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Denver Dialogue on Democracy – The Global Democracy Agenda

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Matthew Kaminski

Afternoon everyone, I hope you have your espressos and are ready for a great conversation. I want to thank the Aspen Institute as well as the Cornell school for hosting the session on really the future of freedom in the world. So I asked yesterday my my intern who's a bit of a note all very articulate, but gets a lot of facts wrong about the state of democracy and this is what Bard is his name. Obviously, AI told me competently that it is in decline at Politico. We like to do polling and I want to maybe do a sort of quick poll of this panel by raising your hand. Do you agree are you all short on democracy going forward? anyone? No one. Okay. So you're all on democracy. You're optimistic. So Jane, let me ask you

Jane Harman

We're all very shy. So Frank and I are on the board of Freedom House and Mike Abramowitz is right there in front of us and goalie and Mary is on the board of freedom. House, so we assaulting this place. And Freedom House reports the Freedom in the World Report over 50 years has shown that that freedom is still in decline, especially so last years, yes, but in less decline. 20 I think it's 26 States going up and 27 going down. So, So freedom is to quote the late great Madeleine Albright making sort of a comeback.

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

Just want to add a little bit of context. First of all, I was just momentarily processing In silence because I was thinking about bard. Noting that probably if you Ask BARD to make an argument why democracy is not in decline it would have done just as well. But look, I think I agree with the Congresswoman but I would just add a little bit of historical context. It's worth remembering that in 1800, the number of people who lived with any political rights at all the zero in 1900 is basically one in four people. By the mid 1990s was more than half the population in the world. And right now, it's not quite enough population in the world. But it's 2.3 billion people that live in Liberal electoral democracy. I don't I don't think that's sort of cause for feeling like to be satisfied. But billions of

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people live in democracies. Now the question really is not only is it a decline or not, but what do we need to do to hold on to what we asked him to grow?

Matthew Kaminski

Frank I'm sure no one's ever asked you this question, but But you may have. I heard he wrote something about the end of history at some point. And I wonder whether you at this point in 2023 have reason to doubt your thesis that liberal democracy is the ultimate end.

Francis Fukuyama

Okay, well, we're gonna have a separate conversation about misinterpretations of the thesis. I mean, I would say that, yes, if you take a very long term perspective, democracy is had ups and downs in this country internationally. And, you know, there's some reason to think that this is a you know, a blip in a longer term trend. However, the one thing that makes me pessimistic about the present moment is actually about the United States. The Freedom House aggregate economy of democracy has pointed out that it's not just a quantitative decline. It's the fact that you've seen a decline in the two biggest democracies in the world, India and the United States. And frankly, I think one of the biggest threats to democracy around the world right now is in the United States, because you had one of the clearest attacks on a fundamental democratic institution on January 6, and the person that organized that attack is the leading candidate of one of the major parties and you got polling data that shows that, you know, a third of Americans believe the last election was fraudulent. There's a deep belief in the illegitimacy of American institutions. And as long as that's the case, and given the role that the US has played in promoting global democracy and being a model, I would say that's a that's a situation I certainly did not expect to see, you know, anytime in my lifetime

María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila

coming from that in America, if there were ever appreciate that in America would be where the region and the continent of the last decade and the last you know, opportunities. So we Yes, many times we've posted the lowest economic growth, and we have the highest inequality indexes. So again, that background who asked me, Where do I see democracy going? I don't have a clear answer. Why because if you look at I'm here says that we are backsliding. If you look at the European Parliament last briefing, say to go back to America has been six months things in advancing democracy and advancing fair elections and advancing also in human rights.

Matthew Kaminski

But isn't my last point, it seems like in Latin America, you've had some worrying developments, but some pretty positive developments too in last couple of years. I mean, Brazil had a near miss too, but it seems kind of gotten through it. Why are you more optimistic? In fact,

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Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

I am but against the purpose, I say what is the fundamental for me question in Latin America, is that people are being disenchanted with democracy because they don't feel the effects. So if you ask that you see Latina Latino men grow, and the last survey from 2021 That was just reported last November. Only 25% of Latinos agree that democracy has been positive for us. 73% disagree in the results that democracy has had in the continent. So for me if we don't link positive people's lives impairments to democracy, it will be a very steep climb.

Jane Harman

Well, first of all, I had my numbers wrong. I'm going to be corrected. It was 35. declines in 34 improvements in the Freedom House report. Apologies, folks. Apologies. But I'm not. I mean, there's a pessimistic way to look at this or an optimistic way to look at this. And if I weren't an optimist, I would not have served in the United States Congress for nine turnovers. So let's go there. Now it turns out it's 400 years people. So okay. But, again, this wonderful article of Madeline's in foreign affairs, which was, I think, the last serious piece she published before she sadly died prematurely at a very young age at something but nonetheless, it's a gigantic loss, said she was bullish, and I relate to that. First of all, she said she, she based some of at least the US story on the way we left Afghanistan. And that's fair. I mean, I thought it was the right policy, but I thought the execution was extremely poor. And it sent a message not just to the Middle East, but to the whole world, that we weren't going to stick with our friends and that climbing out of that ditch will be hard. But that was around that point. She said if you're in a ditch, the only way goes up and then she had some reasons why she thought democracy would make a comeback. And I'm kind of there. Just do. Did anyone watch TV today? Sure. You didn't know you were all here. But if you had seen the joint session of the United States Congress, and we entered this with the Israeli President speaking in the chair, there was Kevin McCarthy and Kamala Harris who Republican and Democrat, nine people boycotted out of 535 That ain't a big number. And and you saw them all standing in unity and applauding. Just visualize that democracy is making a comeback. I mean, it's difficult, but there are oases in this dismal present, where we can see that that things will change.

Matthew Kaminski

Can I linger on the US and maybe you can discuss the us before we go to the rest of the world and take up Frank's point that actually, the problem starts here number Do you agree? Do you know? I kind of

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

Yeah, for sure. I mean, look,

Matthew Kaminski

think about what is strong in the US and what is weak, but where do you see Yeah,

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Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

so let's start with the fact that the US occupies a particularly important geopolitical position among democracies, right? We have enormous influence on the world, people look to us, and rightly feel alarmed by January 6 by the decline of norms that generally support compromise apropos of Congressman's point, by a threats, including physical violence threats on election officials. So we're supposed to kind of get to work on all of this. And a lot of it runs through basically two realities. The first one is that polarization has gone beyond leaders to people groups, affective polarization since that I cannot trust people who disagree with me. And that reinforces a sense of decline of basic norms of democracy. It's ironic because oftentimes, political scientists, you know, two or three generations ago used to speculate that democracy required a lot of knowledge among voters. I think what we're finding is that it doesn't actually require quite that much knowledge, but it does require support for certain norms of conversation about demonizing your enemies. So that's on one hand. On the other hand, if you asked me in 2016, what I'm most was concerned about using rhetoric to transition. My candidate who won the election sort of saying in the campaign trail, it was that there would be a sort of mass indication that key American institutions like reports, like media, like the bureaucracy will basically crumble under sustained political attack. And I don't think that's happened. I think that what we've seen is a degree of resilience in the courts, including courts that are themselves pretty polarized like the US Supreme Court, that nonetheless reject theories like the independent state legislature theory that might have actually opened up the door to quite a bit of political chaos. So it's really makes patients but I wanted to say two more quick things before I stop it. Just why do I believe in democracy? Why do I think ultimately, the lion's share of Frank's concern do I feel like we still have the tools in the US to make progress? Number one, because we are not afraid of confronting our real problems? Right. In this stage, the Chinese ambassador said you know what? We should think about democracy and purpose and what does it actually accomplish? And as a Californian, I will tell you building infrastructure is very slow in California. Frank has written about this. I want democracy to deliver and I just want to talk about why it's good morally and ethically, but to democracy is not only about delivering outcomes, it's also about a moral and ethical case for it that prevents official cruelty. So I feel like from that perspective, we have a lot to work with

Francis Fukuyama

a well, so I would like to say that the global judgement about the desirability of democracy, oftentimes, it's not based on principles or ideals. It's based on it is based on outcomes. And, you know, I think that there's actually a lot to be said for the United States at the present moment. Our economy is going gangbusters compared to any other economy in the world. Right. I mean, China is midst of a kind of double dip recession coming out of zero COVID. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in recent decades. Inequality is decreasing because people at the bottom of the ladder are actually seeing increases in their wages, and poor inflation is now down to 3%. And so it's really kind of a remarkable machine that somehow keeps going despite all of the polarization

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and everything else. However, before we get off the subject of the United States, I just want to make one warning about what could happen based on what happens in the election in 2024. Because it could get a lot worse. And I think that's the thing that concerns me, which actually shouldn't be a concern to everybody in this room was written about him, I think, a very important article in The New York Times earlier this week. About the long term clowns, not just a one candidate but of the entire Republican Party to basically dismantle the professional civil service. They tried to do this at the end of the Trump administration, under Executive Order that created a Schedule F that would have allowed them to fire basically any civil servants. And they're going to do it again. And it doesn't matter who the candidate is. I think this is going to be part of the agenda and it is going to affect the people that worry about national security and foreign policy first and foremost, because I think that's one of the primary targets of this. And so, you know, we'll have to see, I guess, my answer to am I pessimistic or optimistic? Really, you know, it's a cliché to say we're at a knife's edge, you know, decision point, but I do think that more than in other periods of American history, you can see things going pretty well. Or you can see them going disastrously bad.

Matthew Kaminski

But the institutions have endured, yes.

Jane Harman

I mean, they were resilient. How did anyone miss a 22 Where are we seeing 2016 to 20 when the leadership of many agencies was totally gutted, especially in the intelligence area, which I follow pretty closely, and clowns were put in place, and they couldn't destroy our capacity. It's back. I mean, obviously, new leaders make a difference. I don't think gutting the civil service is achievable. I don't think it's civil service. I think if you can make a criticism of it, it's that flexible, and adaptable enough, but these folks aren't gonna go anywhere. Even I just don't see it. And I and I think our country has demonstrated over a very long period and a very long civil war, that that we will overcome this one comment that we haven't made yet is the total lack of civic education now in schools, and the fact that most people in America understand less about the organization or government than new immigrants do when they take the immigration test. And that is absolutely shameful. And we are paying a gigantic price for that.

Matthew Kaminski

Maria who's gonna ask you about what degree is sort of China remains a alternative model that is, is increasingly attractive in your, part of the world and the world can talk easily about other parts of the world, or is was that changing, which again, gives some fuel to your guarded optimism.

María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila

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well? Definitely China is a major factor in that in Latin America. Many other countries have China as their major economic partner isn't a model to its, its raw materials. It's but it's not seen as a model for a form of government. You know, it's, it's again, as I say, is that struggle in the continent to find development to be able to give people you know, the opportunities and the advances in their own life. So, presence is there and also Russia is present there. You must look at me for alpha and Nicaragua you have from time to time there was a big ship arrives them and Nicaragua and then President Ortega just comes in says, you know, I'm gonna call my friend, you know, and he even admitted to an order saying that Russian troops were going to be allowed in Nicaraguan territory. So Latin America is complicated. Okay, so it is complicated, and I do have think we do have to watch the presence of China. Mostly coming through the economic backdoor.

Matthew Kaminski

So Frank, because you talked a lot about autocratic failure and how, you know, the sort of centralized control leads to bad decisions and that I, you've been fairly pessimistic on this panel, even though you didn't raise your hand and you agree with Bard. But I've heard in other contexts as you point out, that ultimately, there's a reason why our systems are more attractive than those systems.

Francis Fukuyama

Well, absolutely. So there's really two issues. One is that an autocratic system centralizes decision making in the hands of one individual, whereas any liberal democracy tries to spread it out, you have to consult, you have to get buy in from, if not the people as a whole, at least, you know, people with expertise and so forth. And we've seen two big, autocratic failures in the last couple of years. The biggest one by far was the invasion of Ukraine. So if you remember watching lidium, or Putin sitting at the end of this 30 foot table, apart from his foreign minister, Defense Minister, because he was so afraid of COVID So what kind of, you know, on the ground information do you think he was getting prior to that disastrous choice that he made? And I think Xi Jinping had a somewhat less but you know, equally, you know, chaotic case of that in the zero COVID policy. You know, one of the things that's really changed in China, from 2013 to the present, is that there's no more collective leadership. You know, that was one of the good things about the post 78 China that you actually had checks and balances built into this very senior group of officials at the top, that's gone. There isn't anybody on the standing committee of the Politburo in the Chinese Communist Party that was in a position to go to Xi Jinping and say, you know, maybe zero COVID is not such a great thing. Maybe we should reconsider it because that was his policy, and I think you see the consequences. The other thing is just the question of legitimacy that, you know, autocratic regimes look very powerful, right up until the moment that they collapsed. And it's very hard to know when that collapse is going to happen. I was encouraged by Crystal Groasis analysis of what's going on in Russia, and I would not be at all surprised if that regime comes tumbling down, you know, in the next few months, because it really lacks that fundamental by in.

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Jane Harman

If I could just gently disagree a bit. I think that nation states have less power now whether they're autocracies or democracies than they had back in the day. And the reason is social media. And social media is a way for people to organize around nation states. When you look at the Arab Spring, which turned out to be the Arab winter, but nonetheless, it did happen 10 or 12 years ago, and governments were toppled the problem with it was that the kids who toppled the government didn't have the interest or capacity to build something better. But nonetheless, I think if you look at Iran, and you look at the demonstrations there and they're not going away because I listened to goalie and she says they're going away and I do think that over time, social media was the incredible new technologies like AI are going to give individual people more power than their governments have.

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

The congresswoman's point I think is really important. I just wanted to add to it because it highlights that when we think about social media or access to AI or freedom of speech, it highlights that democracy should be disaggregated low so we have clarity about how it can differ in different parts of the world. But there is a bit of a core to it that we have to hang on to and I would say it's three parts. It's free and fair elections. It's a space for civil society to decide what it wants, what people want to do, and say and choose. And it's the rule of law. And I would just highlight that it's a good thing for different countries to approach this a little bit differently, parliamentary versus presidential, etc. But we ought to be clear that when, for example, the mechanisms to make sure elections are free therapy gutted. That's not just a sort of cultural or social difference that goes to the court with democracies. That's

Matthew Kaminski

speak to the US but then turn it in a different direction of democracy promotion became a kind of toxic phrase for a while there is now okay to talk about this. And this is what I really want to get at is, what can the US spend, I think over \$100 billion over the last 40 years to promote democracy in the world and we're at a point now where, you know, it is clearly in our interest to reverse the trends we're seeing globally. What is inhibiting American efforts or how would you to promote democracy and how would you design a democracy promotion program? That would be more effective?

Francis Fukuyama

Well, I was on the board of the National Endowment for Democracy for 18 years before I joined the Freedom House board. I don't know quite how you get to that many billions of dollars because traditionally, the NAD budget every year was like less than 100 million. And I think that, you know, the basic idea was that the fundamental thing that democracy is really called Michael Scott,

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American example and you can talk around the world by leveling the playing field. To people in your country, the Roth democratize Xander and to make their voices heard they go she's pretty good, I'm scared. But fundamentally, we don't promote it on the sense of creating it where it doesn't exist in the hearts of the people, that country, but also, our policy is really tough in a way. And I think, in that respect, the invasion of Iraq was a total disaster. It was just a total. I mean, I had talked to many people who, you know, especially in the Arab Middle East, when I say you know, well what about American democracy promotion says, Oh, please don't invade us. Right? Because that's, that's the association that existed after that. After that move, and I think, you know, it leads to a huge understanding is undermined a lot of that soft power.

Jane Harman

I would just add that the net and the National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute that are underneath it are hugely valuable and still great examples of soft power and to use the word political capacity. That's what they do. I've been on a number of their missions, and they should be sold better. What we left, but Frank is right. We had a disastrous war in Iraq, which I voted for as a member of Congress. Let's put it out there. The intelligence was wrong and I was wrong. And then we stayed there for 20 years, just wrecking our reputation in the world. We also made some mistakes in Afghanistan, especially the way we left Afghanistan, which I just mentioned, which Madalyn comments on, but we still have the opportunity to showcase soft power we have a whole of government that could work much better toward showcasing soft power I chair something called the Commission on national defense strategy. It's a mouthful, but the point of it is to critique our national defense strategy, which the Pentagon came up with just a year ago, these Commission's have existed in the past, and one of the things we're going to say, is that defense strategy is not just the projection of military force, it's the projection of American values, and it's probably more effective to win the argument than to win the war if we do this, right.

María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila

Yes, I don't want to jump into exactly that. Soft Power definitely is no military is what we have. And what Latin America and especially Central America, if you see Central America now. It's because of the free trade agreement with the United States. That we have been able also to prosper. So I've just made about five years now.

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

So I think it's worth acknowledging the one premise of your question. We have a lot of scholars, particularly Tom for others. who work on the question of efficacy of dollars spent to promote the rule of law and promote democracy. And crucially, it's not just the US is the United Kingdom in small countries. And I think we have something to show for it. But I do want to acknowledge your point, that it doesn't always work and you know, a to Frank's point. So humility is important here because obviously we have our own challenges in the US and we can simply frame the issue as though we

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have every answer. But why does it matter? I think it's worth reminding ourselves that if we were venture capitalists and wanted return on investment, even if we weren't guaranteed a result, there's pretty good data indicating that democracies are generally run better. They grow faster, they have less visual cruelty, and they go to war with each other less. So to my mind, like if you think about human history, over 50 years, 100 years, like where we want to go, and that ends up mattering quite a bit. It's worth taking some risks. So that 100 million do not like invading a country to be clear, but somebody's the 100

Matthew Kaminski

billion figure came from a guy and an article and a competing publication not 100% .

Jane Harman

Probably false

Matthew Kaminski

is that she was the Washington Post just so I could credible, credible competitor. And but I think that this sort of point there was that sort of a lot of American aid programs were very kind of government focused, and ended up either supporting governments that were corrupt or ended up sort of reinforcing bureaucracies that actually didn't have an interest in sort of opening up and that we have seen effective. I'm a big fan of Ned as well. And, you know, you saw what I was doing on the ground in Eastern Europe and I saw the service Foundation did in terms of supporting grassroots groups in Serbia in Ukraine before the Orange Revolution in 2004. So there are sort of forms of American aid that do seem to be more effective. And but it does seem like that the failure of the last 20 years. Yes, it's probably George Bush. But you know, President Obama was not interested in this because of Trump's or he was not so both Presidents of both parties have not committed to his strategic or to his strategy. To promote democracy overseas.

Jane Harman

Well, I would push back a little and say that President Bush started PEPFAR and he did some programs in Africa that are still very effective that he's involved with. And and I actually, I think I don't agree that that our projection of soft power isn't working it could work better and yes, AI D in some ways it's very bureaucratic but I I think we're doing better there and, and just love John Kerry is in Beijing talking about climate, which is a hugely important and should be a unifying World theme. I mean, climate doesn't respect national borders. If we if we miss this, I can't imagine why. And so and I think yes, room for improvement, spend more money but I also think that that Joe Biden is going around to so many international conferences, talking about American values and allies and partners. And this is a very good exercise in in soft power.

Matthew Kaminski

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One example I can think about is you know, how much does China and Russia spend on and countries in the Middle East on on you know, Russia today, sort of, you know, media and propaganda, which is maybe multiples of what the US devotes to, you know, to getting accurate news into authoritarian states. Via VOA and other outlets.

Francis Fukuyama

That's true. However, the whole media landscape has been transformed immeasurably. So the way that most people get their information now is not through legacy media, except for places like politico which are

Matthew Kaminski

not like us. Yeah.

Francis Fukuyama

But, you know, through social media through the internet, and that's one area where the Russians in particular have been really brilliant, because they have understood that this is not a propaganda megaphone. This is, you know, really a way to simply breed distrust on the part of the people that received the information so that they don't know what's actually true. And I think it's this kind of pervasive distrust of institutions that's been the most corrosive in the United States, in Europe and in you know, in the global south

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

Can I just add like, it's also tricky, because I think you're right to raise like, how does it stack up when it comes to doing we might disagree with but it's tricky, because there's an asymmetry of like, it's one thing to tear down the legitimacy of an institution to introduce doubt. When I was a judge, actually, I was surprised and fascinated to learn that bots spread misinformation about even state level cases. Can you imagine? And token it's a very different than you're asking, like, how do I build up a domestic legal system? How do we get an electoral Institute perform effectively, right? So I think that if you have these proactive institution building goals, and you go about and wanting local folks to be completely invested in it, you actually have a much higher bar graph. Do you think it's

Matthew Kaminski

pretty important? Since we started AI, and everyone's talking about AI, I want to ask you, do you think sort of the kind of rise of AI the emergence of AI is going to make this problem worse? Or potentially better?

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

The challenge and an opportunity? What ends right there's no question that the industrial strength production of misinformation is going to skyrocket in all likelihood, and I doubt that there's any

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straightforward technical solution. I'd add that in the US context, of course, we have first amendment constraints and how government regulates social media, for example, on the other ratings, we have these persistent challenges with engaging the public in decision making, and it's been a core part of American democracy from the beginning and thinking about the jury system, right. So the ways in which general AI for example can zero in on motion ideas and arguments can help people bridge divides in Taiwan, actually, our returning students really interesting work inside the Taiwan discovered about this, and I think we could all stand to think a little bit about the upside.

Jane Harman

And let me add to that, that I add an earlier panel today on the Middle East, talked about the fact that the foreign policy leave that's all of us don't know how to how to talk to Generation Z. And AI could be a huge augment to figuring out language and arguments. If we do it, right. I mean, it can be distorted and and unproductive. But let's imagine the the positive use of AI as a communication tool to really get young people engaged and let them understand what participation means. And voting participation by young people in America is appalling. It's 20% or less, and college campuses like Stanford are part of the problem in that respect, notwithstanding efforts to get people to vote

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

for it. What are you gonna do about that?

Francis Fukuyama

I changed the top leadership of Stanford.

Matthew Kaminski

I think actually a young journalists change the top leadership at Stanford, a Stanford freshman,

Jane Harman

who happens to be the son of Peter Baker and Susan Glasser,

Matthew Kaminski

very proud parents. Is there I want to open up sector of the floor to questions please introduce yourself and maybe say which panelists you might want to direct the question, please.

Audience question

All right, blue, green here Antone Bishop, one of the rising leaders want to direct my question at all of you was specifically the congresswoman. I agree with you that civics education and I would add on that history could be greatly improved in K through 12 classrooms. dDefinitely so. But is there a federal solution from legislative standpoint, where are we Is this a battle we have to fight state by state?

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Jane Harman

Civic Education, this is working now, okay. There we go. Thank you for it's both civics education started at a young age I you know, I certainly remember learning stuff and in lower school and high school and college, and I was you know, misguided enough to think that actually serving our country in Congress would make a difference. And maybe it sort of kind of did, at least for a while. But I'm saying it has to start everywhere. And we have to be much more effective and determined and doing it and there are lots of different approaches to it. Some of them are federal, but some of them are online. Sandra Day O'Connor, the former Supreme Court justice has invented something called iCivics, which I'm not sure how widespread it is, but it was a heck of a good idea.

María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila

And I also want to add from my continent in Latin America is that one of the challenges we have with democracy is that civic action spaces becoming more limited, so educating, especially the younger generation is basic for us to be able to increase that space for civic action.

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

Three quick points about the local and why that's so important. And I think answer your question. One, a lot of the immigrant integration in the US happens locally English classes, civics education to prepare people for citizenship exams, to the stuff involving iCivics, which is playing out in a lot of public schools is an add on to the regular curriculum. It's pretty exciting but then three, you have the decline of local news, which I think we haven't talked about yet. It's a huge issue. And I think you can expect in the next year or so major philanthropic efforts to revive the business model relevant news, because that's often a way that people who are always really polarized can find some common ground.

Audience question

former Foreign Secretary of India, now retired and I speak I don't speak for the government. I just wanted to make a brief introduction on democracy in India. And the tenor of our debate today focused basically on the understanding of the panelists about democracy mostly here in the United States. I think that as far as India's case is concerned, you have to understand the very complex history of our country, particularly you know, the nature of the making of our Constitution, the partition of the country, the enormous diversity, continental proportions. So it's not just a question I know. I mean, we all respect the fundamental tenets of democracy, but the nature of Indian democracy, very much conditioned by the internal conditions of our society and the makeup of what we are as a pupil. Our Constitution begins with the words we the people, as, as the American Constitution does, but there are a lot of departures and you have to understand the nature of the debates that went into the making of the Constitution. And today when we speak of a democratic backslide in India, you also have to understand what is gone before that. One academic refers to

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this as the recency phenomenon. You're talking of recent developments as to what has happened, but there's a whole long chronology the long history of what has happened before that. So I think there's this need, I think, for us to have, perhaps even a separate debate on the nature of

Jane Harman

Can I just comment on that? I agree with that. Let's remember that our Declaration of Independence talks about in order to form a more perfect union. It wasn't perfect, it isn't perfect. The compromises about slavery and the exclusion of women at the beginning of our democracy certainly were. I don't know if we all would have understood it then but looking back on it. Very unfortunate, and we've paid a huge price for both. So why should India be the same as America? And why should you know pick any countries in the world? The goal is, I certainly think is freedom, freedom in the world. That's the goal. That's the aspiration. It's a universal value. I mean, who in in Russia doesn't want to be free? They don't understand many of them given the information they receive and, and in China, the universal surveillance, they don't understand whether there's any option for it, but I can't imagine anyone in the world who would have a chance to be free or who wouldn't sees that.

Matthew Kaminski

Lady in the back, please.

Audience question

Hi, I'm Kelly Piazza. I'm one of the rising leaders and I'm a professor at the Air Force Academy. My question is for you, Maria, about democracy in Latin America. When we think about some of the countries that had experienced democratic backsliding, or are authoritarian in the region. We often think about Venezuela and Nicaragua and some of the other countries that you talked about, but all Salvador has recently come under the spotlight, specifically since the election of boo Kelleigh and the state of exception last year, and his ability to run for reelection. I'm wondering if you can comment on both the opportunities and challenges for democracy in El Salvador.

María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila

I live in El Salvador. So that frames a lot of my my answer. I do believe there is an opportunity. The one thing that really is ticking with people's hearts from what I've mentored, you know, sending unprecedented all of Latin America and agreeing with democracy results. You can see now in my country, a country that was had the number one homicide rate in the world. Nowadays, it's zero. You know, we are able because of the violence control, we are again reviving with tourism, which is a major also the influx of money for us by the way, I must say we have one of the best surfing waves in all the world. We just had three world championships this year, simply because it is no longer considered a violent or dangerous country. So as long as we strive to continue to build around democratic values, and we strive to work four to five institutions, and we will continue to to hope

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for a democratic El Salvador. But again, as I say, the rest of Latin America, you have so many examples from Pinochet, you know, people recognize she led to be what two days but they had Pinochet, you know, so it's, it's, it's a difficult and tough question always turns

Matthew Kaminski

one last one here in the back, sir. Yeah.

Audience question

am way my depth ear Pentacles and again, from the JTAG. Perhaps, the governor, this might be a good question for you. So part of our dialogue was about defending democracy, but we see a lot of political results in democracies we don't like is there a thread running through the left and the right where because the left maybe is seen as more passionate defenders of democracy but not traditionalism. Not traditionalist themes that diverges of those two things that maybe advocates for democracy we're losing ground in many of these countries because they are seen as so progressive.

Francis Fukuyama

That's I think you've hit on really a key issue because you know, there's there's a couple of separate things that are going on. Basic liberal tenant, you know, in liberal democracy is that we should be tolerant and that people have different lifestyles, but, you know, our understanding of who qualifies as a human being with that there's rights which should be respected by the society by the political system has changed over time. So at the beginning of the American republic, it was only white men with property then get the 14th amendment and then you know, you have this steady expansion, and we've expanded that, you know, very rapidly so, um, a lot of the rest of the world has not caught up. And so in particular, something like gay marriage was illegal in most American states in the 1990s, you know, in the lifetimes of many people here, but you know, that kind of change in consciousness occurred very, very rapidly in the developed world. It is not occurring that rapidly in Sub Saharan Africa in many parts of Asia, you know, and so forth. And I think that one of the things that's happened in the American attempt, and the European attempt to promote democracy is that liberal democracy has become closely associated with that kind of narrow social agenda, rather than fundamental rights like do I have the right to vote? No. Do I have the right to participate or join a political party? And that has been exploited by democracy's enemies, you know, beginning with Mr. Putin, saying, oh, what you want to do is spread you know, gay marriage to all these places and have your values imposed on us. And that is a big problem for us. And I think, you know, we haven't really quite grappled with how to deal with that properly.

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

And much of what remains to be done in the US, I think, is also relevant to your question and as much as there's going to be cultural disagreement, but there's got to be some room for people to converge around democratic institutions without having to get bound up in cultural conflict.

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Matthew Kaminski

And close with a close right, okay. Sorry, good close today sort of ask each of the panelists this is kind of a one word answer and what is the main theater today? In the kind of global battle for democracy,

Francis Fukuyama

Ukraine

Jane Harman

agree

Mariano-Florentino 'Tino' Cuéllar

the human minds,

María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila

people's lives sides, you know, the quality of life

Matthew Kaminski

that hearts and minds is it more? it's more than one word. It's

María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila

people people's lives do not get better in democracy. They lose faith in it.

Matthew Kaminski

Okay, perfect. On that note, thank you very much to this panel. We're going to get 15 minute break.

No, we're not. We're not taking a break. We are we are moving directly to something else.