAID financial and technical assistance through NDI and managed to mobilize around 300 young men and women throughout the territory to observe the elections. Now the organization is preparing around 900 observers to place in all polling stations for the parliamentary elections. In addition, they would observe the campaign process and at the same time increase their ability to use technology to collect observer data on the ground on voting day and report.

Throughout our monitoring of the elections, individuals and organizations, both international and national, have had good impressions and assessments of OIPAS, as it is impartial and credible. It has contributed a lot in this young country, through participation of young people with enthusiasm and energy to create democracy and the political environment that is positive, as has happened in the election process.

Even so, we have to recognize that, for our part as an organization, we have to improve ourselves from day to day, because life is a process of learning and walking.

Timor-Leste's STAE has been instrumental in recognizing OIPAS as a national organization for election monitoring, which is impartial, so it has produced cards to make it easier for us to speak during these periods. The commission has been very helpful to us because they know that our observers are impartial, so that they create a certain credibility, transparency and, in this way, democracy can be improved in this country.

Finally, as our key contribution, and with the help of our donors, we need to protect democracy in this young country, which is a process that needs to happen in coordination with other forces, naturally; we will continue to support a healthy democracy in this country, where "the voice of the people is the supreme law".

Many thanks to the people of USA through USAID and NDI and other organizations that have contributed throughout these times to help OIPAS in order to strengthen democracy in Timor-Leste.

Pe. Agostinho de J. Soares, SDB, Director

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE DALAI LAMA

28 April 2017.

Mr. CARL GERSHMAN, *President,*
National Endowment For Democracy,
1025 F Street, NW, Suite 800,
Washington, DC 20004-1409,
U.S.A.

DEAR MR. GERSHMAN,

Thank you for your communication on the valuable work that the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) does in promoting democratic values around the world, including in the Tibetan community.

I admire your work for supporting freedom worldwide. In particular, I am aware of your active and consistent grants for strengthening democratic culture and institutions of our Tibetan community in exile for the past many years. I have no doubt that such initiatives have also been source of encouragement to the Tibetan democratic experience, which we began in 1960, a year after our freedom in exile.

I have always admired the United States for its fundamental values of democracy, freedom and rule of law, and so its institutions and people have the ability to help and encourage the promotion of these positive principles.

As we have discussed during our meetings over the years as well as during my visit to NED last year, your work on promotion of freedom is vitally important given the current volatile situation in many parts of the world and the threat these pose to peace and freedom.

I wish your Foundation continued success in your work. Above all, I earnestly hope that the United States of America, the leading nation of the free world, will continue its responsible leadership role in bringing about a more peaceful and compassionate community of citizens of the world.

With prayers and good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

LHAMO DONDRUB.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE DVB MULTIMEDIA GROUP

Media is important tool used by established democracies like the U.S. and European nations to support democracy movements around the world and enhance information out-flow initiatives from closed countries like Burma/Myanmar.

Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) was established in 1992 in Oslo, Norway following Daw Aung San Su Kyi's, Nobel Peace Prize award in 1991. Starting with shortwave radio, and then launching satellite TV in 2005, DVB has become the most watched independent news channel in Myanmar reaching more than 12 million viewers (according to a recent 2016 BBC survey). Following the political transition, DVB since 2012 gradually moved operations into Burma/Myanmar, and is now fully operating from inside the country. More information about can be found at www.dvb.no.

DVB is being supported by National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and some government and semi-governmental organizations from Europe to enable continued coverage and reporting about political and social situations in Burma/Myanmar since the beginning of DVB establishment. NED hosted a DVB meeting with like-minded donors in October 2004 at their Headquarters in Washington DC discussing to launch DVB satellite TV. NED doubled funding to DVB since 2005 making the launch of satellite TV possible. Whenever there is important political event in Burma/Myanmar- general elections in 2010 and 2015 and production of investigative documentary "Burma Nuclear Ambitions in 2010" for example—NED comes up with additional funding allowing DVB to accomplish these important initiatives. It is also NED bridging DVB and other exiled media groups including the ones from North Korea sharing experiences and lesson-learning with each other.

In addition, during times of dramatic events within Burma/Myanmar—for example demonstration led by Buddhist monks in September 2007, known as Saffron Revolution; and the deadliest natural disaster in Burma/Myanmar history, the Nargis Cyclones in May 2008 leaving 135,000 death and 2 millions homeless—DVB was the one exposing news and footage while the military government was trying to hide from the international community. International governments including the U.S adopted appropriate policies to respond worsening the political and social situation in Burma/Myanmar at the time. Performance of DVB's undercover media operations during those days were compiled into an award-winning documentary "Burma VJ" which was nominated for Oscar in 2010.

Now DVB is in the forefront of media reform in Myanmar together with other stakeholders including the Ministry of Information. These efforts will help lay the ground work for a new independent and diverse media environment which is essential for safeguarding the further development of democracy and human rights within the country. The successes of DVB have inspired many other similar exiled media outlets around the world.

All DVB's accomplishments would be difficult to realize without continued supports from NED since 1993.

[This statement was submitted by Khin Maung Win, Founding member of DVB and Deputy Executive Director, Democratic Voice of Burma.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FREE AND FAIR ELECTION FORUM OF AFGHANISTAN
(FEFA)

To: National Democratic Institute (NDI)—HQ Office, Washington, DC

Re: Democracy and Governance Assistance Programs to Afghanistan

To Whom It May Concern:

Since the fall of Taliban regime, Afghanistan with the contribution of international community has begun new steps on democratic development. Through all these efforts, FEFA has realized about the great role and assistance of international community, particularly the U.S. Government to Afghanistan that have been carried out during the past several years with many institutions and the local partners for democratic development around the country.

Under this U.S. Government assistance, NDI as one of key partner has supported FEFA to build its capacity as a local observation body in 2004 which was extremely cooperative in the area of elections transparency and confidence building. FEFA under this assistance developed its capacity to perform as a professional local organization on election observation, advocacy and promoting citizen participation in all elections-democratic processes. Today, Afghanistan has many similar organizations to FEFA but since NDI under the U.S. Government assistance, worked generously on FEFA's capacity development, conducting regular assessment and providing with the tools and options, FEFA is in the leading role, and stockholders count on it as a principal organization in the field of elections.

Additionally, the international community and the U.S. Government assistance programs have worked with elected provincial council members on how to tackle their legal mandate to help the local governance on a better planning of the provincial development, how PC can effectively and efficiently run their oversight role from the local development projects, and how to provide a report of findings with proper and practical recommendations to the Afghan Government. Many of international community and the U.S. Government assistance programs were designed in a manner that later can be followed by its local partners with a great amount of honor, ownership and sustainable approach. Today, we see that each organization they have received support from the U.S. Government programs, is actively working for the values of democracy a defending the last decade's achievements to be not lost. The international community and the U.S. Government's recent assistance with FEFA, AYNESO and many other Civil Society Organizations on election reform is very substantial and FEFA highly recommend the continuation of such assistance to support key institutions that they are not corrupt, and don't seek this support to become the country's businessmen in the future. Indeed, these support with organizations that they are envisioning for a democratic country, and broader civic participation of the citizen is really needed.

At the same-time, the U.S. Government and international community assistance programs with political parties to become key actor of political development based on a platform to run meaningfully for elected positions, specially on election-cam-

paign-planning, management and targeting their constituencies and believing to a peaceful culture of power transition is very importance program. FEFA see substantial need of U.S. Government assistance to continue with political parties and political campaign offices to properly run, plan and oversight from the work of government by political oppositions and parties.

FEFA also noticed that the U.S. Government programs with polling agents in the provinces was really interesting and helpful. Providing training on elections observations and providing tools and technic to polling agents to monitor elections and report elections violence to the party or candidates' offices worked much for elections transparency and its monitoring.

It is also worth mentioning that they support of the U.S. Government and generally international community worked a lot with women groups that how they can actively and broadly engage and participate in elections. This activity also helped women group to fight with the challenges and ensure a meaningful participation in elections. The trainings that provided to them, and additionally many other programs have enhanced good coordination's and follow-up sessions with key Afghan policy-makers to support women.

More importantly, the U.S. Government supported programs monitored Afghan elections by its experts with the help of its Afghan staff to observe and analyze situation in Afghanistan for elections. All these missions for elections assessment and observations were so much helpful with addressing key recommendations for reforms. FEFA as an Afghan-lead organization highly appreciate the valuable assistance of U.S. Government and international community with Afghanistan programs and with its partners.

Sincerely,

MOHAMMAD YOUSUF RASHEED,
Executive Director.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FREEDOM RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy and esteemed members of the subcommittee, I would like to thank you for holding this important meeting and the opportunity to testify before this subcommittee.

Freedom Research Association is a public policy research organization dedicated to civil liberties, rule of law, free markets and peace. Although relatively new (2014), FRA has been one of the loudest voices defending these values as a strictly independent and non-partisan think-tank.

On April 16, Turkey has accepted a constitutional amendment which transforms the country to a presidential system in a contested public vote. Although the final report is not out, initial OSCE briefing stated that the stakes were not at all equal between YES and NO camps:

"Supporters of the 'No' campaign faced a number of undue limitations on their freedom to campaign. Many 'No' campaigners suffered physical attacks. A high number were arrested, most often on charges of organizing unlawful public events or insulting the president." (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/turkey/311721?download=true>).

YES vote has been promoted via extensive use of public resources including the State TV Turkish Radio Television, as can be seen by the allocated air times on media to both campaigns. YES campaign received disproportionately more TV coverage than the NO in the media including state TVs.

The content of the amendment transfers extensive powers to the executive (the president) in a system design which significantly lacks checks and balances. (<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/04/13/the-turkish-constitutional-referendum-explained/>).

This has only been the latest development in a series of democratic setbacks in Turkey. After the bloody July 15 coup attempt, a state of emergency was declared to deal with the alleged FETO (Fethullah Gulen Terror Organization) and lustration of the state. Although it is a legitimate goal to hold the perpetrators of the coup plot accountable, it led to the dismissal/suspension of 120,000+ public officials without any due process which directly or indirectly affected an estimated 1 million plus citizens.

Journalists and civil society activists are purged either through legal cases, asset freezes, travel bans or detentions and imprisonment. The precautions went so far as to implement travel bans to relatives of suspects without any charge! More than 7000 academics have been fired without any due process based on allegations of allegiance to different groups or simply for signing a declaration.

Yet, Turkish society is not mournful and there are plenty of different organizations and individuals who are willing to stand up for democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Hundreds of different lawyer associations, journalist networks, environmentalist groups, human rights activists and civil society organizations are being established, and they continue to operate with the support of their fellow citizens and international partners despite the increasingly difficult circumstances. They stand for universal values. These values are not in exclusive possession of any single nation, rather, they are properly upheld if defended together on a global scale.

Many Turkish NGOs are in a good collaboration and exchange with international counterparts like IRI to advance democracy, peace, and stability in a particularly delicate region like ours. Their efforts, we believe, help tackle the problems as mentioned earlier. Their continued support for democratic and non-partisan NGOs, in particular for those who work for defending democracy, the rule of law and human rights is an invaluable and essential asset.

Recent referendum result is a sign that Turkish people are very careful towards any further sign of going back from democratic status quo. All the crackdown and silencing efforts on the opposition as well as the deployment of vast public resources could only produce a minimal victory for the proposed amendment. NGOs and civil society activists engaged with the campaigning process in the face of serious risks.

Turkey has been experiencing a continuous influx of Syrian refugees for the last 5 years, with an unending civil war right in front of her southern border. What makes Turkey so adamant in such a difficult region is her well-established democratic institutions of which the civil society is an important part. Turkish Parliament is one of the most visited parliaments in the world which is a sign of active civic engagement.

It is of paramount importance for a stable future of the region and the world that Turkey stays true to democratic ideals. To ensure that, its civil society must keep playing its proper role while remaining engaged with the world. As the civil society is already facing various challenges in this democratic process, the support and solidarity of international partners are critical.

[This statement was submitted by Medeni Sungur, Executive Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FUNDAMEDIOS

When we signed our first grant agreement with the National Endowment for Democracy in 2008, Fundamedios was a nascent organization with no experience in the defense of freedom of expression and freedom of the press and had no other links to international networks. Nine years later, with the continual support of the NED, Fundamedios has become the leading freedom of expression watchdog organization in Ecuador. It is an important actor before the universal and Inter-American human rights systems, and serves as a constant reference for researchers, media, and political actors working on human rights and press freedom issues in Ecuador and the Andean region.

Given the government's hostility toward Ecuador's news media, Fundamedios' work has been crucial in sustaining a free press in Ecuador, both in the traditional media sector and the developing digital media ecosystem. The key to Fundamedios' success in positioning itself in the forefront of this work has been the organization's thoroughness in monitoring and documenting attacks on press freedom. This system, known as the Network to Monitor Attacks on Freedom of Expression, is a project that the NED has supported from the outset of our partnership. This monitoring system has become a reference and model for other organizations in the region. Currently, NED has supported the development of the first fact-checking initiative in Ecuador, *Ecuador Chequea*.

Without support from NED, the growth and development of Fundamedios undoubtedly would have been severely hampered. The same would have happened with other organizations in Ecuador, such as *Plan V* or *Mil Hojas* and today with *Ecuador Chequea*. For these reasons, I can say that NED's presence and support has been decisive in many ways for the sustainability of a civil society constantly under threat in Ecuador.

[This statement was submitted by César Ricaurte, Executive Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. ALI GAWGZEH, MAYOR JERASH, THE HASHEMITE
KINGDOM OF JORDAN

Jordan is facing tremendous challenges to its political and economic development, as well as existential threats to its security and stability. With conflict and instability all around us, particularly in Syria and Iraq to our north and east, maintaining our security and stability is imperative. Regional and international partnerships are critical to our advancement as a society and our development as a democracy in the Middle East. As these partnerships have developed over time, we as local officials have come to better understand just how critical good governance at the local level is to the stability of the country as a whole.

Jordan has been fortunate to forge important partnerships with the United States and other countries in support of our development, and like many communities throughout Jordan, Jerash has been proud to partner with a variety of international organizations supporting a large number of initiatives. These initiatives have been invaluable to our community as we continue to embrace the principles of accountability in representative government.

Since being elected mayor in 2013, my municipal administration has gained significant knowledge from international partners on public administration, financial management, decisionmaking processes, resource management, transparency, and citizen outreach to name a few. No partnership has been more beneficial than the cooperation the Jerash municipality has built with the International Republican Institute (IRI). IRI has earned the trust of the municipality staff as well as the citizens through continuous engagement, responsive programming, and a commitment to a genuine partnership at the grassroots level.

IRI's program in Jerash has shared knowledge and expertise from years of lessons learned in local governance in America and other countries. Through enabling us to make evidenced-based decisions, supporting our capacity to communicate with citizens on issues they care most about, and exposing us to approaches and techniques other communities in the U.S. and elsewhere have deployed has been extremely important.

For example, IRI in Jordan partnered with the Jerash municipality to conduct public opinion surveys with our local citizens. Public opinion polling is not well known in Jordan so this was a new experience for many of us in the municipality. Historically, decisions were made based on whoever had influence over the decision maker, which did not always result in decision reflective of the best interest of the people. With our participation in IRI's "Baladytak" (English: "Our Municipality") public opinion survey program, we were able to develop a much clearer picture of what the citizens were demanding from their locally elected officials. As we learned more and more about the priorities of the citizens, we were more informed and better equipped to make resource allocation decisions based on that evidence, which enabled us to target and spend our limited resources much more efficiently. Simply put, this process transformation would not have been possible without the partnership and expertise of IRI in Jordan.

Secondly, IRI has played an instrumental role in exposing Jordanian local leaders to the innovative approaches other communities, both in Jordan and around the world, have taken to address some of their most pressing challenges. In many cases, challenges we face in Jerash have been effectively confronted by other communities. Capitalizing on the trust built over several years, IRI has convened a number of local governance forums, brought in international experts, and even hosted a mayoral exchange trip to Columbia to learn more about the extraordinary transformation local communities have enjoyed over the last decade. These shared experiences have proven invaluable to my work as a local elected official. As a result, I and many of my mayoral colleagues have pursued governance strengthening initiatives, such as one-stop-shops, we learned more about during these various exchanges of ideas and knowledge sharing opportunities.

We have come a long way, both in Jerash and also in Jordan, but still have a long way to go. We continue to make progress and partnerships such as our cooperation with IRI Jordan are critical to our development. These partnerships strengthen the bonds between our two countries and help us provide better services to our constituents. Improved services play an instrumental role in maintaining a secure, stable, and prosperous community.

Should IRI's ability to continue to engage in this fruitful partnership be diminished or eliminated, it would represent a significant step backward for us as a community and have a negative effect on our work. In an austere budget environment as a result of regional conflicts impacting tourism and other revenue generation, small levels of support enabling us to better engage with our citizens through data

driven decisionmaking processes or learning about the successes and failures of others who have walked a similar path are extremely helpful.

MAYOR DR. ALI GAWGZEH

Greater Jarash Municipality has 260,000 residents, in addition to 42,000 Syrian refugees. Mayor Gawgzeh is a lawyer by training, as well as previously serving as the Director of the Legal Department for Jarash Municipality.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ZANDANSHATAR GOMBOJAV, MEMBER OF THE STATE GREAT HURAL (PARLIAMENT) AND FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER OF MONGOLIA

HONORABLE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: Thank you for the opportunity to testify for the U.S. Senate, the relationship between Mongolia and the United States has been consequential and the role that international support for democratic ideals is crucial to ensuring freedom of thought, trade and movement.

HOW U.S. LEADERSHIP SUPPORTED MONGOLIA'S DEMOCRACY

Immediately following Mongolia's peaceful transition to democracy in 1990, the United States took quick and bold steps to support my country's nascent democratic institutions by bolstering the development of political parties and Parliament, assisting the country's electoral processes by working with the General Election Commission and helping to address the challenges of corruption through working with local government officials and civil society organizations.

This long-standing support from the United States has had a major positive impact on Mongolia's democratic development. Through such support, the United States has helped political parties compete competitively in free and fair democratic elections. Likewise, as a result of this sustained commitment from the United States, Mongolian members of have received technical assistance through U.S.-funded parliamentary strengthening programs, which have directly led to members of parliament, my colleagues in the State Great Hural, to improve their ability to effectively represent constituents and respond to the needs and aspirations of our country's dear citizens.

During this 27-year period following our democratic revolution, Mongolia has created and strengthened democratic institutions, including the national legislature, the judiciary, political parties and civil society. However, despite many positive developments, Mongolia continues to face serious challenges to the consolidation of these democratic gains. As such, the United States continues to play a vital role in assisting Mongolia with addressing a range of current issues, including addressing corruption and even supporting Mongolia's efforts to share its democratic experiences and lessons learned with other countries in the region and beyond.

Despite all of Mongolia's achievements, U.S. support for Mongolian democracy is now more important than ever. Asia is a dynamic region that not only holds much promise and opportunity, but is also confronting many challenges. In recent years several nations in the region have experienced setbacks in terms of political freedoms and democratic governance and although Mongolia has firmly stood by its commitments to maintaining a free and open democracy, partnership and solidarity from democratic allies such as the United States is crucial in shielding developing democracies such as Mongolia from being affected by the influence of hybrid regimes and authoritarian countries.

WHY U.S. SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY IS CRUCIAL

The goal for the United States to support these programs and initiatives that strengthen democracies abroad is not to help others over Americans, but it is precisely because the United States helps others that it is also strengthened. The question is what sort of a world do we want—I have personally seen the benefits that strong, inclusive democracies can have and I do not want to see my country, my region, my world turn back now. Without the leadership of the United States, there will be others that fill the void, others that do not share the values of freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom to choose. We cannot risk this when we have come so far.

Democracy does not guarantee financial success or a smooth political system but it guarantees something far greater—the ability to choose your own path. To have a voice in your community and in your government. Without the ability to choose, people lose the ability to think for themselves and rely on others to do for them. Surely the reliance on “someone else” is a poor arrangement to sustain the entrepre-

neurship, innovation and big thinking that has led to some of the greater ideas the world has seen in my lifetime.

HOW SHARED DEMOCRATIC VALUES BRING THE U.S.-MONGOLIA CLOSER

Through the numerous activities and initiatives that have been undertaken jointly by the United States and Mongolia, the United States has had a positive impact on my country. As the most important of our “third neighbors,” we look to the United States for inspiration—leading Mongolia to serve in important international initiatives such as the Community of Democracies, United Nations, Open Government Partnership and many others. Without the support we received decades ago from the United States, perhaps the democratic trajectory of Mongolia would be different.

There are thousands of Mongolians who study in the United States, gaining valuable knowledge and experience, as I myself did at Stanford University. During my time in California I had the opportunity to study political systems, understand how the freedoms of association, choice and speech were integral to the development of a country and of a people. I have taken those lessons with me back into my life in public service here in Mongolia. Recently, I spearheaded an initiative to pass legislation requiring the use of public hearings in the development and passage of legislation and we are presently organizing a deliberative poll—a process which ensures that citizens are informed about policy options and then asked to make choices about the direction of our country. Without the opportunities I had by studying in the United States and engaging in United States-funded democracy support programs here in Mongolia, I may never have known about these practices or been inclined to use them.

In conclusion, the case for the continued engagement of the United States through democracy support programs is clear to me: without the leadership of the United States, who will speak up for these values we share? These values that protect our communities and enrich our economies. Who will stand firm in the face of authoritarianism? For if our greatest “third neighbor” cannot, how can we?

I call upon you, Honorable Members of the United States Senate, to make sure that the United States maintains its funding for democracy support programs and stands up for the democratic values we know America was founded on, the values we all hold so dear.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AQEEL NAJAM HASHIMI, MAYOR BAHAWALPUR, PUNJAB, CENTRAL CHIEF COORDINATOR, PML-N YOUTH WING, PAKISTAN

It is an immense pleasure for me to write down my experience with NDI. NDI has conducted many training programmes for the capacity building of political workers of different political parties of Pakistan over the years. Currently, NDI is conducting a training programme for polling agents and are training approximately 4,000 master trainers from across the Pakistan and this exercise will produce approximately 373,320 polling agents.

This NDI polling agent program will be a useful and helping tool for forthcoming elections in the country. Pakistan is a country with a vision of peace and whose founder was the democratic leader par excellence who envisioned a real political, parliamentary, democratic system for the country. This assistance from NDI has paved the way towards achieving this goal.

I am of the opinion that all sessions of NDI are so informative and essential for fulfilling the wish of our founder to make Pakistan a stable, peaceful, and sovereign state in the region. I wish NDI to continue demonstrating the same spirit and assistance for making Pakistan a stable and peaceful country through the ballot.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SOKSAN HING, PRESIDENT OF CNRP YOUTH WING AND DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Cambodia stands at a critical juncture in its history. For the first time, youth born after the Khmer Rouge genocide—which resulted in the death of nearly a quarter of Cambodia’s population—will take to the polls to voice their opinions in the June 2017 Commune Council Elections and July 2018 General Elections. Amidst this tense period of constricting political space which puts pressure on opposition political parties, civil society, human rights defenders and independent media, the ability of youth to shape the future of Cambodia is all the more important. Their opinions of Cambodia are no longer driven by fear of war or instability—they want

to see Cambodia transform economically like other countries in Southeast Asia with quality education and economic growth to provide them with a bright future.

It is for these reasons that Cambodia needs the continued support of the international community. Such support would elevate and preserve the promise of peace brought forth by the Paris Peace Accords 25 years ago. The United States, and other signatories of the Accords, need to send a clear signal that they stand with the Cambodian people. In that vein, U.S. democracy assistance is absolutely necessary to this cause. Democracy assistance and continued engagement of the United States in Cambodia is necessary for the conduct of free and fair elections where all political parties can stand on equal ground, and where civil society and citizens can be free from fear of intimidation, coercion and violence.

I can personally attest to the importance of U.S. democracy assistance, because such support made me who I am today. When I was a young boy growing up in Takeo province in the south of Cambodia—close to the border with Vietnam—my father, who was a politician himself, and my mother instilled within me the importance of political participation. “If you are a good doctor you can treat a hundred or two-hundred people,” my mother told me, “but if you’re a good politician, you can help millions.” It was after I heard her words that I became determined to become a politician myself.

However, it wasn’t until I finished high school and came to Phnom Penh in 1997 that I truly began to understand what it takes to become an effective politician who can serve the needs of constituents and improve the future of the country. As a member of the local youth group Students’ Movement for Democracy I came across an international non-profit that was educating young Cambodians on the importance of a multi-party democracy, and robust political and civic education through programs called the Advanced Democracy and Living Democracy Seminars. That organization was called the International Republican Institute (IRI). By participating in the Living Democracy Seminar I gained a sense of hope that youth in Cambodia would bring about the positive change that the country sorely needs.

For the next two decades, I participated in numerous trainings and workshops, debate programs and activities conducted by IRI, including the Youth Leadership Challenge, Next Generation, Future Leaders and various voter registration drives. My participation in these programs allowed me to receive training on international best practices for democratic governance and tangible skills for public opinion research, campaigning, messaging, public speaking and debate. I’ve used all of the lessoned learned from IRI’s trainings to advance democracy in Cambodia by training Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) commune council candidates for the forthcoming elections and sharing skills for effective communication with party youth. I also intend to use these skills to go back to my roots in Takeo province as a candidate for Member of Parliament in the 2018 General Elections.

During that time, the experiences dearest to me were my ability to compete in the Youth Leadership Challenge debate in 2007 and the Next Generation debate in 2013. As a part of IRI’s debate programs, I discussed pressing issues impacting the Cambodian people, including youth involvement in politics, education, healthcare and sanitation services, and ASEAN economic integration. It was a great honor for me to win both debates, and as a prize I traveled to the United States for my first time to see for myself the benefits of a strong democracy.

These IRI programs launched my career. I am now the Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and President of CNRP’s Youth Wing. But I am merely one of millions of youth in Cambodia; more youth need to be empowered and educated to better understand the importance of democracy and political participation. If we want to see positive change in Cambodia, then we must start with youth.

For youth in Cambodia to have these experiences, democracy assistance from the United States to organizations like IRI, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is crucial and must continue. Because of U.S. democracy assistance from these organizations, Cambodians better know their rights and have the courage to stand up and voice their opinions. But without this support during such a critical time in Cambodia’s development, progress made to date could be quickly erased.

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy, and members of the subcommittee, I can proudly say that IRI is a part of me today, and I can be who I am today because of IRI. I implore you to continue to support U.S. democracy assistance in Cambodia and other countries around the world, so that other youth everywhere are able to stand up for democracy and let their voices be heard.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HANNA HOPKO, CHAIRWOMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE UKRAINIAN PARLIAMENT, PH.D. IN SOCIAL COMMUNICA-
TIONS

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy and members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to thank you for the bipartisan support and assistance that has been provided to Ukraine through various programs, including foreign military financing.

Sizable U.S. international assistance has been invested in European security and Ukraine's democratic transformation. It has helped to slow Russia's aggression against Ukraine and has given us the opportunity to rebuild our army from scratch. Ukrainians have shown a readiness to fearlessly defend freedom and now can share with partners how to defend themselves against the Russians phenomenon of hybrid warfare in practice. Let me express "thank you" to the United States for being the world leader in providing practical security assistance to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. We value the trainings provided by the United States to the Ukrainian military. A strong Ukraine, defending its own territory, also keeps Russia at bay as a global threat to the Euro-Atlantic space—so we are contributing to transatlantic security.

USAID's assistance to Ukraine has played decisive role in its democratic transformation. Through USAID, the U.S. has been supporting important reform directions which are of critical importance for Ukraine as well as beneficial for U.S. interests and investments, namely:

- Support of court system reform, which is currently under way in Ukraine and can ensure that U.S. investments are protected with fair justice and rule of law;
- Support of energy sector reform, and such projects as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which will allow U.S. companies to enter Ukraine's energy market in the near future;
- Support of foreign trade promotion policy and strategy development, where Ukraine will be promoting fair trade rules and principles, thus enhancing bilateral trade relations between the U.S. and Ukraine; and
- Support of agricultural and rural development reform, whereas developing the agrarian sector brings additional opportunities for U.S. companies doing business in Ukraine and makes a significant contribution to global food security.

In addition, USAID has been supporting extremely important policy development in areas such as healthcare reform, decentralization and regional development reform, reform of the Ukrainian Parliament and modernizing its procedures in policy analysis and drafting and adopting legislation.

Ukraine continues pursuing its path towards energy independence and making the energy sector efficient and stable. We have already achieved great progress in this direction and adopted important laws, such as the Law on Natural Gas Market, the Law on the National Commission for State Regulation of Energy and Public Utilities, the Electricity Market Law and other laws important in terms of strengthening national energy security and increasing the efficiency of energy reforms in Ukraine. All this important legislation was passed during last 3 years, with skilled experts and consultancies financed by USAID.

U.S. aid to Ukraine is particularly effective at promoting reforms when it is made conditional, applying "more reforms—more financial support" principles, and staying in close coordination with other donors. Since the Revolution of Dignity, the U.S. has invested a lot into the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU)—the new law enforcement agency—which has been set up from scratch and is now pursuing criminal cases against corrupt politicians. The most recent cases are against the head of the state fiscal service of Ukraine and the former head of the energy committee of the Parliament of Ukraine. The U.S. Government invested funds into computers, trainings for NABU detectives, and ensured that NABU is free from political interference. The establishment of NABU was possible because it was a strong demand from Ukrainian society and a condition of IMF loans to Ukraine. The same goes for the requirements for asset disclosure by public officials—the new system was launched back in October 2016 because of IMF conditionalities.

U.S. aid to civil society organizations has helped to nurture hundreds and thousands of activists across the country, who are now watchdogging the government. This includes also independent investigative journalists, who regularly report cases of corruption. Civil society, which receives support from the U.S. Government, is encouraging the Ukrainian Government to deliver results in reforms and anti-corruption. Many civil society activists came to parliament and government to change the country from inside, even though they are still in a minority.

Ukraine is thus re-building its state institutions and updating its democratic procedures in response to demands from its society and with help from the U.S. in many spheres.

Countering information warfare is one of our priorities. At a time when Russian propaganda floods Ukraine with inaccuracies and/or distortions, Ukrainians rely on Voice of America's and Radio Free Europe "Radio Liberty" credibility and accuracy. For example, VOA Ukrainian's daily coverage provides U.S. officials, experts, members of diaspora community and visiting Ukrainian leaders a direct line of communication with the people of Ukraine so they can hear and respond to accurate coverage in their native language, therefore countering disinformation coming from Kremlin-sponsored media outlets. The Ukrainian service would like to expand its partnerships with Ukrainian TV channels and provide fuller coverage of Congress, the State Department and White House. This would help to give Ukrainian citizens a broader and more balanced view of world affairs.

As the head of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian Parliament, I'm working closely with the NDI and IRI offices in Kyiv and would like to highlight their support to the democratic transformation.

In April of this year, as a member of a mixed group of Ukrainian and Lithuanian MPs, I visited Washington to introduce a new European plan for Ukraine, adopted by the Seimas of Lithuania, based on the 2017μ092020 Strategy for Support of Ukraine. During several meetings with think tanks, Congressmen, and National Security Council representatives we discussed the importance of a strong U.S. position on containing Russian aggression. We also discussed the linkages between Ukraine's strength and U.S. national interests. I will share some of the key points here.

1. A SECURE AND STABLE UKRAINE IS CRUCIAL FOR STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC TIES

Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine is a blatant violation of European security. Russian success in Ukraine would lead directly to the destabilization of the continent. Global security would be profoundly wounded. It would also encourage Russia to deploy similar tactics elsewhere in Europe. In such a scenario, the U.S. would find it even more difficult to stay out. If exposed to unchecked Russian aggression, Europe could rapidly become a problem rather than a partner. The U.S. would then find itself having to invest resources to support stability in Europe, rather than enjoying the benefits of united transatlantic actions on geopolitical issues elsewhere.

Just recently I visited the conflict line in Eastern Ukraine. It was on Monday, 24 of April—the same tragic day when an American paramedic from the OSCE SMM was killed by Russian proxies. We are supporting the U.S. in the demand for a timely and fair investigation. Putin will not stop unless he is stopped.

2. GLOBAL NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION IS AT STAKE

Abandoning Ukraine would deal a major blow to nuclear nonproliferation efforts—something President Trump himself identified in December 2016 as one of America's top foreign policy priorities. Under the terms of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, Ukraine surrendered the world's third largest nuclear arsenal in exchange for security assurances from the U.S., UK and Russia, who all committed to respect Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russian aggression against Ukraine, along with the restrained response of the international community, has exposed these assurances as hollow.

3. UKRAINE'S SECURITY DIRECTLY AFFECTS THE U.S. ECONOMY

Guaranteed security is a prerequisite for sustainable trade and investment in the transatlantic region. Future European security is unimaginable without a secure Ukraine. If Russia succeeds in invading and annexing Ukrainian territory, no country in the region will feel secure from similar attacks. The entire security shape of the post-WWII world will collapse, bringing down all manner of economic relationships. This makes Ukrainian security an important factor in US economic welfare. Total U.S.–EU trade in goods and services in 2015 amounted to USD 1.15 trillion. The EU is America's top trading partner. European security is essential for a prosperous America, and a sovereign Ukraine is essential for European security.

4. SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN DEMOCRACY IS A US FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITY

Considerable material and political support has been provided by the U.S. to Ukraine since 1991—especially since the 2014 Revolution of Dignity. This makes Ukraine's domestic reforms a test case for U.S. credibility as a democracy supporter. Abandoning Ukraine would severely undermine U.S. authority around the world,

while also writing off a key regional relationship at a critical point in its development.

Over the last 3 years, Ukrainians have demonstrated their ability to implement fundamental and far-reaching reforms. Since 2014, there has been more progress in overcoming the country's Soviet inheritance than in the previous two decades of independence. The U.S. has a major role to play in making sure this progress continues. It is also very much in American interests to do so. Ukraine has sufficient resources and potential to become the most significant foreign policy success story of the current presidency. This success could transform the entire post-Soviet region.

Supporting Ukraine is also the most logical and practical US foreign policy response to Russia's hostile actions. Continued support for Ukraine allows the White House to avoid entering into direct confrontation with the Kremlin, while presenting the opportunity to make a tremendous impact on the security of the region. In contrast, withdrawing support for Ukraine would undermine the momentum of the Ukrainian reform process and create a favorable environment for further Russian advances. Such an outcome would fail to satisfy virtually any interpretation of U.S. foreign policy objectives.

5. UKRAINE'S SUCCESS WOULD ENHANCE REGIONAL SECURITY

If Ukraine falls back under Moscow's control, the Kremlin will have a platform to project its influence with far greater effectiveness into Central Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, the Black Sea region, and further afield. In order to safeguard its independence, Ukraine has little choice but to make a success of its post-Maidan transition towards a more transparent and democratic model of governance. A reformed Ukraine would become a democratic champion in the post-Soviet space, providing a strong counter-argument to Russia's hybrid interventions while inspiring calls for similar transformations elsewhere in the neighborhood. Supporting Ukraine's transition is not only strategically smart within the current foreign policy context—it could also bring long-term dividends throughout the post-Soviet region.

CONCLUSION

For the U.S., a democratic Ukraine would represent an expansion of the borders of freedom. A stable Ukraine would represent a reliable defense of the Eastern border of the rules-based world. A prosperous Ukraine would be a success story of U.S. foreign policy and assistance. A successful Ukraine would have a positive impact on the whole region, peacefully containing Russia.

The Ukrainian Government, NGOs, and business community are continuing to push forward with tough reforms. No one wants a strong, independent and free Ukraine that is part of the Euro-Atlantic family more than the Ukrainian people, but continued U.S. support and assistance is critical to this process and the path would be much more difficult without it. It is better and cheaper to invest into democratic transition, thus creating a strong state, than to send peacekeeping troops and provide multi-billion dollar security assistance to eternally weak states.

Ukraine chose to ally with the West—and is facing punishment for this choice in the form of Russian aggression. This makes Ukraine a precedent that can heavily tilt the global scale one way or another. Losing Ukraine would mean giving the upper hand to those in Europe who openly challenge America. This would be a major step towards restoring Cold War realities, but with a dynamic in Russia's favor.

Ukraine chose democracy on its own, against all odds. It rebelled against dictatorship twice within a decade. It is ready to fight for its beliefs. All we ask is for reliable support from our allies who share our faith. With the EU going through turbulent times, only America can effectively support Ukraine in standing up to Russia's bullying.

We are counting on you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF I(DH)EAS

LITIGIO ESTRATÉGICO EN DERECHOS HUMANOS, A.C.

I(dh)eas is a Mexican human rights organization which engages in strategic litigation to protect victims of torture and other violations of human rights and their families, and combat impunity through structural and institutional reforms.

Since 2006, Mexico has been under a persistent state of citizen insecurity and an expansion of organized crime that has led to a significant increase in human rights violations and high levels of impunity. These present a clear threat to the stability of the country and to the rule of law.

Between 2006 and 2016, more than 172,000 homicides took place, including 7,500 women murdered since the beginning of President Enrique Peña Nieto's mandate. Nearly 31,000 disappearances have been reported, and more than half of these cases occurred in the last 5 years alone. The Inter-American Commission for Human Rights summarized the situation in its 2016 report on Mexico: "the human rights situation in the past years is evident in greater allegations of forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and torture, a regression in citizen security, lack of access to justice, and impunity."

In 2014, we revised our strategic plan to refocus our institutional efforts on monitoring forced disappearances and empowering victims' families through strategic litigation. Back then, NED was the first organization to believe in our strategy, demonstrating its understanding of the local context and believing in the potential of local civil society groups in advancing innovative strategies. Support from the National Endowment for Democracy has enabled I(dh)ecas to carry out activities in support of the victims of serious human rights violations in Mexico, particularly victims of forced disappearances and their families. It has enabled the implementation of 23 training workshops aimed at relatives of missing persons in more than 15 states across Mexico. NED's support has also allowed us to open new avenues for access to justice for victims and their relatives in Mexico, setting important precedents, such as the presentation in December 2015 of the three first cases of forced disappearances before the United Nations Human Rights Committee. NED's support has also been crucial in the consolidation of our organization. In 3 years, I(dh)ecas became a solid organization and a leader in monitoring cases of grave violations of human rights, recognized by its peers and by the victims themselves and by international donors, who are increasingly relying on our work.

Another element that distinguishes NED from other donors is the trust it builds with its local partners and the continuity of support over several years. For an organization working on strategic litigation, this continuity is critical.

NED's support has enabled organizations such as I(dh)ecas to give a voice to thousands of victims who have long been invisible and to form a common front to fight against injustice and impunity, as well as to advance legislation that recognizes the rights and dignity of victims.

[This statement was submitted by Juan Carlos Gutiérrez Contreras, General Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

Memory is the greatest human weapon against barbarity.

The National Endowment for Democracy, as reflected in its visionary and stalwart support for the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC), recognizes that lasting democracy in any country ensures stability and security far beyond its borders, and enduring democracy depends on deep roots.

We at ICSC know from almost 20 years working at the grassroots level with victims and survivors around the world who find themselves at that crucial point, the point at which they either turn towards violence and extremism in response to their experiences, or—with steady support from trusted sources and proven models to build on—they instead play a pivotal role in nourishing democratic roots, in cultivating a society that values and demands truth, justice and accountability. Their strength is grounded in the power of memory.

The support of the NED allows ICSC to help societies in countries facing increased repression, transitioning from conflict or emerging from dictatorship to develop memorialization and civic engagement programs. Our work stands apart from others as we focus first on individuals and the power of their past experiences to shape a different future: victims, survivors, families of the missing, women, and youth, who often find themselves stigmatized and excluded from formal channels to engage in transitional justice and rebuilding, but all of whom are in fact essential to ensuring lasting peace, as all have a story to share about what life is like without freedom, dignity or respect for human rights.

We have seen time and again in countries from Cambodia to Colombia that it is only through providing a platform for survivors to share their stories—stories of violence, atrocity or conflict, of repression or mass abuse—that societies can identify shared experiences, begin to bridge differences and truly understand the risk, indeed the likelihood of recurrence of violence or abuse if they do not take ownership over their individual and collective future. We at ICSC, with the NED's support, help societies undertake that transformative process through memorialization, lay-

ing the groundwork for lasting peace and a collective commitment ensuring that these events never happen again, there or anywhere else in the world.

Here are a few examples of ICSC programs made possible by support from the NED:

DIGITAL MAPPING AND DOCUMENTATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA)

In recognition of the risk of destruction posed by violence and volatility in the MENA region, ICSC MENA Regional Network members have undertaken a region-wide digital mapping and documentation initiative to document sites of atrocity and human rights violations. The accessible online archive will support local initiatives designed to ensure that the abuses committed at these sites are acknowledged and addressed, and the collected information put to use in pursuit of justice and accountability.

The sites—including sites of detention or torture and unmarked and mass graves—will be presented in map form, with layered documentation that entails victim testimonies, media reports and visual material. The platform will act as a key instrument to engage communities across the region in promoting a rights-based society through the lens of memory. The data will preserve past incidents that can be used as evidence in future transitional justice processes, and establish the groundwork that allows trained actors in the region to lead democracy-building processes.

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN PURSUIT OF PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN ASIA

Religious and ethnic intolerance are among the most virulent causes of instability and conflict globally. To ensure such hostilities do not fester within a region or spread to others, it is crucial to promote tolerance and democracy among two factions in particular: youth, who are prime targets for extremists looking to grow their ranks, and; women, whose political participation has proven central to solidifying peace and democracy.

Asia has become of particular concern in recent years as Islamic militants appear to have increased their focus on the region. ICSC programs at Asian Sites of Conscience offer unique opportunities to turn the tide, serving as trusted spaces where youth begin to understand the root causes of past conflict and how they can engage in ensuring a democratic future. In Cambodia, for instance, youth are particularly affected by poverty, discrimination, violence, and sex trafficking—legacies of the Khmer Rouge regime. Through programs at mass killing sites, ICSC member Youth for Peace educates young people about this history and how to peacefully deal with conflict and reduce stereotypes and discrimination today. The youth then pursue social enhancement projects in their communities, orphanages, schools, and impoverished areas. One 15-year-old participant recently said, “Learning about the past is a way to prevent genocide from happening again in my country and in the world too.”

In Sri Lanka, a country rife with unresolved ethnic and religious divisions that threaten official efforts to move from unrest and atrocity toward a democratic future, ICSC convenes women conflict survivors from across ethnic divides and disenfranchised communities to work collectively to foster reconciliation and peace through projects that tackle gender based violence and threats to the right to livelihood. ICSC is also leading the 9-member Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR) that works closely with Sites of Conscience and Sri Lankan civil society organizations to build their capacity to engage in the current transitional justice process in an informed and sustained manner. Through a series of victim-focused local as well as high-level consultations, participatory transitional justice workshops and roundtables, participants in ICSC-led activities contribute to post-conflict peace-building, stability and rebuilding efforts by ensuring that multiple stakeholders—particularly youth, women and survivors of conflict—are able to engage with nascent transitional justice process.

PROTECTING DEMOCRACY IN RUSSIA AND BEYOND

From its increasing repression to its possible role in elections in the U.S. and France, Russia has signaled that it poses a sizable and far-reaching threat to democracy and U.S. security. As proof of the power of memory, the Russian Government recently took over and rewrote the interpretation of Site of Conscience Perm-36, a former labor camp that served as the only Russian museum presenting the history of political repression in that country. In an effort to preserve this history, ICSC is working through select channels to ensure that the stories of Perm-36 are preserved and shared, by bringing together activists and heritage professionals from

Sites of Conscience across Russia and Eastern Europe for training on promoting transparent and democratic societies, ultimately serving to support and amplify pro-democracy voices in the region.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN COLOMBIA DEMOCRACY-BUILDING

ICSC's 2016 needs assessment in Colombia demonstrates the crucial role survivors, their families and communities must play in creating successful and sustainable transitional justice mechanisms. ICSC findings identified the immediate need to develop truth-telling programs parallel to established formal processes, through which ordinary Colombians can come together to share their experiences of conflict and then turn to rebuilding their communities. In Colombia ICSC and the GIJTR are at the beginning stages of working to promote a just and inclusive society, grounded in respect for human rights, by ensuring that multiple stakeholders—particularly youth, women, indigenous groups, families of the missing and disappeared and survivors of conflict—are able to fully engage in activities that support reconciliation and peace, such as collecting and sharing survivor testimonies and engaging in advocacy.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. THET THET KHINE, NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR
DEMOCRACY AND MEMBER OF THE PYITHU HLUTTAW

April 24, 2017.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, *Chairman,*
U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs.

Re: Democracy Assistance to Myanmar

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN,

When the people of Myanmar voted National League for Democracy (NLD) wholeheartedly in the 2015's General Election, NLD won by landslide, which was a game changer in Myanmar politics. Our victory made it possible the first civilian government in more than 50 years in the country. Myanmar has been a success story in getting the military junta out of its way, although military regimes have evidently been extremely difficult to get rid of throughout the world's history. Even when overthrown, they often leaves a country in chaos. Nevertheless, Myanmar maintains law and order today. The smooth transition into an embryonic democracy took place in March 2016. However people in Myanmar are still not certain whether democracy will prevail in the end. A successful outcome of the current process depends on whether we, as a people, can steer ourselves toward the right direction in our democratic journey.

Myanmar needs the world to embrace and encourage its advancement in its democratization. In fact, the moment we felt the energy of the world's democratic society beaming toward us, prompted our hope for peace, security, happiness, and better life. However, we are aware of the fact that we have yet much to do to install a long-lasting democracy in our country. We have been blessed with true friends like the U.S. ever since the time we were fighting against the military tyranny. This friendship opened the new opportunities we are living currently and will also be advantageous to the democratization process in Myanmar. Therefore, we do not want it slipping away. Yes, Myanmar has been a success story, but it is not the end of our journey yet.

We envision further success in democratizing our nation and I am sure the whole world shares this vision. As a citizen, a member of parliament, and someone who appreciates the benefits of a true democracy. I would like to insist that the U.S. Government continue assistance for our democratization process. As Myanmar democratizes, its people will have much better lives, as they deserve.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MUSA H. MAAYTAH, MINISTER OF POLITICAL AND
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF STATE

May 9, 2017.

Hon. Dr. MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT, *Chairman,*
The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

The Government of Jordan has witnessed how international support, with American leadership in this area, can play important role in Jordan's forward-looking fu-

ture, and help further promote Jordan's commitment to peace and political reform. As an important example, the programs and support offered by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) have contributed significantly to a constructive and inclusive political landscape that has fostered security; helped maintain peace; helped created social cohesion in the country; and helped build citizens' trust in Jordanian institutions.

Through its relationships with key institutions, including the Ministries of Interior, Municipal Affairs, Political and Parliamentary Affairs, as well as the Prime Ministry, NDI has provided support in fostering democratic practices, raised the awareness of government institutions about openness, transparency and inclusiveness and responded to the needs and aspirations of the citizens by engaging women and youth in the political process through civic education programs, support for domestic election monitoring, and capacity building efforts for civil society organizations. Additionally, NDI has implemented important good governance initiatives and provided assistance to members in the Jordanian parliament to strengthen the legislative process.

As Jordanians continue undeterred in moving forward with implementing widespread reforms, and in face of the economic and security challenges amidst the influx of more than 1.3 million Syrian refugees, international development programs such as those of NDI funded by the U.S. Government are vital to providing the much needed assistance and expertise to continue to sustain Jordan's prospective future.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MALAM DARFUR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Country: Sudan

Dates of NED Support: 2014–Present

Director: Lukman Ahmed, BBC Arabic correspondent based in DC who is originally from Malam, South Darfur

“NED provided Malam Darfur Peace and Development (MDPD) with its first grant in 2014, when MDPD was a new organization. MDPD was born with some difficulties, such as limited resources and a far-reaching agenda. That very first grant from NED was a lifting factor and helped to increase the capacity of the organization. MDPD was able to move forward and gain more trust from other international and local partners. The organization jumped from being an institution that largely depended on small fundraising events to a solid institution with a huge network of local, regional, and international partners. MDPD would never have reached its current success as a strong partner in the peacebuilding world without NED's technical and financial support, and without input and feedback from NED staff. NED has enriched MDPD's experience as a young partner organization working to promote democracy in Sudan.

We at MDPD realized that ending the catastrophe in Darfur required mobilizing resources, engaging the local communities, and building trust between the different communities in the region. Our partnership with NED was especially vital in allowing us to dive extensively into this field. NED's efforts in supporting MDPD had a large impact on the resurgence of life in the Darfur localities of Malam, Mershing, and eastern Jebel Marra. This impact now continues to spread to all five states of Darfur.

Because of the generous support of NED, MDPD was able to achieve a historic milestone in the organization's agenda: reconciliation and peacebuilding between the different communities in these localities, which were once epicenters of violence and bloodshed. In October 2014, NED supported an initiative to organize and train Women Peace Ambassadors, who were able to encourage their respective communities, who previously fought against one another, to come together to start discussing their problems. This was the most substantial breakthrough in talks between these rival communities since the conflict erupted in 2003. The Women Peace Ambassadors continued their work, and eventually the group included more local leaders and morphed into a larger Peace Committee. The Peace Committee hosted meetings and signed a peace document on behalf of the communities living in eastern Jebel Marra. NED's support has led to the creation of a solid peace platform. As a result, internally displaced persons (IDPs) have started returning to their villages of origin and gearing up to become actively involved in Darfur's transformation. With help from other development partners, the communities have started agricultural and commercial ventures to rebuild local economies, a critical step towards ensuring that emerging peace is born to last. NED's grants helped MDPD

establish an encouraging environment that motivates other IDPs to return home and seek reintegration into society, a key factor in ending conflict.

MDPD continues to engage the communities in this post-conflict phase to increase the capacity of local leadership, encourage the participation of women and minority groups, and bridge the divide between different ethnic groups. Over the last 3 years, MDPD has witnessed the positive results of the first NED grant proliferating every day, as trust between communities is restored.

Sincerely,

LUKMAN AHMED,
MDPD's President.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL COALITION OF SYRIAN REVOLUTION AND
OPPOSITION FORCES

AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL COALITION OF SYRIAN REVOLUTION AND
OPPOSITION FORCES

Honorable chairman of Congress, distinguished members of the congressional committee, and directors of projects supporting democracy assistance programs: First, the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (SOC) thanks you for providing this opportunity to testify to Congress on the role of the State Department's assistance in shaping the situation in Syria and the establishment of a democratic alternative to the chemical regime.

We in the SOC have worked with your organizations in the past years on different projects and various grants, which generally focused on legitimizing the SOC by strengthening communications between us and Syrians both inside and outside Syria.

After the eruption of the Syrian revolution, suppression, violence, killing, and destruction progressed until the Syrian people started defending themselves. Shortly after, splits in the military and police apparatuses reached thousands from various ranks including tens of thousands of officers and individuals from state run institutions, and even reaching the defection of Syrian Prime Minister Riyad Hijab to the revolution, which could not be stopped. Despite the regime's use of all kinds of weaponry, destruction, arrests of hundreds of thousands and killing of tens of thousands by torture, the revolution could not be stopped. After the regime's military institutions and security services weakened, it turned to Iranian, Iraqi and Lebanese sectarian militias and then Russia intervened directly.

Politically, the international community has been unable to deter the regime and its allies from killing the Syrian people because of Russia's repeated veto. The Russians and regime alleged that the opposition was divided and dispersed and had no representatives that they could engage in dialogue.

And at this point, Syrians from the revolutionary forces, opposition and national figures worked together to form representative bodies, which led to the establishment of the SOC. The SOC became the official representative body of the Syrian people recognized by the majority of the international community. It was a necessary political entity that emerged after the revolution to become an umbrella with which the broad spectrum of opposition forces operated under—inclusive of people from multiple intellectual, political and ethnic backgrounds. The SOC includes structures from:

- Syrian National Coalition;
- Movement for Free and Democratic Syria;
- Moutana Movement;
- National Union of Syrian Scholars;
- Writers Union;
- Syrian Business Forum;
- Kurdish National Council;
- Turkmen Component;
- Democratic Forum;
- Local councils of all the opposition governorates and representatives from military fractions and some independent national figures; and
- Free National Assembly.

Syrian Interim Government (SIG): The SIG is a government elected and tasked by the SOC to act as the executive arm operating inside Syria. It is a revolutionary government working from within its institutions to serve the people of Syria organizing and administrating in Syria's regions. It partners with organizations and na-

tional figures to actualize stability and revive Syrian society aiming to strengthen Syrian unity and strive for a civil and just country.

In a recent visit to the city of al Bab in northern Syria—recently liberated from ISIS by the Turkish-led operation Euphrates Shield, we stressed an urgent need for the SOC to be present in the area to guarantee the hierarchical structure of the state. After the liberation, the al-Bab local council, which receives direct support from one side of the conflict, became convinced of its full independence from surrounding local councils and higher structures such as the provincial councils, directorates of the interim government, ministries and the SOC coalition. This narrow view will lead to a state of division, which will make it very difficult to return to a structure of state institutions unless there is also devoted efforts to support institutional building and develop the capacity of workers and enable them to use tools to connect the institutions together. This is the role that friendly countries and supporting bodies can play, a role that is constructive (long-term) and not only for emergencies (a reaction).

Syrians have lived many long years dreaming of a democratic country that respects human dignity and it was your (America) democratic experience that has been a guiding light for them. But when they took the hardest steps towards their dreams by starting a revolution against the murderous regime, they did not find what they expected with regards to assistance to remove the deadly tyrant—instead saw international complacency and leniency with him. The same tyrant that ignored all international laws and norms and indulged in using prohibited weapons against civilians, which killed many.

Syrians realize that democracy is a building process and cannot be achieved in the first try. But they also realize that democratic countries carry a moral responsibility in supporting these building efforts and there will not be a transition to a democratic country unless they actualize the foundations that serve as the base of democracy.

Syrians realize that the journey from a period of regional chaos to the establishment of democracy, practiced in a correct way, will take practice and will likely have missteps. Though, this process will not be possible without support from friendly countries for the opposition as a partner and not as an interest seeker. The foundation of building a modern democracy starts with Syrians themselves and while experiences until now have not reached the level needed, this does not negate the state of construction needed for institutions to reach the desired goal.

In the past years, American foreign policy has played an important role in influencing the situation in Syria. Though, the slow pace of U.S. involvement negatively affected the image of the United States and its role in the world. Though, it cannot be denied the soft influence pursued by the former administration, which supported a vision of democracy through the life and culture of the people, did not have an effect—it did; especially on the ground among local activists and in the building of small institutions such as local councils, and medical, educational and media organizations. And if this support suddenly stops altogether, a state of chaos will return, which will weaken local cities and destabilize local government already built and established.

The errors and practices in previous stages that delayed the emergence of opposition institutions cannot be overlooked. However, in the opinion of the opposition and forces on the ground, most of these errors were due to the absence of state structures. In getting rid of these negatives practices, there will be support for a vision that permits networks and coordination between all efforts made so that the situation does not return to one of destruction. It is important to structure support so that it enhances primary channels that pour into state-building. One of the most important steps that needs to be worked on in the next stage is structure of support and the bringing together of channels, not the draining and demolition of that structure.

The SOC has benefited from a number of grants from the American administration in the past years—all of which aimed to reinforce the SOC's legitimacy and strengthen its ties with Syrians. The grants helped the SOC tackle primary challenges confronting Syrians and attempts to organize general frameworks. By laying out policies carried out and implemented by the government and organizations, it ensured integration instead of a conflict of interests. The SOC has also benefited from grants that supported its position in the Geneva negotiations, especially those that focused on strategy and helped with logistics, which included actualizing a media image through the creation of an information system. It drove the opinion of the opposition globally in the face of Russia and Iran's support for the regime despite Assad's crimes or trembling and haggard arguments and speeches.

As the conflict became more complicated in Syria, Russia used the regime and its institutions as a tool to achieve regional gains, and to that end, Iran used the re-

gime and Hizballah as a means to actualize its gains in the region using various terrorist acts to increase chaos and fuel conflict. As a result, all efforts to find a political solution failed. All of this places international actors in a weak position unless the United States, with all the power in the world, takes the initiative with regards to supporting democracy programs, protecting constituents, and organizing actions in cooperation with the moderate Syrian opposition to establish important steps in creating a path to end the criminal regime.

Thank you for this opportunity and we hope that the next stage is a decisive stage towards the end of a criminal regime and the building of a democratic alternative.

ABDUL ILLAH FAHAD,
Former SOC General Secretary.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY

April 24, 2017.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, *Chairman,*
U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN,

I write to express my strong recommendation for the U.S. Government to continue its support to build democratic institutions in Myanmar and meet the aspirations of Myanmar people to live in a free and prosperous society. After nearly 30 years of political struggle, my party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), has won the first democratic elections in Myanmar. In November 2015, NLD obtained nearly 80 percent of the electable seats in the Union Parliament. However, while delighted to receive such an overwhelming support, we are aware that we have a monumental task before us. The institutions need to be fundamentally transformed.

Despite the good will, our new government is facing many challenges to deliver the needed change. Having been prevented from fair political competition for many years before, most of NLD MPs are serving for the first time and lack the experience as legislators. The same is true for our government ministers. The civil service, inherited from the previous system, is yet to build a culture of service to the citizens. The judiciary needs to be reformed to serve as an independent institution that has the credibility to deliver justice. On the other hand, expectations of Myanmar people after casting their democratic vote are high, perhaps, unrealistically high.

It will be difficult for our government to meet high expectations of Myanmar people without the support of the U.S. Government. We need this support to complete our transition to a fully-fledged democracy. We believe that only in democracy will all citizens feel included and able to participate in shaping their destiny. We believe that building effective institutions that are responsive to people's needs is the best way to create stability, peace and prosperity for all. That is what our struggle was about. And our struggle was also inspired by the freedom and prosperity that the United States exemplify.

The continuous support from the U.S. Government has helped us to get here, and we have come too far to allow our peoples' hopes to be dashed now. We cannot stop and we will not stop but we hope—in the process—we can count on the U.S. to continue championing expansion of freedom around the world.

U WIN HTEIN,
Member of the NLD Secretariat

PREPARED STATEMENT OF OJO PÚBLICO

Asociación de Periodismo de Investigación Ojo Público (OjoPúblico) is a digital media outlet focusing on investigative journalism to promote, protect and further high quality, accurate information on issues of public interest. Ojo Público believes in the role of media in informing and encouraging civil society and citizens to monitor public officials, corporate interests, and other powerful interest groups. Founded in 2014, and based in Lima, Ojo Público aims to expand its coverage to all of Peru's territory.

The National Endowment for Democracy's support is decisive for our work, as it was one of the first organizations to establish a partnership with OjoPúblico to advance transparency, accountability, and the fight against corruption in Peru. Today, 2 years after the beginning of this relationship, we believe that NED support has

enable us to implement a high-impact project in support of civil society—one that has changed Peru's public policies to help sustain the country's democracy.

OjoPúblico has found in the NED an essential partner due to its prestige and its rigorous monitoring and attention to the implementation of our projects. The NED understands the problems democracies face in this part of the hemisphere and the challenges that OjoPúblico confronts at the local level. Undoubtedly, this quality sets the NED apart from other partners.

Without the NED's support, OjoPúblico would not have been able to build the capacity of investigative journalists to report on political, business, and judicial corruption, especially in these trying times when political corruption have shaken up various governments in Latin America. Countless illicit acts would have remained outside the reach of news media and public officials as well as of other civil society organizations if the NED had not decided to support OjoPúblico. Without a doubt, NED support in the past 2 years has made a great difference.

Sincerely yours,

ÓSCAR CASTILLA C.,
Executive Director.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SOMPORN OUAMPATHUM

26 April 2017.

Subject: Collaboration between civil society in Samut Sakhon province and NDI

The civil society in Samut Sakhon has collaborated with NDI over the past 4 years (2013–2016) whereby it has received great support in promoting democracy in the forms of technical assistance and activity/project. Particularly, NDI has offered platforms for young people, both in formal and informal education systems, to exchange opinions and develop their capacity in the application of democratic principles appropriate to their ages.

In addition, NDI has successfully coordinated and created opportunities for the civil society in the province to the extent that it has been able to extend the results to respond to various issues of concern in the province on the basis of participatory democracy.

I therefore would like to express my gratitude to NDI.

MR. SOMPORN OUAMPATHUM,
*Head of Civic Development Center of King Prajadhipok's
Institute in Samut Sakhon Province.*

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE PAKISTAN INSTITUTE FOR PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

Over the years the United States of America has generously invested its taxpayer's money in Pakistan to support and strengthen democracy. Presently I am Executive Director of Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) that works with the legislatures at the Federal and provincial levels to provide research, legislative support, trainings and parliamentary outreach services. The PIPS campus in Islamabad is a living and lasting example of American people's support to help build a permanent institution through the USAID in 2012. Today the Institute serves 1,256 Federal and provincial legislators and more than 5,000 officials through indigenous resources provided by the Parliament of Pakistan. The PIPS is a living example of sustainable support once extended by the USAID through Pakistan Legislative Support Program.

Before joining the PIPS I headed a dynamic civil society organization, Centre for Civic Education Pakistan (September 2004–April 2016). The Centre was/is generously and continuously supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The Centre conducted civic education and constitutional literacy campaigns besides training the citizens to peacefully articulate their democratic demands and make the difference through the power of their vote i.e. right to be governed democratically. The Centre's work with thousands of citizens to engage them in democratic conversations and dialogue on democracy, constitutionality, civility, rule of law and vital institutional reforms would have not been possible without the NED's willingness to support innovative ideas. With the support of NED the Centre was able to interact with mandate and duty bearers and many of these initiatives are now part of the official policies. The journey continues!

Civil society is weak and evolving but definitely gaining grounds and strength in Pakistan where democracy is witnessing transition with increased institutional confidence. In this regard the support from the NED has catalyzed many relevant processes by extending cooperation to civil society organizations. The opportunities to network and share experiences with democracy activists, practitioners and scholars from all over the globe at the platform World Assemblies convened by the World Movement for Democracy (WMD) enriched democracy debates and discourses. The knowledge products produced by the NED and generously shared stimulate democratic thinking and motivate to assign substantive meanings to democratic experiences. As member of the Steering Committee of the WMD I can testify that it is the only global forum to share values and experiences of democracy in different societies under one roof.

Democracy is always a work in progress and the support extended by the NED help attain many new milestones in this journey. This journey must continue as the long-term investment for posterity, democratic co-existence and the peaceful planet.

[This statement was submitted by Zafarullah Khan, Executive Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAKISTAN TEHREEK-E-INSAF

April 28, 2017.

MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT, *Chairman,
National Democratic Institute,
455 Massachusetts Ave, NW, 8th Floor,
Washington, DC 20001-2621.*

DEAR MADAM ALBRIGHT,

The National Democratic Institute has played a pivotal role in strengthening the democratic institutions of Pakistan. In particular, NDI is currently training polling agent master trainers across the country to ensure all polling stations have trained polling agents (known as poll watchers in the U.S.) in future elections.

As an ex Foreign Minister of Pakistan, having dealt with several International aid organizations and having been involved in the U.S.-Pakistan strategic dialogue, I have the following views to offer:

It is important to note that at present approximately 500,000 polling agents are required as part of the General Elections process within Pakistan. In the previous election held in 2013, the credibility of the entire election process and the mandate of the governing party were put into question as a majority of the opposition parties raised the issue of election rigging & violation of applicable laws. Effective training for polling agents on the applicable laws and procedures is important to eradicate rigging/fraud, and goes to the heart of transparency and credibility of the entire electoral process.

It is pertinent to note that strengthening democracy in a country such as Pakistan goes a long way towards providing stability in the country. This in turn has a positive impact on improving the security situation, not only in Pakistan, but in the entire region. NDI has a constructive and important role to play in democracy assistance. While doing so, it is imperative that in order to get a good value for your money and make an effective contribution, discussions with local political parties are important in order to determine their requirements for such assistance, and program design should be according to their respective needs.

Democracy is understood differently in each society but the core values remain the same. It is important to be well versed with local sensitivities of a country in order to provide assistance where it is most required.

Pakistanis would be averse to any efforts aimed at indoctrination of ideologies that are not applicable to or are against the norms and traditions of the country. However, all assistance that strengthens the democratic landscape is always welcome and we will always continue to be appreciative of any such efforts.

When implementing any kind of program in Pakistan, it is important to employ local personnel in organizations such as the NDI, as people, especially in rural areas, tend to respond more positively if there is no language/cultural barrier.

Finally, I would like to thank the U.S. Government for the democracy assistance it has been providing with regard to strengthening of the democratic framework in Pakistan, including parliamentary and other political institutions.

The ideology and vision of PTI is based on justice for all and the belief that strong and impartial democratic institutions play a key role in empowering citizens and removing the sense of deprivation and marginalization from society. Consequently,

empowered citizens are more likely to fight the extremist ideological mindset and be the impetus for greater security and economic wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,

SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI,
Vice Chairman and Deputy Parliamentary Leader.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE FOR CREDIBLE ELECTIONS (PACE)

April 26, 2017.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, *Chairman,*
U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN,

In November 2015, the people of Myanmar, also known as Burma, elected its first civilian-led government in decades. These elections were a testament to the work and commitment to democracy of millions of Myanmar citizens, civil servants, political leaders and civic activists. They are also a testament to the support we received, as a country and as individual organizations, from the international community.

The People's Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE) had the privilege to become the first civic organization in the history of Myanmar to be accredited to observe an election. The systematic information gathered by our more than 2,700 observers provided an unbiased assessment of key aspects of the election process, from the pre-election period to the tabulation of results, and allowed PACE to issue recommendations to improve election laws and regulations before the next national elections in 2020. Just as importantly, election observation by PACE and other groups created unprecedented political space for citizens to engage in the political process.

We could not have done this alone. From the National Democratic Institute (NDI) we learned systematic observation methodologies that have been developed and fine tuned throughout the years in elections all around the world. These methodologies allowed PACE to be an independent and credible voice throughout the process, trusted by election authorities, political parties and other civic organizations. Our work was also made possible by financial contributions from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and, through NOI, from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). International assistance to other actors also contributed to a successful election process. International organizations assisted the election authorities to compile and update the voter list, accredit observers and educate voters; prepared candidates from multiple parties to participate in competitive elections; and supported other civic groups to provide voter education and observe the elections. In particular, assistance funded by the United States Government was critical to enable Myanmar's transition to democracy.

The 2015 elections were just a first step to full democracy in Myanmar. The country is pursuing an ambitious peace process to end conflict in the border states. Citizens have begun to seek a different relationship with their elected leaders, one based on respect for freedom of speech and other fundamental freedoms. Parliamentarians, most of whom have not held public office before, are learning about their roles and responsibilities in a democratic system. Civil society is finding ways to contribute to this democratic transition as an independent but constructive voice. The success of this democratic transition will require the full commitment of the leaders, institutions and citizens of Myanmar. I believe that it also will require the continued support and assistance of the United States Government and others in the international community to further empower those in public office and across the broad spectrum of civil society to fulfill our complementary roles and strengthen our country's democracy. The path ahead will not be easy but, with continued support, organizations like PACE stand ready to do our part to fulfill the dream of a democratic Myanmar.

Respectfully yours,

SAI YE KYAW SWAR MYINT,
Executive Director.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LANA PRLIĆ, VP OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF BOSNIA
AND HERZEGOVINA

Before I begin my story about my IRI chapter, I would like to briefly introduce myself and help you understand this story, a chapter that started in 2011 and is still going on. My name is Lana Prlić, I am 24 years old, I have a masters degree in International Business and Finance and I am the Vice President of the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am also “mixed marriage” child, born to a Croatian father and a Bosniak Muslim mother. I celebrate both Christmas and Eid, as well as Orthodox holidays with my friends and relatives. I was born and still live in the beautiful city of Mostar, which holds the sad title of Bosnia’s most divided city, politically and ethnically. Those divisions are ruining it day by day, and they are ripping its heart and soul, in a way that is difficult to imagine in the 21st century in Europe.

The deep ethnic divide in my hometown is something I never learned to live with and I will never understand how it can be acceptable to anyone. For all my life, I’ve been taught that no ethnic group or nation is superior to another and that there are only good or bad people. This understanding is something I feed most strongly about and it has shaped me and all decision I have made in my adult life. Perhaps this is one of the reasons I have, at a very young age, developed a passion for politics.

I still remember vividly my childhood days, when I was watching the evening news every night with my mother and my grandparents, and trying to grasp what is going on with undivided attention. My friends use to laugh at me because of this, teasing me that I surely would become a boring politician when I grow older.

It didn’t take long before I actually started my venture into politics. What prompted my decision to join the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 2010, was the fact that I was going to high school in my hometown of Mostar, which was (and still is) a prime example of school segregation. It’s a phenomenon called “two schools under one roof,” where children of Bosniak ethnicity and Croat ethnicity are physically divided in the school. This practice is truly the worst form of discrimination in our education system and a threat to the multi-ethnic society that we once had and that we should be trying to rebuild. The segregation of children in my hometown and in my country has motivated me to enter politics. Of all the issues this fragile country has, this is the one I feel most strongly about and I am determined to fight ethnic segregation until we put an end to this horrific practice.

In 2011, I moved to Sarajevo and received a call from a party colleague, suggesting me to apply for IRI’s 3-year professional development program for a group of young women with different ethnic and political background. The Young Women’s Leadership Academy has shaped me and my political career in ways I could not have imagined when I first joined the program. I was the youngest in the group and as an 18-year old my political knowledge and experience was not impressive, to say the least. The group included 19 young women from all over the country. The group was as diverse as it could be and it proved to be our greatest strength. Throughout the 3-year program we learned to appreciate our differences, we openly debated political and social issues and learned to listen to each other. Looking back, I realize just how much the program enabled us to realize that we share the same problems and hopes for the future. We went from being program participants, to becoming friends.

The program combined training programs and a mentorship program that allowed us to grow individually and work on our skills and address our weaknesses. In many ways, this program laid the foundation of our political careers and offered us the opportunity to learn from renowned trainers and leaders how to communicate, how to conduct effective political campaign and how to become responsive and accountable political leaders. We learned about fundraising, public relations, public opinion research and leadership. We were shown how to use our skills to become the progressive and reform-oriented leaders our country so desperately needs.

Women are one of the most marginalized groups in Bosnian politics. Political parties and their leaders have systematically excluded women from all decisionmaking processes over the years. The value of IRI’s program was not only in that it provided a unique opportunity to learn from the best and the brightest, but also that it offered us support, understanding and mentorship that most of us did not get from our political parties. It was reassuring to know that I always have someone to turn to, to seek advice from, knowing that they have my best interest in mind.

I became fully aware of the impact the program had on me when I became vice-president of my party in 2014, with only 21 years I was the youngest VP in the party’s history. Despite my very young age, I was praised for handling the limelight and the media scrutiny very well. I credit IRI’s program for that. In the 3 years

with IRI, I learned how to communicate, how to react to criticism and how to get up when somebody pulls you down. Most importantly, this program has steadily built the confidence of all 19 women who participated in it. Self-confidence is like a muscle, you can build it up, but to do that, you need a support system, a partner who will provide you with the tools, lead you throughout this process and empower you every step of the way. For me, IRI was just that.

What made this program so unique and innovative was IRI's decision to work with the same group of promising young women leaders for 3 years. This allowed them to witness our development and customize their program to address our weaknesses over the course of these 3 years. We grew as individuals and we grew as leaders. I strongly believe that this approach produces visible results and brings about change that we want to see in developing countries. When I joined the program, I was a young party activist. When I completed the program, I was holding the position of VP of one of the strongest political parties in the country.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended 22 years ago, but the scars it left are still visible. The country is deeply divided, the youth unemployment rate at almost 60 percent is the biggest in the world, and the political stalemate has seriously affected the country's prospects of joining the EU and NATO. It is a very fertile ground for corruption and certain political elites have an interest in maintaining this situation as it is. Only a new generation of reform-oriented, progressive and accountable leaders can rebuild this war-torn country, regain the trust of its citizens and provide much-needed economic security and prosperity. IRI's programs are aimed at exactly those young people, who are capable of leading Bosnia and Herzegovina into a better future. Thousands of young, educated people have already left the country and thousands more are planning on leaving in the near future. I believe we owe it to this generation, and future generations, to build a strong state, to respect the rule of law, to create a prosperous society in which everyone can accomplish their goals and to have responsive leaders whom we can trust. Having said that, I am fully aware of the obstacles everyone who has tried to do that is facing. IRI has been a champion of advancing democracy in this country.

A great number of young leaders have emerged from IRI's programs and they are now holding key positions in the parliaments and in government institutions, working tirelessly on political and economic reforms. IRI's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina is having an important and positive impact. I will forever appreciate and cherish my experience with IRI and the incredible support I have received. In today's world, IRI's work around the world, and particularly in vulnerable countries such as mine, remains as important as ever.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE RED LATINOAMERICANA Y DEL CARIBE POR LA DEMOCRACIA

The Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe por la Democracia (Redlad) is a network that brings together more than 400 organizations and activists from the region who work to strengthen their countries' democracy and to promote and defend human rights. Redlad emerged as a regional initiative of the World Movement for Democracy and has been supported by the National Endowment for Democracy since its inception in 2008.

In its almost 10 years of existence, Redlad has reached more than 50,000 beneficiaries in more than 40 workshops and 10 courses, offered approximately 100 meetings in defense of the Inter-American Human Rights System, gathered more than 2,000 attendees in meetings and events, and produced nearly 200 alerts received by at least 13,000 people. Redlad has been able to defend activists at risk as well as organizations that have been threatened or attacked by authoritarian regimes. Redlad has denounced setbacks in civil society's enabling environment in the region and, in alliance with global networks and movements, publicized the threats faced by activists in the region. In addition, Redlad has strengthened the capacity of civil society to influence public policy and to act in a coordinated manner in the Inter-American system. NED's support to Redlad has not been only financial: It has served as an inspiring point of contact with hundreds of organizations around the world, providing mutual support to other relevant political actors and a means of conveying civil society's most urgent needs to the highest levels.

If NED had not supported us, Redlad would not have been created or would have failed in its attempt to become a space for collective dialogue and action for civil society in the region. We would not have been able to defend the Inter-American human rights system, or include minority voices in high-level, hemisphere-wide settings. In addition, we would not have been able to strengthen the Venezuelan youth

movement, give voice to unprotected communities, or fight against authoritarian regimes.

Do not hesitate in contacting me if you need more information.

Faithfully yours,

GINA ROMERO R.,
Executive Director.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN
SECRETARIAT OFFICE

Events and Achievements after the fall of Taliban.—After the fall of Taliban and the establishment of the United Front forces in Kabul, based on the United Nations demand and agreement of national influential figures of Afghanistan leaders of the United Front, the Bonn conference was held on 06/09/1380, under the supervision of United Nations and hosted by Germany, to determine Afghanistan's national cabinet. The participants of this conference were from Rome Group, the Cyprus Group, 11 members from the United Front led by Mohammad Yunus Qanooni, a delegation from Iran, the European Union, Saudi Arabia and others. The agreement of the Bonn conference after nine days of consultations was to form an interim administration for 6 months and a 2-year interim government and convene the Loya Jirga, led by Hamid Karzai and five deputies.

The important tasks that have been done since then, with the help of the international community, are:

- The formation of an interim administration.
- The formation of Loya Jirga commission for the ratification of constitution law.
- The formation of the Supreme Court as an independent body of government in the country.
- The Formation of a commission for refugees by the support of UN.
- The Formation of a commission to supervise the candidacy process.
- Ratification of the laws for political parties in Afghanistan.
- The creation of electoral commissions.
- The creation of the human rights commission.
- Developments in education, opening of school doors for males and females.
- Developments in the health sector and establishment of health centers.
- Developments in transportation.
- Developments in operational budget and increase in gross production and increase in developments budget by the foreign support.
- Formation of private and public banks.
- Progress in development projects, and developments in creation of electricity dams.
- The total foreign aid to Afghanistan from 2001- 2014 reached \$104 billion.
- For better governance, security and poverty reduction, a conference was held in London (focused on the Afghanistan National Development Strategy) with the participation of 70 countries, and demonstrated their commitment to Afghanistan in all sectors includes self-sufficiency of Afghan National army, Afghan National police forces and National Directorate for Security.
- The 2002 Tokyo conference, 2004 Berlin conference, 2006 Paris Conference, 2008 London conference in 2008, 2010 Kabul and London conferences, and 2012 Bonn and Chicago conferences were all held to support economic aid for Afghanistan.
- The signing of a U.S.-Afghanistan bilateral agreement with US for long term support in 2005, and declarations in 2008 and 2009 by the Afghan foreign ministry and US secretary of state.
- The signing a U.S.-Afghanistan bilateral agreement for long term support in the educational sector, and the training and strengthening of the security sector until 2025.
- The signing of 12 different international conventions and accession of Afghanistan into nine international conventions.
- Afghanistan currently has unilateral and bilateral relations with 88 countries of the world.
- Afghanistan has membership in regional economic organizations, SARC, UNESCO, EICO, World Bank, Asian Bank, ICB and others.
- The formation of the women affairs ministry.
- Developments in CSOs activities and the creation of political and social institutions.

- The creation and ratification of the law of elimination of violence against women.
- The ratification of regulation on prohibiting women harassment.
- The ratification of resolution (1325) for women rights and their support.
- The National Democratic Institute's (NDI) role in cohesion of political parties and support for the provincial council and parliamentary elections candidates.
- The growth of democracy in Afghanistan.
- Women's growth in commerce, politics, social and economic sectors.

Recommendations:

- Comprehensive support on better governance and security, the reduction of poverty and unemployment, and joint cooperation with the international community, United Nations and the U.S. on eliminating corruption.
- Comprehensive support on maintaining security, political stability and preventing neighbors from interfering in the Internal Issues of Afghanistan.
- Support in the educational sector and higher education all over the country.
- Strengthening civil society institutions, and supporting political parties as an important element of democracy.
- Comprehensive support in eliminating international terrorism, Al-qaida and Daesh as phenomena of violence for the whole world.
- Comprehensive support on eliminating the cultivation and trafficking of drugs.
- Maintaining the current achievements in Afghanistan in the areas of peace, political stability, citizen's immunity, the prevention of foreign interference in internal matters of Afghanistan, and the creation of joint understanding regionally and internationally.
- Comprehensive efforts of the international community, the United Nations, and especially USA to stop Pakistan's interference in internal affairs of Afghanistan, and common efforts in fighting terrorists and Daesh who are operating violence against the people of Afghanistan from across the border.

[This statement was submitted by Adelah Bahram Nizami, Elected chief of the Republican Party and Civil Society Senior Advisor to the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. JUNAIDI SAG MH ACEH ELECTION COMMISSIONER,
INDONESIA

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy, and subcommittee members, thank you for granting me the opportunity to submit testimony for this important hearing. I am elected as Aceh Election Commissioner from 2013–2018. Unlike past elections, the 2017 election was not marred by violence and was credible, peaceful and transparent. The success of this election will further stabilize and consolidate democracy in Aceh, positively contributing to the stability of Indonesia at-large.

Leading up to the election, domestic and international observers were worried about large-scale outbreaks of violence. Aceh had a history of violence during past elections, particularly during local elections in 2006 and 2012, when as a candidate experienced electoral violence first-hand. The violence undermined efforts to build a credible democracy in Aceh, which led to larger concerns about instability in a region of Indonesia that was in a state of conflict with the central government for over than 30 years until the signing of the 2005 Helsinki Agreement.

One of the reasons this election took place peacefully was that candidates contesting the election deployed party agent observers to monitor polling stations on Election Day. This was a large undertaking from all candidates to minimize violence and ensure a fair electoral process. On Election Day, candidates deployed party agents to all of Aceh's nearly 9,400 polling stations. These observers served as a strong deterrence to those who wished to disrupt and delegitimize the election.

In total candidates deployed over 70,000 party agents to observe polling stations. While each candidate opposed each other on the ballot, each worked together on this endeavor because all believed it was important to create an environment on Election Day where voters could cast their ballots without fearing for their safety, and where all candidates contesting the election could feel confident that they were taking part in a credible and fair process.

This massive party agent election observation effort would not have been possible without the support of the International Republican Institute (IRI). All candidates worked with IRI under a grant provided by the U.S. Department of State to train over 2,500 party agent trainers, who subsequently went on to train thousands more. IRI played a vital role in not only teaching party agents how to perform their duties

on Election Day, but also in convening opposing campaigns in a manner that built trust and enabled us to work together to ensure a peaceful and stable electoral environment.

Without support from IRI and the Department of State, the number of party agents present at polling stations would have been much lower, reducing their collective ability to serve as a deterrent to electoral violence. An outbreak of violence would have called the credibility of the election into question, potentially destabilized Aceh, with troubling ramifications for greater Indonesia, the Southeast Asia region and beyond.

The support provided by IRI and the Department of State not only had a positive impact on this election, but will have a lasting impact as Indonesia moves toward national elections in 2019. These elections will be an important indicator of the status of democracy and stability in Indonesia, and continued investment from international donors will keep Indonesia moving in the right direction.

Mr. Chairman, Aceh has come a long way since the signing of the Helsinki Accords and the 2006 election. I am proud to have worked with IRI to promote stability in Aceh, and hope there will continue to be opportunities to do so in the future. Thank you again for granting me the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SILAKA

Since its founding in 1993, SILAKA has committed itself to the cause of Cambodian democracy. We believe equitable economic development, environmental protections, and social justice can only come from a free and fair democratic system. This vision of democracy has often been clouded by the heavy restrictions on the opposition and civil society in Cambodia, but we have yet to lose sight of our goal. This may not have been the case if it were not for the reliable commitment and support of the United States.

The United States has partnered with SILAKA from its very first days to build the capacity of Cambodian individuals and organizations to advocate for change. USAID support, provided through NDI, has allowed us to prepare agents of the two major parties to train committed and talented women candidates for the upcoming commune council election. The outcomes of the project go far beyond the critically important goal of electing women to local office. Our trainings for officials on both sides strengthen the ability of their parties to communicate their policy position to voters.

To me, however, the most significant achievement of the program is the bipartisan collaboration fostered between incumbent and opposition leadership, from curriculum development to training day. U.S. assistance has allowed us to develop this example of bipartisan, solution-oriented democracy, with the hope of its spread throughout the country.

Ensuring that the voice of every Cambodian is heard in government is essential to the development of our country. U.S. assistance through NDI has not only supported our advocacy for democracy; it has supported our advocacy on behalf of the marginalized. Women and youth have an unprecedented chance at greater representation in the upcoming election. This representation is critically important in a country as young as Cambodia. Continued U.S. support, putting our shared values to action, can help realize the just, equitable democracy we envision.

[This statement was submitted by Thida Khus, Executive Director, SILAKA, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOSÉ ULISSES CORREIA E SILVA
 REPUBLICA DE CABO VERDE
 PRIMEIRO-MINISTRO

Praia, 28th April, 2017.

Mr. KEN WOLLACK, *President,
 National Democratic Institute (NDI),
 455 Massachusetts Ave, NW,
 Washington, DC 20001.*

Excellency,

I am writing to you today to demonstrate my support for and appreciation of the importance of assistance to democratic development in Africa, particularly in Cabo Verde, by the National Democratic Institute.

Cabo Verde is recognized as one of Africa's success stories in promoting democracy and I believe this was only possible with the help from organizations like NDI. In recent years, Cabo Verde-NDI relations have reached extraordinary levels and, through NDI, Cabo Verde has been able to share and export its knowledge of democratic development to other countries in the region and the world.

Cabo Verde was a one-party state until democracy was introduced in 1991 when, for the first time, a multi-party election was organized. The democratic system in Cabo Verde is now recognized as successful and stable. With a democratic system in place, Cape Verde introduced major economic, political and social reforms leading to an increase and diversification in the country's trade and commercial development with other countries.

In the most recent parliamentary elections held March 20, 2016, I was elected Prime Minister ending 15 years of PAICV-ruled government. When I took office, I announced the following priorities: economic expansion and job growth; poverty reduction; infrastructure and business environment enhancements; expanded foreign direct investment (FDI); crime reduction measures; government transparency; accountability; and national security with a focus on combating drug trafficking.

With the return to power by my MPD party after 15 years in opposition, it was very important to collaborate with institutions such as NDI to assist with the transition of power. NDI support was vital to insure that the transition was accomplished in a peaceful and effective manner. As a result, Cabo Verde strengthened its reputation as a model of democratic governance. Now with the help of NDI, we have been able to share our experiences through a regional conference on Democracy Transfer hosted in Praia, Cabo Verde and, most recently, with a mission led by our Cabo Verde Ambassador in Washington, DC to Gambia for an assessment trip to assist the Gambian new administration in the transition of its own authority.

Such collaboration between Cabo Verde and NDI is an outstanding example to show that the democratic system can work. In today's world, I know that many people still doubt in the effectiveness of democracy but our experience in Cabo Verde proves the opposite. With NDI's support, Cabo Verde can take a leading role in demonstrating that despite challenges, democracy works and we can do this by sharing our knowledge and experience in our region and beyond.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KRZYSZTOF STANOWSKI, FORMER DIRECTOR, POLISH FUND
 FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

In the 1980s NED brings hope and provide assistance to democracy activists and human rights defenders in Eastern Europe. In the 1990s by supporting cross-border programs, NED has played a crucial role in establishing relations between civil society and independent media leaders from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Finally, NED encouraged us and support to provide solidarity with partners from Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Mongolia. Establishing World Movement for Democracy provide a unique platform to exchange experiences with partners from other regions.

NED was important as a model in debate on supporting democracy on behalf of the EU. During Polish Presidency of EU Council European Endowment for Democracy was established to promote the European values of freedom and democracy and assist pro-democratic civil society organizations, movements and individual activists in the EU Neighbourhood. In the same year, Poland established Solidarity Fund PL—Polish democracy support agency.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF IONUT STROE, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF ROMANIA

IRI's partnership with the National Liberal Party (PNL) and lately with Save Romania Union (USR) political parties has been one of the most challenging but at the same time rewarding experiences I have had as a politician in my country. In the context of a very turbulent political situation in Romania over the past few years, the journey we, Romanian politicians, are going through is as compelling as it is challenging—and organizations such as IRI have been key in helping us reform ourselves to adapt to this changing situation. Looking at the details of my personal experience, the relationship between IRI and my party, the (PNL) has two important aspects: party work and political training, and also the need to address transparency as one of the most important lines in political behavior.

Political Work: Together with IRI, PNL has been working hard to try and understand current political and sociological evolutions in my country and a new consensus that is not so dissimilar to the United States. With help from IRI, we have been fed with ideas on how to adapt to new trends and to act as a stabilizing force in Romanian politics—with the idea to help convince politicians to force their structures to modernize and open up to the new society emerging from the ashes of the financial, economic and social crisis of the past decade. Such assistance includes one-on-one meetings with leadership and key political actors of PNL, trainings with campaign specialists for PNL candidates in the last legislative elections, and participation of the PNL leadership in IRI's democracy summits over the past 2 years, including a general summit with all players to agree on the causes of the current democratic distress (and consequent vulnerability to Russian influence) on our continent, and the other one this year dedicated to maximize our opposition work in a constructive, constitutional and positive way for our nation. Together, we have identified plenty of debate points and issues we need to address as a result of our meetings—in this sense, IRI has helped us move forward in a way no other organization could have. For instance, one of the main concerns in our discussion was the need to find solutions in order to achieve political stability facing extremist threats, or the radicalization of public or political speeches. Moreover, we have established that one way of fighting against these types of political behavior could be only by implementing transparency in political decisionmaking so that extremist forces can be stopped from getting more power.

Without encroaching on our own sovereignty, organizations such as IRI encourage a debate held among us as Romanian MPs and decision makers within PNL that is both healthy and in the end very comforting because we understand that, disregarding a certain state of disappointment from public opinion and provided we do what we believe is the right job, we can counter real extremist parties that want to harm our quest for freedom, and can find solutions to counter or re-center politicians that tend to radicalize their public outlook taking advantage of the social situation.

Transparency: With regard to transparency, Romania has a firm legislative background, but needs political will to tackle the issue, and organizations like IRI help us strengthen the latter, a quite unique skill I have to say. In Romania there is a tendency of governing through emergency ordinance. Our relationship with IRI helps us re-think our action so that we can be more connected with good practices and cement our integration into the western world through a trustful, fruitful bilateral relationship.

IRI has been pushing hard with the help of politicians and partners across Romania for a healthy debate on transparency that would include all actors, may it be government, party politicians (something that is very often absent in the Romanian public debate) and civil society, in order to push for a consensus for more transparent practices in the public sphere. Such efforts include a multiparty Romanian Transparency conference organized in September 2016, as well as exchanges with politicians from the Dacian Cioloș government in 2016 and party politicians, notably from PNL and USR, on the how to constructively push for more transparency reforms in Romania.

Unfortunately, in U.S.A., Romania is often associated with images of poverty and corruption. And although these two images are clichés that do not necessarily reflect reality. What is less known is that there is a drive from parties such as PNL to tackle poverty and corruption, and in some cases we have shown great success in improving transparency. Thanks to the IRI-organized roundtable in Romania, in partnership with some NGO's and the political partners, we were able, in a politically neutral context, to remind ourselves of the good work done, but also of the challenges ahead.

We have received a lot of good feedback from our partners, speakers and participants who took part in our common activity and expressed surprise at seeing impor-

tant personalities actually publically talking to each other—one of them even mentioned the “tour de force” of having all parties represented in a roundtable only 3 months before legislative elections, discussing their respective roles in making Romania more transparent in a co-operative mode.

All political actors in Romania agreed to the formation of a technocratic government that has done much to promote more transparency in the administration and beyond. This was partly due to the unique position of an apolitical government comprised of technocrats, CSO representatives, and party politicians being united to reinsert trust in the political system, which is exactly the kind of political work that IRI, through their politically-savvy but yet cross-party approach, encourage. Unfortunately, as recent legislative elections and their aftermath have shown, the political game and its traditional divisions have re-emerged, putting further progress on anti-corruption on the backburner, and we need more than ever the discrete, though extremely helpful and constructive facilitation that organizations like IRI provide.

IRI’s work to promote transparency, epitomized in the conference on “transparency and integrity in the Romanian public sphere,” is a step forward not only because it puts all the relevant actors together for dialogue, but also because it pushes them to talk and listen to one another without devolving into the all-too-common habit of trying to point fingers at each other. Without encroaching upon our sovereign rights as MPs and political actors of our country, IRI thereby pushes us to go forward with reforms and make our system more transparent, and more business friendly. I believe this is good for our own business, because it makes it more attractive to foreign investment, but it is also good for American business, because it makes us all more alike, and our common business more predictable.

Young Politicians: One of the most compelling themes in our discussions with IRI is to empower young and emerging politicians. IRI representatives have been a real force in supporting youth to enter in politics and to take more political responsibility. In PNL there is a rejuvenation process, with a lot of young, refreshing people who went through IRI’s trainings and activities and were elected as MPs in the December 2016 elections, who help us in our re-questioning of ourselves, and I believe will be the key to our adapting to the emerging new world. IRI is training youth who are politically conscious, politically active, but the problem encountered in Romania is that youth in general is much more cynical than it used to be. There is less political participation in general, and much more cynicism about politics in general than there used to be—if nothing is done, I fear that this cynicism we inherited from Communism will prevail again, pushing Romania in new dark ages. After almost 30 years since the fall of the Ceaușescu regime, I guess we can try to sort this problem on our own—and I still think ultimately we will prevail. But having the support and help from our American friends to continue in the path that I believe is positive for each of us would be even better.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION FOR AFGHANISTAN CIVIL SOCIETY

DEAR SENATOR GRAHAM: My name is Khalil Parsa; I survived an assassination attempt last September because of my efforts combatting corruption in Afghanistan. I lead a nonprofit organization, Supporting Organization for Afghanistan Civil Society (SOACS), promoting good governance in Herat province, West Afghanistan. I am deeply honored and looking forward to receive the NED’s Democracy Award on June 7. Currently I am a Reagan Fascell Democracy fellow at NED.

On behalf of my community and colleagues at SOACS, I thank you for your strong support to the NED, which backed our campaign for transparency and accountability of local governments in my hometown of Herat, where citizens can directly call and report corruption. Our campaign made local officials responsive and mindful of SOACS as a civic watchdog. Recently, SOACS received a written complaint about a powerful official, the Chairman of Herat Provincial Council, who was involved in bribes and drug trade. We referred his case to our Rule of Law Committee chaired by the governor of Herat who informed local security officials and officials in Kabul accordingly. The case became public and led to the imprisonment of the said official. Such corrupt officials who cover up for criminal networks threaten our freedom. I was gunned down on September 24, 2016 by two masked gunmen on a motorbike and had seven bullets. I survived miraculously. The attempt on my life will not stop our fight. We will continue our efforts and ask for yours and NED’s continued assistance in promoting good governance and accountability in Afghanistan.

Allow me to share a few details on how we combat corruption. We maintain a grassroots advocacy campaign, encouraging public participation, including peti-

tioning. NED was the first to recognize and support our campaign. With NED support, we launched a hotline for citizens to report on bribes and other forms of corruption, installed complaint boxes on main neighborhoods where citizens safely report incidents of corruption and fraud. We trained our own investigators and representatives from 30 other civil society groups and launched committees to review and verify allegations of corruption. We also built bridges with state and government bodies and advocated for redress and necessary reforms.

We know that combatting corruption in Afghanistan is an uphill struggle. Surely, with persistence and increased awareness we will triumph. Today, we collaborate with local media, radio and TV, we have banners and billboards throughout Herat on citizens' rights, and we receive and follow up on hundreds of complaints, reporting bribes. One good story is that of Gholam Hossein. He is a local farmer who reached out to us asking for help on a land dispute issue where a judge asked him to pay a large bribe. He refused. SOACS investigated his claim, found it credible, and referred his case to our rule of law committee, on which a prominent judge and police chief sit. The committee verified the facts filed charges, and the police chief arrested the corrupt judge. This and many other cases testify to the effectiveness of our footprint in combating corruption in my hometown. We would have not been able to do any of this work had it not been for the NED's continued support.

I want you to know that NED's assistance is a lifeline for civil society groups like us that raise awareness on good governance and on daily basis fight the rampant corruption, which is a lethal threat to Afghanistan's security and political stability.

Thank you,

KHALIL PARSA,
Executive Director.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TOUNISSIET

Since the 2011 revolution in Tunisia, local civil society has played a key role in the development of democracy and democratic institutions. One such organization is our association Tounissiet, founded in 2011 on the eve of the revolution, and focuses on advocating women's rights and gender equality. Our association received its grant from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which has allowed us to develop institutionally by acquiring permanent headquarters and staff, solidifying our vision, and opening additional new branches in Gabès, Bousalem, and Beni Kheir.

Since then, additional support from NED has enabled our association to rapidly expand its scope and activities that include:

- Establishing robust partnerships with international organizations such as the United Nations Women's Fund, the International Center for Transitional Justice, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Fund, and the Carter Center for Democracy and the Center for Reports.
- Capacity building for partner associations in multiple regions of Tunisia on national issues related to women.
- Attracting additional international donors.
- Participating in hearing sessions with local councils on laws pertaining to women and women's rights, including draft laws aiming to eradicate violence against women and create gender equality in inheritance.
- Publishing a 50-page report on the views and recommendations of our Association and its proposals on the anti-violence draft law to the parliament.
- Contributing to the discussions and activities of constitutional bodies, including the Truth and Dignity Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission.

NED funding has allowed our association to develop into a sophisticated NGO that is a force in local Tunisian issues and positioned well to be reactive to social shifts within Tunisian society. Without NED funding, our association would be forced to considerably shrink the scope of its activities, which would hurt the quality of its programs and its impact on democratic consolidation in Tunisia.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL, CAMBODIA (TI-C)

The United States has been a crucial ally to democratic actors in Cambodia since the early 1990s. By connecting Cambodian civil society organizations with internationally-acclaimed expertise, United States support has helped Cambodia navigate a tense post-conflict period to an institutional framework suited for democracy

and in support of the implementation of the democratic roadmap stipulated in the 1991 Paris Peace Accords signed by all Cambodian leaders and factions.

Our democracy, however, has yet to be consolidated. An increasingly restrictive space for opposition politics and civil society activities has threatened the momentum behind emerging civic values in our country. This is where U.S. assistance becomes crucial: U.S. support for voter education has prepared the next generation for political leadership in our multi-party system. Civic engagement programs have equipped women candidates with the skills necessary for elected leadership, while youth activist trainings have imparted the critical value of government accountability. The democratic mindset adopted by Cambodian youth is in part owed to the U.S. commitment to representative government, a commitment we are proud to share.

Transparency International Cambodia, the organization I lead, has partnered with U.S. organizations to take our shared commitment to democracy from theory to practice in the observation of Cambodia's upcoming elections. U.S. material and technical assistance has prepared hundreds of observers, mostly youth, to monitor polling stations in both 2017's local election and the crucial 2018 national poll. In the previous cycle, the evidence of irregularities uncovered by U.S.-supported observation efforts empowered civil society to successfully lobby for electoral reform. If similar irregularities occur in the current electoral cycle, we'll be there to report them, thanks to continuing U.S. assistance for organizations with shared values overseas.

Cambodia may be on the verge of a monumental transition in its history. The opportunity presented by the upcoming elections is rare chance for our country to become the democratic example of Southeast Asia. Since Cambodian advocacy began, U.S. assistance has been multi-faceted, wide-reaching, and crucially important to the realization of Cambodian democracy. It will only become more so in the aftermath of our elections, regardless of their result.

We strongly appeal to the American people and her Government to continue supporting Cambodia in this noble democratic path until key pillars and foundation for democracy and good governance are built and are irreversible.

[This statement was submitted by Kol Preap, Executive Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAVID USUPASHVILI, SPEAKER OF THE
PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA FROM 2012–2016

It is no doubt rare for representatives of any U.S. assistance recipient country to say that “we no longer need your financial and technical support, because you have many other domestic needs and we can find support elsewhere.” Initially I feared that my statement could be almost meaningless for the distinguished Senators. However, when I looked to the issue from the other angle, as a representative of a strategic partner of the United States, I realized that I had a duty to write.

I strongly believe that the world can become better for everybody only if the U.S. continues its leadership in promoting democracy, peace and prosperity around the globe. This leadership is at its most effective when less democratic, less peaceful and less prosperous nations, who are truly applying their own resources to the same tasks, are treated as long term partners. The demonstrated successes of such countries can better initiate increased demand for change in other closed and non-democratic societies than anything else.

From my practical experience of more than 20 years, the work of IRI and NDI in Georgia is not just about providing needed assistance, but also about building and strengthening the strategic partnership between our countries. This model of mutually beneficial, well established partnership, has become possible due to two decades of hard work from both sides. This must be protected, promoted and shared. When NDI opened its first office in Tbilisi in the early 1990s, I was among the Georgians who were assisting them, personally teaching the Americans how to turn on handmade heaters and power generators in their offices and apartments, which in those days did not have electricity, gas or water supply.

That early team was later joined by the current President of Georgia, Giorgi Margvelashvili. The changes in my country since then—not only in utility services, but also good governance, rule of law, media freedom, civil society, multiparty democracy, judicial independence, parliamentary openness, and self-governance—would not have been possible without the help of our American friends and advisors. This fact is well recognized across the political spectrum and, most importantly, by the ordinary people.

Georgia was lucky to have extraordinary people serving in both IRI and NDI offices for years. We never felt that they were foreigners looking to fulfill contractual

obligations. The impression was and is that they are de-facto citizens of Georgia, caring about it, being proud of its success, and feeling its pain in difficult moments. For this reason, our government and people have metaphorically “nationalized” IRI and NDI (along with a few others), as we feel that they are as much “ours” as they are “yours”. Their presence is much greater than their projects.

If they are closed or their presence visibly reduced, I believe Russia will interpret it in only one way—as a green light for expanding its “backyard.” This will also be a dangerous signal to the segment of society, who hear Russian propaganda and long for the Soviet past, causing them to question Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic orientation. Let me be less diplomatic and share the public comment of one popular Georgian politician following U.S. Ambassador Ian Kelly’s remarks on the importance of independent media: “Can anybody explain to this guy that things have changed? Did not he hear about the policy of his own new president about restraining from involvement of other countries domestic affairs?”

This is how certain things are understood and interpreted these days. The battle between the light and dark is taking on new dimensions in post-soviet countries, and the U.S. should be thinking about increasing engagement and cooperation with countries like Georgia. This is the same message of today’s events in Tbilisi. As the countries of the Former Soviet Union celebrate Victory Day over Nazi Germany, Georgia is also privileged to also celebrate the 25th anniversary of the U.S.-Georgia strategic partnership, with the attendance of the President and Prime Minister of Georgia and four former U.S. Ambassadors to Georgia.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ABHISIT VEJJAJIVA, FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF THAILAND

Throughout the years, the NDI has been involved in capacity building work for politicians and staff in a number of areas, notably women and youth issues, as well as engagement with local communities. They have done this in partnership with political parties, foundations, academics and non-governmental organizations.

Such work has contributed significantly to the development of democracy in Thailand. By broadening the experience of political stakeholders in a tangible manner, not only does the work of the NDI strengthen the soft infrastructure for a maturing democracy, but also adds another dimension to the U.S.—Thai relations at the people-to-people level.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE YOUTH FOR YOUTH ASSOCIATION

WITH NED SUPPORT, HOPE IS POSSIBLE!

Through collaboration with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), our association Youth for Youth Association (AJJ) has strengthened its position as one of the emerging initiatives of democratic youth movement that aspires to build a Morocco that is accommodating to all, entrench democratic reform, and be reactive and vigilant to any backsliding to democracy in the country.

Through NED support, we were able to contribute to the constitutional reforms by submitting recommendations to the committee tasked with drafting the 2011 constitution. In addition to this, NED-funding allowed us to achieve the following:

- Cement our organization’s national role as one of the national leaders for the youth movement that promotes democratic values and advocates political reform in Morocco.
- Maintain our ongoing transformation into a national level organization that works on initiatives to improve youth political participation and giving them a role in influencing public policy process in Morocco.
- Develop the “Tamkeen-Empowerment” program as an initiative that enabled youth to track and evaluate policies specific to their issues and participate side by side with government representatives in drafting the National Integrated Youth Strategy 2015–2030.
- Play a critical role in advocating youth rights through the establishment of a coalition of 150 non-governmental youth organizations.

In addition to this, NED funding has allowed our association to grow institutionally and develop strategic partnerships with various organizations and donors. Case in point is the partnership with the World Bank and the Ministry of Youth and Sport, to lead a socio-economic empowerment program that targeted over 400 vulnerable and marginalized youth.

NED support also provided us credibility and visibility that offered our association an opportunity to receive recognition from international organizations, including the

Mediterranean Youth Network of UNESCO, and the Education and Youth Sector of the Council of Europe to list just few.

Through NED-funded “Eye on the budget” project, our association developed a model for a participatory process for youth inclusion in the municipal budget planning in the city of Larache in the North of Morocco. This project has helped create bridges of dialogue for youth to participate and advocate good governance practices, keep up with institutional changes, and participate in local decisionmaking process.

While our association is a capable organization, NED support has made a significant difference in allowing us to lead effective initiatives, professionalize our work, and leverage partnerships. Without NED initial support, our association could not have become a prominent actor in promoting democratic ideas, advocating good governance and accountability, and influencing the public policy process.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR ADVOCACY, GROWTH & ADVANCEMENT (YIAGA)—NIGERIA

With any iota of doubt, NED is the most youth friendly and supportive organization we have worked since YIAGA was established in 2007. Our first grant was given to us by NED to mobilize youth voices for electoral reforms and active citizenship. The foundation of YIAGA is strongly built on NED's support. Today YIAGA has grown as one of the most respected civil society organizations promoting democracy in Nigeria. Beyond promoting institutional reform through the provision of technical assistance, NED's support also contributed to peaceful democratic transition in Nigeria. NED's grant to YIAGA has been and will continue to be grant with the highest level of impact. NED's consistency is phenomenal and the technical support provided alongside the provision of funds is remarkable.

NED's support has contributed to building a movement of active citizens demanding accountability at the state and national level. One significant difference is the area of raising citizens awareness on democratic principles and mobilizing them to take action in defense of democracy. This enhanced the competitive nature of politics in Nigeria as citizens demands has kept public leaders and politicians on their toes.

NED's support has transformed the capacity of local groups to engage in democratic processes. YIAGA technical capacity has been enhanced leading to organizational growth and development. YIAGA engages in high level policy engagement with state institutions. The current Nigerian Youth Policy has been reviewed with inputs from NED support engagements. NED's supported Youth Organizing School laid the foundation for the evolution of the Not Too Young To Run global movement.

NED's support has promoted solidarity amongst civic actors and cross boarder collaboration. This has improved the quality of democracy in Nigeria and other countries within the region where YIAGA is currently working. The opportunities created by NED's support for peer learning and experience sharing has made a huge difference. Beyond expanding our horizon and scope of impact it has led to the evolution of a youth movement, African Movement for Democracy.

Without NED, YIAGA won't be existing today and the leadership role we are playing wouldn't have been possible. At a time where there was no support for youth organizations or startups, NED rose to the occasion to provide support thereby closing that huge gap. We would have lost faith in democracy but for NED's support which gives us hope that we can change our society. There would have been no Not Too Young To Run movement today or the Young Legislators Forum in the national parliament if NED's support was not provided to YIAGA at the material time the support was received.

[This statement was submitted by Samson Itodo, Head of Research, Policy and Advocacy.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. LEYLA YUNAS IN SUPPORT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN AZERBAIJAN

PRESERVES HOPE FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

I began my human rights work in the Soviet Union as a member of the underground movement “National Minorities Enslaved by the Bolsheviks” and in the 1980s became a correspondent for the first human rights *samizdat* newspaper *Ekspress-Khronika*. I also became one of the founders of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan and one of authors of the party's program which sought to establish an independent and democratic Azerbaijan. I have been compiling lists of political prisoners in Azerbaijan since 1988 and in 1995 I founded the Institute for Peace and Democ-

racy (IPD), the most prominent and respected independent human rights organization in Azerbaijan. I have conducted numerous studies and reports about conditions in Azerbaijan—including reports about political prisoners, illegal seizures of property, human trafficking, and corruption and abuses by top government officials. In the summer of 2014 in retaliation for this lifetime of human rights activism, I was arrested along with my husband Arif Yunus on false charges of state treason. We spent nearly 2 years in prison and were released thanks only to persistent international pressure. Currently, we are continuing the IPD's work from the Netherlands.

Looking back at the many years of work and all the different programs that we have undertaken, NED stands out as a reliable, knowledgeable, and flexible partner that seeks to accommodate the needs of civil society in authoritarian settings. As Azerbaijan and other states throughout Eurasia become even more repressive, the civil society requires even greater American support and solidarity. Over the last decade, the problems in our region have multiplied but the funding from foreign donors has declined. To respond adequately to the growing challenges, the U.S. Congress should not only sustain but expand the work of NED and other U.S. funded programs to support civil society in Azerbaijan and other authoritarian countries.

With support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), IPD has undertaken a variety of human rights programs as well as important research projects. Azerbaijani citizens approached our independent organization for help defending their rights, including their property rights. We conducted research into crimes and corruption within a variety of ministries, and the government's illegal seizure of the property of over 100,000 Baku residents. Even before September 11, 2001, IPD began researching the rise of Islam in Azerbaijan. From 2004 to 2013, IPD published three books, which explored in detail the rise of Shia Islam, with the financial support of Iran as well as the growth of Arab and Turkish forms of Sunni Islam in Azerbaijan. By working with religious communities and promoting tolerance among confessions, civil society promotes peace and stability and counteracts the spread of extremism.

In authoritarian countries like Azerbaijan, where there is no separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, where election results are falsified and the courts lack independence—civil society are the only truly independent actors. In authoritarian settings NGOs and media organizations must rely on foreign assistance from U.S. and European donors. By avoiding financial dependence on Azerbaijan's mafia-like and clan-based political authorities, NGOs are the only institutions that protect the population from abuses, which can serve the public good, and provide examples of ethical, democratic behavior. NGOs are incubators of democratic norms and processes in authoritarian settings.

If permitted to flourish, with both diplomatic and material support from U.S. and Europe, civil society holds out hope for a better more stable and free future for everyone.

Sincerely,

DR. LEYLA YUNUS,
 Director of Institute for Peace and Democracy
 Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor
 Winner of International Theodore Hacker Award
 Winner of Polish Sergio Vieira de Mello Award
 Winner of Battle of Crete Award
 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought of the European Parliament Finalist

OUTSIDE WITNESS TESTIMONY SUBMITTED SUBSEQUENT TO THE HEARING

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

DEMOCRACY PAYS DIVIDENDS

CIPE DEMOCRACY SUPPORT PROGRAMS CREATE JOBS AND REDUCE CORRUPTION

CIPE has more than 100 projects in over 50 countries that are impacting democratic and economic development in some of the world's most challenging regions. CIPE's projects ensure that business people are active participants in the democratic process through their engagement with local and national governments. These programs have had a significant impact on local communities by providing economic opportunities and thereby enhancing the quality of life throughout the society.

- In Afghanistan, CIPE and the local Afghan business community developed an initiative that is helping spur economic growth and create jobs in the provincial areas of the country particularly hard hit by the reduction in international development spending. Public-private dialogue between the local business community and provincial governments is a key element in the democratic process and essential for building economic growth. Recent impacts of this dialogue include Afghan Government investment in an industrial park in Kandahar that is expected to provide 3,900 jobs. Entrepreneurship in the province has also been boosted through the issue of 960 new licenses to shopkeepers. In Nangarhar province, increased access to land, electricity and security at an industrial park has enabled 23 factories to open, creating over 2,500 new jobs. These are locally-driven reforms that are the result of CIPE-supported advocacy by the local business community.
- In recent years, women-owned businesses have driven women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh. CIPE has worked with the Bangladesh Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry on an initiative to increase access to credit by women entrepreneurs. Through engaging businesswomen in policy development and advocacy, the program ensures women are a key part of the democratic process. As a result of the program, \$93 million in loans to small and medium enterprises have been provided to almost 10,000 women, helping create tens of thousands of new jobs. Overall, the proportion of women entrepreneurs in the country receiving commercial bank loans has increased from 19 percent in 2007 to over 50 percent today. More than 65 percent of the country's banks now have dedicated desks for female borrowers, staffed with personnel trained to cater to businesswomen's needs.
- Endemic corruption is undermining democracy in Cambodia. A CIPE program is tackling corruption at the provincial level by training local citizens in public procurement monitoring. The program has assembled a coalition of local non-profits, businesses, and village leaders to function as an anti-corruption watchdog. The group monitors public procurement and publicizes its findings. The project has improved transparency and government accountability, and increased citizen engagement with public policy as evidenced by increased attendance at public dialogues. The more competitive tender process has also resulted in an average 50 percent reduction in the cost of contracts, greatly increasing the amount of projects and services that can be provided by local governments. This program is now being replicated and extended to other communities in Cambodia.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 9, 2017.

Hon. LINDSEY GRAHAM, *Chairman,*
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Oper-
ations, and Related Programs,
Committee on Appropriations,
United States Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY, *Ranking Member,*
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Oper-
ations, and Related Programs,
Committee on Appropriations,
United States Senate,
Washington, DC 20510.

CHAIRMAN GRAHAM AND RANKING MEMBER LEAHY:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports the continued funding for democracy programming by the Federal Government through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), of which the Chamber's non-profit affiliate, the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), is a core institute, and appreciates the Subcommittee holding today's hearing.

U.S. foreign assistance programs in support of democracy, rights, and governance abroad provide technical assistance to partners in developing countries, helping them build stronger political, economic, and legal policy regimes. At a time when export opportunities represent such critical growth potential to the U.S. economy and domestic job creation, these programs are a valuable contribution to creating competitive markets for American businesses throughout the world.

The work of the NED and its four core institutes is an essential element of American soft power, as these organizations help our friends build stable and peaceful democracies, often in extremely complex or repressive environments. Consequently, the NED enjoys widespread support from the U.S. business community because it is a cost effective investment that advances national security and economic interests. This, in turn, enables an organization, such as CIPE, to assist the business community in emerging market countries to advocate effectively for the economic reforms that are necessary to improve their own commercial and social environment.

As detailed in the attachment, the Endowment is especially important because it funds programs in countries that Federal Government agencies often cannot effectively reach. In fully funding NED, the United States supports an important institution that advances America's fundamental values and interests.

Thank you again for holding today's hearing highlighting the importance of democracy programs in advancing U.S. interests abroad.

Sincerely,

NEIL L. BRADLEY,
Senior Vice President & Chief Policy Officer.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

As Chairman of the Board of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), a former Ohio Secretary of State responsible for election administration, and a former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, I respectfully urge this subcommittee and the U.S. Congress to continue its tradition of bipartisan support for democracy, rights and governance (DRG). Relatively small, strategic investments in electoral assistance will continue to contribute to a more prosperous, secure America.

To support the DRG sector, we ask that in fiscal year 2018, Congress provide \$2,308,517,000 for democracy programs under Title VII General Provisions, including "shall" language that protects DRG funding from reprogramming to other sectors, and \$210,500,000 for the Democracy Fund under Title III Bilateral Economic Assistance.

ABOUT IFES: "A VOTE FOR EVERY VOICE"

For 30 years, IFES—a 501(c)3 nonpartisan nonprofit—has worked in over 145 countries to support citizens' right to participate in free and fair elections. Credible elections are the cornerstone of a healthy democracy and enable all persons to exer-

cise their basic human right to have a say in how they are governed.¹ In many emerging democracies, a transparent and accurate election is the best evidence to citizens that their government can fairly deliver a public service to the entire nation.

Currently, IFES works in nearly 30 countries to build capacity and strengthen democratic processes across the electoral cycle. International norms and best practices inform our programming, and our work with both state and non-state actors enhances trust between citizens and government officials, supports the power of citizens to democratically sanction or remove government officials for unsatisfactory performance, and promotes systems and processes that provide the purest expression of citizen will.

IFES' core service lines include the long-term capacity building of election commissions; the broadening of citizen participation and inclusion; the empowerment of marginalized groups; and research and surveys that inform our work and further the DRG discipline. IFES achieves its goals by providing targeted technical assistance to local partners on electoral frameworks; election dispute resolution; fraud and malpractice mitigation; political finance regulation; civic and voter education; leadership and advocacy; electoral security; the constructive relationship between the media and electoral stakeholders; innovative technology; and codes of conduct that support professionalism and high standards of ethical behavior.

In 2016 alone, IFES trained 5,791 election offices; reached over 7,000,000 individuals through voter and civic education; produced 244 electoral recommendations through collaboration and advice; and trained 4,402 stakeholders on electoral and political processes.

ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE: A LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT COMMITMENT

No team makes it to a championship without hard work in the pre- and regular seasons, as well as some intense post-season analysis and rebuilding. Similarly, although Election Day may be the "Super Bowl" of the electoral cycle (see Figure 1), it is simply one event in a long process.

¹ Article 21, *The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

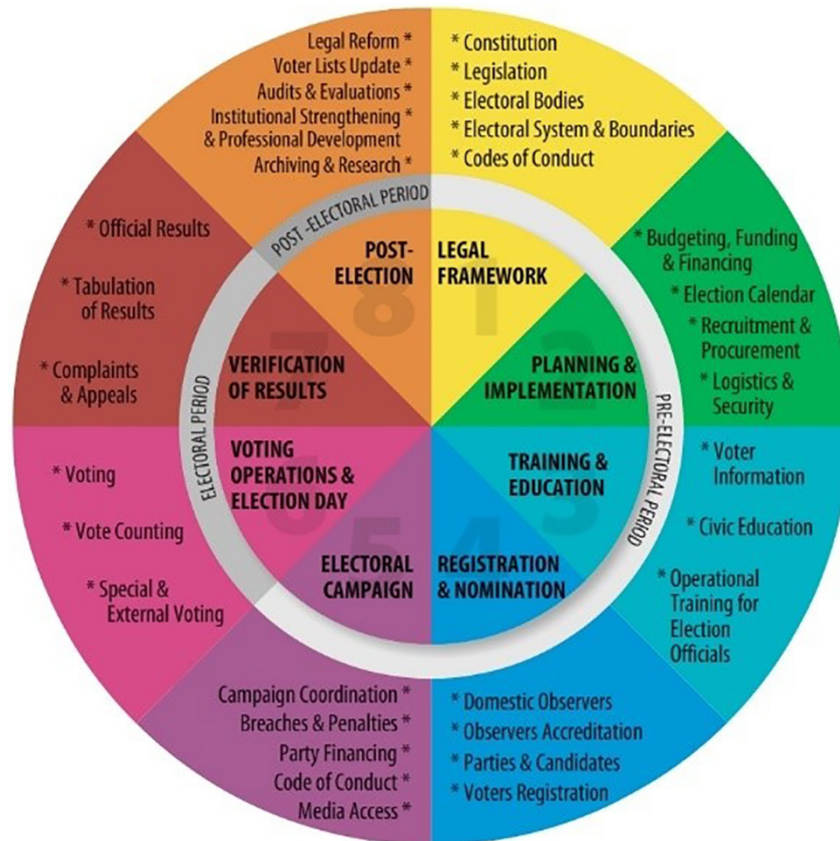


Figure 1. The Electoral Cycle, International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance)

To this end, effective electoral assistance demands investment several years in advance of an election date and in the period between elections. At the heart of a strong electoral cycle is the professionalism of the electoral management body (EMB) and an empowered civil society.

Consistent, long-term support throughout the electoral cycle also enhances stability during uncertain democracy building processes. Shorter term or immediate assistance does not allow for capacity building, the introduction of technology (or the training and public education necessitated by it), or strategic planning.

ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE ADVANCES AMERICAN INTERESTS

Stable democracies make for better trading partners, provide new market opportunities, improve global health outcomes, and promote economic freedom and regional security.

For example:

- IFES' technical support ensured Guatemala's fall 2015 elections were conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner. IFES helped implement the Inter-Institutional Security Committee, through which electoral authorities and other government agencies monitored and coordinated a prompt and adequate response to electoral violence. Credible elections contribute to a more stable Guatemala, removing incentives for its citizens to emigrate north.
- Nigeria's watershed 2015 elections—despite taking place at the height of the Boko Haram insurgency—ensured stability through the first democratic trans-

fer of power in the country's history and its continuation as one of the United States' largest African trading partners.²

- Tunisia, a bright spot in a rough neighborhood, has held three credible elections to date with U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-supported IFES technical assistance, and continues to welcome IFES support as it prepares for local elections in 2017. With USG assistance, Tunisia has resisted authoritarianism and failed statehood, and is a reliable partner in the fight against Daesh and violent extremism.
- Myanmar's historic 2015 general elections saw a landslide victory of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) and ushered in a new era of democratic process. Much of its success was due to USG assistance—as stated by the Chairman of the Union Election Commission after Election Day, “We wouldn't be standing here if not for IFES.” Not only has Myanmar's democratic transition helped open space for improved human rights, but will enhance U.S.-Myanmar cooperation on such international security issues as nuclear non-proliferation and North Korean arms sales.

Syria: Preparing for the Inevitable Political Transition

No matter how or when the Syria crisis begins to resolve, Syrian citizens must prepare for the inevitable political and electoral transition. Since 2013, IFES was worked to enhance the capacity of government and political leaders, civil society actors, women's groups, and citizens at the grassroots level to support the establishment of inclusive and effective democratic processes and institutions in Syria.

IFES engages with local partners, including a network of civil society organizations and other stakeholders that IFES helped to establish, to share information about international standards and practices with the wider Syrian community and create opportunities for discussion about principles of democracy and governance, human rights, and conflict management. IFES also works with local partners on conflict mitigation, civic education and civil society capacity building efforts, while preparing government-level stakeholders to address critical governance issues and collaborate with key groups and organizations. Additionally, IFES engages with the Syrian diaspora to create linkages between citizens, non-governmental stakeholders, and government institutions to encourage the establishment of inclusive and effective democratic processes and institutions in Syria.

IFES' recent work in Syria has focused on displaced Syrian youth, a group at risk for radicalization—young Syrians have few avenues to express their desperation and even fewer platforms for civic engagement. In 2016, IFES assisted Syrian organizations based in Gaziantep, Turkey to found Musharaka, a forum to encourage civic engagement of Syrians living in Gaziantep. In its first year, Musharaka has reached over 1,060 Syrian youth in Gaziantep, an astounding 48 percent of whom have been young women. The popularity of the Youth Forum has led to the creation of a distinct Adolescents' Forum, designed to meet the unique needs and worldview of this youngest segment of Syrian activists. Today, the Youth and Adolescents' Forums are engaged in a leadership development program that focuses on fostering critical skills for young activists by placing them in leadership roles. Both the Youth and Adolescents' Forums have elected representatives from among their ranks to engage with Syrian opposition leaders and Turkish officials on a variety of issues, including the crisis of education facing young Syrians in Turkey. Through the Musharaka Forum, IFES and its local partners have established a beacon of hope and optimism where few others have realized success and meaningful impact.

ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE ADVANCES AMERICAN VALUES

In addition to the tangible benefits, DRG also promotes American values. For example, electoral assistance helps such traditionally marginalized groups as youth, women, and persons with disabilities gain equal access to public institutions, win economic and political self-determination, and fully realize their individual rights. Inclusion and empowerment activities also help strengthen the credibility and stability of democracies more broadly, as democratic institutions flourish when all groups of society are represented.

IFES works to strengthen political participation and inclusion by conducting civic and voter education activities via diverse media, including face-to-face, radio, social media, creative print mediums (such as comic books), and street theater; providing technical assistance to government officials on how to implement international

²The USG role in the elections' success was acknowledged by President Muhammadu Buhari in July 2015: “The contributions of the IRI, NDI and IFES to the success of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria are well documented. I would like to use this opportunity to thank them for their partnership and support to the democratization process in Nigeria.”

standards; empowering civil society organizations; and assisting citizen-led efforts to define best practices.

Combating Violence Against Women in Elections

In every country where IFES works, women represent the largest pool of potential voters. Violence against women in elections is a threat to the integrity of the electoral process—violence or the threat of violence can affect women’s participation as voters, candidates, election officials, activists, and political party leaders, and it undermines the free, fair, and inclusive democratic process. To better understand and address the ways in which electoral violence creates a barrier to women’s participation, IFES developed the Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWIE) Framework to specifically identify and address the unique issues related to gender-based election violence. Through analysis and program implementation focused on increasing women’s participation and leadership in democracy assistance, the VAWIE Framework makes narratives of violence against women in elections in their homes, political arenas and public spaces more visible.

Empowering Persons with Disabilities

IFES seeks to empower civil society to sustainably advocate for equal rights. The General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA)—currently funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, but by initiated with USAID funding from 2011 to 2013—was established as a forum to improve access to political and electoral opportunities for persons with disabilities in Southeast Asia through increased public awareness and advocacy for change. AGENDA is a creative partnership between IFES, disabled persons organizations, election-focused civil society organizations, and EMBs. The AGENDA network’s principal objectives have been to promote election access in Southeast Asia and ensure that access to disability-inclusive political processes is on the human rights agenda of regional bodies, especially the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In the first phase of the AGENDA network, with USAID support, the project expanded its network to seven countries; conducted research in five countries to publish the “Accessible Elections for Persons with Disabilities in the Southeast Asian Countries” handbook; created the first ever checklist for monitoring election accessibility; and developed a training module for election administrators to increase awareness regarding electoral issues impacting the inclusion of persons with disabilities. IFES has leveraged USAID’s initial investment in the development of the election access observation checklist, conducting a total of 10 observations in four countries using the tool.

The AGENDA network has established a strong reputation among key stakeholders, including organizations focusing on politics and human rights, election commissions, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, and other ASEAN and Asia-Pacific officials. The AGENDA partnership is now considered the lead Southeast Asian regional actor promoting the political rights of persons with disabilities.

CASE STUDY: ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE IN GEORGIA

Georgia—squeezed between Russia and Turkey—is, quite literally, in a tough neighborhood. Despite its challenging geography, as well as continued encroachments by Russia on its territory, Georgia continues to be a vital trading partner and security ally of the United States.

Georgia and the United States belong to a number of the same international organizations, including the United Nations, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. Georgia also is an observer to the Organization of American States, a participant in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) Partnership for Peace program, and a partner legislature of the House Democracy Partnership.

Additionally, Georgia is the largest non-NATO and largest per capita contributor to the war in Afghanistan. As Georgia’s border with Russia links it to Chechnya and Dagestan, this ally serves as an essential barrier to the flow of foreign jihadists from Russia to the Middle East.

Given its strategic importance to the United States, as well as its dedication to strengthening its still-evolving democracy, IFES has been honored to play a pivotal, multifaceted role in Georgia’s elections since 1995. For example, IFES’ partnership has been key to the Central Election Commission (CEC), as the two organizations cooperated on a broad sphere of work which led to successive, peaceful elections and the first change of power to an opposition political party, a watershed event in Georgia’s post-Soviet history.

Police Partnership Piloted

Of particular significance in preparations for Georgia's October 2016 parliamentary elections was IFES' assistance in strengthening electoral security by establishing new procedures and clear responsibilities of the CEC and Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). This took the form of training for the CEC and development of strict protocols through which EMBs and law enforcement interact. Electoral security is a new area of work for IFES in Georgia, and the assistance delivered had a positive impact by creating an electoral security coordination body between the CEC and MIA to discuss security threats and share information. This also led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the CEC and MIA outlining improved coordination and delineation of roles and responsibilities for addressing security on Election Day. The effects of this closer coordination were realized on Election Day in 2016, when a Provincial Election Commission and law enforcement in the city of Marneuli worked effectively together to prevent an attack on a polling station, ensure the safety of voters and ballots, and raise the level of confidence in the election management bodies.

Civic Education for Youth

To build the foundation for sustained civic and political engagement, IFES works with educational institutions and other youth-serving organizations around the world to provide both school-based and non-school based civic education for young people. In Georgia, IFES has partnered with 27 institutions of higher learning to implement a fully accredited university-level civic education course; there are more than 7,000 course alumni throughout the country. The curriculum requires students to apply the theoretical knowledge gained through classroom work to real-world situations in their communities, analyzing their communities and then designing and implementing projects to address identified issues. Student projects have focused on a broad array of topics including peer-to-peer voter education in ethnic minority regions and youth actions to promote disability rights throughout the country.

Adoption of Management Plan

IFES has worked intensively with the Georgian CEC to finalize and implement an Electoral Integrity Management Plan. This project started with an Electoral Integrity Assessment and has included collaboration between IFES experts, CEC Chairperson Tamar Zhvania, CEC members and other key stakeholders on the development of a comprehensive plan to support electoral integrity. Through IFES assistance, the CEC served as host and made key presentations at an annual conference of international EMBs, and has emerged as a leader in adhering to the highest standards of electoral integrity by planning for and addressing areas of vulnerability within the electoral process. Other IFES assistance to the CEC is ongoing in the lead up to the 2018 local elections, including: improving efficient and effective election administration at all levels through development of learning modules and direct training; providing support and training to the commission on public relations; assisting in outreach to persons with disabilities, women and representatives of ethnic minority communities to improve electoral enfranchisement; organizing Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) trainings for all 365 District Election Commission (DEC) members; supporting finalization of accessibility adaptations to the CEC's website; supporting CEC civic education initiatives in ethnic minority and remote areas; and planning joint IFES-CEC training for CEC and DEC representatives to improve their written legal products.

THE CASE FOR ELECTORAL SUPPORT: STRENGTHENING THE AMERICAN "BRAND"

IFES' nonpartisan and technical approach allows us to work in some of democracy's most challenging environments. However, our ability to make an impact is also thanks to America's democratic "brand." Historically, champions for democracy around the world have held the United States as a model in electoral security, transparency, and accessibility.

It is important to maintain and strengthen this reputation, which has shown some signs of weakening. Each national American election, IFES holds its United States Election Program (USEP). In 2016, the USEP united 501 participants from 90 countries to witness American democracy in action. The focal point of the USEP is the polling tour, which takes participants to polling stations throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. At these polling stations, participants ask questions of voting precinct personnel, voters, and members of Congress and congressional candidates.

In the 20 years that IFES has hosted the USEP, participants have been deeply impressed by the American political culture of trust. However, in 2016, participants' common refrain was "You Americans don't put your money where your mouth is,"

as electoral equipment and technical support did not match the recommendations provided by IFES and other democracy organizations or reflect American values of accessibility, sanctity of the ballot, and transparency of results.

I respectfully urge the President to uphold the American “brand” by promoting credible elections both at home and abroad. Supporting DRG funding is one such way to honor America’s long tradition of electoral authority.

KEY ACCOUNTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

I thank the Congress—and particularly this subcommittee—for its continued support of DRG in even the most challenging budget environments. In the Consolidated Appropriations Acts of both 2016 and 2017, Congress mandated that the administration spend no less than \$2.3 billion on democracy programs. Congress’ provision of a funding floor protects critical programming. For example, actual spending on all DRG programming was only \$2.087 billion for fiscal year 2014—27 percent less than Congress enacted. The full funding of DRG programs is necessary to properly address democratic backsliding, to consolidate gains from economic development efforts, and to contribute to a more stable and prosperous world. We ask for Congress to continue funding DRG at existing levels.

Development Assistance

Development Assistance funds help further USAID’s goal of promoting resilient, democratic societies. DRG assistance supports new and fragile democracies by helping them develop policies and practices to build effective, transparent, and accountable governments that can deliver political and socioeconomic benefits to their citizens.

Unfortunately, the leaked, draft administration budget document obtained by Foreign Policy³ eliminates entirely the Development Assistance account. This would severely restrict the United States’ ability to achieve its longer-term development goals.

Economic Support Funds

Through the Economic Support Funds (ESF), the U.S. Department of State and USAID help partner countries meet short- and long-term political and economic needs so that they can transition to developed economies. Programs address the economic despair and lack of political participation that violent extremist groups exploit among youth, the unemployed, and marginalized members of society. DRG assistance empowers citizens to ensure broad-based participation; strengthens the rule of law; mitigates conflict; and cultivates respect for the democratic process.

ESF support many of IFES’ programs both directly and through USAID’s Elections and Political Transitions (EPT) Leader with Associates award. The EPT—held by IFES, the International Republic Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI)—is a pre-competed mechanism that allows USAID Missions to respond rapidly to urgent needs across the globe.

We support robust funding for ESF, particularly to help address the alienation of youth and the unemployed who are targeted by violent extremism, build local capacity to conduct credible elections, and strengthen civil society.

Democracy Fund

Through the Democracy Fund, State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and USAID’s Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance support democracy activists worldwide, minimize human rights abuses, including human trafficking, open political space, and enable positive transnational change.

The Democracy Fund allocates specific amounts for State and USAID. In recent years, increasing amounts have been shifted to State and away from USAID. I respectfully encourage Congress to split the Fund evenly between the two agencies, to ensure each agency’s unique approach and priorities are honored.

Assistance for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (AEECA)

This account—discontinued at the administration’s request in fiscal year 2013 and reinstated in fiscal year 2016—was also “zeroed out” in the April 2017 leaked administration document. The AEECA is critical to strengthening our allies in the region (including Georgia), particularly via DRG.

³ <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/04/24/u-s-agency-for-international-development-foreign-aid-state-department-trump-slash-foreign-funding/>.

National Endowment for Democracy

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a critical component of the USG's foreign aid strategy. However, the vast majority of its funding is reserved for its four core institutes, and does not support many critical organizations, like IFES, that have emerged in the more than three decades since its initial legislative establishment. To this end, it is vital that the other accounts for DRG remain amply funded.

LOOKING AHEAD: THE CONTINUED NEED FOR ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

With the continued support of the U.S. Congress, DRG will further promote American interests and values abroad. Investment in electoral assistance simply cannot wait, and must be advanced in fiscal year 2018. Such pressing challenges include Yemen's civil war (to which U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has called for a political solution⁴); Kenya's August 2017 national elections; 2018 elections in Georgia, Mali, and Pakistan; and Indonesia's 2019 presidential elections (Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim democracy and holds the largest single-day elections in the world).

DRG funding is also critical to global migration crisis, which could prove to be both a humanitarian and democratic disaster. IFES is at the forefront of promoting the electoral rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), of which there are over 40 million worldwide. For instance, IFES has begun reviewing electoral laws concerning the rights of displaced persons. If political solutions through the ballot box are critical to the reestablishment of political legitimacy and future governments in countries ranging from Ukraine to Iraq and Syria, then the rights of displaced voters require serious examination. This process parallels with work already underway with many election commissions mandated to conduct overseas diaspora voting.

Again, I thank the subcommittee for its continued dedication to DRG.

[This statement was submitted by Hon. J. Kenneth Blackwell.]

⁴ http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/04/18/Mattis-calls-on-UN-brokered-end-to-Yemen-civil-war/7751492529467/.