

**Public Diplomacy, Democracy, and Global Leadership:  
An approach for the 21st century  
December 5, 2019  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Longworth House Office Building  
Room 1334**

Remarks by  
**Representative Alcee L. Hastings  
Chairman, Helsinki Commission**

Good Morning. Thank you all for joining me today to discuss the role public diplomacy can play on both sides of the Atlantic by cultivating leaders who embrace the core tenets of democracy. This hearing could not be more timely given that by December 2020, this time next year, more than forty parliamentary, presidential, and other elections will be held in the 57 North American and European countries who make up the OSCE region. This includes elections in our own country.

This year, under my leadership, the Helsinki Commission has held events on the importance of international election observation, good governance, and focused on democratic backsliding in particular countries as part of our continued commitment to the underlying principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

Common to all of these issues is the role good leaders can play in ensuring free and fair elections; laws that are equitable, transparent, and enforced; and laying the groundwork to ensure protections and rights for all in their constituencies. It is therefore only right that we end the year with a focus on the role leaders play in advancing our democracies, and how we can build the future of inclusive leadership for the long term stability of our nation and the transatlantic partnership.

Our country has a long history of working with civil society to bring European leaders to the United States and send American leaders abroad, through the State Department's International Visitor's Leadership, Fulbright, and other programs. Europe has similarly found value in professional exchanges such as the European Union's Visitor's Program and numerous other bilateral programs that bring Americans to Europe and vice versa and establish ties of mutual understanding through people to people relationships.

Surprisingly, we are witnessing numerous challenges in western leadership today putting our democracies and the transatlantic partnership at risk:

- The failure of elected leaders and their staff to recognize, protect, represent, and serve their entire constituencies;
- Problematic interpretations of democratic principles to fit political ambitions, garner power, and exclude others;
- The inability to build coalitions for the common good;
- The exploitation of difference to instigate divisions and violence within communities and between one's own citizenry;

- The modeling and rewarding of behavior not befitting or consistent with international commitments.

And this is not a comprehensive list. It is no wonder transatlantic citizens are losing faith that democracy can deliver. It's no wonder, countries yet to adopt democratic principles point to continuing economic, racial, and other disparities in wealth, health, education, justice systems, humanitarian assistance, and other sectors as proof that western democracies are not living up to their own ideals and alternative governing structures are better.

I am glad our expert witnesses are here today to discuss what our approach to leadership programs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be given domestic challenges to our own democracy and others across the transatlantic space. Something is broken. Today we aim to fix it by discussing how the U.S. can better utilize public diplomacy and other programs in developing and supporting truly democratic leaders here and overseas.

And today is just the beginning of these efforts.

I would first like to thank Nida Ansari, whom we borrowed from the State Department for her assistance with this and other hearings. Two weeks ago, Nida with the support of the Commission worked with the U.S. consulate in Milan to launch a new public diplomacy program to strengthen civic engagement and leadership in Italy's diverse youth. The program touched over two hundred people and is already slated for a follow-on program next year. We are saddened that this will be Nida's last hearing with the Commission but, look forward to continuing to work with her to advance these and other programs critical to placing young people on the path to being responsible members of their communities by engaging in their democracies. I will work with my colleagues to introduce legislation in support of this and other public diplomacy efforts that empower the next generation. Nida thank you for your service.

In September, we held a hearing on the State of Diversity and Inclusion in Europe featuring diverse European policymakers. The hearing was the capstone in a decade of events that began in 2009 whereby the Commission has convened diverse U.S. and European policymakers under the banner of the Transatlantic Minority Political Leadership Conference to support increased political representation in western democracies. In honor of the Commission's tenth anniversary of these efforts, I will work with my colleagues to introduce legislation to codify leadership exchanges and knowledge-building between diverse transatlantic policymakers and to encourage representative democracies.

Next year, in February we will host young OSCE parliamentarians here in the U.S. Congress to discuss how we can strengthen their political inclusion to advance peace and security efforts.

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With that I would like to turn to today's expert witnesses who are leading some of our countries most innovative public diplomacy and leadership initiatives in support of ours and global democracies to inform us on how we can strengthen our approach to this work for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Unfortunately, Gordon Duguid, the State Department's Public Diplomacy Director for Europe and Eurasia was unable to join us today to speak first hand about these programs. The Commission has long worked closely with the State Department and civil society interlocutors here and abroad in support of public diplomacy programs. We look forward to hosting him at a future Capitol Hill engagement.

I am however especially pleased that Lora Berg of the German Marshall Fund of the United States is able to provide testimony today. As a former public affairs officer at the State Department, not only was she instrumental in creating some of the U.S. government's most innovative public diplomacy initiatives for young and diverse populations in western Europe, but she also leads GMF's Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network. A program founded with the Commission and the State Department for young diverse electeds now heading into its ninth year with over two hundred alumnae in U.S. and European political leadership. I look forward to her testimony and continuing to work in partnership.

I also look forward to the testimonies of Stacie Walters Fujii of ACYPL, an organization committed to strengthening democracies with a focus on young leaders that was also created by the Helsinki Commission's founder Spencer Oliver, as well as the testimony of Cordell Carter whose work at the Aspen Institute has included participants from the Commission as well as engaging global policymakers and civil society on the founding of our nation and the important role of Congress in the balance of our nation's power.

Thank you.