

5 BIG IDEAS

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AN ALLIANCE FOR A DEMOCRATIC WORLD ORDER

Authoritarian rule paves the way for war to erupt. “Deeply authoritarian regimes cannot live in benign co-existence with liberal democracies,” Professor Larry Diamond explained. To confront these rulers who may look strong to outsiders, democracies and democrats will need to change their strategy. “Promoting an alliance of democratic societies will lead to a more proactive and cooperative approach in areas of our strategic challenges,” argued Czech President Petr Pavel.

“Democracy for us is a choice – both civilizational and existential – to break free, to preserve ourselves and our way of life”, highlighted President of Moldova, Maia Sandu. “We need to consolidate and work together closely like we did in the 1980s and 1990s, when there was a strong movement for democracies globally” added Alissa Wahid, Director of the Gusdurian Network from Indonesia.





STRONG DEMOCRACIES REVEAL THE WEAKNESSES OF AUTOCRACIES

For democracy to prevail and reverse the expansion of autocracies and their aggression, democratic countries need to be strong. As Ukraine simultaneously continues the hard work of reforming and strengthening its institutions, reconstructing infrastructure while Russia's war in the country continues, world leaders can take inspiration from its example. Established democracies need to continue demonstrating a firm commitment to supporting democracy around the globe and confront authoritarianism more directly.

Ukrainians have demonstrated bravery and democratic resilience that should serve as a beacon for world leaders trying to spread a positive narrative about democracy. As Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze put it, democrats around the world must not give up their support for Ukraine because "we just know that in order to exist, in order to survive, in order to have a future, in order to have an opportunity to transform... we have to go on!"

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TURNING THE TIDE WITH THE WESTERN BALKANS

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The Balkans, as a region connecting two continents, as well as the Eastern Partnership countries could play a pivotal role in advancing freedom since it is an area where symbolic dispute between the West and the Rest is playing out. Civil society in the region is already setting an example by aiming to overcome unresolved conflicts. However, the European Union must be more flexible to welcome those who are willing to play by the rules of democracy. Not only are the right incentives necessary for Western Balkans and Eastern European countries to follow the road of democracy and pursue the possibility of an EU enlargement. Citizens in these regions need to be persuaded by a narrative that emphasizes the advantages entailed by this way of life.

DEMOCRATIC GAINS IN EVERY COUNTRY COUNT

Amid a continuous global trend of democratic backsliding, consolidated democracies need to step up their support to emerging democracies. In regions like Latin America, Africa, and Asia, democrats often feel lonely and unsupported. They need backup from peers around the world to become a success story for other countries to follow. “We must demonstrate that democracy, with freedom and a rule of law, is a morally and practically superior form of government, and indeed the only form of government that has assured human dignity, peace, and prosperity,” Diamond asserted and set as a mission for democrats around the world.





THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IS A TECH RACE

Once lauded for enabling activism and civic empowerment, digital tools such as social media are now frequently feared by activists as a tool for surveillance and disinformation dissemination. However, these channels still provide activists a crucial space to voice their struggles and articulate initiatives that confront those violating rights. Policymakers in developed countries discussing and drafting tech sector regulations need to take into consideration those users who risk their lives to make their voices heard through social media. Privacy and data security are not just fancy issues for those fighting on the sidelines, but also critical for protecting freedom of expression and the rights of all digital technology users.

At the same time, the potential for artificial intelligence as a tool disrupting democratic systems around the world is already manifesting. Democracies and democrats need to proactively shape norms and standards regarding AI to preserve our rights and freedoms.

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