

THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN THE AMERICAS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE, PEACE
CORPS, AND GLOBAL NARCOTICS AFFAIRS

OF THE

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THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN THE AMERICAS

THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2011

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE,
PEACE CORPS, AND GLOBAL NARCOTICS AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:16 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez and Rubio.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

Senator MENENDEZ. Good morning. This hearing of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee will come to order. First of all, let me apologize for starting a little late. We were on the phone with the administration and unavoidably detained.

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the signing of the OAS Inter-American Charter, I wanted to convene a hearing to assess the progress of democracy in the hemisphere, to highlight where it is strong and vibrant, as well as where there remains progress to be made.

All the countries in the region save one adhere to a democratic form of government. We celebrate that achievement and we seek to further solidify the pillars of democracy: fair and free elections, the independent operation of the legislative and executive branches, an independent judiciary, respect for civil society, and the ability of the press to operate freely.

As we have made progress in our country during more than 200 years of constitutional rule, so has Latin America. Whereas in the 1980s we saw dictatorial rule, the norm is now competitive elections that are free and fair. We see transfers of power and alternation in power between parties of the right and the left. Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay have made great strides in the quality of democracy over the past 30 years. Chile, a country rated as not free in 1981 under the criteria used by Freedom House, is today rated as free. Likewise, Brazil and Uruguay, rated partly free in 1981, are rated as free today.

In total, Freedom House today rates 22 countries as free and 10 as partly free. So there is work to be done among the countries that are partly free: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, and

Honduras, to mention a few. But in most cases the trends are positive.

Of particular concern are those countries that are rated as free, were rated as free in 1981, but are now only rated as partially free, such as in Venezuela. Let me just mention a few concerns of mine. One of those is the tendency toward centralization of power. In 1980 the military of many countries ruled under authoritarian rule, issuing decrees instead of allowing for the elaboration of laws. Today the trend is toward extension of term limits. We see that trend in Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and recently in Paraguay. In Guatemala the Presidential candidate took an unusual route to ensure her eligibility for the President, divorcing her spouse, President Colom, in order to, as she put it, marry her country. Perhaps such a move is technically legal, but it clearly circumvents the spirit of the law. Even Colombia passed a law to allow a third term for its President, but the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional.

A second concern is respect for civil society, the independent voices of the citizenry, and the right to criticize one's government without fear of reprisal. In some countries, voices are physically constrained, whereas in others the effort has become more opaque, using laws and regulations to frustrate, constrain, and undermine the operation of civil society by imposing barriers that prevent their registration, their operations, or access to resources.

The most strident case in this regard except for Cuba is Venezuela. In December 2010 the Venezuelan national assembly passed legislation that restricts civil society organizations that "defend political rights," or "monitor the performance of public bodies" from obtaining international funding. The law is in direct violation of article 13 of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights Defenders, which states explicitly that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to solicit, receive, and utilize resources for the express purpose of promoting and protecting human rights."

A third concern is that of freedom of expression. In Central America, journalists that cover drug trafficking, corruption, and organized crime face threats to their lives that often result in self-censorship. In Argentina, government attempts to control the press have masqueraded as regulatory controls.

So today I hope to hear from our witnesses on what we are doing and what we can do to preserve and deepen the gains that have been made in the last 30 years and what we are doing to foster strong democratic institutions, respect for civil society and the media, to ensure that on the 20th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, all the nations of our hemisphere will share in the political and economic benefits that are derived from a vibrant democracy.

With that, let me turn to the ranking member, Senator Rubio, for his remarks.

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

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you holding these hearings. These are important. A prosperous, democratic, and stable Western Hemisphere is crucial to the United States own

safety and prosperity. It's in our national interest and, quite frankly, in the interest of the world.

In that respect, there's a lot of good news to report, and I think we'll hear that in the testimony today. Four nations that I would single out specifically as examples of the promise that the Western Hemisphere has in the 21st century: Colombia, that overcame and is overcoming decades of violence, both political and criminal, to stake a new future for itself and continues on that path. We're all very excited about the direction Colombia is headed, despite significant struggles, and we hope, at least speaking for myself, that soon we will have a free trade agreement with the people of Colombia that will further strengthen these democratic institutions and brighten their future.

Chile is another great example of a nation that continues to prosper as it embraces market economics and stability in the political realm; Brazil, that's emerging into not just a regional power, but increasingly a global one, and that we hope will continue to grow in that role and exercise its influence, particularly its example to other nations in the region as to how much promise there exists when you give your people freedom and economic opportunities; and Mexico that, despite some real significant struggles they're going through right now, particularly with criminality, their democratic institutions have taken root and we hope that they'll serve as an example to the region.

There are some other stories, however, that are not nearly as bright and they continue to be a blemish on the Western Hemisphere and, quite frankly, sadden us. The first, of course, is Venezuela, who today is governed by a clown, more appropriate for a circus than as someone who governs a country. It's sad. No. 1, he has illusions of grandeur. He views himself as a world leader. He's not. He's increasingly irrelevant in the region because his neighbors now recognize that he is a clown.

But more importantly, I feel sorry for the people of Venezuela because he's an embarrassment to that country, a people that are a proud people, a people with a tremendous amount of potential, a country with a tremendous amount of wealth, really a nation that has an opportunity to be a leader in the world, but is being held back by incompetent leadership, and we hope that will change soon.

Nicaragua is run by a relic, someone who was in charge back in the 1980s when I was in sixth grade and Madonna was just a new artist coming on the scene. The guy's made a comeback, I don't know how, and unfortunately Nicaragua is being held back as well, and that's too bad because the people of Nicaragua deserve better and can have better and I hope will have better.

Then Cuba, which is not just a repressive regime, it's actually a Jurassic Park. It's run by a bunch of late 70, early 80-year-old men that are really basically relics of a bygone era. They are not just tyrants; they're incompetent. They don't know how to run an economy. They don't know how to run a country. The result is that Cubans are successful everywhere in the world except for one place, Cuba, and that's because of the leaders they have, and we obviously hope to be a part of seeing a change happen there sometime soon.

So there's a lot of good news in the Western Hemisphere. There's at least four examples of bad news. We hope that that will change and, God willing, that will be what the United States can play a role in bringing about.

Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Senator.

With that, let me welcome Roberta Jacobson, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of the Western Hemisphere. She has previously served as Director of the Office of Policy, Planning, and Coordination for the Bureau, covering such issues as civil-military relations, human rights, counternarcotics, foreign assistance. Most recently, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Canada, Mexico, and NAFTA. Outside of Washington, she's also served as the deputy chief of mission in Peru.

We appreciate your long record of service in dealing with issues in the hemisphere, are glad to have you here, and recognize your New Jersey roots, which adds value. Somebody raised their hand in the back there. And along the way, we appreciate what you've done.

I ask you to synthesize your statement for about 5 minutes or so. Your entire written statement will be included in the record. With that, Madam Secretary, I'm happy to hear what you have to say.

STATEMENT OF ROBERTA JACOBSON, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rubio. I'm delighted to be here today. Thank you for the opportunity to appear.

I'd like to start by saying that we share your assessment of the important successes in many societies in Latin America and the Caribbean that they are enjoying today. That success is measurable in rising levels of political and personal freedom, greater economic prosperity, and increased global integration. These factors work together to generate vast opportunity. They strengthen institutions. They have helped lift scores of millions of people out of poverty in the last decade and in the process brought forth huge pools of talent that are transforming very diverse countries.

Yet there remain significant weaknesses in democratic institutions in much of the hemisphere. So we must use this opportunity to secure and deepen democratization in our hemisphere. This requires active U.S. engagement, but it hinges fundamentally on partnership with our democratic neighbors and the actions of both governments and civil societies. The fact that democratic values we seek to advance are shared ones, embodied in instruments like you have mentioned, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, strengthens our hand.

In some countries, democratic space is being rolled back rather than expanded. Persistent government pressure on freedom of expression, the criminalization of dissent, the centralizing and controlling executive branch, and disrespect for the legitimate and essential role of political minorities are our principal concerns in this regard.

In other nations, persistent inequality or the insecurity created by gangs and cartels threaten democratic gains, and unfortunately Cuba remains a glaring exception to the region's democratic convergence, as Secretary Clinton has emphasized.

I have mentioned in my statement, my longer statement, many of the examples of leadership that we see throughout the Americas, many of which you have already mentioned in your review. We have seen veterans of Chile's democratic transition go to Cairo to talk to democratic leaders there about advancing reconciliation. Canadian Prime Minister Harper has made advancing democratic gains in the Americas a core focus of his foreign policy. Colombia is now working with Central American nations to bolster citizen security, and there are others that are mentioned in my remarks.

We're working with governments in the region, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and others to address the needs of vulnerable, traditionally marginalized groups—women, indigenous people, people of African descent, young people, LGBT persons, because we view the defense of these human and civil rights as key to the advancement of the region as a whole. And with the bipartisan support of Congress, we are steadfast in our commitment to four linked citizen security initiatives: The Merida Initiative, the Central America Regional Security Initiative, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, and the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative. Our programs there focus particularly on reinforcing the rule of law and strengthening democratic institutions to bring security and protection to all citizens.

Last week, Secretary Clinton led the U.S. delegation in Guatemala at an international conference of support for the Central American Strategic Security Strategy, which brought together heads of state from Central America, Mexico, Colombia, and many other leaders from around the region and the world. Her participation and our efforts to harmonize our activities with those of our partners also served to follow up on the President's commitments during his March trip to Latin America. She then went on to Jamaica to meet with the Foreign Ministers from the Caribbean community and the Dominican Republic, where she underscored the importance of partnership on citizen security, the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas, and efforts to engage diasporas on economic and democratic development.

But we are also active in the face of challenges posed by democratically elected leaders who seek to consolidate power in the executive branch through extraconstitutional means. It is not always easy to work positively with civil society when governments seek to limit our presence. Because we respect the rights of people in all societies to choose their futures, we stand steadfast in our commitment to universal rights and democratic freedom.

In Cuba, we have taken concerted steps to help the Cuban people live the lives they choose and chart their own course, and we will continue to support dissidents and civil society. We are working to expand connections between our society and Cuban society and open the way for support of Cubans who are striking their own path.

We are particularly concerned about Venezuela, as President Chavez continues to disrespect the legitimate role of democratic

institutions, restrict freedoms, including by closing press outlets, and use the judiciary to persecute political opponents.

In Nicaragua, the government has manipulated the courts and Congress to concentrate power in the executive. We have pressed the Nicaraguan Government to invite election observers and coordinated with our international partners to try and enhance prospects for free and fair elections, though we fear this window is rapidly closing.

Other countries, such as Bolivia and Ecuador, are on complicated trajectories and have limited the scope of our bilateral relationship.

I also mention in my remarks the importance of the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and continuing our work with the OAS, as we have done most recently and most successfully in Haiti's elections and in Honduras's readmission to that body.

So this is the extremely varied backdrop to our intense diplomatic engagement in the Americas, and I look forward to working with you and your colleagues as we strive to make irreversible democratic gains in our hemisphere.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jacobson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERTA JACOBSON

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today.

Mr. Chairman, I have heard you highlight the important success many societies in Latin America and the Caribbean are enjoying today. We share your assessment. That success is measureable in very tangible ways: in rising levels of political and personal freedom, greater economic prosperity, and increasing global integration. These factors work together in remarkable synergy. They generate vast opportunity. They strengthen institutions. They have helped lift scores of millions of people out of poverty in the last decade—and in the process brought forth huge new pools of talent and energy that are literally transforming very diverse countries. It is difficult to imagine this happening without the consolidation of democratic and market societies in most of Latin America and the strengthening of democratic institutions in much of the Caribbean over the last two decades.

Yet there remain significant weaknesses in democratic institutions in much of the hemisphere, so instead of being complacent, we must use this opportunity to secure and deepen democratization in our hemisphere. This requires active U.S. engagement, but it hinges fundamentally on partnership with our democratic partners and the actions of both governments and vibrant civil societies in the region. That the democratic values we seek to advance are shared ones embodied in instruments like the Inter-American Democratic Charter, strengthens our hand. Together we can build on the progress made in recent decades and attack the challenges that remain.

I know I do not need to emphasize to anyone here that we have a huge stake in the success of our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere. So, it follows logically that we have a powerful interest in strengthening and expanding the factors that sustain that success. We know this task is not finished—democratic governance is a constant project.

In some countries democratic space is being rolled back rather than expanded. Persistent government pressure on freedom of expression, the criminalization of dissent, a centralizing and controlling executive branch, and disrespect for the legitimate and essential role of political minorities are our principal concerns in this regard. In other nations, persistent inequality, or the insecurity created by gangs and cartels, threatens democratic gains. Some countries present elements of democratic advance in certain areas, retreat in others, and remain under security-related stress. And, unfortunately, Cuba remains a glaring exception to the region's democratic convergence, as Secretary Clinton has emphasized. But the region's commitment to democratic development, broadly put, is widespread and strong—and the values that sustain democracy are rooted throughout the Americas.

I would like to review a few examples that may not regularly make headlines but provide a sense of the scope of democratic leadership in the Americas. Then I would like to talk briefly about what we see as some of the biggest challenges.

In Brazil, strong democratic institutions have helped forge and hold consensus on combining sound economic policies with vigorous antipoverty programs that together have lifted more than 30 million people out of poverty; Veterans of Chile's democratic transition were quick to visit Cairo following the removal of President Mubarak to talk about the importance of strong institutions, share lessons about advancing reconciliation, and ensuring that democracy delivers results. Mexico's skillful diplomacy brought the December 2010 U.N. Climate Change Conference in Cancun to a successful conclusion. Colombia is now working with Central American nations to bolster citizen security and rule of law capacity. Uruguay's commitment to peace and security extends beyond its borders as a recognized leader in U.N. peacekeeping operations throughout the world. Canadian Prime Minister Harper has made advancing democratic gains in the Americas a core focus of his foreign policy agenda, and we are working closely with the Canadians on these issues. The overwhelming majority of Caribbean nations have fair, open elections, robust civil societies, and generally strong human rights records, but continued economic weakness in some Caribbean nations has hampered their ability to implement rule of law and increases their vulnerability to crime.

We are working with governments in the region, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and others to address the needs of vulnerable, traditionally marginalized groups—women, indigenous peoples and people of African descent, youth, and LGBT persons—because we view the defense of these human and civil rights as key to the advancement of the region as a whole. Full democracy cannot be achieved when more than half of the population does not enjoy the rights that citizens are entitled to and cannot participate in the democratic process.

With bipartisan support of Congress, we are steadfast in our commitment to four coherent, interlinked citizen security initiatives of the Obama administration: the Merida, Central American Regional Security, Caribbean Basin Security, and Colombian Strategic Development initiatives. These initiatives support regional efforts to bring security to their people. Our programs focus particularly on reinforcing the rule of law and strengthening democratic institutions that can offer protections for all citizens.

Last week, Secretary Clinton led the U.S. delegation to the International Conference of Support for the Central American Security Strategy, in Guatemala. This conference brought together the heads of state from Central America, Colombia, and Mexico, as well as other partners such as Spain, the EU, the IDB and the World Bank, to advance strategies for addressing the security crisis in Central America. The Secretary's participation and our efforts to harmonize U.S. Government security-related activities with those of our partners also served to follow up on the President's commitments during his March trip to Latin America. The Secretary also travelled to Jamaica to meet with Foreign Ministers from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Dominican Republic, where she underscored the importance of our partnership on citizen security under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), as well as the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas and efforts to engage diasporas to advance economic and democratic development.

We are, in short, a robust partner throughout the Americas in support of fundamental building blocks of democracy: rights, institutions, security. We are not complacent in the face of challenges posed by democratically elected leaders who seek to consolidate power in the executive branch through extra-constitutional means or by ruling via majoritarianism at the expense of minority rights. These tactics come in various forms, ranging from intricate legalistic maneuvers that are nothing more than an abuse of the rule of law, to brute force, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests.

A bedrock of democratic governance—media freedom—is also under pressure from transnational criminal organizations. To counter increased threats against reporters, the United States is working to promote media security and freedom. In Mexico, we are supporting "Cobertura Segura," a program that trains reporters to work in high-threat environments, in cooperation with the International Center for Journalists. In other nations it is governments that have restricted freedom of expression; we are supporting civil society's efforts to restore a voice to all people.

In the face of these serious challenges, we remain committed to finding ways to work positively with civil society throughout the Americas. It is not always easy to do so when governments seek to limit our presence. Because we respect the rights of people in all societies to choose their futures, we stand steadfast in our commitments to universal rights and democratic freedoms.

In Honduras, we stood with other countries in the hemisphere and agreed that an interruption of the constitutional order by force and without due process of law

was unacceptable. We are pleased that in the wake of the Honduran elections and thanks to the efforts of the Lobo government and mediation from OAS Member States, Honduras has restored its democracy and returned to full membership in the OAS.

In Cuba, we have taken concerted steps to help the Cuban people live the lives they choose and chart their own course independent of the Cuban regime. That is why we are working to expand connections between our society and Cuban society and open the way for meaningful support of Cubans who are striking their own path, whether in civil society or the private sector.

We are particularly concerned about Venezuela as President Chavez continues to disrespect the legitimate role of democratic institutions, restrict freedoms, including by closing some of the hemisphere's most distinguished and durable press outlets, and uses the judiciary to persecute political opponents and criminalize dissent. Grave economic concerns, including the highest inflation in the hemisphere and an abysmal security situation, while felt by all Venezuelans, impact the poor and vulnerable most dramatically. In this difficult environment, Venezuela faces important elections in 2012. We believe that the early presence of a sufficient number of credible and well-trained international observers will be important to the credibility of the process.

In Nicaragua, the government has manipulated the courts and congress to extend and concentrate power in the executive. We have pressed the Nicaraguan Government to invite credible domestic and international election observers and coordinated with international partners to enhance prospects for free, fair, and transparent elections, though we fear this window is rapidly closing. Other countries, such as Bolivia and Ecuador, are on complicated trajectories that have unfortunately limited the scope of our bilateral relationship. In all of these cases, we continue to uphold our commitment to fundamental democratic principles and to address threats to democracy in the region in collaboration with our international partners and regional institutions.

And yet, the hemisphere continues to come together to resolve shared challenges. As we near the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Inter-American Democratic Charter on that fateful day in 2001, we are reminded that the Organization of American States, while by no means a perfect institution, remains a relevant body for hemispheric nations to address regional problems. The OAS was instrumental in helping to ensure that the elections in Haiti were representative of the will of the Haitian people. Honduras' recent readmission to that body after the democratic order had been interrupted is a testament to the region's capacity for constructive multilateral engagement.

This is the extremely varied backdrop to our intense diplomatic engagement in the Americas. We are steadfast in our principles, reliable in our partnerships, and clear eyed about our interests. We also recognize that each nation's citizens are the primary and indispensable protagonists in their countries' political development. We seek cooperation throughout the hemisphere to achieve greater prosperity and security. And we share your vision that effective democratic institutions and respect for basic rights are both fundamental and critical to these goals. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues as we strive to make irreversible democratic gains in our hemisphere.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

So let me start off. Perhaps one of the greatest and least commented on threats to democracy goes beyond elections. Elections are one element of a democracy, but without all the other aspects of what we would consider a democratic country— independent branches of government, a judiciary that is honest, and a legal system that is transparent, that observes the rule of law—those are all elements that make up what a democracy is all about, ensuring that you cannot manipulate a constitution to be able to stay in power, which increasingly is a reality in the hemisphere.

But maybe one of the least commented on threats to democracy in Latin America is the silencing of civil society. The power of civil society to turn the political view and to expose what some would prefer to be hidden makes them a target. That repression is not always as vivid as we may see in a country like Cuba, but the harassment of an activist, discrete forms of rules and regulations that

control the ability of civil society organizations to function, to receive funding, to operate peacefully within their country for change, is in my mind under siege. Venezuela is a great example of that.

How closely does the Department follow this issue and in your view which are the most difficult countries for civil society organizations to operate in?

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that was an extremely eloquent review of the critical importance of civil society in democracies. Without civil society activists able to work freely, one really can't talk about fully functioning democracies. We've made it very clear that we think that that includes all kinds of civil society groups, from opposition political parties to an independent press, a functioning, transparent, fair judiciary, and the ability for folks to organize around any subject and present their views to their government and be heard.

So we think that we pay a lot of attention to civil society. It is a huge part of what we do in the State Department, engaging with civil society. The Secretary has made that a key part of her platform, engaging in townhall meetings, making sure that she talks about the voices in civil society that need to be heard, as well as speaking with governments about their views.

I think throughout the hemisphere you have different situations in different countries and it's difficult for me to say precisely which countries might be those in which we have the greatest concern. But certainly we have been outspoken in our concerns about the difficulty of civil society acting and organizing in Venezuela, in Nicaragua. We have concerns about the ability of the press to operate freely in many countries in the hemisphere, either because those freedoms may be impinged upon by governments or, frankly, because those freedoms are impinged upon by criminal organizations threatening journalists. We know that the hemisphere has become a dangerous place for journalists.

So we believe that there are lots of things that we need to do as a whole in the hemisphere to try and advance civil society.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me pursue that a bit more with you. So you say the Department pays a lot of attention to this and I hear that the Secretary is engaging civil society in conversations, townhall meetings. Those are all desirable, but what more are we willing to do to help civil society in the hemisphere, to empower them to have the ability to try to perfect democracies in their countries or, in the absence of a democracy, to try to help them create a democracy?

Ms. JACOBSON. I think there are a number of ways in which we can help support civil society. One is the bully pulpit and the Secretary uses that, but that's only one. Another is engaging with organizations in programs that we have. Our democracy programs have increased, especially in the citizen security initiatives, the four that I mentioned, where a good deal of our attention is now not only on improving governmental institutions to make them fairer, more open, stronger, to resist corruption, but also in working with nongovernmental community organizations, civil society, in resisting both criminal organizations and being able to channel their views to governments.

I think the other thing that's critically important is the use of new technologies and new media, making sure that we are enabling citizen activists to speak out. The alliance of youth movements that we've promoted throughout the hemisphere works extensively with young people in organizations that are community-based and use digital media to get their message out.

So it is a combination of some of the more traditional forms of assistance, programming and assistance through our foreign assistance budget, but also exchange programs, educational programs, new media.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, let me be a little bit more direct. It seems to me that there was a time in our country when we were very aggressive about promoting democracy throughout the world, and we were very engaged and did not let the pushback of authoritarian governments deter us from pursuing that. It seems to me that in some places in the world we're doing that. I read an interesting article about the Internet in a briefcase and how we are traveling in different places to help societies access it so they can unlock their potential to communicate, inform each other and inform themselves about what's happening in the rest of the world.

Yet when it comes to places like Cuba, where instead of actively engaging in helping civil society be able to have the wherewithal that we want in other parts of the world such as the Arab world and Iran, we have this reticence, and there are some who would in essence undermine the very purpose of our democracy and civil society programs in a country that is clearly by all standards the most oppressive in the entire western hemisphere.

So I think that entities and governments, particularly authoritarian governments, in the hemisphere are clearly going to push back, whether it's against the National Endowment for Democracy, IRI, or our own programs, and that cannot be the basis upon which we abandon the rigor that I as the chairman of this committee want to see in this hemisphere when it comes to helping civil society.

I'm hoping that the administration and the State Department will be more vigorously engaged in helping civil society, regardless of the pushback we get from the Chavezes, from the Eva Moraleses, or from the Castro regime, because otherwise, if we respond to the pushback, then they will have achieved their goal and we will have not had the wherewithal to help those who risk their liberty and sometimes their lives to create greater democracy within this hemisphere.

It is an enormous value to us as a country. It's not only about doing the right thing. Democracies are less likely to create armed conflict against other democracies. They are more likely to permit the type of economies that can help grow and help their citizens prosper and create greater demands by their citizens within civil society.

So I hope we will change course and move more aggressively ahead on the areas that I see as concerns in terms of our democracy programs in this hemisphere.

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that's exactly right. What I was referring to in my opening remarks, we face challenges in implementing those programs of bringing information

to people, ensuring they have access to that information. But those challenges should not deter us from upholding the principles that we completely agree with and trying to ensure that people do have greater access to that information, are able to both project their voices outward and receive the voices of people around the hemisphere and around the world.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that we face challenges, and we had challenges in Poland and we had challenges in what was Czechoslovakia before it became the Czech Republic, and in other places in Eastern Europe, and we did not let those challenges deter us from our vigorous engagement in democracy programs. So I think I've made my point with that.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Secretary Jacobson, for being with us this morning and for your statement. I wanted to talk about something that we don't talk about often enough. I think it's relevant to all of this conversation. It's trafficking in persons. The report in 2010 just came out on Monday. It designates Cuba as a tier 3 country for failing to adhere to minimum antihuman trafficking standards.

As you know, U.S. law prohibits funding for officials or employees of tier 3 governments to participate in educational and cultural exchange programs until such government complies with minimum antihuman trafficking standards or makes significant efforts to comply with those standards. It's obviously not the direction we're headed with regard to these sorts of programs with Cuba.

I guess my question is, how is the administration's exchange process with Cuba in compliance with these legal restrictions, and if they're not—and I think that this has been waived—what's the calculation there? Because I'm deeply—aside from the political realities of what's happening in Cuba, this trafficking in persons issue is a major one around the world and the fact that Cuba is one of the countries that refuses to comply with it and in fact is a significant player in trafficking in persons in terms of its government unwillingness to participate should be troubling outside of the political realm of this.

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Senator. In our exchange programs and efforts to try and undertake exchange programs in Cuba, our goal is to work with civil society. As you reflected in the comment, the reference to the anti-TIP, that refers to exchanges that might involve government members. That's not the case in Cuba. We try to do programming to bring people to the United States who are nongovernmental, to have exchanges that are people to people, civil society-focused.

That's where we will continue to place our effort, on civil society and on people to people. It is indeed unfortunate that we have not seen cooperation on trafficking in persons issues, which are a serious problem throughout the hemisphere.

Senator RUBIO. In terms of the calculation, what goes into the calculation that somehow we should waive those requirements when it comes to Cuba, that we perhaps wouldn't do with some of the other tier 3 countries? What's the cost-benefit analysis of having done that?

Ms. JACOBSON. Sir, I'm not aware that we've waived the requirements for Cuba in terms of exchange programs. I'd have to get greater information or specificity on that?

Senator RUBIO. The exchange programs we have with Cuba now violate—are they not in contradiction with what the law says we should not be doing with countries that are in the tier 3?

Ms. JACOBSON. The exchange programs that we have, such as they are, with Cuba I believe focus on civil society. But I would have to get back to you in further detail as to whether there are any government officials involved.

Senator RUBIO. We'll talk about that more further. But the reality of it is that it did require—as the report outlines, all the full sanctions available for countries that fall under tier 3 are not applied to Cuba, and it's outlined in the report. I apologize for not—I probably should have previewed that question with you earlier because you have a broad array of issues that you had to be prepared for. So we'll talk more about that in the future.

But I just wanted to make the marker out there. That's an issue we're very interested in in general and we're interested to know why somehow on Cuba we went in a different direction.

Two quick questions. On Venezuela, in the elections last year there is now legitimate, although, sadly, a little bit divided and severely restricted, opposition's presence in the Parliament. I was interested if the State Department has thought about any programs or is pursuing any programs to help Venezuelan parliamentarians share experiences and know-how with their counterparts in some of the other, more established democracies in the region or around the world?

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Senator. We have programs in Venezuela that are directed at, in a nonpartisan fashion, trying to work on democratic processes, opening up democratic space. I would need to check and find out if we have specific programs for parliamentarians. I'm not aware of whether or not we do in Venezuela. We do that in some countries.

But overall, our general goal is to work on democratic leadership, and that may include any members of opposition political parties and indeed members of any political parties that are democratically based in Venezuela. We want to work on the processes of government. They're nonpartisan. They're not pro or antigovernment per se.

We too noted the opposition's presence in the Parliament and there are important issues that they are taking up at this time that deserve our attention.

[Addition written information from Ms. Jacobson concerning the above question of Senator Rubio follows:]

Currently, we do not have a parliamentary exchange program in Venezuela. For several years after the 2002 coup, select Members of Congress and Venezuelan parliamentarians—bipartisan delegations from both nations—met as the so-called “Boston Group,” to share experiences and enhance dialogue. The Department had no formal role in that group but remained in close contact with its members. The Boston Group fell into disuse after 2005, but there apparently is some interest in reinvigorating it.

USAID programming in Venezuela, as well as in other countries, aims to improve dialogue among diverse political actors. Those programs are nonpartisan and open to all political persuasions. We can arrange a private briefing on our USAID programs in Venezuela.

Senator RUBIO. Just—it's not as a criticism. Just to highlight it, I think it's a positive development that there is an emerging opposition—we needn't call it "opposition"—minority party in Venezuela that is in opposition to the policies of the government, who have a legitimate voice on behalf of the people of Venezuela, and we should explore, whether it's through nongovernmental organizations, the State Department or otherwise, in a way that doesn't undermine them, by the way, because oftentimes that's what they've done, is undermine minority parties by saying they're somehow being controlled by the United States; but empower them with the ability to be a more effective minority party, point out the abuses and the bad policies, because apart from all of the abuses and all the ridiculous acts on the part of the leaders of that country, of President Chavez, he's also incompetent. I think part of being the minority party and the opposition party in that Parliament is being able to point to his policy failures and how Venezuela could be doing so much better if it went in a different direction.

The last question involves Guatemala. I'm in receipt of a letter—it's dated May 24—from the Guatemalan Supreme Elections Tribunal. What they ask for basically is they're requesting international observers for the upcoming Presidential elections. You may not—you may be or may not be aware of—we'll certainly share this and I think maybe other Senators may have gotten this letter as well.

But basically, they're asking us to participate as a group of international observers for their upcoming elections on September 11, 2011. Are you aware of this request, and if so is the State Department prepared to ask the participation of U.S. organizations under this request?

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Senator. We obviously strongly support the work of the TSE, the electoral tribunal, and we've made it very clear that we're concerned about some pressures and threats that they've been under, and that it's very, very important that those elections be carried out in a free and fair way. We will be working with others, both within Guatemala and outside and in the hemisphere, to ensure that they are observed as much as possible, and we're certainly part of that conversation.

Senator RUBIO. Just to close the loop on it, because I want to answer this letter that they wrote me, are you aware of or can we talk later at some point when you can check into it even deeper about whether the State Department would be willing to actively solicit American organizations to participate as international observers in their elections?

I think they're probably sending this all over the world. They're looking for international electoral supervision. But I would encourage the State Department to be helpful in bringing about two or three organizations here in the United States that would be willing to go to Guatemala and observe the elections. I would encourage you to take a part in that. We can talk more about that after.

Thank you.

Ms. JACOBSON. Absolutely. Thank you.

[The written information from Ms. Jacobson follows:]

The U.S. Mission to the Organization of the American States (OAS) is contributing \$200,000 to support the OAS' 2011 Guatemala Electoral Observation Mission.

In addition, USAID has a Cooperative Agreement with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) for elections support (approximately \$1,000,000 in USAID funds). The two main activities of the agreement are a quick count on election day and training/technical support to the national observers network.

USAID also has an agreement with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening that supports an elections Web site with information for voters, electoral registry operations, technical/administrative strengthening of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, and other areas to promote free and fair elections in Guatemala.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

I just have one or two other questions. It's interesting to note that the TSC actually just disqualified—I hadn't seen that press report; my staff showed me—the former first lady from running. So I guess they are taking some very courageous positions. We'll see if they can continue to withstand it.

In my view, freedom of the press is under attack in several countries in Latin America, in some cases by governments, in other cases by the threat of violence from private actors. Venezuela threatens those who criticize the government. Argentina has attempted to control the print stock of a newspaper critical to the government. In Honduras and Mexico, the lives of journalists who dare to report on drug trafficking activities or government corruption or authoritarian rule are at stake.

What priority does the Department and our missions place on supporting independent journalists and providing them with the space to share their views and publicize their opinions? Do our missions intercede in helping those independent journalists?

Ms. JACOBSON. They do, Senator. This is an extremely high priority for us and we're extremely concerned about some of the trends that you've outlined. It takes different forms in different places. In Mexico, for example, we have a program called Cobertura Segura, which works with NGOs at the University of Guadalajara, and which trains journalists in how to avoid the kinds of pressure and dangers that criminal organizations put on independent, fair reporting.

In places like Honduras, we have helped the government set up a special task force that is focusing on some of the crimes that have been committed against journalists, among other groups.

In places where we have seen governmental pressure on independent journalism, we have certainly spoken out. We have ensured that we have robust exchange and international visitor programs for independent journalists, so that they can share their experiences, so that they can learn from other journalists, both around the hemisphere and in the United States.

So there are a variety of ways. At the OAS General Assembly this spring there were two resolutions passed, one on freedom of expression, one on freedom of assembly. Not always easy to get those issues focused on. We have given monetary contributions to the OAS's rapporteur on freedom of expression because we think her work is critically important in this area.

So there are a variety of means that we use to try and promote and protect the vibrant media in these countries, and we will continue to do so.

Senator MENENDEZ. My final question is, How can we work with the OAS to strengthen its resolve in pursuing enforcement of its Inter-American Democratic Charter?

Ms. JACOBSON. I think, Senator, it's an excellent question, and I think that we have to—

Senator MENENDEZ. I only ask excellent questions. Just kidding. [Laughter.]

Ms. JACOBSON. Indeed.

Senator MENENDEZ. We have to have fun here along the way.

Ms. JACOBSON. What we do with the OAS basically is to try and support with allies in the hemisphere the engagement of that organization through its members individually, but most importantly collectively at times, because when we work together we can have enormous effect. I think that's why I used the Haiti and the Honduras examples as ones where the region came together as a whole to act on concerns and threats that were seen to democratic processes.

It is not always easy for us to get that kind of consensus to work in all areas, and I think that we have to continue to both refer to the charter itself and to make the charter real through programs and actions by the OAS that bring that charter to life, if you will, in individual cases. We certainly have seen over the years that the OAS has been able to act and been able to reverse in many ways threats to democracy, beginning really with the situation in Peru and the Windsor commitment out of the OAS General Assembly years ago in that case.

But it has not always been an even path and there have been times when there are threats to democracy that have not been responded to as strenuously as we would like them to be. So it is a work in progress and we will continue to engage with the special rapporteurs, with the specialized bodies of the OAS who implement parts of that, and with member states as the 10th anniversary approaches to strengthen and highlight those parts of the democratic charter that still need implementation.

Senator RUBIO. Just a brief statement and I want to get your impression on it. This may shock you, but as an American in politics—I think the same is true in the Western Hemisphere—sometimes people run for office and they say certain things for domestic consumption in their countries, and then they win the election and they have to govern and they become incredibly pragmatic. I think we see that throughout the region as well.

I think we saw that in Brazil, where President Lula when he had to run he had ascribed to some political theories in the past, but once he began to govern didn't fully embrace, and in fact took his nation down the road, a much more pragmatic road economically, certainly politically, and the result is that Brazil today is on the verge of becoming a global power, which is a very good development for the region and a very good development for our partnership with them, hopefully.

So I watch with great interest what happened in Peru, a nation that has really begun to progress economically as well and just had an election. There was some rhetoric, particularly in the past, but the new President stated his intentions with respect to Peru's democratic institutions—well, first he distanced himself from state-

ments, including his previous support for, for example, some of the policies followed by Chavez and others, and he praised Brazil as a model for the kind of economic policies he'd like to see his country continue to pursue.

Do you have any impressions you could share with us on the future of Peru? Because I hope that they're on the verge of joining that list that I outlined earlier—Brazil, Colombia, Panama, hopefully Mexico if they can be successful in the challenges that they face, and others, Chile, that are headed in the right direction economically, and of course with their democratic institutions.

What are your general impressions about the hope there and, more importantly, the hope of our engagement with Peru in a very positive way?

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Senator. Another excellent question.

Senator RUBIO. I got it from the chairman. [Laughter.]

Ms. JACOBSON. I think it's a terrific example. And you've mentioned all of the countries, frankly—many of the countries; I shouldn't leave out others perhaps—where we have really positive relations, where countries are really moving ahead on reducing inequality, increasing social inclusion, strengthening democracies and their economies. That's precisely what we'd like to see with Peru and to see that continue.

Our view of President Humala's election is that we want to have the best possible relationship with him. We have congratulated him, obviously, on his victory and said that we look forward to working with him. We have enormously important interests with Peru—continuing to work on counternarcotics issues, continuing to help with economic strengthening, ensuring that that economic prosperity reaches further, frankly, than it has thus far.

We really want to have precisely the relationship that you've outlined, a very positive partnership with Peru, and we're optimistic about that.

Senator MENENDEZ. With that, let me thank you very much for your testimony and your responses to our questions. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the days ahead. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

Let me introduce the next panel and ask them to come up as I introduce them: Michael Reid is the Americas Editor at *The Economist*, and a columnist in Latin American media, such as *Valor Economico* in Brazil and *Poder* in Mexico. He has become one of the world's leading authorities on the political, social, and business cultures of Latin America. As a journalist who has been covering the region for a quarter century, he has sought to shed light on what many still consider a forgotten continent. And we welcome him to the committee.

Dr. Jorge Dominguez is the Antonio Madero Professor for the Study of Mexico, Vice Provost for International Affairs, and Special Advisor for International Studies to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and chairman of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies. I hope you get paid for each one of those, doctor.

He is the author or coauthor of various books, among them "Consolidating Mexico's Democracy," "Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America." We appreciate your willingness to

interrupt a family visit in order to be with us today and look forward to your testimony.

Mr. Dan Fisk is the vice president for Policy and Strategic Planning for the International Republican Institute. In his varied career, Mr. Fisk has served as Special Assistant to the President, Senior Director for the Western Hemisphere Affairs at the National Security Council. At the State Department he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, as well as a former senior staff member and associate counsel for this committee. We welcome you back, Dan, to the committee for your testimony.

Again, let me invite each of you to make about 5-minute statements. Your full statements will be included in the record, and we'll start with you, Mr. Reid.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL REID, AMERICAS EDITOR, THE
ECONOMIST, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM**

Mr. REID. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Senator Rubio. Thank you very much indeed for the invitation to appear before you today. As an observer of Latin America who hails from the other side of the pond, I take it as a rare honor. So I thank you very much indeed.

Mr. Chairman, Latin America has never been as democratic as it is today. With one notable exception, Cuba, every country enjoys formally democratic government. Over the past decade the region's democracies have been strengthened by much socioeconomic progress. Faster economic growth means that some 40 million Latin Americans left poverty between 2002 and 2008. Most countries successfully navigated the world financial crisis and the past 2 years have seen a strong economic recovery and the resumption of the fall in poverty.

Income inequality is declining, too, and that matters greatly because the extreme inequality that has long scarred Latin America has had a series of negative consequences, reducing economic growth, increasing political instability, and forming fertile ground for populism.

These positive trends are achievements of democracy. Social safety nets are much improved. Conditional cash transfer programs now cover around 110 million of the poorest Latin Americans. That's one in five of the total. The steady expansion in years of schooling in the region has also helped reduce inequality. And Latin America is seeing an expansion of the middle class and a growing sense of citizenship.

This progress is bringing greater political stability. Between 1998 and 2005, eight elected Presidents were ousted before the end of their term. Since then this has happened in only one case, that of Manuel Zelaya in Honduras.

But clearly the region's democracies still face many difficulties. Sustaining socioeconomic progress and generating equality of opportunity requires raising the rate of productivity growth and improving the poor quality of public education. Crime and citizen insecurity are now the most serious public concerns in the region, having displaced economic worries. Outside conventional war zones, Latin America is the most violent region on Earth. Criminal

organizations challenge the writ of the state. The prevalence of violent crime is both consequence and cause of the relative weakness of the rule of law in many Latin American countries.

Despite some attempts at reform, judiciaries remain ineffective and sometimes corrupt, and the same goes for police forces, and prisons are all too often overcrowded, violent spaces.

Last, in a handful of countries the practice of democracy has been undermined by elected autocrats. To widely varying degrees, elected leaders in Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Argentina have hollowed out democracy, eviscerating checks and balances, and threatening civil and political freedoms and the private sector. And one might add that organized crime poses similar threats in Mexico and parts of Central America.

For the most part, elected autocrats have been able to concentrate power because they are popular, because they have a rapport with poorer voters who have previously felt unrepresented. The legitimacy of these leaders ultimately derives from the ballot box and that is their Achilles heel. Even if President Chavez is restored to vigorous health in Venezuela, the opposition has a good chance of winning next year's Presidential election.

Chavezmo as a continental project has been in retreat for several years. Victory in the ideological conflict of the past decade, that I have referred to as the battle for Latin America's soul elsewhere, has gone to the democratic reformers, such as Brazil's Dilma Rousseff. That is because chavismo has demonstrably failed. Despite high oil prices, Venezuela's economy has lagged others in South America in the past 2 years and other countries are overhauling it in social indicators. It is symptomatic that Ollanta Humala, Peru's President-elect, now professes himself to be a sympathizer of Brazil's policies rather than the chavista he was in 2006.

Mr. Chairman, the United States still enjoys considerable influence in Latin America. In my opinion it can best deploy it by supporting the governments in the region that are its friends, that show respect for the everyday practice of democracy, and an obvious example would be the swift approval of the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia.

The most effective means of weakening elected autocracy are in my view multilateral regional diplomacy, working with partner governments in the region, and the succoring of civil society organizations such as those that are bravely standing up for civil and political freedoms across the region.

Thank you very much and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Reid follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL REID

Mr. Chairman Menendez and other members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to appear before the subcommittee, an invitation for which as a British observer of Latin America I feel particularly honoured.

Latin America has never been as democratic as it is today. With one notable exception, Cuba, every country enjoys formally democratic government. Over the past decade the region's democracies have been strengthened by much socioeconomic progress. But clearly they still face many difficulties and challenges. In a small minority of countries, elected autocrats have hollowed out democracy, eviscerating checks and balances and threatening civil and political freedoms. More broadly, the region's democratic governments have much work to do to ensure the rule of law

and the security of their citizens, and to provide equality of opportunity and the public goods required to sustain rapid economic growth. Democracy also faces narrower political problems, such as the weakness of parties, a new tendency toward political dynasticism and seemingly widespread corruption, much of it related to party and campaign financing. Nevertheless the balance sheet of the past decade is positive: democracy is putting down stronger roots in Latin America and bringing with it greater political stability. Between 1998 and 2005 eight elected Presidents were ousted before the end of their term. Since then, this has happened in only one case, that of Manuel Zelaya in Honduras, when a conflict of powers ended in a coup.

(1) The economic and political evolution of Latin America

Unlike many other parts of the developing world, Latin America has a tradition of constitutional rule dating back almost two centuries, albeit one that was imperfect and often truncated. But the current period of democracy, dating from the demise of dictatorships across much of the region during the debt crisis of the 1980s, is in my view qualitatively different from those that went before. The pendulum between dictatorship and democracy that marked much of the 20th century in Latin America has stopped. With the granting of the vote to illiterates, and the reform of electoral authorities, almost everywhere universal and effective suffrage has been achieved. Decentralisation, though not problem-free, has deepened democracy. And urbanisation and socioeconomic progress have generated more active and inclusive citizenship, although this remains a work in progress.

Although a few countries possess older democracies, in much of Latin America the retreat of dictatorship coincided with—and was partly a result of—the debt crisis of the 1980s and the death throes of economic policies of statist protectionism. Democracy brought promarket economic reform, but inherited widespread poverty and extreme inequality of income. The initial fruits of reform were relatively disappointing, in part because of adverse conditions in the world economy. Poverty fell only moderately and inequality increased, partly because of the failure to implement an adequate social safety-net and partly because of the one-off impact of radical and unilateral trade opening.

The region's democracies were subjected to a severe stress-test during a lost half decade of economic stagnation and recession between 1998 and 2002, when unemployment rose, real incomes fell and progress in reducing poverty was halted. As noted, some countries saw political instability; and more generally, public support for democracy waned. The “Washington Consensus” became a damaged brand.

In these circumstances, the political alternation that is normal in democracies brought a number of governments of the centre-left to power, ending two decades of dominance by the centre-right. In itself, that represented an important democratic breakthrough: electoral victories by the left had often been thwarted by military intervention during the cold war. Several of the new Presidents were born in poverty, and are not members of traditional “white” elites: their election gave a more inclusive character to democracies. Several of these governments, notably Brazil's, have pursued generally moderate, social-democratic policies, maintaining economic and financial stability and respecting constitutional restraints on executive power. But other elected leaders of the left, especially Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, have established personalist regimes and imposed a much greater degree of state control over the economy.

The past decade has been a good one for many of the region's economies. Those in South America especially have benefited from sustained high prices for their commodity exports induced by the industrialisation of China and India. In the 5 years to mid-2008, economic growth in Latin America averaged a creditable 5.5 percent a year. Thanks to much better economic policies, continued demand from Asia and timely support from multilateral financial institutions, the region navigated the world financial crisis successfully, with most countries suffering only a brief recession of varying severity but no structural damage. A vigorous recovery saw growth of 6 percent in the region last year, moderating to around 5 percent this year. Whereas 44 percent of Latin Americans were officially counted as living in poverty in 2002, that number fell to 32 percent in 2010. Income inequality is falling, too. That matters, because Latin America has long been scarred by extreme inequality, which has had a series of negative consequences, reducing economic growth, increasing political instability and forming fertile ground for populism. Data for 2002–10 shows income inequality decreasing in 16 out of 17 countries, with the GINI coefficient falling on average by almost 3 points.¹ The region's democracies have built

¹Leonardo Gasparini and Nora Lustig. “The Rise and Fall of Income Inequality in Latin America” Cedlas. Available at <http://cedlas.econo.unlp.edu.ar/esp/documentos-de-trabajo.php>.

much better social safety-nets, including conditional cash transfer programmes which now cover around 110m of the poorest Latin Americans. The gradual but steady increase in the years of schooling of those entering the workforce also seems to have helped to reduce income inequality. At the same time, low inflation and financial stability is stimulating the growth of credit and home ownership.

The fall in poverty has prompted much triumphalism about the rise of a “new middle class,” now held by some to form a majority of the population in Brazil. In fact, many of these people can more accurately be described as lower middle class or working poor and their situation remains fragile. A more realistic estimate by a team at the Brookings Institution reckons that 36.3 percent of Latin Americans were middle class in 2005.² But the point is that a process is under way in which many people have disposable income for the first time; and their children are usually much better educated than they are. Across much of the region improvements in living standards are palpable in better housing and the expansion of shopping centres and modern retailing. In many places, this has been matched by an improvement in public facilities, such as transport and telecommunications, parks and sports facilities.

This trend of socioeconomic progress is favourable for the permanence of democracy in Latin America. Indeed, it has generated a greater sense of democratic citizenship. But the progress needs to be sustained and intensified. In particular, the poor quality of public education continues to impede equality of opportunity. The region has made strides in expanding educational coverage, but it will take many years for most Latin American countries to catch up. Of the bigger countries, only in Chile has a majority of the workforce at least completed secondary education (though the same applies in Costa Rica and Uruguay). The second, even bigger, problem is that Latin Americans don't learn enough in school. The eight Latin American countries that were among the 65 countries (or parts of them) that took part in the latest PISA international tests of secondary-school performance in 2009 all came in the bottom third.³ In Panama and Peru, the worst performers, nearly a third of 15-year-olds tested were close to being functionally illiterate. Visit a state school almost anywhere in Latin America and it is not hard to see why: the teachers are themselves often poorly educated and trained; the problem of teacher absenteeism is chronic; and the school day may well be short because of the need to accommodate two or three shifts. But the story now is of improvement, from a low base. In the 2009 PISA tests Peru, Chile, and Brazil all registered significant improvements compared with their performance in 2000; Mexico did to a limited extent. In all those countries there is now a public debate about the importance of improving the quality of public education. Increasingly, teachers are being required to submit to evaluations; educational testing has been introduced; and teachers pay is being linked to their school's improvement. Opinion polls show that parents tend to be complacent about school performance, but civil-society pressure groups are working to change that.

(2) The difficulties in establishing the rule of law

Another important trend is less favourable for democracy: the rise of organised, violent crime. Crime is now the most serious public concern in the region, having displaced economic worries, according to regional polls by Latinobarometro. With reason: outside conventional war zones, Latin America is the most violent region on earth. Worst are the three countries of Central America's northern triangle, Jamaica and Venezuela; murder rates per head of population in Honduras and El Salvador are more than 10 times higher than in the United States. Four and a half years in to President Calderon's crackdown on the drug mafias, the level of violence in Mexico continues to rise. It is not an exaggeration to say that the writ of the state does not run, or certainly not in uncontested fashion, in parts of Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Colombia, as well as inside prisons in many countries.

This problem is in part externally generated, by the failure of prohibition to reduce substantially demand for illegal drugs in the United States and Europe, and by the failure of the United States to prevent the export of small arms or take more effective action against money-laundering. The committee should not underestimate the extent to which the United States is seen as part of the problem, rather than part of the solution, of violent crime in Latin America. But clearly the spread, prevalence, and intensification of violent crime is also both consequence, and cause, of the relative weakness of the rule of law in many Latin American countries. Despite some attempts at reform, judiciaries remain ineffective and sometimes corrupt; the

²Mauricio Cardenas, Homi Kharas, and Camila Henao, “Latin America's Global Middle Class,” Brookings Institution, April 2011.

³OECD, PISA 2009 Results at www.oecd.org/edu/pisa/2009.

same goes for police forces; and prisons are all too often overcrowded, violent spaces. The result is a terrifying level of impunity, with 9 murders out of 10 going unpunished in Mexico and Central America's northern triangle.

But some countries have managed to achieve significant reductions in violence. In Colombia, the absolute number of homicides has almost halved since 2002; the rate per 100,000 people has fallen from 70 to 34 over the period, and is now below the rate in Venezuela. That is something for which U.S. aid can take considerable credit, combined with the efforts of Colombians. In Brazil, São Paulo state, and more recently Rio de Janeiro, have seen steady falls in violent crime, principally because of better policing.

As well as better policing and more effective courts, in the medium term controlling organised crime requires providing more and better legal opportunities for young Latin Americans. The weakness of the rule of law is also manifest in the scale of the informal economy in Latin America, which employs roughly half the labour force. Another such manifestation is the prevalence of corruption. As well as the squandering of public resources, the perception of corruption can generate disillusion with democratic institutions, and provides fodder for populist attacks on representative democracy.

The growth of violent crime has posed an acute threat to media freedoms in some countries, especially in Mexico and Central America, as was the case in Colombia in the 1990s. Drug-related violence has made Mexico one of the world's most dangerous countries for the press, according to the Committee for the Protection of Journalists. Thirteen Mexican journalists have been killed since the beginning of 2010, at least three in direct reprisal for their work. The committee is investigating to determine whether the other deaths were related to the journalists' work

(3) *The practice of elective autocracy*

In a handful of countries elected leaders have chosen to rule in a more or less autocratic manner. Such rulers have not always been of the left: Peru's Alberto Fujimori was a conservative elected autocrat. But over the past decade, a small group of leftist leaders have behaved to a greater or lesser extent as elected autocrats.

Venezuela's Hugo Chavez is the archetype. He has systematically concentrated power in his own hands and neutered independent institutions. He has done this by means of a new constitution; the packing of the judiciary and of other institutions of state, bending the rules to ensure that they are occupied by loyalists; and frequent recourse to rule by decree. He has also considerably expanded the role of the state in economy, often in violation of the property rights guaranteed by the 1999 Constitution, a document he himself inspired. According to Fedecamaras, the main private-sector organisation, almost 400 companies have been nationalised since Mr. Chavez became president in 1999 and late 2010, most of them in 2009 and 2010. Some 3 million hectares of farmland have also been taken over. In most cases, compensation has not been paid. President Chavez has also done his best to neutralise the growing strength of the opposition. He has done this first by eviscerating the powers and resources of local government; and, second, by rewriting the electoral law to eliminate proportional representation (in violation of the constitution) in the election for the National Assembly and gerrymandering the electoral districts, so that although the opposition won a narrow majority of the popular vote in last September's legislative election it ended up with only 67 of the 165 seats. In addition, the government has used its nominees in the offices of Comptroller General and Attorney General to harass legally some opposition leaders, selectively disqualify them from standing as candidates or filing criminal charges against them, often of corruption. Whether or not such charges have legal merit, they have been levied in a politically partisan manner. President Chavez's government has also taken several steps to curb media freedom. These have included the nonrenewal of the broadcasting licence of RCTV, previously the most popular television station, and those of a number of radio stations. Media owners have been the target of law suits and journalists have often faced harassment, including physical attacks by chavista mobs. It should be noted that some media played into the government's hand by adopting a highly partisan stance, usurping the role that should more properly be played in a democracy by opposition political parties. In addition, the opposition allowed the president to turn the National Assembly into a rubber stamp by boycotting the 2005 legislative election.

The main reason that President Chavez has been able to concentrate such power is because he has been remarkably popular, at least since 2004, despite his government's mismanagement of the economy, of infrastructure and many other matters. That is in part because sustained high oil prices have given the government a windfall which has been spent on the poorer Venezuelans who make up his political base.

It is also because of his rapport with many poorer Venezuelans who identify with him as “one of us.” He has persuaded them of his political narrative, according to which they owe their poverty to U.S. imperialism, the “oligarchy” and past “neoliberalism,” even if this does not bear serious historical scrutiny. Thus, in 2006 President Chavez won a fresh Presidential term with 63 percent of the vote. Even though the government’s economic mismanagement meant that Venezuela has suffered 2 years of recession from which it has only emerged this year, polls suggest that Chavez continues to enjoy support from between 40 percent and 50 percent of the population.

Venezuela is in many ways an autocracy, but it is not a totalitarian state. To a significant extent, it retains an open society. Some television channels remain non-partisan, while several important newspapers support the opposition. Civil-society groups play a vital role in monitoring and criticising the government. And unlike the Castros in Cuba, President Chavez owes his legitimacy to the ballot box. Although the President has abused state resources in election campaigns, until now there is no conclusive evidence that the vote count has been fraudulent in Venezuela. Provided it remains united, the opposition has a real chance of winning the Presidential election due at the end of next year (that chance will clearly increase should the President’s health remain in doubt). While there are fears in some quarter that Chavez would not accept electoral defeat, he would have little support within the region for any attempt to cling to power in those circumstances). And all the polling evidence suggests that the vast majority of people on both sides of Venezuela’s political divide consider themselves to be democrats.

Of the other countries in Chavez’s anti-American ALBA block, Nicaragua is the most complete autocracy (Cuba apart). By manipulation of the judiciary and the electoral authority, President Daniel Ortega has got himself on the ballot for this year’s Presidential election, in violation of the constitution. There are strong reasons for believing that the municipal election in 2008 was not free and fair. Two opposition parties were disqualified from the ballot, and independent election observers were refused accreditation to monitor the count. The country’s leading investigative journalist, Carlos Fernando Chamorro, has faced harassment. However, if Ortega wins in November’s vote, it will be because he is more popular than the unimpressive and divided opposition.

Some of these things apply in Bolivia and Ecuador. As in Venezuela, both Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador have concentrated power in their own hands through the device of a new constitution. In Bolivia, the government has taken effective control of the judiciary. Some opponents have suffered harassment. Media organisations say that a law against racism has on occasions resulted in self-censorship. But there can be no doubt that the arrival in Evo Morales in power gave a more inclusive character to Bolivian democracy. Morales remains popular, but less so than he was mainly because of the government’s handling of some economic issues. In Ecuador, opposition concerns about the working of democracy focus on the recent narrow approval in a referendum of government proposals that would give it greater control over the judiciary and the media. In addition, the government has used the defamation law to harass some journalists. To a much lesser extent, there are concerns about the concentration of power in the executive in Argentina. The governments of the Kirchners have exercised extraordinary powers over the distribution of revenues to the provinces; they have nationalised the private pension system, and used its equity investments to place directors on the boards of private companies; and taken a series of measures to disadvantage media groups that are hostile to the government. Yet once again, if President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner wins a second term in the Presidential election in October it will be because of the popularity rapid economic growth has bestowed upon her and the public sympathy she has derived from her bereavement.

(4) Civil society and political change

The committee should note that President Chavez enjoys far less influence in Latin America today than he did 5 years ago. That is partly because he honoured only some of his promises of largesse. It is partly because his verbal aggression against the United States is far less effective with President Obama, who is widely popular among Latin Americans, in the White House. But it is mainly because Venezuela under his stewardship has performed poorly in recent years. Its economy contracted by 3.3 percent in 2009 and 1.6 percent in 2010 according to the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; that compares badly with regional average contraction of 1.9 percent in 2009 and growth of 6 percent in 2010. Venezuela has also performed less well on social progress: for example, between 2005 and 2009 Peru, which has pursued free-market economic policies, climbed 24 places in the United Nations Human Development Report, and now ranks ahead of

Venezuela. It is striking that Ollanta Humala, the victor of Peru's Presidential election, now professes himself to be a sympathiser of Brazil's political approach, rather than that of Venezuela, which he favoured when a candidate at the last election in 2006. In addition, the difficulties of Cuba's regime have further undermined the appeal of atavistic communism.

The political hegemony of the left in Latin America has had positive consequences for democracy in some countries, and negative ones in others. That hegemony has owed much to the commodity boom, which has financed redistributive social policies and allowed incumbents of all political stripes to achieve and retain popular approval. A more uncertain outlook for the world economy suggests that Latin American Presidents may find life harder in the coming decade than they did in the last one. Future economic difficulties may increase popular discontent in the region, but they will also place a premium on sound economic policies.

The polling evidence suggests that roughly half of Latin Americans have remained convinced democrats through the ups and downs of the economic cycle, with only a small minority favouring authoritarian government. However, Latin America's long history of natural-resource abundance combined with extreme inequality and relative underdevelopment means that the populist gene remains part of its body politic. And the prevalence of crime and corruption can add to the appeal of authoritarian political leaders. Nevertheless, as Latin American societies become less poor and less unequal, the social foundations of democracy ought to become stronger. Over the past decade the region has seen an ideological conflict, between democratic reformism and autocratic populism. In my view, that battle is now clearly being won by the democratic reformists. Political hegemony in Latin America is increasingly to be found in the centre ground.

The decline in Chavez's influence shows the wisdom of those in this country who argued that the best policy towards Venezuela's verbal provocations of the United States was to ignore them. The United States still enjoys considerable influence in Latin America. In my view it can best deploy it through close and constructive relations with the governments in the region that show respect for the everyday practice of democracy (an obvious example would be swift approval of the free-trade agreement with Colombia). Multilateral regional diplomacy and succouring civil-society organisations have shown themselves to be the most effective means of supporting democracies that have come under pressure from elected autocracy. Everything suggests that this will continue to be the case for the next few years.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.
Dr. Dominguez.

**STATEMENT OF JORGE I. DOMINGUEZ, PH.D., ANTONIO
MADERO PROFESSOR FOR THE STUDY OF MEXICO, HAR-
VARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, MA**

Dr. DOMINGUEZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Senator Rubio. It's an honor to be here. In my remarks, I concentrate on a point that my colleague Michael Reid just made, namely, that most Latin Americans today live under constitutional democratic government. That is why I spend some time in my written text on Brazil and Mexico, because that is where most Latin Americans live.

I was delighted to hear Senator Rubio's earlier comment comparing Brazil and Peru, because that is in fact how my testimony begins. I look at the example of Brazil's 2002 Presidential election to indicate very much the key points Senator Rubio emphasized: the key role of the constitutional transfer of power from government to opposition, the shift of the political views of the candidate who wins the Presidency, Lula, in significant ways departing from his past—a candidate who had been described as a rabble-rouser and a radical in the past—the fundamental continuity between the policies, economic and social policies, of the outgoing government and the incoming government, and the themes, Mr. Chairman, that you emphasized of a vigorous civil society.

In your previous questioning, of Secretary Jacobson, both of you also asked about international factors. Brazil's 2002 Presidential election is a very good example of the benign role of the international community, including the U.S. Government at the time. Because Lula was perceived as a radical rabblouser, there was panic in international bond markets, which also adversely affected the exchange rate. It was the timely and effective intervention of the International Monetary Fund and the Bush administration at the time that helped to stabilize those economic circumstances, enabled Brazil to have a good election, and, surprising as it may seem for a conservative Republican U.S. President and a self-professed democratic socialist in Brazil, for the two countries to have a good partnership in the years that followed.

It is in that context that I look with hope, yet admittedly not more than that at the Peruvian election, where President-elect Ollanta Humala has indicated similarly a shift of views and even imported Brazilian advisors to try to make this more credible, while bearing in mind as well that Lula and Humala are not the same. Lula never led a military rebellion; Humala did. Lula had never associated his own views with those of Hugo Chavez and Humala did, again as my colleague Michael Reid had indicated.

I pay attention to the Mexico 2000 election for other reasons: the role of the mass media that interests you and this committee; the role of the electoral institution, which is equally crucial; the role of the incumbent President and the political parties at the time. Let me highlight why I do so. On the opposition side, which is one of the lessons I draw for Venezuela, it was essential for the long-running opposition party, the Partido Accion Nacional, the PAN, to believe that it could win and therefore not to shrink away from contesting elections, not doing what the Venezuelan opposition did in December 2005, namely, to abstain and enable Chavez's political forces to win every seat in the national Parliament.

To believe that you can win also means that you believe you can challenge electoral fraud, admittedly with the cooperation of others, which is the next point that I want to make. The Mexico 2000 Presidential election was one of many where international and domestic election observers were important. It included the NDI and the IRI. We, fellow witnesses, were chatting before about that election before this session started. As we look ahead at Latin American elections, there is an important role for the international community in such election observation.

On the international side, in Mexico 2000 the Clinton administration had effectively signaled, along with Wall Street and other international financial markets, that the key was a good election, not whether Candidate A or Candidate B were to win it, and that was effectively communicated.

Next, I simply want to underline my agreement with the themes that both of you, Senator Menendez and Senator Rubio, have indicated with regard to Venezuela. The issues there are not just whether one in general agrees or disagrees with Hugo Chavez, but the politicization of the electoral institutions, the aggressive intimidation of the press, including the shutdown of independent mass media organizations, the aggressive undercutting of the rights of civil society both under international human rights conventions

and Venezuela's own constitution, the intimidation of opposition political leaders, including potential Presidential candidates, and the abuse of executive decree powers.

It is, as you noted in your opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, about to be the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. It remains a viable, valid, and I hope more effective document, difficult as it is, appropriate as it is, to coordinate U.S. policies and the work of our allies and friends through a multilateral institution that is at times cumbersome, but it is the most effective path that we have.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Dominguez follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JORGE I. DOMINGUEZ

Rabble-rouser. Radical. Left-winger. Threat to prosperity. Dangerous socialist. These and other adjectives were used to describe Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva from his appearance in the late 1970s on Brazil's national political stage until his first election as President of Brazil in 2002. During the 2002 Presidential campaign, domestic and international markets continued to view Lula as a grave threat. Interest rates spiked on Brazilian bonds; there was also exchange-rate turmoil.

In retrospect, Brazil's 2002 Presidential election was a watershed in the history of democratic and market consolidation in Brazil. It demonstrated the effectiveness of Brazil's constitutional order through the public formulation and expression of opposing views and the fair and effective operation of its electoral institutions under the rule of law. It featured the role of parties, civil society, and a free mass media.

- It was the first time in 40 years that one popularly elected Brazilian President passed the sash of office to another.
- It completed the process of incorporation of all Brazilian social classes into the political process.
- It passed political power from the governing party to the opposition party.
- The election was hotly contested, and there was free, vigorous mass media coverage and broad and deep engagement from civil society and political parties.
- Lula signaled transparently during his 2002 campaign that he and his party had changed their views and would henceforth "hug" the political center.
- Lula and his party went on to fulfill the promises made during the campaign, including significant continuity, with plausible policy adjustments, of the market-oriented economic policies as well as the social policies of his predecessor.

Brazilian citizens and their leaders constructed this democratic transition and consolidation. International factors were secondary, but not insignificant. During the 2002 Presidential campaign, the Brazilian Government required support from the International Monetary Fund to stabilize the economy and calm international bond and exchange-rate markets. During the campaign, Lula publicly endorsed the IMF stabilization plan and promised to implement it upon his election as President, which he did. The U.S. Government supported the agreement between the IMF and Brazil. Indeed, it is no hyperbole that the IMF and the Bush administration contributed to Lula's election as President of Brazil and, in that way, contributed as well to the consolidation of Brazil's democracy and prosperity.

Democratic politics is, therefore, built at home, but it is easier to build it with a supportive international community.

This experience may be pertinent to an assessment of Peru's President-elect Ollanta Humala. As had been the case with Lula during his 2002 Presidential campaign, Humala made it clear during his 2011 Presidential campaign that his own views had changed, declaring that he wished to emulate Lula's experience, including through the importation of Brazilian campaign advisors. True enough, the pre-Presidential political biographies of Lula and Humala are quite different. Humala once helped to lead a military rebellion; Lula never did. Lula founded, shaped, and led a political party; Humala's political appeal has remained personalistic. Humala's previous Presidential campaign had sought to emulate Chavez, not Lula. Yet, recent Peruvian history has witnessed an uninterrupted string of Presidents who moderate their policies upon their installation in office. Humala has a historic opportunity now to implement the social policies that Peru has long needed and for which it finally has the economic resources.

Now, consider Mexico. It was 11 p.m. on July 2, 2000. The television networks, broadcasting from the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), turned their cameras on the

Institute's president, who was about to give the preliminary results of the voting in Mexico's 2000 Presidential election. Speaking in a rushed monotone, he reported on the "quick counts" and other technical means of verifying the voting in advance of the complete count. He referred to statistical significance or the lack thereof of these various tests, making the dramatic appear dull; he concluded on the cautious note that Vicente Fox, the candidate of an opposition party, Partido Accion Nacional (PAN), seemed ahead.

With a break that lasted only seconds, the television networks turned their cameras on President Ernesto Zedillo at his Presidential office in Los Pinos. Zedillo, dressed formally for this occasion, was wearing the tricolor Presidential sash across his chest. Behind him were two icons of republican Mexico. One was a gigantic flag of Mexico. The other was a portrait of the 19th-century President Benito Juarez. Zedillo spoke deliberately, pausing for effect and clear public understanding. He noted that the audience had just heard the preliminary results from the IFE president. Without hesitation, he boldly congratulated Vicente Fox on his election as President of Mexico and pledged that his administration would cooperate fully during the upcoming 5-month transition period. He called upon his party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), to be proud of a long record of accomplishment in the transformation of Mexico and, in that spirit, to support the election outcome.

Again with a short break lasting only seconds, the television cameras next turned their lights on the PRI headquarters, specifically on the party's Presidential candidate, Francisco Labastida. All PRI leaders looked stunned. Some in the crowd shed tears. Then someone was sufficiently inspired to start singing the national anthem, and others joined in. The special transmission in its three parts lasted about 10 minutes. It would be followed with images of Fox supporters celebrating in downtown Mexico City and elsewhere as the evening wore on.

This account illustrates five key changes in Mexican national politics that have endured.

- Television and radio were the means to communicate the remarkable transfer of political power that had just occurred.
- The constitutional reorganization of Mexico's electoral institutions proved essential to permit and enact a free election.
- Free, professional public opinion polling and the associated technical work of academics was an important instrument for this transition.
- The leadership of the outgoing President was essential to impart confidence that the election outcome would be respected.
- Both the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the long-lived opposition party, the National Action Party (PAN) had changed to make a free, fair hotly contested election possible.

The slow process of transition toward democracy in Mexico, and the prior experience of democratic transition in the 1980s in Brazil, greatly facilitated and contributed to the experiences of democratic consolidation in both countries in the 2000s.

In Mexico's case as well, Mexican citizens and their leaders constructed democratization, yet international factors played a supportive role. In Mexico, the clear message from international financial markets was to hold a good election, not to place bets for one candidate and against the other. On election eve, only the candidates from the PRI and the PAN had a reasonable chance of winning. Wall Street, London, Hong Kong, the Clinton administration, and other governments conveyed the same message: Let the election be free and fair—either candidate would govern Mexico as an international good partner.

The construction of Mexico's democratic transition had also required that opposition leaders and their supporters should shed the self-paralyzing expectation that the long-ruling party would commit electoral fraud and abuse. This is a pertinent experience from Mexico's near-past to today's circumstances in Venezuela. One must believe in the possibility of winning in order to be able to win.

Mexico's 2000 Presidential election, as had been the case in its 1994 and 1997 national elections, featured as well a significant number of international and especially domestic civil society observers. Domestic and transnational civil society thus played a significant role, including among them the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute. Election observation, in Mexico and elsewhere, is an important contributor of the international community to democratic practice.

Most Latin Americans live in Brazil and Mexico. Most Latin Americans, therefore, experience democratic governance, market-oriented economic policies, more effective social policies, open political party contestation, free mass media, and have ample opportunity to participate in civil society organizations. The principal story in their respective processes of democratization was written at home, though in each case a benign international environment was a helpful secondary consideration.

The U.S. Government, under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, as had been the case as well under Presidents George H.W. Bush and Jimmy Carter and during the second term of President Ronald Reagan's administration, contributed to these democratic processes through a combination of self-restraint and timely yet modest positive inducements. Transnational civil and political society played a generally constructive role as well. The political effect of international markets was benign in Mexico but it made the democratic process temporarily more difficult in Brazil.

A similar story regarding the national construction of democratic processes and a supportive role for the international community, including the United States, can be told with regard to Chile in 1990; Uruguay in 2004 when the first President from the Left, the Frente Amplio's Tabare Vazquez, was elected President; or the Dominican Republic in 1978 and 1994–96. Domestic and international election observation was also crucial in these pivotal elections in Chile and the Dominican Republic.

There is, however, a quite different sequence for the relationship between domestic and international factors as they may affect the start of democratization. A cataclysmic international event may reshape structures and incentives to foster a democratic transition. This was the impact of the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union in Europe. It was the starting point for the democratization of former Communist Eastern Europe. The end of the cold war helped also to bring to an end the wars swirling in Central American countries in the 1980s, with peace and democratization in Nicaragua in 1990, El Salvador in 1992, and Guatemala in 1996. Domestic and international election observers were essential in these Central American transitions. Defeat at war is another cataclysmic event; it contributed to democratization in Greece in the early 1970s and in Argentina in the early 1980s. These are, to be sure, unusual, and infrequent events.

The same framework for analysis sheds light on Venezuela, which is the most noteworthy example in the Western Hemisphere of a departure from constitutional liberal democracy, the concentration of disproportionate power in the hands of the President, the imposition of constraints on the mass media and civil society organizations, and frustrated international initiatives.

Venezuelan voters have repeatedly elected Hugo Chavez President of Venezuela. Unlike Mexicans in 2000 or Brazilians in 2002, Venezuelans have yet to vote the incumbent or his party out of office. In various plebiscites, Venezuelans have also supported a number of constitutional changes that have greatly strengthened Presidential powers in Venezuela. In the December 2007 plebiscite, however, Venezuelan citizens defeated Chavez-proposed constitutional amendments that would have dramatically strengthened Presidential powers even more and weakened nearly all means to hold the executive accountable. Voters stopped the worst outcome but have acquiesced in other constitutional changes that have weakened the constitutional bases for democracy.

The weakening of democratic institutions in Venezuela has not, alas, been caused by Chavez alone. In 1998 and subsequent elections, Venezuelan voters also abandoned the two major political parties, the social democrats and Christian democrats (Accion Democratica and COPEI) that had shaped democratic practice in Venezuela since the 1940s. In advance of the December 2005 legislative elections for the National Assembly, opposition leaders decided to boycott the elections in the hope that their failure to participate would discredit the result. The main effect was that Chavez's partisans won every seat and left the opposition without a voice in the National Assembly. This is also why I referred to Mexico's opposition experience, above, in thinking about Venezuela's opposition.

The Venezuelan opposition has demonstrated renewed signs of life and much better strategic sense in recent years, winning nearly half of the votes in the most recent national legislative election and undertaking the work necessary to choose a single unity candidate in time for December 2012 Presidential election to contest Chavez's expected bid for reelection.

Whatever anyone's assessment may be regarding the behavior of voters or opposition leaders, there are appropriate reasons for concern regarding the following issues in Venezuela:

- The extent of partisan politicization of electoral institutions, which raises doubts about the fairness of the election process.
- The severe constraints on freedom of the press and the systematic attempt to undercut unfairly the public expression of views critical of the government.
- The comparably severe constraints on civil society organizations that demonstrate independence from the government, both those entities that had long existed (unions, business federations) and other that emerged in response to the Chavez government.

- The arrest, or induced exile, of significant opposition leaders, including the major potential opposition presidential candidates for 2012.
- The use of executive decree powers both to enact policies that should have emerged from the normal legislative process as well as to implement these anti-democratic practices.

In such a context, the impact of the international community has been frustrating and frustrated. In the early years of the past decade, the Organization of American States (OAS) sought to protect the public space for fair elections. The role of the OAS was positive in this regard; voters continued to support Chavez, however. In the early years of the past decade, U.S. Government officials adopted a publicly confrontational approach toward Chavez. No doubt many of those criticisms were accurate, and understandable, but they backfired. They made it easier for Chavez to consolidate his core political support and to blame the United States for both the failed 2002 coup attempt to overthrow him and other difficulties. The prolonged rise in the international price of petroleum, which characterized the entire past decade until late 2008, enormously increased President Chavez's capacity to build support at home and abroad.

The decision of the Bush administration in its second term, continued under President Obama, to tone down public confrontation with Chavez and better coordinate policies with Venezuela's neighbors has deprived Chavez of the ease of exporting blame but it has also not had much impact one way or another on Venezuela's slow march toward autocracy.

Constitutional democracy and the rule of law are valuable in themselves. They may also contribute significantly to prosperity. Autocrats may promise policies that domestic and international investors like, but those policies are credible only for the duration of the autocrat's rule. In constitutional liberal democracies as they have been evolving in Brazil, Mexico, Chile, and Colombia, among others, policies change as different Presidents and political parties take their turn at governing but the fundamental rules of constitutionality—and the framework of fundamental economic rules, therefore—persist over time. The credibility of promises to investors under such democratic circumstances is much higher and effective. Such credibility helps to explain why these four countries have out-performed their own economic histories under democratic rule.

Venezuela, in contrast, has suffered from lack of domestic and international investment, and from capital flight, for a variety of reasons, but one of them is that President Chavez's promises and policies are time limited—they may last while he is President but it is unclear, even doubtful, that they would outlive his Presidency.

Democratic constitutionalism serves prosperity in other ways. Voters, the national legislature, and the mass media may hold the executive accountable, and such informational transparency makes it more likely that errors would be corrected. Voters may, in democratic elections, defeat incumbents, thereby making an even sharper correction. Under effective interparty competition and legislative oversight, the likelihood of abuse of power declines. These elements, too, help to distinguish between the poor quality of governance in Venezuela and the better quality of governance in the region's constitutional democracies.

Democracy and prosperity do not always go hand in hand. It is possible to have one without the other, and Latin America's political and economic history is an apt example of such past disjunctions. Today, however, the region's governments cluster in ways unlike during most of the region's history. Today, the more effective constitutional democracies have also the better prospects for prosperity, and the countries with sound economic policies are also those where democratic practice is stronger. On the positive side, this is a "virtuous" or reinforcing path about which there is much to celebrate. On the negative side, it is a worrisome path that may lead to further abuse and poor performance.

In both instances, Latin Americans have constructed their own history. It is our task from afar to provide the supportive environment that helps to foster democratic practices, stand with their citizens vigilant for the respect of rights enshrined in international treaties, and be ready to support the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, under the auspices of the Organization of American States—a Charter, signed on the fateful day, September 11, 2011, whose principles were valid then as well as today.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.
Mr. Fisk.

**STATEMENT OF DANIEL FISK, VICE PRESIDENT FOR POLICY
AND STRATEGIC PLANNING, INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN
INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. FISK. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rubio, thank you for the opportunity to present some observations from the perspective of a nongovernmental organization involved in democracy promotion. The International Republican Institute has implemented programs in Latin America for more than 25 years. We currently are in 11 countries.

With this year representing the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, this hearing provides a useful reminder that U.S. interests are fundamentally connected to the state of democracy in the Americas. Let me join the chorus in terms of the good news. Over the past 30 years, we have witnessed throughout the region the broad acceptance of elections and other democratic practices as the means to select leaders and legitimize governmental authority.

The fact is that more of the region's citizens are today participating in the political and economic decisionmaking of their respective countries than ever before.

Now, this is not to argue that some form of democratic perfection has descended upon the hemisphere. Rather, it is to note that the acceptance of democratic practices are now a foundation of citizen expectations throughout the region, regardless whether individual leaders genuinely support or fully implement such practices.

There are exceptions and challenges to this general positive growth of democracy. Uncontrolled crime and authoritarian populism I would identify as the two most significant challenges.

The role of constitutional order and the rule of law are fundamental to a country's democratic health. But these terms can also be misleading, as in the case of Cuba, as you two gentlemen have made reference. That nation has a constitutional order and a body of laws, yet remains the antidemocratic outlier in the hemisphere.

The deepening of democracy requires a constitutional order that protects the rights of individuals, provides for the responsible division of governmental authority, and promotes respect for the rule of law. However, over the past decade we have seen instances where constitutional changes have undermined democratic institutions and instead concentrated power in a single office or person.

Constitutional order, like the rule of law, should be neutral, not an enshrinement of any particular political tendency. It should include constraints on governmental action, not just limit the range of citizen behavior. As for the rule of law, too many countries still suffer from an arbitrary application of the law, not from a lack of laws. In some instances the law is dysfunctional by design, generally by the design of a small segment of the population who seeks to empower and enrich itself at the expense of others. This I think is at the core of authoritarian populism.

Weak institutions, including civil society structures, and attacks on journalists and a free media also contribute to a situation of democratic uncertainty. Regardless of the past reasons for this stage of affairs, democratic practice remains most successful where there are competing centers of governmental authority, where civil society has an opportunity to meaningfully engage decisionmakers,

and where the media can vigorously report on the actions of those in office.

As we've discussed here earlier, today's Venezuela is the region's poster country for the challenges that confront the consolidation of a democratic society. While Mr. Chavez's rise to power 12 years ago represented popular disapproval of government run by wealthy elites, his government, however, has manipulated an independent judicial system, eliminated any sense of a predictable rule of law, and eviscerated the responsibilities of other independent bodies, including the national legislature.

Worrisome is that we have seen elements of this model copied in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua, and we share the open question on what happens with Peru. But by comparison there is Colombia, where a popular President with an 80-percent approval rating stepped down when a proposed third term in office was deemed unconstitutional by an independent judicial body. A free competitive election chose his successor. Democracy is about more than a leader's approval rating and Alvaro Uribe understood that and respected that.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, we should keep in mind that many in the hemisphere want our help in building and strengthening democratic institutions and practices. Such assistance is not a matter of imposing U.S. structures and values. Each country has to develop its own path. However, as partners in this experiment called democracy we can and should respond to those seeking to learn from other's experiences and not only from the North American experience. More importantly in my view, by supporting those who favor freedom and democracy we are contributing to the betterment of all who live in this hemisphere.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fisk follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL W. FISK

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rubio, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present some observations on "the state of democracy in the Americas" from the perspective of a nongovernmental organization involved in democracy promotion. The International Republican Institute (IRI) has implemented democracy programs in Latin America for more than 25 years. Currently, we work in 11 countries in Latin America.

We are all aware that the vast majority of attention in the foreign policy arena is currently—and rightly—focused on the historic events taking place in the Middle East, the continuing efforts in Afghanistan to stabilize that country's situation, and the ongoing challenges of rebuilding in Iraq and addressing other aspects of the war against terrorism.

With the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter on the horizon, this hearing provides a useful reminder of the importance to the United States of our Western Hemisphere neighborhood. As members of this subcommittee know well, this hemisphere remains critical to any efforts by the United States to create jobs, to become less energy dependent on unstable suppliers, to address the challenge of illegal drugs and associated criminal activities and violence, and to maintain our overall national security. The state of democracy in the Americas is fundamentally connected to all of these U.S. interests and to the future betterment of the human condition throughout this hemisphere.

Before addressing the specific questions outlined in the Subcommittee's invitation to testify today, it is important to remember that the overall "democratic trend line" in the Americas is one of notable achievement during the last 30 years. It is fair to describe the region as generally democratic, with some notable exceptions, of course. During this time:

- We have witnessed the acceptance of elections as a regular exercise to select leaders and legitimize—or attempt to legitimize—governmental authority.
- We have witnessed the broad rejection of military dictatorships and of an overt political role for militaries.
- And we have generally seen advances in respect for human rights, as well as the opportunities for citizens to better their lives in health, education, and economic status.

The fact is that more citizens are today participating in the political and economic decisionmaking processes of their respective countries than ever before.

This is not to argue that “democratic perfection” has descended upon this hemisphere. Rather, it is to note that the acceptance of certain values and processes are now at the base of citizen expectations throughout the region, regardless whether individual leaders genuinely support or fully implement such practices.

In part this acceptance has historical roots. While the long-term record of this hemisphere’s politics is mixed, there is a democratic or reform legacy beyond that of the United States and Canada. For instance, the democratic footprint in many Caribbean nations is all-too-often overlooked. The commitment to democratic practices remains strong and has served those nations well, even if some only received their formal independence in the 1960s.

In Costa Rica, Uruguay, Argentina, Colombia, Panama, and Chile, despite periods of civil conflict or authoritarian rule, reform undercurrents have endured. In other countries in the region over the last 30 years, we have seen conditions change, in some instances with external support, resulting in an embrace of democratic norms and processes, albeit with continuing challenges. Examples include Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Paraguay, and Brazil.

Are these countries examples of perfectly fine-tuned democracies? Certainly not—and most would say that our own democracy is still seeking to fulfill its ideals. However, what we see in many of these democratic transition “success stories” is an appreciation for—and value placed upon—democratic institutions and broader citizen participation.

This hemispheric embrace was memorialized in September 2001—ironically, on September 11—when the 34 active member countries of the Organization of American States (OAS) unanimously approved the Inter-American Democratic Charter. In the words of the Charter, “the peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it” (Article 1).

Adherence to the objectives of the Charter remains uneven. Regardless, it remains the normative standard for this hemisphere and should be the measure by which countries are evaluated.

Obviously, there are exceptions and challenges to the general, positive growth of democracy in the region. As noted in the 2011 report of Freedom House, Freedom in the World, “uncontrolled crime and authoritarian populism” are threats to the region’s democratic progress. IRI sees the presence and/or effects of these threats in a number of countries in which we work, and countries where institutions are weak, corruption is rife, and citizens do not have confidence in the authorities are especially vulnerable to the consequences of uncontrolled crime or authoritarian populism, or both, as we are seeing in Venezuela, for example.

The issues, then, at the heart of this hearing—the rule of law, constitutional order, concentration of power, and the role of civil society and a free press—are elements in deterring and reversing these threats.

The role of constitutional order and rule of law are fundamental. But these terms can also be misleading, as in the case of Cuba. That nation has a “constitutional order,” at least to the extent that it operates, in name, under a so-called constitutional document and a body of laws, but both are used to cloak a totalitarian structure with a veil of legitimacy. Cuba remains the hemisphere’s antidemocratic outlier, even when placed side by side with today’s Venezuela, Nicaragua, Ecuador, or Bolivia.

Constitutional order also is subject to manipulation. There have been a variety of constitutional reforms and challenges to constitutional order over the past decade, from Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador to Colombia. In some instances, constitutional changes, approved and legitimized by popular plebiscites, have undermined democratic institutions, transparency and accountability, allowing for the concentration of power in a single office or person. For example, most recently, Ecuador held a referendum that consolidated the power of the President over the judiciary and the media.

If there is good news in these processes, it has been in the participation of large numbers of citizens; the bad news is the significant erosion of the checks and balances essential to democratic governance that has been masked by feel-good measures, such as shorter work hours or other perceived benefits, or by issues that

distract voters from the sponsor's wider political agenda. Again Ecuador's recent referendum offers an example: in its constitutional referendum, the most widely publicized question had to do with the proposal to curb casinos.

Whereas a persistent challenge has been the treatment of constitutions as "multiple choice" documents—with leaders determining which provisions to respect and which to ignore—the region has recently seen constitutional amendments that result in the transfer of authority to a single officeholder who wields arbitrary authority and is not constrained by the country's constitution. In effect, the constitution has become the basis for the exercise of authoritarian power over facets of everyday life.

The deepening of democracy requires a constitutional order that protects the rights of individuals, provides for the responsible division of governmental authority, and promotes respect for the rule of law. Constitutional order, like the rule of law, should be neutral, not an enshrinement of any particular political tendency. It and the law should include rules or principles that constrain governmental action, not just limit the range of citizen behavior.

As for the rule of law, several countries in the Americas have experienced the arbitrary application of the law, not a lack of laws. In too many instances, the law is dysfunctional by design—generally the design of a small segment of the population which seeks to benefit and enrich itself at the expense of others. This, in many ways, is at the heart of today's authoritarian populism: the arbitrary manipulation of the law with the objective of consolidated political power under the guise of "participatory democracy."

In part, this situation has evolved as a result of weak or fragile institutions, including weak civil society structures. In a number of countries, the governmental structural underpinnings of a President, Cabinet Minister or legislator are wholly reflective of the personality, not some free-standing structure. The need goes further than the existence of an apolitical civil service—which is sorely needed in many countries. As a former State Department colleague once put it, in Latin America, you can talk about presidents but not presidencies, ministers but not ministries. Often the structure, to the extent there is one, exists as a reflection of the personality, being little more than a shell which is filled by the appointments of the next occupant, not as an independent institution focused on the national interest.

This institutional weakness is also seen in other branches of government, including the institutions that should be a counterweight to concentrated executive power, including national legislatures and judiciaries. Departmental and municipal governments also often suffer from a reliance on the national executive for resources, and the same has been found to occur with other independent bodies, such as national election commissions. Sometimes the institutional weakness of these other governmental entities is exacerbated by the constitutional division of power; sometimes it is the consequence of neglect or the malignancy of corruption.

Some observers have ascribed this situation to the caudillo ("strongman") tradition in Latin America: the blurring of governmental authority in one central figure. This situation also has generated a persistent debate on "presidentialism" versus "parliamentarism" in Latin America. Regardless of the historic basis for power being centralized in one person, or one's views on presidencies versus parliaments, democratic practice remains most successful where there are competing centers of governmental authority, where civil society has the opportunity to meaningfully engage decisionmakers, and where the media can vigorously report on the actions of those in power.

It is for these reasons that IRI sees significant value in developing and strengthening the multiple elements that are fundamental to democratic governance, from national legislative bodies, including those in Mexico, Colombia, and Peru, and political parties to local or municipal governments, civil society organizations, and a robust media.

Today's Venezuela is the poster country for the challenges that confront the consolidation of genuine democratic practices and norms.

In Venezuela there is clearly a sense of "democratic right and wrong" among the people, but the institutions in that country are fragile and earlier governments failed to meet the needs or expectations of a significant segment of the population. This situation has allowed one man—Hugo Chavez—and his allies to tip the balance of power in his direction by manipulating the once-independent judicial system, eliminating any sense of predictable rule of law, and eviscerating the checks and balances that should be provided by the national legislature. Through the consolidation of power in the executive, Mr. Chavez has been able to seize private property and wealth, obstruct national-level political opposition, punish a free media, harass civil society, and perpetuate his own power through self-serving so-called "constitutional reforms" and plebiscites.

While Mr. Chavez's rise 12 years ago represented a popular disapproval of self-interested government run by wealthy elites—his remaining in power represents a virus to which several countries in the region have fallen victim. Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua can certainly be included in that grouping. Presidents Morales and Correa, respectively, have copied President Chavez's blueprint for consolidating powers under the guise of "popular" and "participatory" mechanisms. Nicaragua's President, Daniel Ortega, has used Mr. Chavez's money—the use of which is not subject to accountability by any Nicaraguan—to exert influence over the media and other sectors of society and government in an effort to perpetuate his hold on power. In November, Mr. Ortega will attempt to extend his hold on power through scheduled national elections. Already there are concerns by many Nicaraguans that the electoral field is tilted in Mr. Ortega's favor.

By contrast, there is the experience of Colombia. As the 2010 Presidential election cycle approached in Colombia, a segment of the citizenry voiced a desire for Alvaro Uribe to run for, and serve, an unprecedented third term in office. To do so, the Colombian Constitution would have needed to be amended via a popular referendum. However, in one of the strongest pieces of evidence that democratic institutions and order have come a long way in Colombia, the country's highest court ruled that a referendum was unconstitutional. As a result, Colombia's President—with an 80-percent approval rating—ended his term in office. A free, competitive election selected his successor.

Mr. Chairman, I will close with two general points: first, we cannot continue to confuse elections with effective or democratic governance. As I noted earlier, the region has embraced elections on a regular and recurring basis. However, it still struggles with governance. Too often, we have given significant attention to an election and then turned away, thinking that the job is largely done. A fair, transparent election merits commendation. However, it does not change a dysfunctional governmental structure; it does not overcome the endemic challenges to the maintenance of a democratic polity. We have learned this lesson in a number of countries.

Yes, the United States has attempted to assist countries in post-election/post-transition situations. At the same time, this attention has had its deficiencies—not intentionally but because we often consider governance as little more than a technical problem to be addressed. Our programs tend to shy away from helping democratically elected officials with the small "p" political aspects of governing, which involves continuing interaction between officials and citizens—an interaction that is at the core of democratic governance.

This type of assistance must include more than the provision of technical tools. It may be useful to have software to track a country's budget or cases in its court system; but such software is irrelevant to the average citizen if services cannot be delivered, if bureaucrats and judges perform based on graft, or if citizens' views are ignored by decisionmakers as policies are being developed and implemented.

Such assistance is not a matter of imposing U.S. structures on Latin America. Each country has to develop its own path. As partners in this experiment called democracy, we can respond to those seeking to learn from the experiences of others, and not only from the North American experience. There are many models of successful democratic development.

Second, and related to the above, we should keep in mind that many in this hemisphere want our help in the building and strengthening of genuine democratic institutions and practices. The peoples of this hemisphere "get" freedom and democracy. By supporting them, we are contributing to the betterment of all who live in this hemisphere.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you all for your very insightful testimony.

Let me start by taking off where you just finished, Mr. Fisk. What is the appropriate role for the United States in helping civil society further promote democracy where it is not as vibrant and strengthening it where it is?

What are the top two or three things the United States should do?

Dr. Dominguez.

Dr. DOMINGUEZ. One effective instrument—and it speaks to Senator Rubio's question of Secretary Jacobson—is election observation. Election observation is a set of procedures, a set of instruments, which has developed over a period of time. It can be

effective, it has been effective in a number of entities. Some of it may be done by any civil society organization in various countries, including the United States. But some of it, which I would commend to both of you, is the work that IRI and NDI have done over time; this is a specific issue. In my own personal experience with election observation, working with NDI and IRI has been unfailingly very rewarding and I believe effective.

Let me give you a different example altogether. It may not work, but just to think out loud. So beginning some years ago, the state of Zacatecas in Mexico led the way, other entities elsewhere in Mexico followed it accordingly, to try to harness some of the remittances from Mexican citizens living in the United States, not just to help individual family members, but also to help to develop social objectives, community objectives, and small civil society groups at the local level.

It developed eventually into what is often called the three-for-one funding. For every dollar that comes from a Mexican in the United States to a family and in a local Mexican community, Mexican local and state and federal entities contribute a dollar. The question is whether some of that could be augmented or facilitated through the charitable features of the U.S. Tax Code, to facilitate and to stimulate those kinds of commitments where the bulk of resources would come, not from the U.S. taxpayer, but from individual citizens who voluntarily make these efforts and from governments in Mexico or other Latin American countries. This would harness transnational civil society, but for the purpose of assisting those in particular communities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Reid.

Mr. REID. Mr. Chairman, I would say firstly it's important to avoid kind of crude attempts at promoting regime change. I'm struck—from outside, or exporting democracy from outside. I'm struck by the kind of broad consensus that I think exists here today that that is not the way forward, and I think that's good.

Second, I would say that a lot of this work inevitably falls not to the United States Government, but to other institutions in American society, and particularly foundations and NGOs. I do think that supporting media freedom, pressure groups, and watchdogs throughout the hemisphere is absolutely vital and they do an important job, and the more of that work that is done the better.

I think Senator Rubio, if I remember rightly, mentioned the idea of the United States supporting parliamentary visits by, for example, Venezuelan parliamentarians to other, more robust democracies in Latin America, and that strikes me as very important, because I think that peer pressure at the end of the day and taking the peers of Venezuela to be the other Latin American countries I think is important.

Specifically, there is a specific event scheduled next year, the Presidential election in Venezuela, which is of supreme importance that it should be as free and fair as possible. I think election observation may be difficult. It can only be achieved through multilateral agreement.

I would note that I think there's been no conclusive proof up until now that the electoral, the actual counting of voting, has not

been accurate in Venezuela, and it's important to mobilize as much pressure as possible to ensure that that vote is free and fair.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me just follow up on my question. You mentioned regime change at the very beginning. Surely you don't suggest that assisting civil society to promote greater democracy, freedom of the press, and the right to organize, is regime change?

Mr. REID. I didn't mean to. Of course I don't think that's the case. I think there's a distinction. But I think in the past some elements within Venezuela, for example, attempted unconstitutional regime change and, while they did not, I don't think there's any proof they got support from the administration here, they got support from some political sectors here.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Fisk, IRI has had a robust Cuba program for many years that supports civil society and conducts unique polling on the views of Cubans on a variety of issues. What do you think has worked? What can we do in places like Cuba to help promote civil society and disseminate independent voices both on and off the island?

Mr. FISK. Mr. Chairman, I first of all believe that the programs that have been implemented, while they've had their bumps in the road in implementation, overall have overcome, been able to overcome, a lot of the challenges presented by the Cuban regime specifically.

In terms of continuing to make sure that we in terms of the NGO world get information to the island, that we try to find opportunities to get Cubans skills in terms of basic concepts of democracy and also some basic organizational skills. In some cases we're starting with very, very basics. In some cases it's pens and paper. I know there's a lot of excitement about social media and that's also a facet in terms of what IRI does. But I think that the fundamentals are there in terms of how it works.

The problem, of course, we always run into is the fact that the regime has a very effective security apparatus. The other issue we have, frankly, in a forum like this is when we talk about it it potentially calls attention to things or to people, and you were right earlier to note that a lot of these individuals have to make a very tough decision. A U.S. NGO can always get up and leave a place. In Cuba it's even tougher than others.

But I do think that in terms of the fundamentals of the U.S. program as it exists, I think it's there. From our vantage point, of course, we always see opportunities for more. But it is a case in which I think that the committee from our perspective, the committee should be assured that there are things in motion and there are ways to get information—there are ways to get these skills to people on the island.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. Thank you to the panel.

Here's what I'd like to do, is kind of make a brief statement on my views, something that's been on my mind for a while. It's very topical. It's what we're talking about today. And then get your impressions, your agreement, your disagreement both. I'd prefer your agreement, but your honest assessment.

A couple things. First of all, you have governments, and I use Cuba as an example, that are not legitimate. In essence, they do

not have the consent of the people that they govern. The only reason why they're in charge is because if you don't agree with them they hit you on the head, they put you in jail, they exile you, they torment you and your family, you have no economic opportunities in the country in general, and especially if you don't agree with the government.

They're illegitimate because they do not govern with the consent of the governed. That's one thing. Put that aside for a second. In those, I think it's very clear in my opinion where the United States should be. We talked—the word “regime change” was used. I would say to you that anywhere in the world where there is an illegitimate government that doesn't govern with the consent of the people that it governs, the United States should be on the side of the people. And I think Cuba is a prime example of that in the Western Hemisphere.

Then you have a second complication or a second issue we face, and that is nations that have democratic institutions, but perhaps leaders that are trying to undermine the democratic institutions or policies that we don't like. That's really the one I want to focus on right now. We're very proud of our Republic in the United States and rightfully so, but it hasn't been one throughout its history without challenges. We certainly had a Civil War 100-some odd years ago over some of the issues that faced our country.

But one of the things that makes us unique is the ability to take on some very difficult issues in this country, very divisive issues, within the context of the Republic. Richard Nixon resigned, but imagine if he had ordered the Army to march on the Capitol and prevent his impeachment if that was headed in that direction.

In my own home State, in the year 2000 we had a very close election that ultimately decided the election and the Presidency of the United States. But when the Supreme Court ruled, Vice President Gore accepted it and moved on. Imagine a different scenario. It's far-fetched for us to think, but it happens around the world, where the Supreme Court rules a certain way and all of a sudden the President or whoever is in charge orders the army into the street or the cancellation of it or what have you, or the intimidation of the Supreme Court on how to rule.

So those institutions by and large, even though we have very heated disagreements in the United States, have allowed us over time to solve some very contentious issues that other countries have had to fight wars over and that have set these nations back.

I was moved reading last night the testimony, the written testimony of Mr. Dominguez. You talked about the election in Mexico and how it was reported by the voting council, and immediately the cameras cut to the President and then they cut to the governing party that had been in charge forever and a day and how they had to accept it, and how the people broke out and started singing the national anthem of Mexico—a really pivotal moment in that country's history.

Imagine how much worse off Mexico would be today, facing the challenges it faces, if it didn't have this democratic institution, fortified by these elections where power changes hands, people aren't happy about it, but they agree with it.

So here's our challenge. From time to time throughout the region there are going to be elections and the person who wins may be somebody whose policies we don't like, not policies to undermine the institutions, just their policies. We may not like their rhetoric and we may not like some of the things they've said in the past or promised to do in the future. But they won an election. So the challenge there for us—and I'd like to have your input on it—is how would you advise, on a foreign policy perspective, the kinds of things we can do to separate—and maybe there is no concrete steps we can take. But how do we separate those two, between the fact that—it's not that we don't like Hugo Chavez's policies, for example; it's that in addition to being a danger to his neighbors and a bad example to the world and an embarrassment to his people and his country and a guy who's holding his country back and that's sad for Venezuela, he also attempts to undermine democratic institutions, maybe not by rigging votes, but certainly by intimidating people, certainly by not creating a fair playing field where both messages can get out and Venezuelans can make an informed decision.

That's different from somebody who's running and saying things we don't like, but ultimately is governing in an effective way. So what is your suggestion to reach that level of public policy maturity where we can distinguish between the election of someone who we don't like what they stand for, but they got legitimately elected, and the election of someone who then uses that position to undermine democratic institutions? Because we should be against that, but ultimately we've got to deal with folks that are elected whose policies we may not like at a given moment.

Mr. REID. Senator, that was a very lucid exposition of the issues. I think the answers are not easy. I think it's important to stress that the construction of robust representative democracies in Latin America is a learning process for the societies themselves, and that was really what I was trying to get at by suggesting that attempts at regime change from outside would not be effective or helpful.

I think that in the case of Venezuela, I'm sure all of us abhor the ways in which the institutions of representative democracy have been weakened in Venezuela. But as you implied, that has so far been done with the consent of the majority of the people, and the narrative that the President has sold to the people has that their problems have been as a result of outside interventions.

We might rationally consider that to be a fantasy, but it has had been quite effective. So in other words, I think it's quite—outside influence is important, but it's important at particular moments. It's likely to have much more leverage and impact at a moment when the society itself is changing its mind, changing its political mind. I think that process is under way in Venezuela. It's not complete yet. I think it's starting in Bolivia and in Ecuador.

I think Nicaragua is a slightly different case in that for an opposition to win an election you have to have a reasonably coherent and plausible opposition and a plausible candidate, and I don't think that's the case in Nicaragua.

So while I think one has to wage the democratic war through civil society, support for civil society institutions, I think one has to also pick one's battles to an extent.

Dr. DOMINGUEZ. One theme that has come out both in your questions and some of the comments from fellow witnesses is an important element in all of these key political issues yet it is very difficult to shape—it's easier to observe, but it's more difficult to shape—and it's statesmanship. So Dan Fisk referred to the statesmanship of President Uribe, who, notwithstanding his popularity, accepted the decision of the constitutional court and stepped down.

Senator Rubio, you just referred to the Mexico 2000 election, where President Zedillo, first time ever, congratulated his opponent and presided over a peaceful transition.

If I knew more how we could fashion such statesmanship, I would feel much more confident about answering your question. But I want to begin with a sense of humility that I cannot fully address it, precisely because that element, statesmanship, is important.

So a couple of examples. At the time the Brazil 2002 Presidential election, I could imagine there would be many people in the city of Washington at the time who were very nervous, just as there were many nervous Brazilians at the time fearful that Lula might be elected President of Brazil. That's why it was difficult. And yet it worked because there was the willingness to give this political process a chance, to see how Lula would govern.

To the great credit, not only of President Lula and Brazilians in the first instance, but also of many others, including the Bush administration at the time—I have no idea what your views were, Dan, but you were an official at the time—this worked very successfully. It really is one of the accomplishments of which Brazilians, but also the international community, should be proud.

That's the question that bears on thinking about Peru today. I don't find myself in general in sympathy with President-elect Humala's views, certainly not the early version of President-elect Humala, but not even the more current versions. But I would want to give him the same benefit of the doubt that Brazilians gave to Lula, and that the international community gave to Lula, to the case of President-elect Humala.

It's probably worth remembering that, when Chavez was first elected President of Venezuela, he did not run on the platform that he has implemented. He was, as Dan Fisk noted, very much in opposition to the way Venezuela had been governed. He was challenging both political parties and long-entrenched elites. But he did not articulate at the time that he would be undertaking the kinds of policies that have undermined the media, and that have undermined journalists and civil society.

The difficulty—the real serious difficulty both for the Venezuelan opposition and for anybody else, is that this Chavez process has occurred very gradually. It was not a military coup. It was not a sharp interruption. It was autocracy drop by drop. It's much more difficult to respond to the gradual installation of autocratic practices. And we have not, we collectively, Venezuelans and the opposition or those of us who may support them outside of Venezuela, have not done a very good job at supporting a democratic process there. It's very hard to do so when it happens little step by little step.

Mr. FISK. If the committee will indulge me in stepping out of my IRI role and taking on kind of from experiences, Senator, I've actually, like a number of us who've served in positions at various times, whether it's academically or in the government specifically, have struggled with exactly the question that you've presented. If someone has an answer that's a definitive one, it would be useful to know.

Picking up on Jorge's comment, though, your counterpart does make a difference. President Bush took the calculated risk in the mind of the Bush administration to reach out to President-elect Lula and then President Lula. It was more than a "trust but verify." You also had two leaders who understood that their national interests—that they had more in common in their national interests, shared more than separated us. That is to both Presidents' credit in my view, and I'm by the way personally pleased that President Obama and President Rousseff have continued that path in terms of United States-Brazilian relationships.

But it is more than a "trust but verify" circumstance. I would argue that Mr. Chavez did not come into office with the intent to be our friend or just to get along with us. I think he had another agenda. This is, I think, also one of those issues that the antidemocrats in the hemisphere learned in the 1980s they could not shoot their way into power, so that they had to learn the democratic practices, but without adopting the democratic ethos and internalizing it. They have done a very good job and, again as Jorge mentioned, it is a matter that we struggle with because, whether we like his policies or not, President Chavez is President because he was elected. President Ortega was elected. President Morales, elected. You go down the list.

That is a dilemma for us, and one of the questions at the base of your question is, in a democratic process can a people basically vote themselves into subjugation, even though it's an antidemocratic state at the end? There is no good policy response.

But let me tie this back to the chairman's question about the instruments. I do think this is a matter in which the United States, both in terms of the executive branch, the President, and this institution, need to be clear, need to be very clear. There needs to be moral clarity in terms of where this country is in terms of supporting small "d" democrats, not only in the hemisphere, but around the world. Ambiguity in my opinion works to the advantage of those who are opposed to democracy or are misusing democratic means to promote their ultimate ends. So that is one thing that's important.

Second, in the end U.S. civil society is a potent force. It's been referenced earlier. There are a lot of, in this hemisphere, a phenomenal amount of engagement between private American citizens and private American groups with counterparts in the hemisphere. There's a phenomenal interaction.

But when it comes to the political side, there is a very small group that do this. I want to be careful because I don't want to sound self-serving, but there is basically a very small community that does this in this country in terms of the outreach to civil society that strengthens them in terms of their ability to organize and advocate on behalf—and again, it doesn't make any difference

whether the issue is education or water or gender equality, violence against women, a number of things. But there is a very small group that does that.

Again, the reality is that those of us who do this—and I'll step back into my IRI role—is we have funders, and those funders are predominantly the United States Government. So this is not a plea for funding, but this is just the reality that we exist in.

Then in terms of what the chairman and you, sir, have made comments to, it is a matter of making sure that that support continues to be there. Again, I think it's one part, the bully pulpit. It's the moral suasion. Another, it's the very real reality on the ground, and it spreads throughout. You asked Secretary Jacobson about country teams, U.S. missions. That's an important place as well for both of those elements to be.

So again, I'm kind of mixing my—wearing two hats here in some ways, but hopefully that is a somewhat coherent answer to your question.

Senator MENENDEZ. A few out-of-body experiences in less than 5 minutes, moving back and forth. But I think it was very insightful.

I want to pick up on something you said and then ask one question. Part of what you said, Mr. Fisk, I know it wasn't a plea for funding. I do believe, however, that these engagements of IRI and NDI are very important. Part of my concern, one of the reasons I have been promoting for several years now a social and economic development fund for the Americas is to address the root cause of why people turn to the Chavezes of the world. They turn because they are in deep economic straits. Their governments prior to have not responded to their hopes, dreams, and aspirations, and someone comes along who promises the world and uses the rhetoric, gets elected, and then uses their position of power to transform institutions to keep them in power. They might continue to do some populist things, though, as was observed, Venezuela is doing worse in terms of its economy versus other parts of the hemisphere.

So it seems to me that one of the things in our national interest and our national security interest—forget about being a good neighbor, which is a desirable goal as well—is if as part of our effort help strengthen the opportunities for sustainable development efforts and education efforts in the hemisphere, we give rise to a growing universe of citizens of the hemisphere who right now sit below the poverty level, are in pretty dire straits and very susceptible to what ultimately ends up being an antidemocratic result. Hence your statement, is it right to go ahead and vote yourself into subjugation at the end of the day?

It seems to me that while this is in the national interest of the United States in our own hemisphere, it only gets a fraction of our overall international assistance, and is the cause of many issues we debate in Congress, such as undocumented immigration. People leave their countries as a result of dire economic straits or civil unrest. Otherwise they would stay. They're beautiful countries. So you want to stop the tide of undocumented immigration? One part of the equations is creating sustainable development and economic opportunities for people in the hemisphere, that will ultimately lead to the benefit of the United States in creating greater markets for U.S. services and products.

You want to ensure that there isn't instability in the hemisphere in terms of security or that Iran, China, and others don't have a deeper foothold than they purport to have in order to strengthen our relationship in that respect.

I hope we can work to create a connection here that says that the work of IRI and NDI and some more robust efforts in creating development opportunities to have a growing middle class in the hemisphere is in the national interest and security of the United States.

My question that I would be remiss if I didn't take advantage of Dr. Dominguez's expertise here is on Mexico. It's probably the country in the hemisphere we are most closely intertwined with by geography, economic trade, security, history, and people. And of course that country has in the past 5 years been challenged by drug trafficking organizations.

I looked at the Freedom House's report, "The Authoritarian Challenge to Democracy," where they drop Mexico's political rating from free to partially free. I admire the President of Mexico's efforts to take on the narcotics cartels, probably more robustly than at any time in Mexico's history, and I wonder, considering the challenges, is that a fair observation of Mexico, one; and two, how do countries like Mexico, that are fighting the narcotics challenge, balance the effort to create security and at the same time make sure that their democratic institutions don't become authoritarian to some degree in response to the security challenge?

Dr. DOMINGUEZ. I have great admiration for President Calderon, given the extraordinarily difficult challenges that he faces, and the work that he has been undertaking. I think it is fair to say that if you or I were journalists in Mexico we would feel intimidated, not by the President of Mexico or by his government, neither by the Mexican Congress or the executive, but by the threat that, if I as a journalist write a story, I could be shot as well as by the fear engendered through the personal experience of assassination and intimidation of journalists in Mexico. This has become a very severe issue.

Similarly, you probably saw the newspaper from Ciudad Juarez on the border saying to criminal organizations: Tell us what you want us to do; we will censor ourselves if need be. So it's not just the actual acts of physical violence, but the realization of an important element of the mass media that they cannot do the job that they want to do and from which Mexico would gain.

So it's one of those instances where, at the level of the working journalist, it is true they are less free than they were before. What is unusual about this case is that it happens not as a result of the actions of the national government. This is not Venezuela. This is not Hugo Chavez.

One of the things that I do find impressive, again difficult as the situation is, is the sustained efforts of the Mexican Government, not only to deploy force to combat those that are committing crimes and assaulting ordinary citizens or journalists and many others, but also to try to train both the military and the police in the effective professional role of law enforcement and the deployment of troops in ways that Mexican security forces had not done in the past.

So, paradoxically, as Mexico's categorization has been dropped to partially free, the security forces are more likely to be respectful of human rights now than they were in the past. I would give high marks to the role of the government as it faces this situation, while at the same time recognizing that, yes, it is true that the experience of the ability to express freedom of the press, freedom of expression, has declined.

Senator RUBIO. I just want to first thank the panel. It's been an excellent panel. I appreciate very much your input. I was just telling the chairman how insightful this is.

I wanted to briefly run—I don't want to call it a doctrine—a view of the region and see your perceptions of it. I've kind of written it down here as we've discussed it. The first is categorizing three different types of entities, the governments that we run into in the region. The first are tyrannies like Cuba, straight-up tyranny. This is a country whose government is not legitimate. It oppresses its people. The only reason why it's in charge in that country is because its people are oppressed. The United States position toward that should be that, you're not legitimate, the government, and that we are going to—if we have a chance, we'll do everything that we can to help your people bring about a change in these countries within our national interests and our limitations.

The second are nations like Nicaragua and Venezuela, that do have democratic institutions, but leaders that are trying to undermine them. Our view of that is that when those efforts are put in place, whether it's intimidating the media or intimidating opposition or intimidating dissent, that we're going to criticize you for it and we're going to call you out for that. We're not going to interfere in your internal affairs. We're not going to support things that may undermine democratic institutions, because we're not going to add to your problems and we're not going to contribute to them, but we're also not going to celebrate and certainly not ignore when you do things the undermine your democratic institutions.

By the way, the challenge there will be—we don't have that problem now, but the challenge there historically has been, well, what if the people undermining the democratic institutions are pro-American or pro our view of the world, but they're undermining democracy? So we'll have to have discipline in order to have credibility with that.

Then the third is nations that have democratic institutions and that respect them. Maybe from time to time those nations don't vote the way we want them to at the United Nations, and maybe they make some weird alliances that we don't fully understand around the world, and we can criticize that. But they are free, they are real republics and democracies. We should celebrate that. And the price—or the benefit of that should be strong relationships with the United States and the ability to do business with them, and this is something we should celebrate and encourage and show the region that, look, we don't want to control your domestic or foreign policy; we'd like to influence it, as you'd like to influence ours. But ultimately, if you're committed to democratic institutions we're going to celebrate that and we want to work with you on that, and that really will strengthen our ties.

Kind of that view of the region as a way to go forward, I don't know if you have any impressions on that?

Mr. REID. Thank you. Just before addressing that question, could I add something to Chairman Menendez's question about Mexico? I lived in Mexico as a journalist for about 4 years in the early 1990s and I would point out that when I lived there, at least for the first 3 years, not a single media outlet in Mexico City was free. So I think there's been a big change and one should remember that context.

It is certainly true that there are serious threats to the lives and liberties of journalists and media organizations in Mexico today, but they tend to be concentrated in remote—in areas away from the capital, as was the case in Colombia in the 1990s.

Just in terms of the security effort and its implications for democracy, I do think it's crucial that Mexico moves faster on building a serious police force or serious police forces, because the historic achievement of the Mexican revolution was to have taken the army out of politics. I think that—in contrast to what was happening elsewhere in the region. I think there is a danger that the longer that the army is involved in the front line of the crackdown against drug trafficking organizations, then the army risks becoming politicized and its reputation tarnished. Indeed, we're starting to see signs of kind of anomic violence in parts of Mexico that are actually reminiscent of the revolution in some ways.

So I think that the task of strengthening police forces in Mexico is absolutely vital and it's going too slowly in my view. But that is a task for the Mexican Government, in which obviously the United States can help in terms of looking at its own drugs and firearms policy, which I know you've held a hearing on recently.

Then just to turn to Senator Rubio's characterization, yes, I think that's right, that somebody like Ollante Humala, whom you mentioned before, is a man who has antidemocratic antecedents, but has arrived in power through a democratic process. The Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset said: "I am myself and my circumstances." I think that the way in which Humala governs will depend a lot on his circumstances, and I think the United States can contribute to those circumstances being those of a strong underlying democracy in Peru by engaging with him.

The only thing I'm troubled slightly by—and this is a long discussion, perhaps, to get into at the end of this session. But I think there is finally a process of change going on in Cuba. I think it's started, because I think that the economic changes that the government has announced, modest though they are, hemmed in though they are by all kinds of restrictions, I think for the first time they involve changes that the regime will not be able to control. If indeed one in three Cubans is going to be working in self-employment in an incipient private sector in a few years time, then the fundamental contract that the Castro brothers established with people on the island, that they would forego their liberty in return for a series of the necessities of daily life being provided for by the state, that's gone, and Cuban society will start changing very rapidly. I think other countries in Latin America will engage with that, and at some time the United States will have to think about in what way it could constructively engage with that in order to

achieve the outcome that I'm sure everybody wants of a democratic and capitalist Cuba.

Dr. DOMINGUEZ. Just to comment on your characterization, I think it's apt and it can give us clarity on a couple of points. It is probably easier and more effective for the U.S. Government to work with and support the countries that already have constitutional democratic regimes than to deal with those that understandably we'll worry about, but their situation is harder to address.

So one connection then could well be to the idea that Senator Menendez mentioned a moment ago, namely, his longstanding interest in a fund for social and economic development. The most successful antipoverty program certainly in Latin America, but not just there, has been economic growth. To be able to facilitate the kinds of economic growth that will bring more people into the work force is an idea on which we ought to focus firmly.

The second observation we've learned, which is why the word "social" is important in the name of Senator Menendez's proposal, is that economic growth alone is probably not as effective as economic growth with sensible, well-targeted social policies. Michael in his opening remarks mentioned conditional cash transfers. To give you a different context, one of the reasons Humala was elected President of Peru is that, for reasons that remain difficult for me to understand, neither of the two most recent Presidents in Peru chose to use the very impressive economic growth of Peru over the last decade to invest in social policies, even when these proposals were presented to them by their advisors.

So understanding the utility of economic growth and smart social policies, which other Latin American countries have undertaken, and focusing on supporting those who are doing good work in these areas—I think that's a good road ahead.

Mr. FISK. Senator, I would agree with your typology. I would add, though, you've also got to remember that there's going to be a government-to-government dynamic and there's going to be a civil-society to civil-society dynamic in each of the three categories you have of countries.

What I would encourage this subcommittee to keep in mind is we tend at times to focus on the tyrannies and the democratic countries at risk. We've got to remember there are still a lot of countries that we would characterize or Freedom House, for example, would characterize as fully free, but they're still struggling. They've got a number of issues on the political side, also on the socio-economic side.

So it's understandable why we focus on a Cuba, on a Venezuela, but we also have to focus on a Guatemala, for example. We have to focus on a Paraguay. So those countries, you don't want to see them moving into another column. That's something to keep in mind.

Again, I would just put—again, this is from an NGO perspective—though the instruments are there to help people help themselves, ultimately the peoples of those countries have to be the actors and have to make the decisions. But again, the United States has a lot we can offer beyond trade agreements, beyond rhetoric. There are instruments here. We have to have the political will to

do it and to deploy those, and that in the end becomes the ultimate question.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you all very much. We have taken a lot of your time. You've been very generous. It's been very insightful. I think you will have helped the committee's work moving forward. We appreciate your testimony.

The record will remain open for 3 days for members to ask questions. If you receive them, we ask you to respond to them as expeditiously as possible. With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:57 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE ROBERTA JACOBSON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR

Question. In a speech at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies on March 29, 2011, Under Secretary Judith McHale discussed how Assistant Secretary Arturo Valenzuela is open to using social media to communicate with Latin American citizens. Specifically, she stated, "We are interested in applying social media to promote our strategic objectives in the Americas." She outlined these objectives as the four pillars of our regional partnership: "protecting citizen security; expanding economic opportunity and social inclusion; securing our clean energy future; and supporting democratic, transparent, and accountable institutions of governance." Similarly, in your testimony today, you stated, "We are, in short, a robust partner throughout the Americas in support of fundamental building blocks of democracy: rights, institutions, security."

- In what ways is social media being used to promote democracy in Latin America? What are the existing programs as of June 2011? What plans are being developed to expand social media programming in the region? Please provide examples of how programs are currently deployed, and please give examples of new innovative programs that will be coming on line in the short term.

Answer. The Department of State uses digital media platforms to advance our policy objectives in Latin America: citizen security, strong democratic institutions, inclusive prosperity and opportunity, and secure and clean energy. Though Internet and mobile penetration vary widely across the Americas, the number of citizens accessing these technologies is on the rise.

The technological mediums that we employ vary. WHA uses Embassy Web sites, blogs, Facebook pages and local equivalents (e.g., Orkut in Brazil), Twitter feeds, video streaming, and interactive Web chats to expand our reach and sustain relationships with foreign audiences. WHA increasingly uses mobile content developed by other State Department bureaus and U.S. Embassies to reach individuals without access to broadband Internet.

Digital platforms amplify policy messages and raise the profile of official visits, including of President Obama and Secretary Clinton. In their and other visits to the region, social media and Web technology—across multiple language platforms— attract the largest possible audience, thus helping us reach a wider, and often times younger, audience.

For example, when President Obama visited Brazil in March 2011, we invited all Brazilians to take part in his visit through a Web site where they could provide their views about education, global cooperation, the economy, and clean energy. The effort netted over 32,000 welcome messages for the President, 160,000 visits to Obamabr.org, a Web site jointly designed by the Embassy and Office of Innovative Engagement (OIE) specifically for the POTUS visit, and a net gain of nearly 40,000 new fans and followers on the mission's social media platforms.

Other examples include:

The use of specialized, targeted programming. U.S. Embassies have used a Green Video Contest to engage social media audiences in envisioning solutions to clean and sustainable development challenges. One post hosted a Women's History Quiz to foster dialogue on women's rights; another invited audiences to enter a photography competition in honor of the U.N. International Year for People of African Descent.

The promotion of press and Internet freedom. As part of World Press Freedom Day events, the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) and WHA launched

the WHA Enhanced Engagement series of Web chats with a Spanish-language program on Violence against Journalists and Freedom of Expression, on April 29.

Engaging with civil society. On February 16, 2011, the Secretary of State spoke at the inaugural “Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society” at the Department of State, the first strategic dialogue with a group other than a government. IIP’s CO.NX global-cast of the event increased direct contact with civil society across the world and linked global changemakers to create conversations where none had previously existed.

Connecting exchange alumni for ongoing dialogue and support. The Jóvenes en Acción (Youth in Action) exchange program for at-risk Mexican youth uses Facebook as an ongoing platform for virtual meetings among the participants as they implement the community service projects they designed while together. Embassy La Paz uses Facebook to create face-to-face connections, using regular content updates and contests. The Department of State encourages alumni of U.S. Government exchange programs to connect with Americans, embassies, and exchange alumni around the world via the Alumni.state.gov Web site.

Providing information about U.S. foreign policy and programs in the region. The Department of State’s @USAenEspañol, @USAenFrançais, and @USAemPortugues Twitter accounts provide U.S. foreign policy news and information in Spanish, French, and Portuguese. The accounts also offer Q&A sessions with senior State Department officials. In addition, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs leverages the Department of State’s official blog, DipNote (blogs.state.gov), to tell its story. To date, Western Hemisphere Affairs entries comprise approximately 10 percent of DipNote’s 2011 content.

Encouraging entrepreneurial growth. On June 28, 2011, IIP also launched an Entrepreneurial Facebook page—Iniciativa Emprende—to promote entrepreneurship and innovative thinking in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Using third-party content to highlight new trends, ideas, challenges, and breakthroughs in the world of entrepreneurship, the page seeks out young people in the Americas who want to build their own businesses. The Web page attracted 5,000 users in its first 4 weeks. More than 90 percent of current fans are teenagers, evenly distributed among Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela. Link: www.facebook.com/iniciativa.emprende.

Question. Please provide an assessment of the social media ecosystem in the region. Accordingly, which countries is the State Department targeting with its social media initiatives, and through what methods is the State Department using social media in these countries? Are any specific programs designed for the ALBA countries? Does the State Department focus upon Internet users with broadband access, mobile users, or both? Is the State Department partnering with any companies like Twitter, Facebook, or Google to achieve its strategic objectives in the region?

Answer. Social media platforms: As part of their public diplomacy strategic plans, Embassies select a variety of communication methods to engage audiences. To reach new audiences and to assist posts in their outreach, the Bureau of International Information Programs offers packages of complementary print, audio, video, and social media-ready content in various formats, including mobile-friendly formats, supplemented by Web chat or digital video conference programs, speakers, and PowerPoint materials for presentations.

U.S. embassies design social media outreach specific to their host country environments and U.S. foreign policy objectives. For example, the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela uses the Embassy Web site, Facebook (7,227 fans), Twitter (12,805 followers), and YouTube to engage a broad audience on U.S. policy, democracy, and current events. The Embassy’s 91 YouTube videos attracted 23,910 views in the first 6 months of 2011. The Embassy also used its Web site, Facebook page, and the Department’s DipNote blog to expand the impact of its “Beisbol y Amistad” program, which connected former Major League Baseball players and coaches with underprivileged youth at 10 baseball coaching camps throughout Venezuela, with a focus beyond baseball fundamentals to leadership, teamwork, and the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

The Department of State welcomes ideas from U.S. technology companies for advancing foreign policy goals. For example, in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, a group of engineers from the tech community launched a free SMS relief service to help the people of Haiti. The text message program allowed people to text their location and their needs to a free short-code: “4636.” In response to the Haitian earthquake, Google worked with the U.S. Department of State to create an online People Finder gadget so that people could submit information about missing persons and to search the database. This same tool was employed for subsequent earthquake responses in Chile, Japan, and New Zealand. The Department organized a technology delegation to Port-au-Prince for a short training course for Haitians on

the use of technologies to assist in citizen security. In addition, in Brazil, Google launched the “People Finder” in partnership with the U.S. mission. Google also helped the Embassy to stand up special Orkut (a Google-owned social media site extremely popular in Brazil) and YouTube pages for the March 2011 Presidential visit (the Mission Brazil Orkut community was one of three in existence at the time). Orkut currently has 7,476 members in the Embassy community. Link: <http://www.orkut.com/embaixadaeua>

Question. Similarly, what content does the State Department create and share via social media, and how does this content relate to its democracy promotion goals? How many unique users access and share this content with others? On average, how many unique users access State Department generated material each month? What are the top three countries that access State Department social media content? What countries have the least access to State Department social media content? Do any trends emerge regarding the user base that most frequently accesses and shares State Department content? For example, is there a clear geographic distribution of users between rural and urban areas?

Answer. Department of State digital platforms explain U.S. foreign policy, society, and values and seek to develop partnerships with citizens in achieving shared goals: citizen security, strong democratic institutions, inclusive economic prosperity, and clean and secure energy. Content may be in the form of U.S. official statements and speeches, visual-rich e-journals, videos, or two-way interactive Web engagements led by U.S. leaders in government, academia, business, or culture.

Figures on average monthly page views and visitors for the period July 2010–July 2011 follow below, along with the countries that most access Department social media. The Department of State is working on strategies to capture the extent to which users of Department-generated material share this content with others. Current data does not tell us the distribution of users between urban and rural areas.

WHA Embassy and Consulate Web Sites

Page views—monthly average: 9,190,420

Visitors—monthly average: 1,295,194

International visits: 73.57%

IIP Digital (launched on April 1, 2011)

Page views—monthly average: 130,704

Visitors—monthly average: 71,163

International visits: 69.93%

23 percent of page views related to Democracy Theme

America.gov (Note: America.gov transition to IIP Digital on April 1, 2011, and was archived on that date.)

Page views—monthly average: 1,667,684

Visitors—monthly average: 925,288

International visits: 63.52%

6 percent of Page Views related to Democracy Theme

IIP content created on Democracy Theme

English: 2406 documents

Spanish: 357 documents

Top Countries accessing all Department social media

Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil

WHA countries with the largest Facebook fan bases

Dominican Republic: 58,789

Argentina: 48,470

Bolivia: 39,854

Brazil*: 38,205

Paraguay: 34,891

Mexico: 21,500

Peru: 21,254

* Counting Orkut (popular social media site) fans of the U.S. Embassy Brazil, Brazil’s total would be 45,679 (37,227 Facebook fans + 7,474 fans Orkut).

The country with the least access to Department of State online content is Cuba, because of connectivity cost, availability, and government censorship of online content.

Question. Are you aware of any countries in the Western Hemisphere that actively censor State Department produced content, and if so, which countries censor or

block access to this information? What steps, if any, have been taken to circumvent this censorship?

Answer. The Government of Cuba controls media within its borders, does not recognize independent journalists, and provides for freedom of speech and of the media only insofar as they “conform to the aims of socialist society.” Cuban law prohibits distribution of printed material from foreign sources that are considered “counter-revolutionary” or critical of the government. Foreign newspapers and magazines are generally unavailable, and Cuba has the lowest Internet penetration rate in the hemisphere. Some hotels catering to foreigners offer unfettered Internet access, but its cost makes it inaccessible to many Cubans.

The Department seeks to enhance the free flow of information to, from, and within Cuba. In 2010, the U.S. Interest Section (USINT) offered 16,347 Internet sessions to the Cuban public, including human rights activists and independent journalists, through two Internet resource centers. USINT provides daily news and information to Cubans in a variety of print and electronic formats. Over 500 independent journalists have participated in basic journalism training offered at USINT. USINT regularly offers basic computer skills and blogging classes, supports over 100 independent libraries in Havana and the provinces, and runs weekly onsite English courses.

At this time there are no other countries in the Western Hemisphere that actively censor State Department content.

Question. What is the State Department’s budget for social media outreach in Latin America as a whole, and how many specific initiatives are included in this budget? What are these specific initiatives, and how much funding do they receive? Which countries are allocated the most money and for what reason? How does the State Department determine how much money a country receives?

Answer. The Department of State’s Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) supports social media primarily through its human resources. A recent field survey, conducted by the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, counted 72 Foreign Service officers and 114 locally employed staff overseas engaging with foreign publics through social media. Their efforts amount to more than 1,300 hours of work each week or the equivalent of 33 full-time positions. There are two Washington-based full-time positions devoted to social media in WHA.

WHA does not allot funds to countries specifically for social media outreach. Our embassies and consulates use their program funds to cover the costs of telecommunication or multimedia production and editing. Occasionally, the Department supports an advertising campaign to raise the profile of digital outreach. WHA occasionally pays for added bandwidth capacity for streaming video at event venues and for simultaneous translations.

The Bureau of International Information Programs provides technical support for digital outreach and Web site hosting, as well as content in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

Question. With regard to technological connectivity, what is the State Department’s primary focus in Latin America? Is more money currently being spent to promote access and provide infrastructure like broadband, or is money being allocated to promote an increased user base? Of the infrastructural projects for which money is being allocated, what are the main priorities (broadband access, cell phone towers, etc)? Are infrastructure building projects focused more upon rural and under connected areas, or do they focus upon strengthening existing infrastructure in urban areas?

Answer. The Department of State’s policy goals are to promote policy and regulatory reform for the development of competitive communications markets that would allow for the increased deployment of, and access to, innovative information and communications technologies.

At this time the Department of State does not allocate money for any infrastructure projects. Currently, the only active support to build infrastructure is run by USAID in Haiti where a broadband network is in place and is being expanded to reach more rural areas.

USAID is also working on the Global Broadband and Innovations Program for improving access and connectivity. This initiative is in the beginning stages in Colombia.

Question. Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico lead Latin America with high connectivity, mobile subscriptions, and absolute internet users. Brazil has the largest absolute mobile subscriptions in the region, and almost 90 percent of the country has a mobile phone. With approximately 76 million Internet users, it also has the

highest total number of Internet users in the region, and a relatively large percentage of the population (approximately 40 percent) uses the Internet. Colombia and Mexico share similarly high overall connectivity, yet when one compares these statistics to the United States or Europe, one discerns the extent to which improvements can be made in these countries. Even though these countries are regional leaders with regard to connectivity, what steps are being taken to improve their connectivity? Additionally, in what ways has the State Department used social media to communicate with these countries? How does it measure the success of its initiatives, and do you see any immediate areas that can be improved?

Answer. To improve connectivity within and between other countries in the region, the Department of State promotes awareness of benefits of digital inclusion and shares the best practices for using technology to achieve inclusive economic prosperity, citizen security, strong democratic institutions, and sustainable growth. For example, our embassies engage civil society, educators, journalists, public servants, and business contacts in dialogue on how social media have improved transparency, efficiency, and performance in U.S. schools, business, and government. Social media allows the Department to engage with new and expanded audiences, beyond the socioeconomic elite. In the social media space, authority is determined not by one's income, societal status, or political connections, but rather by the breadth and depth of one's networks. Particularly in the case of youth who use social media as a way to connect with their peers, the Department is able to build and engage individuals through a networked, many-to-many model of communication. What previously would have been impossible or prohibitively resource-intensive—directly communicating with tens of thousands of foreign citizens on an ongoing basis—is now commonplace. Social media, as we have seen most recently in the Arab Spring revolutions, can help give a voice to the voiceless and provide a forum for coordinating collective action for the common good. By engaging in these spaces, the Department is able to tap previously unaddressed audiences both as targets of communication but also as subjects of dynamic, people-powered movements to effect positive change in their societies.

The U.S. Embassy in Bogota uses the Embassy Web site, Facebook page, YouTube channel, and Twitter feed to attract and retain social media users to encourage understanding and support for U.S. culture, government programs, policy, and goals. For example, during Black History Month in February 2011, the Embassy ran a comprehensive series of content, trivia contests, a Twitter-based video chat with Afro-Colombian baseball player Edgar Renteria, and promoted various activities and events. As a result, the Embassy attracted more than 1,000 new Twitter followers.

One measure of Embassy Bogota's online engagement success is its steadily expanding online audience. Since January 2011, Embassy Bogota's Facebook followers have increased from approximately 4,000 to nearly 5,900, and Twitter followers number more than 10,000.

Embassy Bogota is also working with various agencies to increase the use of SMS technology to reach the 94 percent of Colombians who own a cell phone. The Public Affairs Section, together with USAID, is working with the NGO community and private sector to connect landmine victims with community health providers in rural areas via mobile phone, as well as to extend judicial services via SMS in at-risk neighborhoods. The Embassy is also working with SOUTHCOM to develop an SMS messaging system to support counter-recruitment and demobilization messaging targeted at rural populations with a large FARC presence.

The U.S. mission in Brazil has focused on building strong partnerships with local social media influencers to grow its robust social media communities (now at nearly 38,000 Facebook fans, more than 7,000 Orkut fans, and nearly 12,000 Twitter followers). The mission cooperates with Government of Brazil social media practitioners to create joint communication plans for bilateral events and initiatives, with Brazilian media figures whose Twitter followings number in the millions in support of Cultural Section programming, and with Brazilian NGOs in support of social equality.

The U.S. mission in Mexico uses a variety of electronic tools to communicate with Mexican audiences. In addition to the Embassy Web site, each of the nine consulates has its own Web site, two "Virtual Presence Post" Web sites cover southern regions of Mexico, and many consulates employ one or more social media tool as well. Embassy Mexico City's Web site has received more than 1,200,000 page views since April 1, 2011, with a monthly average of 330,411 page views. Embassy Mexico City also maintains a largely policy-oriented Spanish-language Mission Blog, featuring both Embassy-generated content and content from other U.S. Government agencies and principals (of which the most recent was Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero's essay on open government).

Since July 2009, the Embassy has maintained a Twitter account (currently with 3,346 followers and growing at a rate of about 10 followers per day), to draw attention to Embassy news and to circulate content from the Web site and blog to other audiences. The U.S. Embassy in Mexico's Facebook account currently has 6,410 fans, up from 2,600 in November 2010, and recently featured a journalist-created video focused on media freedom in the Americas. When Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Mexico in January 2011, Facebook fans posed questions to the Secretary and received online responses from the Secretary, covering economic integration and the benefits of free trade, the importance of intercultural academic exchange, and the role of women in government. The consulates in Ciudad Juarez, Guadalajara, Hermosillo, Matamoros, Monterrey, Nogales, and Tijuana each have Facebook accounts, as does the Benjamin Franklin Library in Mexico City, for an additional 15,070 fans, and a grand total nationwide of almost 21,500.

The Embassy's Public Affairs Section produces original video content highlighting, for example, English Access language scholarships for underprivileged youth, Embassy-sponsored cultural exchange events, and joint U.S.-Mexican scholarships for young Mexican indigenous leaders. Links to these videos on the Embassy's YouTube site are distributed via the Web site and various social media platforms. The most recent video, highlighting the Access program in the state of Puebla, received 1,700 views in just 2 weeks. An Embassy-produced YouTube video explaining changes to the visa application procedure has been viewed 78,880 times in 6 months. The Embassy's new Flickr page is nearly ready for launch, and will feature photos of all types of Embassy events.

The State Department worked in collaboration with Alliance of Youth Movements (AYM) to host a 2-day summit in Mexico City in October 2009. AYM Mexico City brought together approximately 100 young digital activists from across the globe to connect with U.S.-based technologists and share their work to engage citizens in their own countries through technology. AYM Mexico City allowed participants to share best practices on digital engagement and political activism, including: a Facebook effort by a young Indian boy to remember the victims of the Mumbai terrorist attacks; a Twitter-based effort to give Moldovan citizens a voice against their former government; and innovative mobile and online engagement efforts to provide a voice for Mexican citizens against narcoviolence. State continues to work with AYM (now known as Movements.org) personnel to identify and connect with activists in particular regions. We have also sent out Movements.org personnel to various countries through our speakers program.

In 2010, WHA partnered with the Secretary's Senior Advisor for Innovation to lead a delegation of technology experts to Mexico to identify innovative methods to address violence in the border region. A key deliverable of the delegation was the creation of an anonymous crime reporting service in Ciudad Juarez. Working with the Government of Mexico, telecommunications companies, and civil society organizations, a State Department team developed a technical solution for a "tipline" compatible with Mexican telecommunications infrastructure to permit citizens to make anonymous phone calls to the police from any telephone. The technology offers safety and confidence to a local community accustomed to witnessing cartel infiltration in the local police force. It permits a reformed law enforcement system to gain access to valuable information while rebuilding the trust between the police and the citizenry. The technical system has been installed and is currently in a testing phase. It will be implemented by Mexican law enforcement this year alongside a concerted effort at public education and community engagement. The Juarez implementation is a pilot project, and the Government of Mexico plans to scale up a successful model to other cities.

Question. While information and communications technology data is more limited for developing countries, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Haiti stand out as three of the least connected countries in the region in terms of Internet users, mobile phone subscriptions, secure Internet servers, and broadband access. Nicaragua lags in both mobile subscriptions and Internet users as it has the lowest percentage of Internet users in the region. Cuba has the lowest broadband access, and the lowest percentage of mobile phone subscriptions. Similarly, no broadband data is available for Haiti, and Haiti has a low percentage of Internet users and mobile phone subscriptions. How does the State Department reach out to countries with low connectivity? Is social media programming an option with these critical nations, or are State Department initiatives more focused on providing technological infrastructure? If the latter, in what areas is the State Department focusing funding with regard to building infrastructure? Have these endeavors been successful thus far?

Answer. Although Haiti has low Internet penetration, the Red Cross estimates that more than 85 percent of Haitians use mobile phones. Partnering with local cell

phone providers as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Department of State and USAID maximized the widespread use of mobile phones and SMS texting to connect voters in the most recent elections, as well as to assist Haitians with mobile banking. As reconstruction efforts continue, access to Internet cafes or home-based Internet service will slowly increase. Private sector businesses are already working to increase Internet connectivity.

In Nicaragua, despite increases in private and public investment in the last decade, Internet access remains among the lowest in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Nicaragua has 3.5 Internet users per 100 inhabitants, or approximately 210,000 users. A 2003–07 World Bank telecommunications project contributed to expand Internet access to 104 of Nicaragua’s most remote communities by bringing Internet connection to small entrepreneurs and local government offices and by establishing one public Internet access center in each of these communities.

State programming has focused on social media training for journalists through ECA speaker programs. State is also supporting technological infrastructure improvements and training, including the use of social media, to independent Nicaraguan radio stations through DRL funding channeled through IRI. USAID promotes Internet access through small infrastructure upgrades and the provision of equipment to key NGOs and in municipal public information offices, including health programs. USAID also has trained civil society groups in the use of social media and promotes its use as a vehicle for development messages.

In Cuba, the U.S. Interest Section (USINT) offers free Internet access to Cubans. Social media are among the platforms USINT employs to connect with the Cuban people and to promote the free flow of information to, from, and within Cuba. The Department of State has actively supported the administration’s goal of increasing telecommunications connections to Cuba so that individual Cuban citizens may have greater access to information. Numerous U.S.-based communications companies have consulted with the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control and the Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security to use the expanded general licenses for providing satellite and undersea cable connections to Cuba.

Question. Many opportunities for democracy promotion exist in Latin America in countries like Venezuela and Cuba. However, when using social media, different approaches must be used for each country to reflect its connectivity and user base. Venezuela, for example, represents a key target for social media initiatives because of its high percentage of Internet users, mobile phone subscriptions, and Twitter users. Cuba, on the other hand, lags behind with regard to connectivity indicators. What efforts are you undertaking, if any, to promote democracy in Cuba through social media? Are you unable to do so because of the lack of infrastructure there?

Answer. The Government of Cuba controls media within its borders, does not recognize independent journalists, and provides for freedom of speech and of the media only insofar as they “conform to the aims of socialist society.” Cuban law prohibits distribution of printed material from foreign sources that are considered “counter-revolutionary” or critical of the government. Foreign newspapers and magazines are generally unavailable and Cuba has the lowest Internet penetration rate in the hemisphere. Some hotels catering to foreigners offer unfettered Internet access, but its cost makes it inaccessible to many Cubans.

The Department seeks to enhance the free flow of information to, from, and within Cuba to support the Cuban people’s desire to freely determine their future and reduce their dependence on the Cuban state by exposing Cubans to American life and American democratic values. In 2010, the U.S. Interest Section (USINT) offered 16,347 Internet sessions to the Cuban public, including human rights activists and independent journalists, through two Internet resource centers. USINT provides daily news and information to Cubans in a variety of print and electronic formats. Over 500 independent journalists have participated in basic journalism training offered at USINT. USINT regularly offers basic computer skills and blogging classes, supports over 100 independent libraries in Havana and the provinces, and runs weekly onsite English courses.

Question. In November 2010, the State Department held its first TechCamp in Santiago, Chile, to allow technology experts to discuss with community groups and NGOs ways to empower grassroots movements through technology. Are any similar programs being planned for the future? If so, where would these seminars take place, and what goals would they seek to accomplish?

Answer. TechCamps are a part of Secretary Clinton’s Civil Society 2.0 initiative to build capacity by providing training on tech-based tools. TechCamps are 2-day

events in which Department of State personnel convene civil society organizations, technology experts, and representatives from the private sector to provide case studies of successful technology tool applications and training to NGOs to increase their impact.

The Department is actively exploring a TechCamp in conjunction with a Digital Inclusion conference that the Uruguayan Government may host in the fall. The Digital Inclusion conference aims to promote more effective access to and usage of information and communication technologies to expand educational opportunities under the Pathways to Prosperity initiative in this Hemisphere.

Question. What new initiatives, if any, are you undertaking in the region to promote democracy through the use of social media? What countries is the State Department targeting specifically with these efforts? What forms of social media are prioritized?

Answer. Through social media, the Department of State promotes democracy by stimulating conversations with foreign publics on formal democratic institutions and the linked issues that reinforce them. Modern connection technologies provide U.S. Government officials with opportunities to engage with foreign publics to discuss the shared interests that are at the heart of U.S. foreign policy objectives in the region. The Department also provides training and support to enable citizens of countries in the Western Hemisphere to use new technologies as a means to express their aspirations for constructive change to government officials and fellow citizens in their countries.

These dialogues amplify the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) strategic goals of expanded economic opportunity for all, the safety of the hemisphere's citizens, social equity among all peoples of the Americas, and clean and secure energy.

On June 4, 2011, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Michael Hammer, responded to questions in Spanish on the @USAenEspañol Twitter account. Recently, the Department disseminated subtitled versions of Secretary Clinton's "It Gets Better" video on YouTube, calling attention to the need to stop bullying and offer support to sexual and gender minorities.

During his July 14 "Conversations with America" Web chat hosted on the Department's DipNote blog, former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Arturo Valenzuela, discussed the process of building and strengthening democratic institutions. He tweeted excerpts from then-Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Roberta Jacobson's June 30 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on "Democracy in the Americas."

On the WHA Facebook page and other social media platforms, the Department promoted the Open Government Partnership, spreading awareness of an opportunity for countries to act in a multilateral setting with civil society partners to create more open and accountable governments.

To address foreign publics on racial and social inclusion, the Department's DipNote blog has featured a series of posts to promote discussion and offer resources for the U.N. International Year for People of African Descent, including one entry on a Racial Ethnicity and Social Inclusion program. The program's Web chat attracted participants from around the world, creating a space to discuss educational, political, and communal opportunities to include people of African descent in democratic processes.

Citizen security remains a salient concern. When citizens do not feel safe to vote, conduct business, or even travel in their countries, democracy cannot function. Working with the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, Mexican mobile providers, and the Mexican Government, the Office of the Secretary's Senior Advisor for Innovation is developing a secure tipline available to residents in Juarez, Mexico, to help overcome the challenge of personal security. WHA Deputy Assistant Secretary Julissa Reynoso addressed security issues important to Central American countries in her July 15 "State Department Live" Web chat with journalists. Deputy Assistant Secretary Fabiola Rodriguez-Ciampoli moderated a Web chat on freedom of the press and violence against journalists in which the panelists answered questions from journalism students from several countries in the region, including El Salvador and Guatemala.

Finally, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor has programs that support media training in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Ecuador; these programs address the use and impact of social media, along with traditional topics such as independent journalism, investigative reporting, and overcoming self-censorship.

Question. As you continue to move forward with these initiatives, where do you see areas for improvement? How can you work with Congress to achieve your goals in the region, and ideally, what form of assistance would prove most helpful? In the

future, would more congressional funding be needed, and if so, how much? What role, if any, would public-private partnerships play?

Answer. In accordance with the Department's Strategic Framework for Public Diplomacy, the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) has created and is staffing an audience research unit to integrate in-depth market research within the Department of State's public diplomacy apparatus to target content more precisely—especially social media content—to national and subnational audiences overseas. IIP is preparing to launch a 6-month pilot program to create a proof of concept for the use of powerful social media analytical and management tools to identify trends emerging from social media chatter and influential members of social media networks, among other market intelligence innovations.

Through the Secretary's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) process, we are investigating the possibility of recruiting industry experts in the application of connection technologies both to engage foreign audiences and to generate innovative tech-driven solutions to foreign policy problems. These experts would have regionally focused portfolios and work across the Department and with USAID to coordinate the development of strategies for the successful deployment of connection technologies as tools of public diplomacy, economic development, and the promotion of civil society.

