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NINTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE, TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

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NINTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

THURSDAY, MAY 26, 2022

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE,
TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY,
DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES;
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:07 a.m., in room SD–106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine presiding.

Present: Senators Kaine [presiding], Cardin, and Rubio.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues will come to order.

It is my pleasure to welcome two distinguished panels of witnesses for this hearing on the Ninth Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles. I want to thank Ranking Member Senator Rubio for his dedication to advancing American interests and values in the Western Hemisphere throughout his career.

I am proud of the work we have done on Latin American and Caribbean issues during our time together in the Senate and believe there is so much more that can and should be done.

I have long argued that our sustained engagement in Latin America is in our national interest. The U.S. and countries throughout Latin America share close ties. Our collective prosperity and security are closely intertwined.

Each time I have traveled to the region and when I lived in the region I have seen and heard firsthand how countries want us more engaged. So I am pleased to be able to hold this hearing focused on the biggest event for the region.

Recent coverage of the Summit of the Americas has been somewhat critical, focusing on who has been invited or who is attending, but despite those critiques, I believe that the U.S. hosting the event is a welcome opportunity because the summit is an important time for the Administration to outline a clear vision for the hemisphere, one that speaks to the broad and collective challenges we face together and for us to champion the freedom that citizens across the region are yearning for.

I am glad that President Trump is scheduled to lead the U.S.—President Biden is scheduled to lead the U.S. delegation to the Summit, especially after President Trump chose not to attend the last one in Lima in 2018.

This is the first Summit of the Americas hosted by the U.S. since the very first summit in 1994 in Miami when my ranking member colleague was struggling through elementary school.

The world, certainly, does not look like it did back then when democracy was ascendant, the Soviet Union had collapsed, NAFTA had just been signed, and there was broad optimism about a free trade agreement for the Americas.

Fast forward to today, and citizens across the region are increasingly dissatisfied with how democracy works, in part, because their governments have not delivered and people view elections and elected representatives as untrustworthy.

The negative outlook has only increased the allure of China's siren song of easy money, an economic relationship that comes with little transparency and little quality. Despite some malaise, we see people across the hemisphere continuing to fight for their rights to speak freely, for institutions that treat them fairly, and for the right to decide how they are governed, principles that are embodied in the Inter-American Democratic Charter that all OAS members agreed to 21 years ago at the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City.

We see journalists in Mexico doggedly fighting for their freedom of speech even at the risk of being killed by criminals, which, tragically, continues to happen. We saw Nicaragua's own representative to the OAS in March forcefully denounce his government's brutal repression of its people. We have seen Guatemalan prosecutors and judges fighting to uphold the rule of law in their country, even if it means they have to leave their country to do so.

We also see partners like Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic banding together in a democratic alliance to defend the values outlined in the charter, and I welcome that development and hope we might see more of it.

There are serious challenges that affect us all and that require collective action. Pandemic recovery, economic inequality, drug trafficking, corruption, encroachment by our adversaries, climate change, irregular migration—all these require U.S. engagement and leadership in the region and so I will welcome the Administration's ambitious and inclusive agenda in response to these many issues and look forward to hearing how it is approaching the Summit with these challenges in mind.

We are not going to fix everything at the Summit. It is a dialogue, but we need more dialogue and we need more partnership. We are all Americans, and the event provides us with a unique and important opportunity to advance our interests and values.

I am also interested in hearing how the Administration intends to shore up commitment to the Democratic Charter. Last week, I joined Senators Menendez, Rubio, and others in introducing legislation to uphold the charter because, regardless of whatever disagreements we have had as a region, we decided collectively back in 2001, I would argue, properly, that we should prioritize the values outlined in the charter.

One last comment before I turn it over to my ranking member, Senator Rubio, for his remarks. I last visited the region in July of 2021 with six senators—three Democrats and three Republicans—and our visit coincided with the delivery of vaccines, and I heard such appreciation.

Many of these nations have said to us again and again, whether we are in the region or whether their heads of state are visiting with us, that they feel like we do not pay attention, that they would rather deal with the United States, that the connections between us make the partnership a natural one, but that our presence is mostly an absence and other nations like China are more active and present.

So as the vaccine deliveries were occurring, there was such an outpouring of support in the nations that we went to—Ecuador, Guatemala, Colombia, and Mexico—such an outpouring of thanks and kind of, like, we are so glad you are back.

In the tragedy of the pandemic where nearly 30 percent of the deaths in the world have been in Latin America, they contrast to the United States that was willing to give them the best vaccines in the world with a China or Russia that were willing to sell them substandard vaccines and then cancel the contracts if they said something nice about Taiwan, for example.

I think our vaccine diplomacy last year opened an opportunity—potentially, an opportunity for a new chapter—of more engagement, more attention, more focus, and I pledge to work together with my ranking member on this committee to help ensure that that happens.

Now I would like to offer an opportunity for opening comments from somebody who has been a strong leader in the U.S.-Latin America relationship during his entire career, Senator Rubio.

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

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Chairman Kaine, and thank you for your continued interest and your willingness, and I think this is actually a very timely hearing and I appreciate all the work you did to make it come about.

I, too, remember that 1994 summit in my hometown of Miami. I was a 23-year-old just completing the eighth grade for the fifth time and——

[Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. —but all kidding aside, I remember it because in 1994 we were in that sort of post-Cold War hubris. Everybody—the world was going to—everyone was headed towards not just the liberalization of trade and democracies, but everyone was going to look more like us.

There was no Soviet Union and the world had changed, and there was tremendous amount of optimism about the direction of Latin America, which had been plagued throughout the fifties, sixties, seventies by right-wing dictators and left-wing strongmen.

Suddenly you saw all these countries from Nicaragua to Paraguay, Bolivia, all these emerging from that era to something very different. There was a tremendous amount of optimism, but obvi-

ously history did not end in 1991 and human nature being what it is, that is an ongoing challenge.

Then we fast forward to today, this Summit of the Americas. Actually, I remember the last Summit of the Americans that I attended in Peru, and it was my suggestion to the then Trump administration that they issue an invitation that the next one be in the United States, and my hope was that it would be in Washington because if it were in Washington we would have an opportunity for our colleagues here in the Senate, and then the House would be in session, to interact with those foreign leaders that would be in town and it would really highlight the importance of that event.

For whatever reason, they chose another site and that is fine. That is not our biggest challenge. Here is the biggest challenge. We are really in a pivotal—with all that is going on in the world and is very important we are in a very pivotal moment when it comes to the region.

There are an enormous number of rising challenges that need to be addressed. That post-Cold War hubris about democracy is being directly challenged, including in places that elect people who win elections and then do not govern as democrats and, in fact, that they use the power they acquire electorally to undermine the functioning of institutions.

That has been the case in a number of places. Nicaragua is one. Venezuela is another. So you have the real challenge today, not just of a long-term dictatorship that has been in Cuba for a very long time, but what, basically, are now dictatorships in Venezuela, in Nicaragua, and the fear that that could spread to other places—the rise of anti-American leaders in a number of places, including places where they were elected, whose rhetoric is openly hostile or at least, certainly, counter to our national interests.

Perhaps the biggest challenge in the region is the sense that America is just not engaged, that we just do not care and, unfortunately, I think that is reflected in a number of places including, frankly, with all due respect, here in the United States Senate where a handful of us do care a lot about what happens in the region, but others are—just do not spend a lot of time on it.

I understand the world is a busy place and there are a lot of issues to cover, but in the framework of public policy, foreign policy focus, the Western Hemisphere, I think, is neglected, given its importance both strategically and geographically to what is happening in the United States.

We have real challenges in migration, migration that is, largely, driven by the fact that people feel they can no longer live in their countries, and so these countries in the Western Hemisphere are not just sources of migration. It is one of the things that people do not talk enough about. They are not just sources of migration. They are transit points for migration and the transit alone is an extraordinary burden on these countries.

Talk to the government leaders in places like Panama. Talk to the government leaders in Mexico and they will tell you that becoming a transit point for migration from people from over 70 or 80 countries around the world poses an extraordinary challenge on them, in addition to the fact that there are countries, for example,

in Central America—Honduras, Guatemala—where the youngest people in that country—their future, their workforce, the ones that should be building the future of the country—have decided that their future belongs somewhere else and are trying to figure out how to get out, and that is driven by not just lack of economic opportunity, but violence, murder, extortion by local criminal gangs, and corrupt government leaders, oftentimes in the pockets in some places of these elements.

Then you also have Chinese interests in the region. Chinese exploit policies of exploitation, its attempts to trap developing economies in debt traps that they never can get out of, get their hands on natural resources and things of this nature, and then Russia, which is always seeking ways to harm the national interests of the United States in low-cost, high-yield propositions like their involvement in Venezuela, like their hope of, potentially, establishing a military presence in Nicaragua, like the spread of propaganda, over a hundred something individual online outlets that the Russians are now behind to spread propaganda in the region that needs to be countered.

All that said, there are also real opportunities in the Western Hemisphere that, I think, we are missing. I ask myself as we watch these supply chain disruptions, because stuff is made halfway around the world and now it is shut down because of a pandemic or whatever it may be, why are more things not being made—if it cannot be made in America why are they not being made in places closer to America?

Why do we not have huge factories in Haiti or in Guatemala or in Honduras, places that could provide opportunity for employment in those countries and, by the way, are located much closer to us in terms of supply chains and disruptions?

Why are they not there? There is a lot of reasons. Some of it has to—a lot of it has to do with the decisions of these local governments, but some of it, I think, has to do with the fact that we have not had a strategic vision to encourage that, what role are we playing there, and I think that is really an important opportunity for us to provide some leadership in that direction.

Then add to that the opportunity to provide a counter, and many of these countries that come to us and say, look, we do not want to do investment deals with the Chinese, but they show up with a bunch of money, no strings attached, and you guys offer no alternative. There is no alternative and I think that has to change, and some of that has begun to change, but I think it has to change much faster.

These are the things that have to be covered, but in the end, we can never forget what the Summit was always about. This is called the Summit of the Americas, but what it really should be called is the Summit of Democracy in the Americas because the purpose of the Summit is to bring together democratically-elected governments to show that democracy can work, that democracy can lead to actions that solve the real problems of real people.

It is why I think it is so disturbing that so much pressure is being placed on this Administration, which is still unclear about exactly what kind of summit this will be.

I will close with this, and this is an important point. This is not about not inviting Cuba because we want to send a message or not inviting Nicaragua because we want to send a message or not inviting Maduro because we want to appease some electorate in the United States.

It is this. You cannot claim to be summit of democracies if at the table are seated elements that are clearly anti-democratic and, actually, what it does is it gives them credibility.

There is credibility attached to being invited to these forums. There is credibility attached to being—the credibility that is damaging, by the way, to those who oppose them, to people that have risked their lives, risked their fortunes, risked their futures, risked everything to stand up to these people and are being told, well, those are the leaders of that country and we have to deal with them.

It is demoralizing to those who stand up and oppose them to see the people who they oppose, who have been so vicious and harmful to their countries, being treated as legitimate governments deserving of the same recognition and the same standing as democratically-elected leaders in places like Costa Rica.

It is demoralizing, and not only is it demoralizing, it is uplifting. These regimes laugh at it, they brag about it, and they use it to further demoralize their opposition and to further coalesce the internal support for their own leadership in their countries among their inner circle.

These are important things that we have to consider. I appreciate you being here today. I am, obviously, not pleased by the lackluster rollout, but I am glad that someone is on the job and trying to pull this thing together.

I think it is really important that it be done the right way because I would rather have no summit at all than one that is counterproductive, and I fear that, potentially, this is where we might wind up.

So thank you for being here. Thank you for your willingness to work on this issue, and I look forward to hearing your testimony and then asking you some questions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

We do have two great panels. On the first panel, we have Kevin O'Reilly, who is the Summit of the Americas' national coordinator at the Department of State in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

He was previously Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Brazil and Southern Cone Affairs and Andean Affairs. He is a career member of the U.S. Foreign Service. He served abroad at U.S. embassies in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, and Indonesia.

He holds master's degrees from the U.S. Naval War College and Johns Hopkins. He received his bachelor in history and his law degree from Loyola University in Chicago.

Thanks for joining us for this important discussion, Mr. O'Reilly. You will be offered the opportunity now to provide testimony. We ask you to be concise, summarize your statement within 5 minutes. Your entire statement will be included in the record and then we will proceed to questions.

STATEMENT OF KEVIN O'REILLY, SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS NATIONAL COORDINATOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. O'REILLY. Thank you very much, Senator.

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Rubio, and members of the subcommittee, I am honored to have the opportunity to appear before you today.

On June 8, President Biden will arrive in Los Angeles to host the Summit of the Americas, a first for us since the inaugural event in 1994.

This will bring together governments from across our hemisphere to create new opportunities for our citizens and citizens across the Americas. We see, as well, direct engagement between the people and their government leaders as a Summit priority and we expect people from every country of the hemisphere to join us in Los Angeles, including from lands where authoritarians would silence their citizens, to focus on building an equitable, sustainable, and resilient future.

Civil society, youth, and business will participate through the Civil Society Forum, the Young Americas Forum, and CEO Summit, and for the first time representatives of these groups will engage directly with heads of state and government in roundtable discussions, their conversations on topics ranging from accelerating digital transformation and safe and secure communities, address U.S. priorities, and also exemplify the exchanges between citizens and elected officials that characterize the best in democratic dialogue.

The Department shares a process known as the Summit Implementation Review Group through which governments develop leader-level commitments to adopt and launch in Los Angeles.

We intend to establish a comprehensive action plan on strengthening health systems, on working together to prevent, prepare for, and respond to health crises and strengthen our health infrastructure, including the health sector workforce, and in so doing create growth in our economies.

Our commitments for a green future and clean energy transition aim put the region at the forefront of sustainable growth while addressing climate challenges.

To bridge the digital divide and make sure all can benefit from the 21st century economy, we intend to create the first regional agenda and common principles on preparing citizens and societies for the digital transformation reshaping our hemisphere and our world.

Finally, this Summit offers our region's democratic leaders an opportunity to affirm their commitment to democracy and to the citizens for whom—from whom they derive their authority by adopting an action plan on building strong and inclusive democracies.

These commitments reflect both our priorities and topics of broad concerns are identified in consultation with governments, civil society, youth, and business from across the region, a process that we began shortly after we first assumed the chair of the Summit process from Peru in July of 2020.

These commitments, each in their own way, help address the root causes of irregular migration exacerbated by the pandemic and

now by rising global prices on agricultural, food, and other commodities, a challenge made much worse by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

To drive economic recovery, we have to push for reforms and expand opportunities for financing from transparent sources such as the Inter-American Development Bank and its private sector window, IDB Invest.

This agenda can help focus governments on strengthening democratic resilience, fighting corruption, increasing health security, supporting and strengthening independent media and civil society, promoting more equitable economic growth that reaches the people on the peripheries of our societies, and combating the climate crisis.

Each Summit pillar in some way addresses the root causes of migration across our hemisphere, a major challenge for the U.S., but not only the United States. It affects us all.

So President Biden and other heads of government and heads of state will also discuss how to work together and develop collaborative coordinated responses to migration and forced displacement, and we hope that this process we will set the course for stabilizing migrant populations, expanding legal pathways, improving humane migration management to bring our historic migration crises under control.

We are going to work together with members of this committee to make the Summit a success, joining partners from across the hemisphere to meet shared challenges, and we see clear value in building a regional consensus on such priorities wherever we can.

[The prepared statement of Mr. O'Reilly follows:]

Prepared Statement of Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Rubio, and members of the subcommittee, I am honored to appear before you today. On June 8, President Biden will arrive in Los Angeles to host the Summit of the Americas, a first for us since the inaugural summit in 1994.

This event will bring together governments from across our hemisphere to address pressing challenges and create new opportunities for our citizens and citizens from across the Americas.

Voices from across the hemisphere will inform the Summit's work.

We see direct engagement between the people and their government leaders as a Summit priority, and we expect people from every country of the hemisphere to join us in Los Angeles—including from lands where authoritarians would silence their citizens—to focus on "Building an Equitable, Sustainable, and Resilient Future."

Civil society, youth, and business will participate through the Civil Society Forum, Young Americas Forum, and CEO Summit. For the first time, representatives of these groups will engage directly with heads of state and government in roundtable discussions during the Summit.

Their conversations on topics ranging from "Accelerating Digital Transformation" and "Safe and Secure Communities" address U.S. priorities and exemplify the exchanges between citizens and elected officials that characterize the best in democratic dialogue.

We look to make substantial progress on urgent challenges facing the Americas.

The Department of State chairs a formal process known as the Summit Implementation Review Group, through which governments develop leader-level commitments to adopt and launch in Los Angeles.

We intend to establish a comprehensive action plan on strengthening the capacity of health systems, and their resilience; on working together better to prevent, prepare for, and respond to health crises and strengthen our health infrastructure and systems, including the health sector workforce; and in doing so create growth in our economies.

Our commitments for a green future and a clean energy transition aim to put the region at the forefront of sustainable growth while addressing climate challenges.

To bridge the digital divide and make sure all can benefit from the 21st century economy, we intend to create the first regional agenda, and common principles, on preparing our citizens and societies for the digital transformation reshaping our hemisphere and our world.

Finally, this Summit offers our region's democratic leaders an opportunity to affirm their commitment to democracy, and to the citizens from whom they derive authority, by adopting an action plan on building strong and inclusive democracies.

These commitments reflect both our priorities and topics of broad regional concern identified in consultation with governments, civil society, youth, and business from across the region, a process that we began shortly after we first assumed the chair of the summit process from Peru in July 2020.

These commitments and action plans, each in their own way, help address the root causes of irregular migration, exacerbated by the COVID–19 pandemic and now by rising global prices for food and agricultural and other commodities, a challenge made worse by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

To drive the region's economic recovery, we must push for reforms and expand opportunities for financing from transparent sources such as the Inter-American Development Bank and its private sector window, IDB Invest.

The agenda that I've laid out here can help focus governments on these underlying issues by strengthening our democratic resilience, fighting corruption, building resilience in our health systems and increasing health security, supporting and strengthening independent media and civil society, promoting more equitable economic growth that reaches the people on the peripheries of our societies, and combating the climate crisis.

As a region, we must address these issues in an equitable and inclusive way, or we will only exacerbate our vulnerabilities to health emergencies, food insecurity, irregular migration, and other challenges.

Each Summit pillar in some way addresses the root causes of migration across our hemisphere, a major challenge for the United States, but not only the United States. It affects us all. Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, and their neighbors host more than 5 million Venezuelans, victims of political repression and economic collapse. Costa Rica hosts 500,000 Nicaraguans who have fled Ortega's authoritarian rule. Mexico stands third among nations globally in the number of asylum claims received. This unprecedented challenge must spur us to work together.

President Biden and other heads of government and heads of state will also discuss responses to migration and forced displacement, including efforts to stabilize migrant populations, expand legal pathways, and improve humane migration management.

We will work with the Department of Homeland Security and governments in the region to ensure order at our southwest border. DHS will continue responding to irregular migration by strictly but fairly enforcing our immigration laws, processing individuals in a safe, orderly, and humane manner. DHS efforts underway will help streamline immigration processing for noncitizens in custody, to minimize time spent in shared accommodation and strain on U.S. resources.

We will continue to support DHS efforts to quickly remove individuals who do not establish the legal grounds to remain in the United States, while remaining a global leader in providing protection for those who flee or fear persecution and torture in their home countries. We constantly coordinate with other countries to ease or streamline repatriation requirements.

We will work with members of this committee to make the Summit a success, working together with partners from across the hemisphere to meet shared challenges. We see clear value in building a regional consensus on such priorities wherever we can.

Senator KAINE. We will now go to 5-minute rounds of questions, and I will begin and then go to the ranking member. So let us go ahead and start.

Mr. O'Reilly, the Administration—there has been criticism for the approach to the Summit. Foreign leaders have criticized the exclusion of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. My colleague addressed that well in his opening. Others have criticized the lack of a plan to improve the region's economy and trade linkages or overall lack of prioritizing the region.

These are criticisms that would not be unexpected. Summits are good for bringing leaders together to dialogue, but the real test of a summit is if there is after action.

What would you—what is the Administration hoping might be the after action results or strategies coming out of the Summit next—in June?

Mr. O'REILLY. Thank you, Senator.

We were, indeed, pressed as a result of the pandemic and a lot of the preparations have, in fact, been compressed. We were only able, judging the evolution of the pandemic and other circumstances, to announce earlier this year that Los Angeles would be the venue and it has, in fact, made communication tighter.

We have been working on developing a positive agenda from long before that and in consultations with other governments, and these are some of the outputs that—or the results that we hope to encourage, and I mentioned some of them in my opening comments.

First, working together with governments in the region to develop an action plan on health. Now, it is not just a question of responding to the crisis, but rather because this hemisphere created the modern public health systems of this world.

The predecessor of the Pan-American Health Organization long predates any other multilateral organization of that type anywhere in the world, and we have 8 percent of the planet's population and suffered something like 30-plus percent of the fatalities in this Western Hemisphere.

Senator KAINE. I am going to—just going to dialogue with you rather than we each——

Mr. O'REILLY. Please.

Senator KAINE. —on time, and that was the case. Thirty percent of the population—8 percent of the population, 30 percent of the deaths, but we only sent 8 percent of our vaccines to the Americas. We prioritized based on population, not based on need.

In the Americas, because of migration flows, there is probably a much greater case to be made that it would be in the United States' interest to prioritize more vaccine delivery in the Americas because that is where the threat was. As we were doing vaccine distribution within the United States we tended to prioritize communities that were getting hit hardest by COVID.

We kind of used an approach globally, well, let us just spread it equally over every part of the world whether or not there is a serious challenge, and I would argue that that provision of 8 percent of our vaccines to a population that had 30 percent of the deaths, it was an under-prioritization of the Americas.

We were slow going in. Russia and China got in first with PPE. The good thing is once we started producing vaccines and delivering, there was great appreciation for our effort. So I think the vaccine diplomacy has opened the door after we kind of got out of the block slow.

I hope we will build on that door opening and I was pleased to hear you put health as one of the first pillars because I think that could be such an obvious area, given the times we live in and the recent success that we have had in at least delivering high-quality product in a way that has been appreciated.

Mr. O'REILLY. Sir, we have seen as well that now, as the circumstances evolved, we see governments and individuals across the region opting for higher quality, more reliable resources provided from U.S. innovation and U.S. firms in order to meet these requirements, and we have managed to distribute free—as you mentioned earlier, free and without strings nearly—I think it is 68 million doses and we have, in fundamental ways, helped change the trajectory of the pandemic.

Senator KAINE. Let me just stick with health, and I will go a little bit over and then I want to go to Senator Rubio.

He raised in his opening this sort of nearshoring concept. A lot of our supply chains are in China and Asia. We had not defined in the past health equipment, medical equipment, as kind of a national security supply chain that we needed to keep close and so we ended up, really, in a jam when it came to things like PPE at the front end of the pandemic.

These are textile products. They could be perfectly manufactured in American textile firms that are already operating in Central America. They could expand employment, expand opportunities.

The idea of defining medical equipment and medical supplies as a national security imperative and wanting them closer to our shore, they should be manufactured in the United States or possibly in a country with a trade agreement with the United States.

This could bring tremendous economic opportunity to the Americas and it could also be part of this first health pillar where we are producing more to prepare for the next challenge and the next pandemic right here that will benefit everyone.

Is that sort of nearshoring focus how we can drive economic development to meet the health care goal that you described as pillar one—is that the kind of thing that there will be discussions about?

Mr. O'REILLY. We have tried to work very hard with colleagues across the region as we head into the Summit to make—to have that kind of cooperative discussion about the standards, the market requirements, the—what consumers in—of high-quality health goods need in terms of production and what firms need in terms of the standards for transparency in order to create just those kinds of opportunities in health—not only in health, but in health, and we have certainly had discussions on the sort of technical nuts and bolts of these sorts of challenges with governments across the region.

I know I have—certainly, with the Government of Colombia we have had these discussions with others as to how they can make themselves attractive to free market—a free market to participate in this kind of production because we know that the region has the talent and the creativity to do so.

Senator KAINE. I am going to now turn it over for questions to Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Chairman.

Just a couple points on the offshoring. I think, number one, the most important thing they can do is people need to know if I open a factory in your country some mayor or police chief is not going to show up a month later saying, hey, I have a deed here that says this property belongs to me. You need to pay me $5,000 a month

or $10,000 a month in order to keep the business. That is usually bad for business. I think that is the beginning of it.

Then the other is I think we need to prioritize and figure out ways to use our own financing mechanisms to create those incentives. I think the market incentives are there if there were the capital availability through the Inter-American Development Bank or some other measures, and I think that that is really important, but we have to focus on it.

I wanted to ask you some very specific questions. Have we invited anyone from the Cuban regime to be a part of the Summit?

Mr. O'REILLY. Pardon me. Senator, that will be a decision for the White House to make.

Senator RUBIO. So we have not yet invited, as far as—I mean, you would know if we invited someone. We have not yet invited anyone to the Summit?

Mr. O'REILLY. That would be a White House call, sir.

Senator RUBIO. No, I know it would be their call. I am asking if it has already been made.

Mr. O'REILLY. Not to my knowledge.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. We recognize Juan Guaido as the legitimate interim president of Venezuela. That is a correct——

Mr. O'REILLY. Absolutely.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. Have we invited him or anyone from the interim government to the Summit?

Mr. O'REILLY. We are in constant discussions with them about how to participate and engage in the Summit.

Senator RUBIO. Have we invited them to the Summit yet?

Mr. O'REILLY. We are in regular discussions with them and your question——

Senator RUBIO. No, I know you are in regular discussion. I think the—I know what you are answering because I get it. I am asking have we invited—I mean, have we invited them or not? We are in—in those discussions have we invited them yet or we just have not made that invitation? That is——

Mr. O'REILLY. That will be a White House call, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. So the White House has not made that call yet, correct?

Mr. O'REILLY. That will be a White House call, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Have they made that call yet?

Mr. O'REILLY. Not to my knowledge, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. Why is it so hard to answer these things? These are pretty straightforward questions. I am not trying to trick you. It is just I just want to know. I get it.

Look, the answer is the White House has to make that call. They have not made that call yet. I get it. That is not—I am not saying that is your call to make. I am just asking the question because that is why we have these hearings.

Mr. O'REILLY. Of course.

Senator RUBIO. All right. Have we invited representatives of civil society in Cuba, for example, people involved in what happened last July, mostly artists and things of this nature who simply want to be able to have freedom of expression? Has anybody like that been invited to the Summit?

Mr. O'REILLY. Yes, sir. We want to have as broad a participation from civil society from every country which—where authoritarians who are dictators are seeking to snuff out public debate.

Senator RUBIO. So we have made those invitations?

Mr. O'REILLY. Yes, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. Have we invited the Maduro regime or any of its representatives to the Summit?

Mr. O'REILLY. Absolutely not. We do not recognize them as a sovereign government.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. Have we invited anyone from the Ortega regime to the Summit?

Mr. O'REILLY. No.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. My question is this. My understanding is that President Obrador in Mexico is, I think, probably the ringleader of this who are going to boycott the Summit unless you invite this trifecta of tyranny in Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Cuba.

Is that influencing the decisions we are making in regards to—I mean, is that something we are taking into account in regards to who we invite or what we do, moving forward?

Mr. O'REILLY. We are certainly having discussions with the Government of Mexico and with all the governments in the region about the structuring and organization of the debate.

I mean, next week, I will be in Los Angeles to continue discussions on the agenda that I just discussed and I know the White House and other senior officials are constantly in dialogue with the Mexicans and with many other governments.

The former chairman of this subcommittee, Christopher Dodd, is currently traveling in South America as the President's Special Advisor for the Summit and has had consultations with—already with Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and will visit other countries as well.

Senator RUBIO. It is just—my view on it is, and I have seen the public statements that Obrador has made about, well, we are not going to go to the Summit if these guys are not invited and so forth.

My view of it is this. I do not think the United States of America should, frankly, be bullied or pressured into who to invite to a summit we are hosting. If he does not want to come he does not come.

In my view, one of the great things about it is if we have a summit where we do not invite dictators and the people who wanted dictators to come decide to boycott it, then we will just know who our real friends are in the region and govern ourselves accordingly.

I think it would be a good opportunity to filter out the—those who are aligned with our views on the direction of the region and those who are not.

I want to ask you about Haiti. We have invited the current prime minister of Haiti, correct?

Mr. O'REILLY. Yes, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. Obviously, you do not want to speculate about what happened between now and that Summit and so forth, but I have very deep concerns about Haiti, in particular.

The Prime Minister is—he is an interim Prime Minister. There is not a lot of clarity there about what happens if, God forbid, he is removed from office via a coup or something far worse, and we are hoping that does not happen. I imagine the topic of Haiti—its

future, its direction, how it goes from here on out—is something that will be on the Summit agenda.

Is that something we are proactively raising?

Mr. O'REILLY. We are very much engaged as part of the broad sweep of our diplomacy in the hemisphere on just that agenda, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Yes. I think we really should highlight that as far as understanding what we can do, first, to help along with partners in the region to get some stability in Haiti.

Without stability in Haiti it has an impact on multiple countries. Even Cuba is now intercepting Haitian migrants. We are beginning to see that. There are, certainly, a large number of Haitian migrants that are now transiting through Central America and presenting themselves at the southern border. The Bahamas has long had to confront these sorts of challenges.

So I think it is really important that that be a topic that is highlighted and focused upon because I do think there are countries in the region that can—that have a vested interest, beginning with the Dominican Republic—it, obviously, shares Hispaniola with them—but others that have a vested interest in contributing towards some level of governmental stability there and security so that we can—that can then be built upon to, hopefully, provide a better—and I just hope that the topic of Haiti is prominently featured on the agenda and it is something that we really confront.

I will turn it back over, and then I do not know if we have a second round.

Senator KAINE. Excellent. I think Senator Cardin will now ask questions by WebEx.

[No response.]

Senator KAINE. All right. We are going to try to get Senator Cardin up. While we are doing that, let me ask another question.

Mr. O'Reilly, one of the natural tendencies we have is to focus on the kind of problem areas and so the dictatorship or democratic backsliding in the region is very real.

I mean, Senator Rubio's opening statement kind of talked about the difference in the vibe between 1994 in Miami and in 2022 in Los Angeles, but there are also some bright spots, and I think often what you really need to do is when you have bright spots amplify them.

So the Alliance for Democracy and Development, Dominican Republic, Panama, Costa Rica, wanting to have a greater center of gravity to advocate for democracy, rule of law, human rights, I think that is a positive.

It is early in the new tenure of the president of Chile, but I have viewed his willingness to call out abuses by governments that you might think, because he kind of came from the left, he would be supportive of—his willingness to call out abuses in Nicaragua or the Russian invasion of Ukraine, that is promising.

What are you thinking about strategies for the Summit that we might do to kind of amplify or shine a spotlight on some of the positive developments in the region to counter a narrative that it is just all a backslide right now?

Mr. O'REILLY. Absolutely, Senator, and we have also been very encouraged by the work of the governments of the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Costa Rica, and you can already see that this

is something that, certainly, in Costa Rica crosses their local partisan divide. The change of Administration has not changed their commitment to this objective at all.

This is not something that we brought forward. This is a homegrown initiative and one that is exceptionally positive, and we see those kinds of positive developments as well in places like Ecuador and, yes, I think you are right, after the difficult divisions and public debate in Chile that dates from before the pandemic, you see a situation where—a knitting together of a new political consensus and a great deal of ethical clarity about democratic governance, and that is really a fundamental for us.

It is not—people choose their own—in democracies, people choose their own course for their own nations, and we have no quarrel with that whether those governments are conservative, whether they are of the left, whether they just shoot straight down the middle.

It is a question of following rules, of democratic participation, of their own constitutions. These are our complaints with people like Nicolas Maduro, who trample those rules of the road, if you would, of any democratic government.

So part of our agenda of this action plan for strengthening the commitments we made to one another in Quebec City and then on that—the one bright spot on that sad day of September 11, 2001, with the Inter-American Democratic Charter is to make sure that we are setting a positive agenda for democratic governance because, as Senator Rubio was just saying, you do all the right things to build a business and then someone sticks their hands out for a kickback.

That is a question of democratic governance. That is a question of accountability. Those are the ways that we can build—if we strengthen those institutions, if we strengthen the rule of law, if we strengthen accountability, that is where we get the opportunity to show people that the faith they place in democratic governance, well, that faith is well founded.

So much of our agenda, whether it is health, whether it is digital, whether it is the economic—broad agenda of economic recovery that pulls people in from the margins and makes them feel that they are invested in their future, well, the foundation of all of that is effective democratic governance.

Senator KAINE. Indeed. Indeed. Is Senator Cardin available now?

[No response.]

Senator KAINE. Senator Rubio, do you have additional questions for Mr. O'Reilly before the second panel?

Senator RUBIO. No.

Senator KAINE. All right.

Mr. O'Reilly, thank you. I will see you in Los Angeles. We are going to be, hopefully, bringing a number of senators out for Thursday evening and Friday, and we hope that the Summit is a success.

Even more than that, we hope that the aftermath of the Summit demonstrates a—just a higher level of attention, focus, and partnership between Americans North, Central, and South. Thank you very much.

We will now introduce our second panel.

As you come on up, we will begin. Very, very happy to welcome both Dr. Chavez and Mr. Farnsworth to the subcommittee today.

So let me introduce our second panel of witnesses. Dr. Rebecca Bill Chavez, who is the president and CEO of the Inter-American Dialogue. She was formerly a senior fellow in the Dialogue's Rule of Law program, previously served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Western Hemisphere Affairs from 2013 to 2016.

In that role, she prioritized women, peace, and security initiatives, combating the militarization of law enforcement, and also expanded defense institution building programs. Prior to that, Dr. Chavez was a tenured professor of political science at the Naval Academy. Her research focused on democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. She received her master's and Ph.D. in political science from Stanford, bachelor's degree from Princeton.

Eric Farnsworth—Eric leads the Washington Office of the Council of the Americas. Prior to work with the Council, he spent almost a decade in government with the Department of State, Office of U.S. Trade Representative, and the Clinton White House. He also served in the United States Senate with a wonderful former Senator, Sam Nunn.

I want to thank both of you for joining and I would like to ask, first, Dr. Chavez, and then Eric Farnsworth, if you will deliver your opening testimony and then we will go to questions.

STATEMENT OF DR. REBECCA BILL CHAVEZ, PRESIDENT AND CEO, INTER–AMERICAN DIALOGUE, WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. CHAVEZ. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Rubio, members of the subcommittee, thank you so much for the opportunity to testify today about the Summit of the Americas.

As you mentioned, I am president and CEO of the Inter-American Dialogue, which is a think tank that is dedicated to the issues we are talking about today, to fostering democratic governance, prosperity, and social equity in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In my testimony today I want to underscore two core points. First, we should not view the Summit as a single discrete event. Instead, the Biden administration should use this gathering to announce a holistic strategy and vision for Latin America and the Caribbean.

This is really important. A lot of commentators, myself included, have been asking questions like who will be invited, who will attend, but what is most important is that the Summit is happening, and we should make sure that it lays down the foundation for longer-term sustained engagement in the region.

It has to be a launching pad. It cannot be a one-and-done event. The Summit should be part of a broader effort to reengage, reassert the U.S. position as a partner and leader in the region, and reassure the region that the United States cares deeply about the Americas' collective future and well-being.

Second, the Biden administration must release as soon as possible a robust Summit agenda that reflects and aligns with the concerns of the region as well as with U.S. interests.

I was pleased to hear some elements of that agenda earlier from Mr. O'Reilly. As he notes, there are critical issues on which the U.S. can and should work together with the nations of the hemi-

sphere, many of which were not of concern at the—during the first summit in 1994 when democracy and economic development were on the rise.

Today, the region is polarized. COVID–19 has laid bare public health and economic challenges. Democracy is in retreat, climate change is threatening the safety of people, and global rivals are making their financial and political presence strongly felt.

I am going to highlight three such issues. First, on the Summit agenda and a critical component of an Americas strategy should be the hemisphere-wide migration crisis, which can only be addressed in collaboration with partners.

We have tended to focus on our southern border, and I was pleased to hear Mr. O'Reilly today talking about the broader nature of this crisis. I want to highlight that migrants from a diverse set of countries, including Venezuela, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Cuba, in addition to the Northern Triangle countries, are fleeing a mix of acute humanitarian crises, political repression, violence, and state fragility.

Over 6 million Venezuelan refugees are overwhelming neighboring countries. That is on the scale of the Syria and Ukraine refugee crises, and it is happening here in our hemisphere. Over 6 million.

We cannot forget that is happening. Granting TPS to Venezuelans was important, but just as the U.S., on a bipartisan basis, has generously stepped up to assist Ukrainian refugees, so should we work with our hemispheric and global partners to help refugees in the Americas.

Part of the agenda that I hope will be incorporated into a broader Americas strategy is COVID–19. We need a region-wide plan for the still-evolving pandemic and for public health emergencies that the region will undoubtedly face in the future.

As has been alluded to, COVID hit Latin America and the Caribbean hard—over 27 percent of the total number of COVID deaths in a region with only 8 percent of the world's population.

I fully agree that we need to prioritize vaccine distribution to our partners in the Americas. At the Summit, the U.S. should begin to work on a more cooperative approach not just to manage the COVID pandemic, but to strengthen public health systems, more generally.

Finally, the COVID crisis has brought into focus the need for inclusive economic recovery. The pandemic contributed to a devastating economic contraction of 7 percent in 2020, leading to a 10 percent increase in poverty.

Given that impact, coupled with the rising inflation, there are several commitments that the Biden administration should make in Los Angeles, and these also must be included in a strategic vision for the region.

We have to move beyond discussion. We need to expand efforts to attract private investment to the region. We need to announce climate-friendly infrastructure investment initiatives to follow through on the Build Back Better World promises, and we need real action when it comes to nearshoring.

I want to conclude by thanking you for drawing attention to the Summit, and also, more broadly, to Latin America and the Carib-

bean, a region that is so important to the interests of the United States.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Chavez follows:]

Prepared Statement of Dr. Rebecca Bill Chavez

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Rubio, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the upcoming Ninth Summit of the Americas to be held in Los Angeles.

My name is Rebecca Bill Chavez. I am President and CEO of the Inter-American Dialogue, a think tank dedicated to fostering democratic governance, prosperity, and social equity in Latin America and the Caribbean. We work to shape policy debate, devise solutions, and enhance cooperation within the Western Hemisphere.

From 2013 until 2016, I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Before that, I was a tenured professor at the United States Naval Academy, focusing on democracy and security in Latin America and the Caribbean. I have dedicated my policy, academic, and government career to working on and understanding U.S.-Latin American relations as well as democracy and the rule of law in Latin America.

THE SUMMIT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEPLOY A VISION

In my testimony today, I want to underscore two core points.

First, we should not view the Summit as a single, discrete event. Instead, the Biden administration should use the gathering to articulate a vision for Latin America and the Caribbean that it will carry forward over the coming years.

Second, the United States must release as soon as possible a robust Summit agenda that reflects and aligns with the concerns and priorities of the region as well as with U.S. interests.

As was the case when the first Summit of the Americas was held in Miami in 1994, hosting the Summit in the United States and especially in Los Angeles has tremendous symbolic value. With a population that is almost 50 percent Latino and with deep ties to Mexico and the other countries of the hemisphere, Los Angeles is a microcosm of the deepening connection between U.S. domestic policy and foreign policy. Beyond the strong resonance of its location, the Summit presents the Biden administration with the opportunity to announce and begin implementing a holistic strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean—a pivot to the Americas that is more needed today than ever.

Despite concerns about Summit participation by other nations, the Biden administration can and should take strong steps to make the Summit a success by underscoring that the Summit is part of a broader U.S. effort to reengage with the Americas, reassert the U.S. position as a hemispheric partner and leader, and reassure the region that the United States cares deeply about the Americas' collective future and well-being. Of course, this will require that the U.S. Government make and follow through on concrete commitments.

In addition to presenting a vision and a renewed commitment to the Americas, the United States must present a Summit agenda that reflects the concerns and priorities of the region. There are many specific and critical issues on which the United States can and should work together with the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean.

In sharp contrast to the first Summit in Miami when democracy and economic development were on the rise, the United States will be hosting this year's gathering at a time when the region is polarized, COVID–19 has laid bare public health and economic challenges, democracy is in its second decade of retreat, climate change is threatening the health and safety of people throughout the hemisphere, and global rivals are making their financial and political presence strongly felt. A U.S. commitment to a Summit that reflects the region's priorities and to greater engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean is fundamental to competing effectively with authoritarian countries like China, which are increasingly influential in the region.

President Biden's commitment to multilateralism on a global scale should constitute the backbone of the Summit itself and of a Latin America and Caribbean strategy. After all, the greatest threats to our hemisphere are complex and transcend national borders. An Americas strategy without strong partnership and alignment or that is seen as simply a unilateral U.S. project is destined to fail. The President has the opportunity to build common cause with the hemisphere's nations through the reinvigoration of regional organizations like the Organization of American States, which should play a key role in bolstering democracy in the hemisphere.

The Hemispheric Migration Crisis

First on the Summit agenda should be the hemisphere-wide migration crisis. Irregular migration is a tragic humanitarian issue that impacts countries across the Americas—a truly hemispheric challenge that is best addressed in collaboration with regional partners. As such, the Biden administration has the opportunity to demonstrate that it cares about more than crossings along the U.S. southern border.

Migrants from a diverse set of countries, including Venezuela, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are fleeing a mix of acute humanitarian crises, political repression, violence, and state fragility. Over 6 million Venezuelan refugees are overwhelming Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, and many other Latin American and Caribbean countries. This number rivals Syria's demographic collapse, and yet the amount of international funding for each Venezuelan refugee is only 10 percent of the per capita funding for Syrian refugees. The Biden administration took an important first step by granting Temporary Protected Status to Venezuelans in the United States. Now it's time to do more. Just as the U.S. Government on a bipartisan basis has generously stepped up to assist Ukrainian refugees, so should the United States work with hemispheric and global partners to help refugees in our hemisphere.

President Biden started to build the scaffolding of a holistic approach to migration with its Northern Triangle Strategy, an essential step with a focus on the root causes, including crippling poverty, widespread violence, government corruption, and climate change. Although its long-term focus on rootedness represents a positive shift away from the ad-hoc, reactive stance that has characterized U.S. policy for decades, it only covers a portion of Central America, leaving out Nicaragua where thousands are fleeing the brutal Ortega regime, not to mention Mexico, South America, and the Caribbean. The localized strategy should be a building block of a broader approach that goes well beyond concerns about migration to the United States, and President Biden should use the Summit to propose a set of practical policy solutions.

COVID and Public Health Emergencies

The agenda should also include a sustainable, region-wide plan for the still-evolving COVID–19 pandemic and for public health emergencies that the region will undoubtedly face in the future. COVID–19 hit Latin America and the Caribbean hard, killing over 1.7 million people—more than 27 percent of the total number of global COVID deaths in a region with only 8 percent of the world's population. Many countries came to see China and Russia as stronger pandemic partners than the United States, given how slow the U.S. was to provide personal protective equipment and vaccines.

At the Summit, the United States should work to organize a more cooperative approach to managing the pandemic and strengthening public health systems more generally. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have for too long invested far too little in health infrastructure. In addition to increasing vaccine provisions, the Biden administration should initiate a robust vaccine technology program to ramp up regional manufacturing capacity to achieve global equitable vaccine access. More broadly, the United States needs to work with other countries to establish robust and reliable systems to coordinate better our response to future pandemic threats and, more broadly, region-wide public health emergencies.

The pandemic and the resulting school closures had significant negative effects on education opportunities across the hemisphere, particularly for students from vulnerable households. The region had the longest average school closures of anywhere in the world, and some countries are only now reopening for in-person learning, over 2 years after school doors were first closed. The Summit is an opportunity for the United States to reaffirm the importance of education recovery efforts and commit to partnering with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote quality education for all, including through cooperative programs such as the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative.

Inclusive Economic Recovery and Growth

The COVID crisis has also tragically brought into focus the economic weaknesses of the region. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean reports that the spread of COVID contributed to a devastating economic contraction of 7 percent in 2020, which led to a 10 percent increase in poverty in 2020 and exacerbated income inequality. According to the World Bank, students impacted by extended school closures could face a 10 percent loss in their lifetime incomes.

Given the devastating economic impact of the pandemic coupled with rising inflation, inclusive economic recovery should be a central piece of the Summit agenda, and there are several initiatives and commitments the Biden administration could

announce in Los Angeles, including the expansion of efforts to attract private investment to the region. The Administration's Partnership for Central America could serve as the model and starting point.

The U.S. should also announce climate-friendly infrastructure investment initiatives to follow through on the launch of Build Back World and the promises it made to Latin America and the Caribbean with the other G7 countries a year ago. Expectations are high in the region, especially since the September Build Back Better World listening tour that included stops in Colombia, Ecuador, and Panama. As a start, the Administration should harness its various development finance tools, including the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, and provide specifics on areas that it will invest in, which is becoming even more important as China's competing Belt and Road Initiative gains traction in the region.

The Administration should also announce specific initiatives that follow up on its talk about nearshoring as a way to boost economic performance in the hemisphere. There are many opportunities to re-route and reinforce more secure and reliable supply chains through the region as an alternative to manufacturing and services hubs in China and other parts of the world. Manufacturing and production were both significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic, which has prompted companies to explore options in Latin America and the Caribbean. It's time for the Biden administration to create incentives for companies to move their operations to parts of the Americas that are closer and have easier access to the United States.

Finally, as of part of President Biden's effort to tackle the climate crisis, the Administration should announce bold new clean energy investments and demonstrate its support for the region's renewable energy goals. The climate conversation should also include an actionable plan to increase climate adaptation assistance to the region, particularly to the Caribbean and Central America, which experience the most catastrophic impacts of climate change in large part due to their geographic exposure to extreme weather events. Aid should also target the most vulnerable populations, including women, indigenous communities, people of African descent, and youth. Potential commitments include greater funding for resilient agricultural practices where a single drought can utterly destroy the livelihood of subsistence farmers. The Administration should also expand its work with the countries that share the Amazon rainforest using a variety of tools from technical assistance to funding to expand protected areas and indigenous reserves. By providing financial and technical resources for the region to meet its climate commitments and build its resilience, the United States can take the lead on a shared sustainable development agenda.

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for shining alight on the upcoming Summit of the Americas. I also want to thank the Subcommittee for its bipartisan and much-needed attention to Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that is so deeply important to the interests of the United States.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Dr. Chavez.

Mr. Farnsworth.

STATEMENT OF ERIC FARNSWORTH, VICE PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. FARNSWORTH. Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity, again, to testify before this subcommittee.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members, I really want to thank you both and those who may be on WebEx for your continued leadership on these issues. It is genuine.

We need, Mr. Rubio, the types of leaders in the Senate that you spoke of in your statement, and both of you dedicating today's hearing, but also your own prioritization of the Western Hemisphere is noticed and it is meaningful and it is important. So thank you for that.

In uncertainty there is opportunity, and the Summit of the Americas presents an important opportunity for the United States to meet the region where it is, to present a true partnership for re-

gional recovery, to work to ensure that the next pandemic wave is less terrible, and to stand firmly and resolutely for democracy.

The world has changed dramatically since the first U.S.-hosted summit in 1994. I was also there in Miami and I saw, personally, the excitement and ambition of the assembled leaders, each one democratically elected.

We were at the "end of history." Russia had been chastened. China was not yet a thing, at least in the Americas. Nation after nation had moved from dictatorship to democracy, from economic distress to stability, from closed economies to open, toward a real desire for expanding trade with the United States and with each other.

Only Cuba remained an outlier, then as now, although today both Venezuela and Nicaragua have also left the democratic path, and Haiti continues to struggle to constitute and sustain democratic governance as it also did in 1994, and other countries in the region also face democratic challenges.

Across the region, one constant since Miami is the desire to meet the needs and improve the lives of citizens and this is where we have a real opportunity in Los Angeles for lasting, positive change if we choose to prioritize these issues.

Latin America and the Caribbean have been hit hard by the COVID pandemic, as we have already heard. Beyond the awful human costs, budgets have been strained, debt has increased, and rising U.S. interest rates are making dollar-denominated debt more difficult to service.

The World Bank projects regional growth this year of just over 2 percent, hardly enough to create the jobs the region requires to get back on its feet or to address rising social demands.

Ultimately, the region's leaders themselves are responsible for job creation and development in their own countries, but we can help, and if we want the United States to maintain a privileged position in the Americas, I believe we have to help because alternatives now exist that did not exist before.

The Los Angeles Summit would be the perfect opportunity for Washington to announce a commitment to regional growth and recovery, launching a concerted effort on debt service and relief, new lending, incentives for private sector-led investment, and trade.

While a significant trade initiative may not be in the cards, there is no reason Washington cannot propose a region-wide effort to liberalize individual sectors such as environmental technology, goods and services, or the digital economy or health care consistent with and building on the framework, frankly, that the President just announced himself in Tokyo for Asia.

Why cannot we use a similar approach for the Western Hemisphere?

More ambitiously, consistent with the region's own interests, I propose we seek to expand the bipartisan USMCA into the rest of the hemisphere, including other nations as they show the interest and capacity to meet the standards and obligations that the agreement requires.

Second, the pandemic is not yet over, but it is clear that sustainable health systems are an investment in the region's economies as well as in the well-being of its most vulnerable citizens.

Mr. Chairman, I really appreciate your comments in terms of vaccines and I have been saying since the pandemic began with the hashtag #VaccinateTheAmericas that we have to prioritize the Americas for the public health reasons for sure, but also there is a strategic component here with China. It is something that makes sense for us to be doing.

We would be better positioned to ensure regional health care systems work better and we would be better able to prioritize help in terms of the inevitable next pandemic.

There is also one very important aspect here and that is that the pandemic is—it is fundamental to fix the pandemic if the region's tourism services sector is going to recover.

Tourism is a major services export, and with the high U.S. dollar right now there should be a huge desire for American citizens, particularly U.S. citizens, to travel to the Western Hemisphere to take advantage of the strong U.S. dollar.

They are not doing that, necessarily, because still the pandemic is raging in parts of the hemisphere. So it is not just a health issue. It is an economic recovery issue and I think we have to acknowledge that.

Finally, we must be committed stewards of regional democracy. We can all do better in practice, for sure, ourselves included. It is important to uphold the basic democratic standard for Summit participation.

That is why the bipartisan Upholding the Inter-American Democratic Charter Act of 2022 is so very much appreciated for both you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member. In that vein, Venezuela's constitutional leader, Juan Guaido, should also be invited to the Summit and as of late last night, at least, he had not yet been invited.

These issues are fraught, but it begs the question, at this point what is the purpose of regional summits, because simply meeting a commitment to meet is not enough. Without an ambitious, attractive agenda to rally around, the narrative is too easily captured by those whose interests do not coincide with our own and, indeed, that has been the case.

Working toward regional recovery, including trade expansion, addressing health care and other social needs, and standing for democracy even when it may be unpopular to do so, in my view, would be a great place to begin.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Farnsworth follows:]

Prepared Statement of Mr. Eric Farnsworth

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to share my views with you and the Subcommittee on the upcoming Ninth Summit of the Americas, which the United States will host from June 8 through June 10 in Los Angeles. The Council of the Americas has been involved in the Summits of the Americas since the first Summit was conceived and hosted by President Bill Clinton in Miami in 1994, and in every Summit of the Americas since then. And my own involvement also dates to that first Summit, when as a young State Department officer I was one of the advisors working to bring the Summit together substantively and logistically.

THE VISION AT THE CENTER OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS

The Los Angeles Summit is an opportunity to build on that first Summit of the Americas, and on a process that has been in place now for almost 30 years. So I think it's important to start by looking back at what drove the United States to launch the Summits of the Americas. The 1994 Summit took place at a singular moment in U.S. and global history—one that seems pretty distant right now, but which is important to capture. When President Clinton took office in 1993, the Berlin Wall had come down only 4 years earlier, and the Soviet Union had collapsed—largely peacefully—just a couple of years before. The United States was enjoying a unipolar moment as the sole superpower. Enjoying it, but also working to define what that unipolar moment would mean and how we would use it going forward, after almost half a century in which the Cold War dominated our and the world's foreign policymaking.

In that context, the first Summit caught a democratic wave in Latin America and the Caribbean and launched the process for a region-wide free trade area. Most significantly, it represented a vision for U.S. relations with Latin America, and for the Americas as a whole. It sought to reshape the way we as Americans—"estadounidenses"—dealt with a region where history is remembered, and not always positively; to move past the Monroe Doctrine of the 19th century and the "backyard" talk of the early 20th century; to build on the Alliance for Progress of the post-World War II era; and to think of ourselves as "americanos," partners with the region in advancing a shared set of values. It is a testament to that vision that it has endured for 28 years, and that the following Summits of the Americas were held with a similar vision for democratic partnership and open-market prosperity. The 2001 Summit in Canada spurred completion of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, a landmark, and still unique, document approved unanimously in Lima on September 11, 2001, just hours after terrorists crashed civilian aircraft into the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The Inter-American Democratic Charter committed the region's governments to democratic governance, building on the commitment made in Quebec City that democracy would be a requirement for attendance at future Summits.

A FADING SENSE OF PURPOSE

Over the next 20 years, however, the sense of common purpose faded as we in the United States turned our attention, necessarily, to the "Global War on Terror." Regional governments were sympathetic and ready to partner in this effort, but did not experience the threat in the same way. A growing number of illiberal governments in the region questioned U.S. actions as we sought to protect ourselves. Many governments also began to question the value of a U.S.-led regional trade area. By 2005, the Free Trade Area of the Americas was suspended, and by the time of the 2012 Summit, hosted by Colombia, governments were divided over what democracy and trade even signified, making it difficult to reach agreement on a common agenda.

In some ways, that is the story of the Summits of the Americas over the last two decades: a move from a shared vision for democracy, trade, and prosperity to a venue for taking a stand. Still, if each meeting became progressively less ambitious, successive U.S. administrations understood the value of the Summits. As the only gatherings where Latin and Caribbean governments come together with the U.S. and Canadian leaders, they provided a unique opportunity to advance regional dialogue and aims. President Bush attended two; President Obama attended three. And in each case, the Summit meeting served to connect the United States better with a region that, despite being so central to U.S. security and prosperity, is often overlooked in Washington.

THE LIMA SUMMIT AS TURNING POINT

The Lima Summit in 2018 represented a turning point in both substance and regional relations. Substantively, in the wake of the Odebrecht scandal that rocked many governments in the region, the Peruvian hosts focused the Summit on anticorruption measures, achieving a meaningful, if limited, agreement for the first time in over a decade. This despite dealing with their own political instability and the resignation of their president just 2 weeks before the meeting. In some ways, the agreement heralded a possible return to the sort of visionary ideas that drove the early Summits of the Americas, even if the scope was narrower. For U.S. relations with the region, however, the Lima Summit represented a departure. When President Trump canceled his attendance, many in the region viewed it as a snub. The offer by Vice President Pence for the United States to host the next Summit, while

welcome, did little to diminish the sting. When President Biden took office last year, the normal planning process for a Summit of the Americas was already well behind schedule. Still, many in the region hoped that the Ninth Summit of the Americas could represent a turning point for the better. And the year-long delay necessitated by the COVID–19 pandemic seemed to offer an opportunity for the Biden administration to mount a thoughtful effort around a new vision for hemispheric relations.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE LOS ANGELES SUMMIT

Two weeks out from the Summit, the general consensus in the region, and among Latin Americanists, is that the vision is clouded. I hope and trust they are wrong. Because we are at a moment of great uncertainty for the United States and for our Western Hemisphere neighbors. And in uncertainty there is opportunity. This Summit of the Americas, hosted by the United States for the first time in a generation, presents an opportunity for us to meet the region where it is: to present a true partnership for regional recovery, to work to ensure that the next pandemic wave is less terrible, and to stand firmly and resolutely for democracy.

Across the region, one constant since Miami is the desire to meet the needs and improve the lives of our citizens. And this is where we have a real opportunity in Los Angeles for lasting, positive change. Latin America and the Caribbean has been hit hard by the COVID pandemic. Beyond the awful human costs, budgets have been strained, debt has increased, and rising U.S. interest rates are making dollar-denominated debt more difficult to service. The World Bank projects regional growth this year of just over 2 percent, hardly enough to create the jobs the region requires to get back on its feet or address rising social demands.

Ultimately, the region's leaders themselves are responsible for job creation and development in their own countries, but we can help. And if we want the United States to maintain a privileged position in the Americas, we must help, because alternatives now exist that didn't before. Cuba is no longer an outlier. Populism, illiberal democracy, authoritarian government, and even brutal dictatorships in Venezuela and Nicaragua, as well as Cuba, have appeared, challenging democratic institutions that were already weakened by corruption and a lack of rule of law. China has successfully asserted itself economically and is now the first or second trading partner of most countries in the region. And it is clear that China is looking to assert itself politically in the Americas, questioning the value of democracy and undermining democratic institutions, as part of an increasingly aggressive global competition with the United States.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RECOVERY THROUGH TRADE AND INVESTMENT

The Los Angeles Summit offers the perfect opportunity for Washington to announce a commitment to regional growth and recovery, launching a concerted effort on debt service and relief, new lending, incentives for private sector-led investment, and trade. While a comprehensive trade initiative may not be in the cards, there is no reason Washington cannot propose a region-wide effort to liberalize and facilitate trade in individual sectors including environmental technology, goods, and services, the digital economy, and healthcare. More ambitiously, we should be seeking to build on the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, USMCA, which received bipartisan support to advance North American economic integration. We should use the Summit to offer our neighbors the opportunity to join us, as they show interest and capacity to meet the standards and take on the obligations the agreement requires. The region is asking for such an agenda and will meet their needs elsewhere if we do not respond effectively.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RECOVERY THROUGH BETTER HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Second, the pandemic is not yet in the regional rear-view mirror, and it is already clear that sustainable healthcare systems are an investment in the region's economies as well as in the well-being of its most vulnerable citizens. The United States has donated millions of vaccine doses to the region, and must continue to do so, for our well-being as well as that of our neighbors. Beyond prioritizing vaccine assistance, we should lead in strengthening the region's healthcare systems by instituting a high-level, annual public-private health and economy forum. This would help make sure healthcare systems in the region work, that they are able to cope with the many health issues made worse by the COVID–19 pandemic—including mental health, noncommunicable diseases, and women's health concerns—and are able to deal with the next pandemic that scientists assure is only a matter of time.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RECOVERY THROUGH A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY

Finally, we have to be committed stewards of regional democracy. We can all do better in practice, the United States included, but it is important to uphold the democratic standard for Summit participation, and to continue working to strengthen democratic institutions against undermining from corruption, populism, and autocratic leaders. That is why, Mr. Chairman, concrete bipartisan leadership on the "Upholding the Inter-American Democratic Charter Act of 2022" is so very much appreciated. That is why those who have not been democratically elected should not be invited to the Summit of the Americas. And that is why Venezuela's constitutional leader, Juan Guaidó, should be at the Summit.

WHY THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

Trade and investment, healthcare, democratic governance. These issues are no easier to develop consensus around than they were 3 years or 10 years ago. In fact, they are fraught, for us at home, for our hemispheric neighbors, and for us as a region. But they are critical for our prosperity and for that of the Americas as a whole.

So as we prepare for this Summit, these thorny issues before us beg a question: at this point, what is the purpose of these regional summits? Because simply fulfilling a commitment to meet is not enough. What is needed, what we are hoping for, is a renewed vision for the region, led by the United States and crafted together with those committed to partnering with us, based more on values and less on geography. Working toward regional recovery, expanding trade and investment, addressing healthcare and other social needs, and standing for democracy—even when it may be unpopular to do so—would make for a great start down the path toward this renewed vision. It is what I am hoping for. It is what the region is hoping for. And I believe, with the leadership of the United States, it is well within our ability to achieve.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Farnsworth. To both of you, we will question in this order. Senator Cardin was trying to get in by WebEx in his car and could not, but now he is here in person. I am going to let him start. Then we will go to Senator Rubio and then we will go to me.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sometimes I have a little bit of a challenge. I live in Baltimore and commute every day so I am in a car a lot and had a hard time working my monitor in the car today. I was not driving. I just want everybody to know that.

Let me thank the chairman and ranking member for their leadership on this subcommittee. I know both of them have really made this one of their top priorities in their service in the United States Senate, and this is our hemisphere. This is our neighborhood, and their leadership has been extraordinary. I want to thank our two witnesses.

The Summit of America gives us an opportunity, once again, to meet with our states in our hemisphere on a common agenda. I just want to agree with our leadership on this committee that it has to be under the values of our hemisphere, which are democratic states that respect human rights.

I heard the exchange between Senator Rubio and our previous witness. I think it is critically important that our values are maintained at this Summit and it will be tested in the ability to allow those voices to be heard, countries that are autocratic and are not living up to the commitments that we expect in our hemisphere.

I want to raise just one additional question, if I might. Regional organizations, I understand, will be part of the Summit. There will

be a discussion as to how they can more effectively help in dealing with the issues that many of you have talked about.

We could talk about the Inter-American Development Bank or the Pan-American Health Organization, but I want to talk about the Organization of American States. It is an important organization. Its headquarters is just a short distance from here.

It seems to me it could be a more effective voice on the challenges of our hemisphere. So Senator Wicker and I, who chair and are ranking on the Helsinki Commission, have been extremely active in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

We think that organization has been more effective in dealing with a lot of the issues comparable to what the OAS has done and we think one of the reasons that is true is because there is a parliamentary dimension to the OSCE. There is no real parliamentary dimension at all to OAS.

So we introduced legislation, which was passed and signed into law in January of 2020, to instruct our mission to move forward with a parliamentary dimension within the OAS.

I mention that because at the Summit of Americas I heard that our chair is going to be bringing a delegation of legislators to that summit. I think that is an important thing for us to do.

I can tell you, having parliamentarians' participation in an organization enhances its effectiveness. We are not restricted as diplomats. We can call it the way it is. Listen to Senator Rubio. Yes, he will tell you exactly the way—we can speak the truth. We also can translate our words into actions through parliamentary activities.

So my question to our two witnesses is that looking at the regional organizations we have in our hemisphere—I do not want to lead the witness—aren't there ways that we can make these organizations more effective? We put a lot of resources into it. We put a lot of time into it. Yet, I would suggest that most members of Congress have little knowledge of what these regional organizations are all about.

Dr. CHAVEZ. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

You are drawing attention to a very important issue, and that is the general state of the Inter-American system, which I fully agree is facing a great number of challenges.

What I will say, though, right off the bat is that in my desire to push the Administration to develop a holistic strategy and vision for the Americas, I think that this should be a core part of that strategy—how to reinvigorate and renew not just the OAS, but all of the various institutions that comprise this system.

I very much appreciate creative ideas such as incorporating a parliamentary dimension to the OAS, and I think that that is a great place to start, but it is not just the OAS. I think we need to do more when it comes to the Inter-American Development Bank.

The Inter-American Development Bank has not been engaged for a number of reasons. I saw firsthand the potential of the Inter-American system when I was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and attended two Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas with Secretary Hagel and then with Secretary Carter, and I saw the potential for real action in this sort of organization.

At the time, it was in response to climate change, the increasing extreme weather events, and the need for a hemisphere wide mechanism for the militaries of the region to come together in support of civilian authorities to respond to humanitarian and disaster response needs.

I fully agree that these are tools that we need to renew, we need to reinvigorate, and I urge the Administration to make this a core part of an Americas strategy.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Let me—Ms. Chavez, I will start with you because we talked a lot about the migration crisis. We agree with that. COVID–19—I mean, all those things are important—economic growth. I really do wonder—I guess I want to ask a little bit about your statement about reinvigorating regional organizations like the OAS and using that and others to bolster democracy in the hemisphere.

Is not part of bolstering democracy, I believe, sort of elevating those countries that are actually following democratic norms—which, by the way, democratic norms sometimes elect people whose policies we may not like, right.

I mean, I, certainly, do not agree with some of the policy directions that President Obrador has taken in Mexico, but I do not argue that he is a dictator or that he somehow has taken power in that country through means that are illegitimate.

I mean, that is a part of the risk here when—I mean, that is just part of the things that happen, and I imagine that there are people elected in this country that our partners in the Western Hemisphere sometimes do not agree with their policies as well.

That is different from having someone who takes power, and the real dynamic we have seen now is people that figure out how to win elections and then once they capture the government or once they are in power, then they begin to undermine all the institutions in that society or bend them to their will.

The favorite is always the infamous—the generic electoral commission that suddenly is filled with all of your buddies and cronies as the vote counters, but it happens in the court system and the like.

The reinvigorating democracy piece, I think, is both practical. We need to be providing people assistance on things like countering propaganda and disinformation. I mean, if we think disinformation is damaging to American democracy, this stuff is happening in a lot of these countries. We see that.

We see how that influence operations are occurring there to sort of steer the currents, and not to mention the proven instances where you have these transnational criminal groups that are pouring millions of dollars into political campaigns in these countries.

How do we address those parts? What institutions beyond the Summit can we use to address those challenges?

I will start with you, Ms. Chavez, because you have talked about this. What other institutions and measures can we use at the Summit and post-Summit to address things like disinformation, the financing of campaigns by criminal groups who have—drug dealers or whatever that have millions of dollars that they can invest in

some of these campaigns? How would we elevate that issue and make it not just a topic of the Summit, but after the Summit?

Dr. CHAVEZ. Thank you for the question. You make an excellent point about democracy, in general, that there are an increasing number of cases not just in Latin America, but across the globe where a leader that is democratically elected and then we see that leader in a very deliberate manner dismantling democratic institutions, like the autonomy of the courts, and we have examples, as you allude to, in our own hemisphere where that is happening.

One of the recommendations, I think, and this would be part of reinvigorating the OAS—well, first of all, I have to express my gratitude for the Upholding the Inter-American Democratic Charter Act, which I think is an important statement about the importance of this charter.

One of the things I think the hemisphere could do a better job of is calling out these deliberate assaults on particular institutions and not wait until there is this race to the bottom, not wait until just a shell of democracy is left.

One thing is to look at the steps that are taken along the way and we are seeing this, for example, in El Salvador.

Another big issue in our hemisphere, and we see it in particular in Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela, is violations of human rights. In the case of Venezuela, the U.N. role with its mission to Venezuela where it actually went in and then reported on crimes against humanity is another way. That is not a hemispheric organization. It is the United Nations, but I think that was also incredibly important.

As far as disinformation is concerned, I think this is an issue for our own democracy as well. I think—as I have said, I think that we need a more holistic strategy, and that should be part of that strategy.

It is my understanding that the Administration is devoting resources to countering disinformation in the region, whether it be in the lead up to the Colombian elections, whether it be Russian disinformation in Mexico, because, as you allude to, it is a real problem, again, across the Americas, across the hemisphere.

Senator RUBIO. Can I go on or just—I am not going to take much longer.

Mr. Farnsworth, I wanted to just touch—so I am thinking back to the importance—the symbolic, but also practical importance of who do you invite to a summit. Because a lot of times people say—they hear me talk about do not invite Cubans. Oh, he is just a guy from Miami, a Cuban American. These guys are just—they just—they want us to be stuck in the 1960s and it is all about blocking Cuba for political purposes.

There is a practical implication to it and I will tell you—let me describe it. So in July of last year, you had, basically, apolitical people, right. I am talking about poets and artists and songwriters and things of that nature that are, okay, we are in Cuba. We want to be able to express ourselves, and when they mean express themselves politically, their expressions are not necessarily things about how government should be structured.

They have complaints about economic performance and opportunity or why are we not allowed to—why do we have to run our songs and their lyrics through a government censor.

So they protest against these sorts of things. The government cracks down brutally, putting children—literally, pulling children out of their homes and putting them in jail. In fact, the regime in Cuba just criminalized criticism of government officials. Not protests alone, criticism. Just the act of criticizing them can wind them up in jail.

So all this is happening. So you are one of these people. You are standing up against that. I think for the first time in modern memory, you have a real amount of unity. You have the Latin Grammys talking about this. You have people across the board sort of uniting behind this from the perspective of being against it.

Then you read or hear that, potentially, Cuba, that regime, just 2 weeks removed from criminalizing criticism, less than a year removed from a brutal crackdown at the street level, is going to be invited to the Summit.

I do not know if people fully understand how demoralizing that is because the way the regime uses that against its opponents and internally—among people internally that might be thinking, hey, we are getting isolated. Maybe it is going to be time for a change once all the old dudes die off, or sooner. They start thinking—the regime says to them, you see, the world does not really care. At the end of the day, we have the power. They have to work through us. In the end, they are going to cut a deal with us and the evidence of it is they invited us to a summit.

I would say the same thing about Maduro, and that is the argument Maduro is using around his inner circle. It is not that the inner circle in Venezuela thinks Maduro is some great historic figure. It is that they are corrupt. They have made millions of dollars off that corruption, and right now they are better off with him there than without him.

That may change in the future, but that is the—and the argument he makes to them is, I am the guy that can get this thing right again. I am the one that America is now beginning to talk to and deal with.

So I think that is the practical implications of that sort of thing that and, by the way, it just completely demoralizes and discredits those who are standing up and opposing those movements.

That is why I ask about these invitations because I think these—I would rather have a summit with 15 countries that are a democracy than with 25 countries and five or six of them are just blatant anti-democratic regimes, because then it is not a summit of democracies. It is a summit of whoever is in power in these individual countries.

I was hoping you could talk a little bit more about both the symbolic and practical impact it has when you elevate regimes like this to that status.

Mr. FARNSWORTH. Thank you, sir. I think your points are very well made and very important, and the Summit of the Americas from the beginning—from its inception in Miami, it has been different.

It has been intentionally a meeting of democratically-elected leaders to the point where the hemisphere itself in Quebec City in 2001 created the expectation that for all future summits only democratically-elected leaders would be included and that expectation was actually memorialized in the Inter-American Democratic Charter that was signed in Lima, Peru, on 9/11.

Secretary Powell delayed his return to the United States as terrorists were attacking the United States to sign the Inter-American Democratic Charter because it was that important.

That is the basis of the decision here. It is not a U.S. determination about political this or that. The hemisphere itself decided that nondemocratically-elected leaders should not have access to this crown jewel of Inter-American relations.

There are other fora. There are other opportunities for discussion. Okay. Fine. You can have that discussion in the context of other vehicles, but the Summit of the Americas has expressly been reserved for democratically-elected leaders. So at some level, this really is not even a decision for the United States to make because it was a hemispheric decision and, by the way, that document was signed by no less than Hugo Chavez himself. So there is a lot of support here, or there was, at least, at the time.

I think your point about platforming dictators is critically important, particularly now. You have had the protests from July in Cuba less than a year ago. You just had the passage of a draconian penal code. To then turn around and invite a representative of the Cuban regime to a democratic summit of other leaders, frankly, rewards that type of behavior, and your word "demoralizes," I think, is appropriate in this context.

It has also been interesting to me and concerning, frankly, that some countries in the region—some leaders in the region have chosen to make this, essentially, a cause célèbre issue in terms of their own participation.

It seems to me that coming out of COVID, where economies have been crashing, where recovery is not guaranteed, where Ukraine's wheat and agriculture products are not guaranteed for global markets, where energy prices are spiking, where debt loads are increasing, which are now more difficult to service because of increasing expense of the dollar as well as rising U.S. interest rates, I mean, look, there are lots of things to be discussing at a Summit of the Americas.

Is the most important hemispheric issue whether Nicolas Maduro, who is being investigated by the International Court of Justice, should be included? To me, that is a nonissue.

The answer is no, let us talk about economic recovery. The answer is no, let us find a way to create jobs in the region so that migrants are not tempted to try to come to the United States because our economy is growing and regional economies are not growing.

There is a whole discussion here waiting to be had, desperate to be had, with democratically-elected leaders from the region and, yet, the conversation has been hijacked by people who are trying to undermine the interests of the United States to promote their own interests, in some cases, in the region.

That, to me, is incredibly disheartening because if you put that, again, against what we saw in Miami in 1994, it was a totally different scenario. In 1994, it was the United States was being pushed, actually, to commit to a free trade of the Americas. The United States was being pushed in order to have an ambitious agenda.

It was Venezuela that insisted that energy be a part of the Summit of the Americas' agenda in 1994. Again, I was there so I am speaking from personal knowledge, but the way that the hemisphere has shifted in that discussion over the last generation has been something very important to see.

If I can extend just for another 30 seconds. I know that I am talking way too much. I apologize.

The question about some of the tools that we have to address these, I think, is also a critically important issue, and from my perspective, the United States has not done a very good job either using the tools that we have available to address democratic backsliding in the hemisphere nor have we updated our toolbox, and let me explain.

The toolbox has changed. Social media did not exist in 1994. There was no Telesur in 1994. There was no Russia Today propagandizing in Spanish throughout the region in 1994. Yet, the United States has not updated our toolbox.

Why does Nicolas Maduro have access to Twitter with over 4 million followers? Many of them probably bots, sure, but that is a U.S. platform subject to U.S. laws. These are the types of things, I think, we have to have hard conversations around because the ability to reach citizens and communities outside of the countries is, frankly, the ability to propagandize and spread an anti-democratic message and many times an anti-American message. I think we have to take a look at that.

I think the OAS has traditionally had some troubles, but I do want to give a shout out to the Secretary General Luis Almagro, who I believe is a real champion for democracy and has stood for democracy even when many of his member states have not supported him in that effort.

There are other things to say, but the point is I think you are definitely on the right track.

Senator RUBIO. I am going wrap up my portion of this just to say I think the point you have made about prioritization is really important, given all the challenges the region is facing across the board.

To have some of these folks sort of make this issue the primary issue that they are hinging the entire Summit on, I think, shows you a lot about the political interest behind some of this.

I also think, by the way, that—I mean, what many—Obrador is an example—hide behind is sort of a tradition in Mexican politics, particularly to him as well, about noninterference, which is an easy thing to hide behind except that you may say that your position is noninterference, but these countries are practically interfering in the affairs of other states.

As an example, in Venezuela they have created a migratory crisis through their policies that has been a huge burden on Colombia and other countries that have had to face that wave of migration.

They have invited Iran into the hemisphere in ways that, I think, are potentially destabilizing in the long term. They are openly protecting—hosting and protecting narco trafficking groups that operate from Venezuelan territory to conduct attacks inside of the territory of Colombia. That is interference, I think—pretty clear interference.

Then there is these grotesque violations of democratic norms. I do not know how we could possibly ever argue that Nicaragua has to be here. In Nicaragua, everybody who ran for president against Ortega went to jail. Everybody. Not half the people or a couple of the leading candidates.

If you filed for—to run for president, you wound up in jail incommunicado from your family, and that is a pretty outrageous antidemocratic move is to say, I won an election because all my opponents are in jail because I put them there.

That is what they have done and that is the guy they are insisting that we invite and his crazy wife, and to be a part of this who is probably the real power because he is borderline incoherent at this point, but she is even, perhaps, worse than he is and he is pretty bad.

So the last question I had is something we have not talked a lot about and it is not directly related to the Summit, but I would like to get both of your impressions on it and that is Colombia.

I think most of us remember a time, maybe 20, 22, 24 years ago, where there was real concern that Colombia was headed to failed state status. You had these cartels that, basically, in many cases, held the governments their hostage over extradition treaties, bombings, and things that were occurring.

I think one of the great successes of American engagement in the region is our engagement with Colombia to the point where not only did Colombia become sort of a very stable place with these issues, like we have issues and everybody else has issues, but became a force multiplier. In essence, what the Colombians learned from us they have been able to take to Honduras and train their forces, as an example, there on how to combat these irregular groups and so forth.

So I am always concerned about if ever there was a change in Colombia—and I know they have a presidential election coming up and they will have to make those decisions, and a lot of this stuff that we do with them has been institutionalized so you hope that that will survive political changes no matter what direction they take.

I was hoping to get the input of both of you of what would happen to our interests, not to mention to the stability of the region, if Colombia were to be lost to a direction that looks more like the instability we have seen, or worse, in places like Venezuela? What would that mean for democracy, for security, and for our national interests in the region?

Mr. FARNSWORTH. Rebecca served in the Pentagon so I wanted to offer her the first opportunity, but she says she will defer.

I think it would be—it is foundational. Look, the U.S. relationship with Colombia is strategic at this point. It is foundational to our ability to advance democratic and security interests throughout the hemisphere, not just in Colombia, and to have that undermined

would be, in my personal view, a real setback not just for U.S. interests, but for democracies in the region.

Colombia has also been a huge partner in trying to alleviate the humanitarian crisis that is right next door engendered by Chavismo, right, in Venezuela. So if you have that bulwark in some way changed, the humanitarian crisis coming out of Venezuela could by orders of magnitude get even worse.

I do think Colombia is a target. Colombia has been a target for a long time and it is definitely a target now in terms of interests that are not aligned with the United States or are not aligned with democracy in the hemisphere, because if you can get a country like Colombia to change path and to pursue an anti-democratic path—and let me hasten to say I am not suggesting that what is going to come out of the elections will be anti-democratic. Who knows what is going to come out of the elections? I am simply talking theoretically here.

This is a critically important country and it is important for the Colombian people themselves, first and foremost, but it is a strategic partner of the United States and were that direction to shift, then I do think you would have a real setback for the United States, but also for other countries that have, clearly, depended on that force multiplier impact that you so clearly discussed.

The other issue I would raise, clearly, is the fight against illegal narcotics, but I think my colleague here would be better positioned to discuss that.

Dr. CHAVEZ. Thank you for the question and also for pointing out the importance of our bilateral relationship with Colombia.

As Eric referenced, during my time at the Pentagon, Colombia was our closest defense partner in the region, and it was a relationship that was incredibly important to Colombia, but also to the United States.

As far as the upcoming election goes, I think it is too early to say whether or not Colombia will be lost. It is possible that there will be a president who has a different set of policy priorities, but we do not know whether or not he is going to act in an undemocratic manner.

This is just also just a reminder when we are thinking about the Summit, this is not a summit of friends of America. I think we are right to be concerned about assaults on democracy, but I do not think that the fact that a country does not agree with us is something that we should be weighing in on.

I would say that one of the core issues with Colombia, regardless of who wins this next election—and I say this from someone with a DoD background—is that Colombia has undergone horrific decades of conflict and the military in Colombia has played a tremendous role.

Without the military, the peace accord would not have been possible, but going forward in our relationship with Colombia we need to be focusing more on the social recovery of the territory, not just the military recovery of the territory, and this is about establishing a state presence in the previously undergoverned parts of Colombia, and I think that that is something we can work on with Colombia no matter who wins.

The military has gone in, secured territory, but now we need the other Colombian institutions to go in and establish a presence. Show people—show the Colombians that they are there to stay. I think that is the only answer to the long-term conflict and instability in Colombia.

Senator RUBIO. Just as a point of clarification, by no means do I think that we should be excluding countries from the Summit of the Americas because they do not agree with us. Like, if you did not vote with us at the U.N., I do not think—on whatever issue, Ukraine, that we should somehow exclude you from it.

The argument I have made is if you are not a democracy, if you are an open unapologetic dictatorship that puts presidential candidates that run against a dictator in jail, I do not think they should be invited to the Summit of the Americas, but not people that disagree with—I am not arguing Mexico should not be invited and they, certainly, disagree with us on a bunch of issues.

In the case of Colombia, I think what is happening now there is a case in point for why democracy is so important. So Petro is running and he is the leading candidate in some of the polling, and I would venture to guess that we probably are not going to agree with him on some issues.

You see his public rhetoric has moderated. I do not know how he will govern. Why has his public rhetoric on some of these issues moderated? Because he is trying to win an election. He is trying to get people to vote for him, and his policies will also have to take that into account if he wants to be reelected, which is the great thing about democracy and that is that you have to—leaders have to measure their policies by what the electorate may or may not reward and that is why democracies and democracy is so critical because it does—as long as there is a democracy, Colombia is going to be okay. They may elect someone we do not agree with, that we may not like every decision they make, but, ultimately, they will have to govern themselves by the constraints of an electorate that will punish them and their party.

If we do not have democracy they can do whatever they want and, oftentimes, that is what starts wars and creates crisis and that really is the point that I wanted to drive.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dr. CHAVEZ. Can I just say I am in violent agreement with you and with Eric about the importance of—on the issue of invitations and participation. I fully understand why Maduro, Ortega, and Diaz-Canel are not invited. Well, I guess we do not know for sure, but I am assuming that they are not invited.

Also a reminder that participation is a two-way street when it comes to attendance. Nicaragua has demonstrated that it does not want to be involved in a hemispheric discussion. It showed that the day it expelled OAS from its country. So I do agree on the issue of democracy.

Senator KAINE. Let me do this. I want to talk to you, Mr. Farnsworth, about part of your testimony was about—well, both of you testified about the importance of economic recovery post-pandemic and you raised an interesting thought that I had had, as well.

Why are we—why is the Administration being a little skittish about trade activities in the region? I am a pretty harsh critic of President Trump, but that makes me feel duty bound to compliment Trump accomplishments and there were some and one of them was USMCA. That got an 89 to 10 vote in the Senate.

NAFTA, after 20 years, of course, we should have learned how to make it better and the USMCA negotiation made it better. That kind of a vote on a trade deal in the Senate is highly unusual.

Why would we not look at USMCA and then go back and look at the other trade agreements in the region and say, could we either incorporate those free trade agreements into a broader USMCA framework or could we conform those trade agreements to the principles that we negotiated in USMCA?

We have nations like Ecuador that want to join in the Colombian free trade agreement. I think that—as we are talking about economic development in the region, I think that this is a really important piece because one of the challenges we often have is some of the neighbors in the region that have the most problems, so think of the Northern Triangle, who do we invest in there that we feel is a reliable partner for our investment dollars?

Well, if we have American companies and others that are already there and that could hire even more people and generate even more economic activity if conditions were right, why would we not focus on trade as an accelerator of economic potential in the region?

Could you go a little bit more into either expanded USMCA or conforming existing trade agreements to USMCA standards? In particular, it may be that we want it, but the nations we are talking about—I know Ecuador would like it—maybe there is not the appetite for it in the region.

Do you see the appetite in the region for broader trade agreements with higher standards?

Mr. FARNSWORTH. Love to have the opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The short answer is yes. I would add Uruguay and, certainly, Brazil has made very clear its desire for closer trade relations with the United States, as have other countries. You mentioned Ecuador.

It goes back to my earlier comments in terms of the tools that we have available. At the end of the day, trade is a tool. If it is working well we should do more of it. If it is not working well we should figure out a way to make it work better, and that was the whole purpose of USMCA, which was a bipartisan success, and it seems to me that taking trade off the table, which, in my view, successive U.S. Administrations have, essentially, done, has been to take away the best incentive we have to bring countries into a more—a closer relationship with the United States economically, certainly, to build the supply chains we are all talking about, but also to create the incentives for things like good governance, anticorruption, support for the environment—all the things that we have talked about so many times in this chamber.

The point being that if you take that off the table the attraction of somebody like China, who comes with a lot of money and no expectations or demands really feels a lot better and there really is not a choice to be made because there is only one option, right.

So we have taken ourselves out of the game. At the same time, we are trying to deal with historically high now migration flows to the United States and, again, part of that is just basic economics.

The U.S. economy is doing well. The regional economies are not doing very well. People do not have jobs in their home countries. They are going to go where they can get jobs or where they think they can get jobs.

So part of that answer has to be job creation in the home countries, particularly the Northern Triangle, particularly the countries where migration is coming from the most.

At the same time, if the private sector does not see the incentives or does not see the attractive environment to invest, to create jobs, to innovate, to do the things we would take for granted in the United States, then they are going to overlook the region and that is precisely what has been happening, particularly, again, in the Northern Triangle and elsewhere.

So using trade as a tool to help create those conditions that the private sector will find attractive to invest in, I think, has to be part of the discussion as well as using trade as a tool to help incentivize better relations with our neighbors, frankly—the countries in our own hemisphere.

Now, we can do this in a creative way. We do not have to say, look, just because you are in a certain geographic time zone or zip code you should have access to USMCA.

No, we should use this as a way to incentivize better economic and democratic—I do not want to use—well, practice, right, to be able to say to a Costa Rica, a Panama, a Dominican Republic, yes, you guys are pretty far along. Let us talk to you about accession to USMCA. Let us hold this in as an option for other countries in Central America, maybe a Honduras, a Guatemala, to say, okay, let us work with you to help you build the type of capacity and capability to be ready for USMCA to welcome you in. Let us say to a Nicaragua, which is still part of CAFTA–DR, to say, look, we are not going to bring a nondemocratic country into USMCA.

So you are creating economic incentives for behavioral change and that is something that we have gotten away from. We are just not even talking about it. At the Summit of the Americas, I believe, in Los Angeles this should be the core message that we are creating; we will work with countries economically and on democratic governance, but you got to work with us.

Let us make this a real partnership. Let us get back to the idea that we are all in this together, our future is linked to yours, we need to be working together, and let us get away from this mentality of somehow the United States is bad and this country is not.

I mean, we are in this hemisphere. It is not going to change. Let us find a way to do that, but I do think we also have to recognize that there are some countries that just are not going to want to participate—and that is okay—in the trade agenda, and what the fatal flaw of previous summits has been that this has been agreement by consensus.

In other words, every country has to agree to do a free trade area of the Americas. Well, if a country in the Caribbean or Hugo Chavez in Venezuela or the Mercosur countries do not want to do the

free trade area of the Americas, well, then it blows apart, which it did in 2005 in Mar del Plata.

The point being that that then prevented the United States and our democratic friends and partners to move forward in some way. Why should we let the recalcitrant countries determine the pace of integration?

Senator KAINE. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Mr. FARNSWORTH. Why do we not find the partners in the region we can work with and build an agenda there that is so attractive that the ones who find themselves lagging will say, wait a minute, we need to be part of that because otherwise our own futures are in doubt.

That is where you create the positive incentives for countries to say it is better to be linked with North America and the United States because of what we get from them together than trying to figure out what the Chinese might be giving us, and by the way, they want half of our coastline and debt that we cannot get out of.

That is a conversation I think the hemisphere is absolutely ready to have. The question is are we ready to have it, and by all indications we are not there yet.

Senator KAINE. I think we, on the committee, those of us who really care about this need to push the Administration, I think, starting with the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Panama. Recognizing the announcement of this alliance would be a wise idea.

Look, this has been a good hearing. Obviously, Senator Rubio and I, Senator Cardin, are really interested in this. We did not have good attendance—I will just be blunt—and that says something. Often when we have Western Hemisphere hearings, we do not.

When I am on SASC and we have hearings about SOUTHCOM the attendance is not so great. The resources that we provide to SOUTHCOM through the defense budget are minuscule and it is a—stands in sharp contrast. If we were having a hearing about Ukraine or Taiwan, we would have really good attendance, and I think it is a—it is kind of evidence of a proposition.

In another context, the other day I recalled a line that was used by Pope Francis a few years ago as he was challenging parishes, but it could have been a challenge to people and, certainly, a challenge to political leaders. He was saying that we needed the [speaks in a foreign language]—the islands of the mercy in the middle of a sea of indifference.

The thing about that formulation that I found really striking when I read it was he did not counterpose mercy to evil, cruelty, or hatred. He counterposed it to indifference.

I just have felt long before I came to the Senate that indifference often characterizes the attitude of officialdom—not every member of officialdom, but it often characterizes the attitude of American officialdom to the Americas.

We will get interested if there is a crisis. So we will have a doctrine like the Monroe Doctrine that really was not about the Americas. It was about Europe. Or during the Cold War, we better get interested in the Americas because the Soviet Union is. Or if there is an immigration flood to the border, okay, we will get interested for the moment.

In terms of persistence and a framework that is not just an episodic one-off based on the crisis du jour, I am not sure we have ever really done that as a nation. Secretaries of State fly east and west all the time. They just do not fly north and south that much.

I am grateful for colleagues, Senator Rubio and others, and I am grateful for professionals who—you have been doing this for a very long time because you see how important it is to our country that we do it and that we do it right, and I hope that we might have a new day where we will take seriously this notion that we are all connected as Americans.

I think Amerigo Vespucci was the biggest overachiever of all time. What did that guy do to get two continents named after him? Nevertheless, we are all Americans. We are all linked together culturally, in language, in family, in trade, in migration. There is so much upside for us.

If you compare the U.S. leadership that snapped together the coalition to battle against an illegal invasion of Ukraine and you look at the influence that the U.S. had in helping snap that coalition together, and then you look at the influence we have or kind of do not really have with our nearest neighbors, you just see how much more work we have to do.

So for being dedicated to the work I thank you. I thank you for the hearing today. It is Thursday. I will keep the record open until 5 o'clock tomorrow. If additional members have questions, I would encourage you, if there are, to answer them thoroughly and promptly.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:43 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MR. KEVIN O'REILLY TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. In your view, do you think it is important that only democracies be represented at the Summit, or is there merit to the argument that all nations and leaders in the hemisphere should be represented?

Answer. Upholding the region's commitment to democracy is a key component of every Summit of the Americas. At the Third Summit of the Americas held at Quebec City from April 20 to 22, 2001, leaders called for the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and made strict respect for democracy a pre-requisite for future Summit participation. The United States is proud to join past Summit hosts in upholding this commitment. The Civil Society Forum, Young Americas Forum and CEO Summit of the Americas will provide a platform for participants from all countries in the Western Hemisphere to make their voices heard.

Question. How might the potential absence of several heads of government affect the summit proceedings and broader prospects for enhanced hemispheric cooperation?

Answer. All democratic governments in the Western Hemisphere will attend the Summit, although some will participate at the ministerial level, allowing for substantive dialogue and meaningful commitment to address the most pressing issues facing the people of the hemisphere.

Question. How successful do you think the process for consideration of the commitment to a Parliamentary Forum dimension of OAS will be during the summit?

Answer. The United States is committed to advancing the goals and objectives of the OAS Legislative Engagement Act. Due to the long and detailed negotiations among 31 countries needed to add language to agreed Summit documents, we could not include reference to the initiative in the Inter-American Action Plan on Demo-

cratic Governance, but the Secretary plans to highlight the value we place on this process in remarks during a June 10, 2022, lunch with members of the Joint Summit Working Group. We remain committed to working with you and your staff to follow through on implementation of this important initiative.

Question. To what extent do you think the leaders will agree to firm and binding commitments?

Answer. The United States is committed to working with our regional partners through the Summit Implementation Review Group and the Organization of American States to hold governments accountable in following through with the commitments adopted at the Summit of the Americas. When the democracies of the Americas work together to seize opportunities and address shared challenges, real progress is possible. Collaboration ensures democracy delivers for its citizens.

Question. What level of importance do you believe OAS and other regional organizations hold at the Summit and how should this importance be reflected on the official summit agenda?

Answer. The OAS and 12 other international organizations form the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) will play a vital role in the Summit process. The JSWG provides technical support and capacity building to governments as they work to implement their Summit commitments. The OAS also houses the Summits of the Americas Secretariat and serves as the institutional memory for the Summit. JSWG organizations will participate in the ministerial lunch on June 10, 2022, and the OAS Secretary General will address the leaders' plenary.

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