



**Virtual Reporters' Roundtable on Democracy with
President & CEO of the Foundation for Electoral Systems Anthony Banbury,
President of the International Republican Institute Dr. Dan Twining, &
President of the National Democratic Institute, Ambassador Derek Mitchell**

Monday, December 6, 2021
3:30 pm – 4:15 pm EST
Official Transcript

Moderator: I'm going to go ahead and start since we are recording this event. I'm Adrienne Ross, thank you so much for joining us today for the Consortium's first ever reporters' roundtable. I will kick off our discussion by first introducing you to our three presidents. Some of you, I know you've heard from, you are all familiar with these presidents.

First, Dr. Dan Twining is the President of the International Republican Institute. Since 2017, he has been leading the institute's mission to advance democracy and freedom around the world. He has also served as counselor and director of the Asia program at the German Marshall Fund. As a member of the US Secretary of State's policy planning staff, a foreign policy adviser to US Senator John McCain, and a staffer for the US Trade Representative. Dr. Twining has also taught at Georgetown and served as a military instructor associated with the Naval Postgraduate School.

Anthony Banbury has been the President and CEO of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems since 2018. Tony has worked to advance democracy and human rights in a number of conflict and post conflict settings around the world on behalf of the US government and the United Nations. In fact, in 2010, when UN leadership was tragically killed in the Haiti earthquake, Tony was called on to lead the joint Organization of American States UN civilian international mission.

And last but certainly not least, Ambassador Derek Mitchell is here today. He has been the President of the National Democratic Institute since 2018. He began his development career with NDI's field programs in the former Soviet Union in Asia and has served in senior leadership posts at the US Department of Defense and the State Department. In 2012, Ambassador Mitchell was the first US Ambassador to return to Burma, after 22 years of diplomatic absence following the 1988 military coup there. Together, these gentlemen lead the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening, or CEPPS, independently established in 1995. The Consortium enjoys bipartisan support on Capitol Hill and unites nonprofits to execute USAID's largest democracy Program Awards.

Today, in advance of the White House Summit for Democracy, the presidents are here to talk with you about democracy's status in the world and as you may know, they're among the

world's fiercest defenders of democracy. In fact, just a few days ago, Ambassador Mitchell returned from Taipei, where he joined leaders from the world's democracy for the Open Parliament Forum.

This morning, he welcomed Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman for a keynote on why democracy matters at an NDI virtual event. And before I hand it over to the ambassador, just a quick housekeeping note, we are recording this and the presidents will do a quick round robin to share a few poignant thoughts, and then we'll take your questions.

So, reporters on the line, if you just want to hit your electronic hand at the bottom of your screen, I'll get to you just as quickly as I can.

So, Ambassador Mitchell, let's kick it off with you. Please share your thoughts on why the White House's Democracy Summit is so important and what's at stake for this particular moment in time? Why is it so significant for local democracy?

Ambassador Derek Mitchell: Well, thank you, Adrienne. And thank you, Jesse, it looks like we have here and I know we're on the record, there'll be a transcript and I just want to say at the top that the timing of this is quite bittersweet or very bitter in a way because of the news just today that that good friend Fred Hiatt passed away, the Washington Post columnist, editorial writer who was one of the leading voices of principle on the editorial pages of any newspaper, and certainly the Washington Post and just a huge loss to the journalistic community and anybody who cares about democracy and human rights in the world. And I know I speak from my friends and counterparts here from Dan and Tony in just being heartbroken over the news. But I know he would have loved this summit and had something to say about the summit that's happening later in the week. I think it is a really good thing this is happening.

I know there are a lot of debates about what the summit should be about and controversy over how the United States can hold this when we ourselves may be living in a glass house we have our own problems with democracy. Well, the fact is democracy's work is never done. No democracy is perfect, and we are all fallen as it were, we're all struggling to be more perfect unions. But we all know with absolute certainty, despite the humility that we all must have, that democracy is the best form of government yet devised by human beings. And what this event this week is really about is affirming, reminding ourselves of why democracy matters, what is at stake in democracy sustenance, and show solidarity among free peoples and free nations, about the qualities of democracy that we need to both support and protect around the world. It is no secret about the attacks on democracy that are being waged from within countries, but also from outside countries by illiberal powers. They see opportunities to take advantage of democracy's weaknesses, weaknesses of institutions. So, I think there's no better time now, then what the Biden Administration is trying to do, which is not a single event, they are talking about summit this week, and then a year of action, and then another summit next year.

So, think about this, in terms of being a launch event, a moment of countries coming together, to affirm certain democratic values to come out with a practical Agenda for Action, among free states to affirm democratic principles and democratic values. And to show that there's more of us than there are them as it were. This is not a matter of geopolitics, per se, there are

geopolitics in this world. But this is an affirmative agenda. And I really think this is about is a positive agenda about the benefits of democracy to remind us all and recommit ourselves to this agenda, and then having a very practical, but we should what we should all do together, but as governments and in partnership with civil society and parliaments and other institutions, to ensure that democracy is ever strong, getting stronger and is protected during this very, very precarious moment in human history.

So, we were told to give just one broad thought at the top, I'm giving you one very broad thought, and very interested to get questions, maybe more specific questions about the summit and aspects of it. But with that, let me turn to Tony, my good friend from IFES to take it from here.

Anthony Banbury: Thanks. Thanks, Adrienne for organizing this. Thanks to Jesse and Rachel it looks like, who are online with us. Really appreciate the opportunity to be here with friends and important pillars of the democracy promotion work in the United States, Derek Mitchell and Dan Twining. This is a very important moment, not just because of the summit, but because of what I think we see now as a broad recognition and alignment of democracy organizations and activists, think tanks and researchers, parliaments, congresses, aid organizations, executive branches, all finally coming to the conclusion that many had reached a few years ago. It took some other stuff to get to, which is that the traditional work of democracy promotion around the world for the 30 years or so the post-cold war era has gone through significant change in just a few short years.

For 30 years it more or less looked the same was very important work around democracy promotion, election administration training parliaments, engaging with civil society and voters. And the tools for doing that were refined over time but assumed but sort of broadly enabling environment. But in the last five years or so a bit more, the context has changed dramatically, and that traditional work of democracy building, and those tools are still really important, but they're by no means adequate. There are new and very serious threats to democracy that are driven by authoritarians, supported by corrupt financial and political elites, supported by malign foreign actors, and fueled by the technological mercenaries that we see out there who are developing new commercial tools and making them available to authoritarian actors.

So, in a way, it's like in the public health world, everyone, you know, we still have to worry about the measles and the flu all over the world. But now it's all about COVID, it's a little bit like that in the democracy world. We still have to do the basic work of democracy building. But now we have to be much more focused on these new threats to democracy. And there are two basic things we have to do as a broader community: One, identify these new threats, have a very good understanding of the new technological tools weaponized technology, misinformation campaigns, the movement of funding to corrupt political processes. So, understand them, identify them. And secondly, counter them. Those are, we need to do those two things. IFES previously proposed the creation of a DARPA for democracy, building on the DARPA model, which would involve funding blue sky R&D, that would go after these very serious threats. And now, it's great to see movement in Congress, Senator Cruz and Senator Brown advancing legislation to strengthen the US and broader civil societies or to promote democracy around the world, USAID, State Department, the administration, taking a lot of important steps, a concrete step, the announcement today of a new the anti-corruption strategy. So now the forces are

aligning to really counter the threats that have evolved so rapidly, so we fell behind the times. But now I think we're going to be in a much stronger position. The summit's going to launch a series of activities in the year ahead. And I think we're going to see some really good fighting back by the forces that support democracy and all that, all the promise that goes out to people around the world. So, I'll stop there and turn it over to Dan Twining, President of IRI.

Dr. Dan Twining: Great. Thanks, Tony. Great to see everyone and to be with my colleagues. Something that Americans, Republicans, Democrats and independents actually all agree on, hopefully, which is our sport for freedom in the world.

The Summit for Democracy creates a strategic opportunity to defend open societies against authoritarian aggression and really to rally the free world, we've been playing defense for a very long time, authoritarians have been stepping out led by China and Russia, not simply to preserve their own systems, but to actually subvert and weaken and erode democratic practice around the world. Our great power rivals have tried to do this in our own country. Meanwhile, petty tyrants in places like Burma, and Belarus and Nicaragua and Venezuela, have essentially destroyed their own economies and the hopes of their peoples, for very personal reasons of self-enrichment and preservation of power. So, we have a lot of work to do. It's time I would argue to play offense by stepping out our support for small "d" democrats all over the world. This is not only the right thing to do, now, I know my colleagues agree, it's in America's best interest that our core national security challenges emanate from authoritarian, great power competitors, from violent extremism that flourishes in ungoverned or conflict riddled spaces, and from mass migration, including its weaponization by tyrants in places like Venezuela and Belarus.

So, I totally support the President when he says that there's a global contest between democracy and autocracy in the world. We have a lot of work to do to defend the Open Society and it's worth preserving and fighting for. Americas stood for freedom in the world since 1776. I don't know why we would step back now of all times why now, when authoritarians are stepping out to try to weaken and erode democratic norms and law, rules and institutions. So, the Summit for Democracy will be followed, as Derek said, by a year of action and a couple of thoughts on what that could entail just in telegraphic form. This goes beyond just the democracy community. But it'd be great to see a political Article Five similar to NATO's self-defense mechanism in which democracy support each other against malign forms of foreign influence and digital aggression. It'd be super for democracies to rally around strengthening democratic supply chains so that authoritarians can't weaponize energy resources or medical supplies. It'd be excellent to see many more countries embrace what I know is supported by the President and by the US Congress, which is sort of a version of bigger global Magnitsky sanctions, smart sanctions around the world against kleptocrats and human rights, gross offenders, stepping up our support for democracy in the digital realm, including by protecting data and other forms of information that matter to make sure that surveillance states like China's don't command the technological commanding heights of the 21st century, that would actually erode the democratic practice, not just abroad, but at home.

And finally doubling down on democratic alliances, including our new groupings like the D 10, maybe a T 12 technology coalition, the quad these other partnerships that bring likeminded states together to uphold freedom and democracy.

Finally, of course, I hope to see not just the United States President, but many leaders commit to a smarter form of foreign assistance that really prioritizes individual rights, political freedoms and the rule of law, we know that development more broadly can't happen without these democratic pillars in a society. So, thank you. I look forward to our chat.

Moderator: All right. Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen. I'm happy to open the floor up to our reporters. If you have questions, you can go ahead and either raise your electronic hand or just open your mic and go ahead and ask a question. If you don't have questions, I will just keep asking my questions. So, Jesse, Rachel, Elise, anything you want to add to this conversation?

Reporter: I don't really have a question. You answered all my questions. So, I mean, I guess thank you and I'm sorry, I'm in a terrible background. But I think my problem with this whole idea of the Democracy Summit, is that I think the frame is really great. And I think it's very great to rally democracies, and, and all of this, but I feel that somewhere between the frame and the execution is where we're kind of getting lost, like, I don't really see specific initiatives to deal, you know, they're dealing, I think, maybe more with this with the kind of symptoms of the problem of democracy, instead of addressing some of the root causes. And there's a lot of talk and a lot of beard scratching, if you will, about the protecting of democracy. But one, whether it's, you know, something is, you know, monumental is Afghanistan, or it's something in Belarus, where the activists are looking for something specific, or it's somewhere that corruption is a big problem. I just feel like the execution is the problem. And I'm not really sure about, you know, kind of what grand statements is going to do on that. And then there's, you know, obviously, what you address like, you know, the kind of questions about like, are we the right ones to be leading this conversation right now? Anyway, that's a lot.

Moderator: I think you've asked just the right, you've hit the right points, and you've got the right people here to answer. Derek, do you want to start with sort of the format of the summit? And then we can have Dan and Tony weigh in as well?

Ambassador Derek Mitchell: Yeah. Well, the issue of what's coming out of the summit, if it's just a lot of talk, I think you're exactly right, Elise, I mean, and I hope it's, in fact I know it's not going to be just that. I mean, there are going to be very practical announcements of initiatives on the tech side. There's going to be an event tomorrow on gender. And there's a lot I think that can come out that's very practical, in terms of how to get at some of the core issues. I mean, one of the core issues is not necessarily China and Russia, they're taking advantage of the weakness of democracies to get it and subvert I mean, so we need to be much more secure ourselves. And the way we're dealing with data with technology, making sure that democracies deliver, that when there is a transition, that those democratic forms actually deliver for citizens, otherwise, they'll get upset or get frustrated, or there's polarizations inside countries that the illiberal actors can take advantage of.

I think the key factor here, though, and I think it means that we all have to manage our expectations, there is no silver bullet to the challenges of democracy, there's not going to be one event that's going to lead towards the answers, there's not going to be one initiative that's going to lead to the answers to this. But it starts with affirming, first of all, reminding ourselves in solidarity, what is at stake here? And what is it that that unites democracies across differences, commitment to certain values, what is at stake now what is under threat are the

standards norms, and rules of the international system, rules of transparency, of accountability, of inclusion, of representation of all. These are very fundamental democratic values, and the Chinese and others. illiberal are getting into the institutions that are trying to redefine them.

They're even trying to redefine democracy. The Chinese just came out and they put out a white paper on democracy saying, "we're a democratic country". We need to ensure that democracy is defined precisely and not that anyone's going to be fooled by China, but that we make sure we're protecting what it is we're talking about defining it exactly. And then moving out on some of these really critical issues of standards and norms and values when it comes to inclusion of women, empowerment of young people, free speech, free media, civil society empowerment, conversations and when it gets to technology, issues of data protection, all these things are under siege, that democracies need to be in coalition defending according to the values that we see as I listed, that we need to be protecting. And it's not going to happen in one event, but you have another year, and then next year will be very interesting to see where we stand then and what the agenda is moving forward from there.

Moderator: Tony, anything you want to like to add to that?

Anthony Banbury: Yeah, thanks. I mean, it's a real risk, right and one of the reasons what, Elise, you note is happening is because democracy takes a long time to build, right? It takes generations, it's as much of a part of a social contract as it is a law or parliament. And what can take a long time to build can be undermined pretty quickly. And in that period of time that it takes to build a democracy, I don't mean to sound like I'm vamping, and I really hope I'm not, of a lot of bad things can happen, that look very anti-democratic in the United States or other countries.

So, what's really important is that, while all the traditional work of democracy, building, engaging with civil society continues, we need new tools and approaches to address the kinds of risks you're talking about, and some of the challenges that Derek was just mentioning. But to develop those tools to understand the new nature of the threats, to deploy those tools, and see them have an impact on a societal level, much less a global level, is going to take a lot of time and hard work. The good news is, though, I think, the way democracy is being talked about now around the world, by foreign assistance bodies, of parliaments, legislatures, civil society, it's of a very different nature than it was even five years ago, it's seen as one of the single greatest issues for democratic societies around the world. And that broad recognition of the importance of taking this issue more seriously, looking at it differently, developing new tools, I think, is what gives me hope that even while we're going to continue to face all kinds of challenges, Derek has rightly pointed that, hopefully, we're going to be moving forward in a way that's different than the way we've been backsliding now for 15 years or so.

Reporter: Yeah, I mean, that's all I agree with you both on all of that. I think, I think another part of my like, issue is that if this is just a rallying the world around like China/ Russia a bad US/West good type of paradigm. It's not going to go very far, you know, yes. You know, you're all right, like China, you know, is certainly and, and Russia to, and others around the world are certainly, you know, kind of challenging democratic norms. But if it's just a way to get our allies to join with us to gang up against China. I mean, I fear anyway, that this is just part of the China obsession, not to say that it's not warranted. But I think we need to, you know, focus on

these issues for democracy's sake. And it not become part of our like toolbox against China only, if you get if you get what I'm saying.

Dr. Dan Twining: Elise, I hear you, being someone who is obsessed by China.

Reporter: No, I mean, I am too!

Dr. Dan Twining: China's rise is correlated quite perfectly with the last decade plus of democratic decay, they're not unrelated, right. But I think what we need to do is rediscover our strengths. And I will say, I mean, in response to your original question, people around the world, in Belarus and Zambia, and these places are not waiting for America to perfect our democracy. And they really actively want our support for their cause, for their own reasons, right. So, I think we've somehow convinced ourselves because of our own domestic difficulties and other things, that somehow democracy is no longer necessarily the solution. And actually, the greatest optimist, I was with a young student who's fled for his life from Hong Kong last week, he was the greatest optimist about democracy and freedom in the future that I've ever met. Because he knows that Xi Jinping and the authoritarians are afraid of that youth energy and vigor. And so, I think part of this is reminding ourselves of democracy's strengths and that exactly as you say, getting to work, the bad guys, not just in China and Russia, but around the world, the bad guys have been much more intentional about promoting authoritarianism than we have been for the last decade or so in promoting freedom.

Reporter: Yeah, I mean, I saw, I mean, there's not a lot of us on so I'll just, I'll just talk a little bit more.

Moderator: Rachel does have her hand up. So, I just want to make sure we let her finish.

Reporter: Super quick and then Rachel, I hand it over to you. I saw Svetlana Sokoto, I'm going to say her last name wrong. But I saw Svetlana, when she was here, and it was like, even her people were saying yes, like the US was very good about kind of rallying the democratic flag, but we're looking for like very specific things, very specific asks. And it's like, we have to do both right? We have to, you know, stay true to these great big democratic principles. But then at the same time, like, you know, walk the walk?

Ambassador Derek Mitchell: Well, I mean, yeah, as I say, I think there's no silver bullet, I think some countries think, well, if we only just put more emphasis on this, or if we were serious than these problems will be solved. And it's not that simple. I mean, there's no easy way to bring to change, Lukashenko's mind or to change the dynamics inside the country. But we can do more in solidarity with other countries to impose a cost. And to show that you know that destiny is not an aside, time is not on the side of these autocrats. That, in fact, the momentum is on the side of those who favor, those who want freedom. But let me just get back very quickly to your point about China, because I think it's a very important point, at least from my perspective, and I'm obsessed by China, we have worked on China for now 30 years. I mean, I've I did this in the Pentagon. But you're exactly right, we have to be very careful with this, that this is not about China, China wants to make it about itself. China's trying to frame this as all about it. Like they try to make everything about it. The fact is, this is about what China represents, not about China, is not anti-China, it is pro-democracy.

To the degree it's about China, it's about how is China creating more or assisting a more illiberal world, through their influence through their activities, to try to suppress free speech, free media, in all these standards, so it's not really about China, but what China is doing or what any illiberal out there is doing. And I think it's important that we keep it away from the geopolitics because that plays into, I think, the worry of a lot of countries around the world, that this is just an instrumentalized operation, when actually, it's not. And I think the administration needs to be making that point more clearly, because it has a China component. And it has a democracy component that have some overlap, because of what China represents in the world.

But it's not a geopolitical struggle, per se. It's more of a struggle over what are the rules, what are the norms, what are the values, what are the standards under which the international system will operate in the 21st century? And that goes beyond China, goes beyond a single country.

Anthony Banbury: If I could just add quickly, I'm sorry, now to Rachel to delay. At this point, I think, Elise, if you do raise a really important point about what's going to be the administration or and future US administration's approach to democracy, we saw over different administrations of different parties going back many years, a tendency to instrumentalize our human rights policy. And it was only there while it was convenient for us, and some administrations were more willing to sacrifice human rights principles than others.

But I think whenever the US did sacrifice our commitment to human rights, we paid a price. And there are always internal struggles within that administration. I'm sure it's only that natural China hawks are debating with the pro-democracy types inside the Biden administration. But I think it is very, very, very important for democracy, democracy promotion, not to be instrumentalized, because people around the world, as Derek was mentioning, and Dan, are demanding and seeking and we need to be the allies of those people who are looking to strengthen democracy in their society, not instrumentalize them to our own objective.

If we were to do that, or if the US administration would, it would be very damaging, but as long as we are consistent in our support for democracy, because of what it offers to the people, that I think we will be well served.

Reporter: Thanks, guys.

Moderator: All right, Rachel, you have been patiently waiting with your hand up.

Reporter: Great. So, kind of jumping off what Elise brought up, it seems to me that there is, you know, behind much of the falling support for democracy, particularly in developing countries is, you know, disappointed hopes at the lack of economic development.

You know, many people in the world who support democracy may like the principles of it, but they really like the idea of having improved livelihoods for themselves and their kids. And when that doesn't happen, whether it's because of corruption, whether local corruption, foreign corruption, because of trade rules, which make it difficult to export, or because of international financial institutions, you know, wanting repayments, you know, like, when democracy doesn't, you know, bring the fruit, you know, people turn away, and how, how do policymakers connect to that as well, because it's more of a graduate level kind of understanding of what democracy

means, free and fair elections, you know, but people think it also means a prosperous middle class, you know, and we haven't been able to really show the second can happen, you know, so how do we do a better job with that and policy wise?

Dr. Dan Twining: So, the answer is to go back and link economic and political freedom, which used to be fashionable until things changed.

Rachel, you ask an astute question. I mean, I would say that, you know, things like corruption and elite capture and that sort of thing are result of democratic deficiencies that democracy has been given a bad name, because you're right, democracy is not delivered in countries like Tunisia, just to give one obvious example, but that's not because democracy itself is deficient. It's because it's not been effectively executed and implemented, right. We should also, I mean, I think we get so caught in the headlines. And it's fair enough. We're all either journalists or we consume journalism endlessly. We should step back I mean, the historian side of us and realize that actually, almost every high economy in high income economy in the world is an open society is rule of law society, right? I'm sort of accepting say, Qatar, which sits on you know, an oil and gas field, but really every successful modern high-income economy, including east Asia, we've been deluded into the idea that China's discovered some superior developmental model, guess what Americans are six times richer than Chinese are per capita, Taiwanese and South Koreans are three, four or five times richer than Chinese are, right? The developmental miracles in East Asia actually are not in China, under authoritarian development, those countries developed actually under authoritarian rule and then they opened up because exactly what you suggested happening, they developed big middle classes that wanted more than prosperity, they wanted political rights. And I think we should be a little more confident in that proposition.

And it goes to the final point, which is just about going back to the earlier conversation about execution, is that we seriously need to execute on an agenda of economic and political freedom in the world. And that includes using our enormous assistance budgets in the US and Europe and Japan and elsewhere to orient around these objectives. They actually do produce prosperity but tackling corruption and these other scourges. That's what we need to do to defend and protect an enlarged democracy.

Ambassador Derek Mitchell: Just to add to that, is there Adrienne, is it someone else?

Moderator: No, in fact, I was going to say, I saw you taking notes. So please go at it, Derek, and we'll come back to Tony in just a minute.

Ambassador Derek Mitchell: Yeah. No, and I associate myself with Dan's remarks. No, it is a very astute question. As stated, you're exactly right, that people simply want more than anything, they certainly want freedom, they want freedom of speech, they want to control their own lives. But ultimately, they need a job, they need to take care of their families, they need to see that democracy delivers for them in very practical ways. And if they don't see that they look for an alternative. But as they look for alternatives, they may turn to that, on occasion, look for something, you know, extraordinary. But very soon, they realize that extraordinary option doesn't work either. Which is why that old Churchill remark about democracy being the worst form of political system created by human beings except for all the others.

Democracy is not easy. And it does take as Dan say, it takes time to build institutions, it takes even longer to build a culture of democracy. And the expectations that you suggest, Rachel, about, people think, well, we're going to get democracy and therefore we're going to be like the United States was, we'll get rich and powerful very quickly. And it doesn't happen that way. So, managing expectations, that it does take time, that they're going to be ups and downs, they're still going to be old mindsets and old ways and set ways in countries that will not lead to quick results. And we all have to be more patient as well. That right now we're dealing with a snapshot of regression and frustration.

But look at Tunisia just today. And we're seeing increasingly there was a coup and people were saying "Well, you know, the politicians didn't do their jobs, we're fine with this coup" very soon they got frustrated with the suppression of their rights and the labor union just today said, we need to see elections soon. In Burma, my old country, Myanmar. I mean, you took a poll last year during the election and people were saying, "oh, people have soured on democracy, they're frustrated". Well, look, what happened with democracy was taken from them. They're coming out in extraordinary ways to defend. So, this is a work in progress. And I think we all need to be patient and recognize that there's a struggle out there. And there are those who are empowering the people who are on the illiberal side of this. And we need to be, as you say, Rachel, very thoughtful, and very strategic.

When we do this work of not just looking at an election, or an institution, but looking applied democracy is how I call it, of democracy being applied to practical issues in people's lives, so that they could connect this system with their daily wellbeing. And if they don't see it, yes, they'll get frustrated. And you'll see the illiberal take advantage. So, we ourselves need to be I think, progressing and evolving in the way we think about this. And also talking about it more frankly, with our partners around the world.

Anthony Banbury: Yeah, maybe just to add to that, I think it's at the heart of the challenge of democracy promotion around the world in a way that wasn't necessarily the case for a few decades after the Cold War, where was a lot of focus on the form of democracy building and not the substance or the outputs. Now, though, I think there's a much broader recognition of how important it is that there isn't just a free and fair election and a functioning parliament, and freedom of speech, but that there are governments that deliver on expectations of their populations.

In 2018, IFES dramatically changed our mission from election administration to democracy, our mission is together, we build democracies that deliver for all. So, there's a lot of issues around exclusion and social contract and minorities not having access to whether they're ethnic, tribal, religious, national, or whatever, to political and financial benefits of society and constitution writing in order to ensure that minority groups don't get excluded from the benefits of society.

I think fundamentally, people around the world want the same thing. It's a job, I think it's a slightly different, they want to be able to feed their kids, they want the kids to go to school, they want to be safe and not have marauding gangs attack them. And they want to be able to take their family members to doctor if they get sick. If democratic government can't deliver on those things, it's a danger of being exploited by nationalist, populist, whatever. And so, a strategy that seeks to build democracy in a society has to take all of that into account. Yes, it's

important to have free and fair elections and all voters registered, but it's so much more than that. And the approach that is taken, needs to recognize at heart and frankly, there are some similarities in the US about a weakening of our societies because of failures or perceived failures of government to deliver.

But making sure the healthcare system works or that education systems work, and 10-year-old girls can go to school, you know, that's not traditional democracy promotion, but it is a central part of the democratic strengthening in a society. So, you're absolutely right to raise the risk of that.

Moderator: We're coming up on quarter after the hour. I just want to give everybody a chance to ask one follow up question if you've haven't had all your thoughts answered yet. Elise, Jesse, anything else? Rachel, follow up? Right, gentlemen, do you have anything you want to add before we go today? Any last thoughts?

Dr. Dan Twining: Great to see everybody.

Moderator: Thanks. All right. Well, thank you so much. We're done. And you all know how to reach me if you have any follow up questions. So, we will put out a transcript, so you have all the words and please be in touch. Thank you so much. Bye.