

Testimony to House Intelligence Committee
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Chairman Schiff, Ranking Member Nunes and esteemed Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to offer my thoughts for this hearing on 'Autocracy's Advance and Democracy's Decline'.

I have dedicated my political life to promoting freedom and democracy. And to advocating the benevolent force of a US-led Western Alliance. An Alliance that united to defeat the tyrannies of Nazism and Communism.

However, tyranny is once again awaking from its slumber.

Last year my foundation, the Alliance of Democracies, produced the single biggest international survey of attitudes towards democracy. It found that people in autocracies are more satisfied with their governments than those living in democracies.

It is high time for the world's democracies to come together and fight back against autocracy.

If the free world fails to unite against the autocratic challenge, the personal and economic liberties that we often take for granted today will slowly but surely decline in the coming years.

After the fall of communism, many people, including myself, were hoping to see China and Russia become part of the free world. We must now conclude that the opposite has happened. China and Russia have descended back into autocracy and become openly hostile geopolitical rivals of the world's democracies.

Autocracies like Russia and China are systematically seeking to undermine our political systems. They exploit and abuse economic relationships, building elaborate debt traps and energy dependencies. They use covert influence to disturb our politics and undermine trust and confidence in our democratic institutions.

China has taken an increasingly authoritarian turn under Xi Jinping, bullying its smaller neighbors in the South China Sea, bypassing international law, and building its global economic footprint without reciprocity. The economic giants of China are synonymous with the state - challenging free trade.

I witnessed the authoritarian turn in Russia under Putin.

Russia does not only invade its neighbors and poison its suspected adversaries, it also seeks to poison our democracies and media.

Over the past two years, foreign interference has been detected in at least ten elections and referendums on both sides of the Atlantic. This is a playbook that was developed by Russia.

In Europe, according to a report by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russia is responsible for 80% of disinformation activities. Just last week, Microsoft detected efforts

to phish servers of European think tanks, mirroring a similar effort detected last year in the US.

And make no mistake - invading Crimea, meddling in our elections, poisoning a spy on the streets of England, hacking or attacking our servers - these are part of Russia's hybrid warfare.

What should we do to counter this authoritarian surge?

First, we need to strengthen the spine of our democratic supremacy. We should create an overwhelmingly powerful and credible democratic alliance in order to counterbalance the rising and assertive autocracies. We need to preserve and strengthen NATO, and we need to build stronger relationships between the traditional transatlantic alliance and the rest of the world's democracies, including major powers such as Japan and India. We need to strengthen the world's free societies to counter the advancing autocracies. As my contribution, I created the "Alliance of Democracies", a non-profit dedicated to the advancement of democracy and free markets across the globe. I'm hosting the Copenhagen Democracy Summit [on June 28 this year](#). The Summit provides a high-level strategic forum to those who share a broad commitment to democracy to discuss the most pressing issues of our time. I hope to see members of Congress and this Committee join us to reaffirm our trust in global democracy.

Second, we must counter foreign meddling in our elections and democratic institutions. At the Alliance of Democracies, our flagship initiative is the Transatlantic Commission on Election Integrity. A bipartisan initiative, I'm joined in it by in it by Michael Chertoff and Joe Biden. It is our mission to raise public awareness of the

of the potential threats coming from foreign powers and to develop new technologies to prevent the next generation of disinformation such as deep fake audio and video. We recently launched a five point election pledge calling on EU candidates and political parties not to actively or passively support efforts to meddle in elections such as fabricating, using and spreading false or fabricated documents, video and audio.

Third, we need determined American global leadership. Whether you like it or not, America is the indispensable nation for the democratic world order. If the United States retrenches, it leaves a vacuum filled by the bad guys. Then the United States will be faced with stronger foes, weaker friends, and a more insecure world. But America should not carry the burden alone. The other democracies have an equally important duty in the defense of the free world. As one of America's greatest friends and a genuine admirer of your country (and grandfather to American grandchildren) let me stress this: The USA benefits from the multilateral world order it built after World War 2.

In conclusion: We must present a united front against the autocracies. The authoritarian advance is a common threat to the United States and Europe. We must develop a robust response. The world's democracies must present a united front against the autocracies who are themselves united in their efforts to undermine us.

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