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## Tuesday, April 30, 2019

## Chair

**Mr. Michael Levitt**

# Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

**Tuesday, April 30, 2019**

● (0850)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.)):** Good morning, everyone.

I am pleased to call this meeting to order. This will be the third session of our study on threats to liberal democracy in Europe.

I want to welcome the members back after two weeks in their constituencies. I also want to welcome our two esteemed witnesses this morning, who are joining us from Hungary and New York city.

First, we have the Honourable Michael Ignatieff, president of the Central European University, by video conference. Michael Ignatieff was appointed president and rector of Central European University in 2016. Prior to that, he served as a professor of practice at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and, of course, he was a member of Parliament from 2006 to 2011 and former leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Good morning, Mr. Ignatieff.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (President, Central European University, As an Individual):** Good morning.

**The Chair:** Joining us this morning from New York, we have Secretary General Martin Chungong from the Inter-Parliamentary Union. He has more than three decades of experience working on parliamentary democracy, and as part of his work on the IPU he serves as a gender champion, ensuring that gender equality is integrated into the IPU's work and functioning.

Gentlemen, we are most interested to hear from both of you this morning. You can each take around 10 to 12 minutes to provide some introductory remarks. Then we will open it up to all members for what I'm sure are going to be some really interesting questions.

Mr. Ignatieff, why don't we begin with you since you're calling in from a little further afield, just in case we have any issues with the video connection.

Please go ahead, sir.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks for the opportunity to address the committee, some of whom are colleagues from my days in the House. I send a warm and respectful greeting to members of the committee on all sides of the House. Greetings from Budapest.

Here at Central European University we provide world-class masters' and graduate education to students from over 100 countries, including from Canada. For two years, as you know, the Hungarian government has been trying to drive us out, but we're still here as a symbol of academic freedom in Europe. We've had support from universities around the world, including from Canada, and the Canadian government's support for our position and our right to stay here has been unequivocal and strong throughout.

The committee has heard from some extremely distinguished academic experts on central and eastern Europe and I concur with their findings. I read their testimony and thought I would try to concentrate on the implications for Canada. I'm going to go a little wide here and at a little high altitude, because that might be helpful to the committee as it puts its report together.

One way to think about the implications of the parlous state of liberal democracy in central and eastern Europe is to situate it in a wider context. You could almost say that the Atlantic Ocean has been getting wider and wider over the last couple of generations. By that, I mean that the gap between Europe and North America is growing and is likely to grow in the future.

One reason for this is that the memory of our shared history is fading. Canadians fought and died for European liberty and freedom in two world wars, and that memory is very important in our founding myths, but the memory of it is fading from Canadians' minds slipping out of Europeans' memory as well. People don't remember just how central Canada was to their story of liberty.

This is having strategic implications. Our American ally, as you know, is publicly questioning the value of the North Atlantic alliance, the NATO alliance. I sometimes wonder if in the future, Canadians will begin to question the value of the NATO alliance as well. We've done so recurrently over time. It hasn't become a salient issue in Canadian politics simply because it doesn't cost us very much, and it's not at the centre of Canadian debate, but it's only a matter of time before Canadians start asking, “What we are doing in NATO?”

On the European side, Europeans are increasingly aware that they will have to defend themselves, that the North Atlantic alliance was the alliance that got them through the Cold War but that they're going to have to start spending on defence and defending themselves.

Another factor that's changing the relationship between Europe and Canada has been the way in which our own population has been transformed. A decreasing percentage of our people trace their roots back to Europe. An increasing percentage trace their origins to Asia, Africa and Latin America. This has been a revolution in our country and an enormously positive one, but its net effect is to weaken the European-Canadian tie.

On the European side, when the Europeans, particularly in central and eastern Europe, look across to Canada, they see a model they increasingly reject. Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal have embraced the multicultural future. We're one of the great success stories in that way.

[*Translation*]

It's wonderful for our country.

[*English*]

However, if you look at Warsaw, Prague, Budapest and Belgrade, they've turned their backs on such a future.

[*Translation*]

We have a multicultural future in Montreal, Quebec City and across the country, but it's a future that the Eastern Europeans no longer recognize.

● (0855)

[*English*]

At the same time, in the biggest sense, the axis of the world is shifting inexorably from the North Atlantic linkage that was the centre of our foreign policy for the whole of the 20th century. The axis of the world is shifting from the North Atlantic to Asia-Pacific, and I think that means that Canada is going through the most substantial transformation of its foreign policy in my lifetime that I can remember. Canada is struggling to maintain its relationship with the United States. It is in deep difficulty in its relationship with China, and it's necessarily having to rethink its relationship with Europe. It's one of the architects of the post-1945 world order.

Canada was a founding partner of the UN, a founding partner of NATO, and a founding partner of the Bretton Woods achievement, and we were so because we thought multilateralism was a vital lever of influence for a middle power. But these institutions, all of these international multilateral institutions, are in some difficulty, particularly because the increasing standoff between the U.S. hegemon and rising powers is preventing these multilateral institutions from being effective.

This is a slightly gloomy *tour d'horizon*, but it's designed to make us think about the European-Canadian relationship in a new way. What do we do now as a country if we can't depend on others for traditional alliance structures?

A couple of things seem pretty evident to me. We're going to have to spend more on our defence. We're going to have to commit to defending the peace of others through our skills in peacekeeping. We need to remain a beacon of hope for people seeking to emigrate and become Canadian. We need to figure out how, as a major oil producer, we can meet our climate change commitments without blowing our federation apart.

We need to ensure, most of all, that our own liberal democracy remains vital and viable.

[*Translation*]

This means maintaining the national unity of the country, which is everyone's country.

[*English*]

We need to keep our federations civil, and we need to be a good example of freedom.

We need to teach our own people that liberal democracy is a balancing act between majority rule and minority rights, between parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law, and between cabinet government and parliamentary oversight. Liberal democracy is constantly having to be reinvented and retaught to the next generation, and I know that's something that parliamentarians take immensely seriously in their lives as members of Parliament.

What does this mean for eastern Europe? I think, to put it bluntly, we can't export democracy. We can't export our multicultural model to eastern and central Europe. The world may need more Canada, but I doubt that the world wants more Canada. That's a bit of cold water down our necks, but I think it's salutary. We're a much admired country. I love Canada. I love it even more being outside of the country, but we shouldn't be foolish about whether our models are exportable.

We need to understand whose business is whose here. Preventing the authoritarian turn in central and eastern Europe is not fundamentally the business of Canada. It's the business of the European Union, and they've concluded—very controversially—that keeping authoritarians inside the democratic club is better than expelling them, but I don't think Canada can assume the perennity, the indefinite future, of the European Union, because this tension between a Europe founded on democratic principles and an increasingly authoritarian eastern Europe might just, in 10 or 15 years, blow the whole wonderful experiment apart.

What can we do? I'm very impressed, as a Canadian working in central and eastern Europe, at the quality of our diplomats. Many of them are ambassadors. Three of them, I think, are female, and they're absolutely fantastic, but they all tell me in private that they don't have any resources. The Danes, the Swedes, the Dutch, the Germans, and especially the Norwegians have money to invest in civil society, free media, democratic education, student exchanges, and academic research exchanges between Canada and the countries of this region, but our diplomats have very little in terms of resources, and that's a shame.

● (0900)

We know what happens when we do invest. The Canadian investment in Ukrainian democracy, above all through election monitoring, has been a crucial part of the stabilization of Ukrainian democracy, and we need to follow that. When you think of central and eastern Europe, please don't forget the Balkans. These are frozen conflicts that can blow up at any moment. We would be well advised to invest in civil society and peace-building in that region, especially because their prospects of getting into the European Union any time soon are very slight. We can't neglect our security obligations. We've sent support to the Baltic states and their sovereignty. That has sent a message that we are prepared to stand in alliance to defend the sovereignty of these states. That seemed to be tremendously important.

Finally, we need to figure out what team we can play with. The Americans, to an astounding degree, have withdrawn from the security and stabilization of Europe. They regard Europe increasingly as a geostrategic and economic competitor. We are the North Atlantic society that still retains a commitment to liberal democracy in Europe, and we need to find the team we can play with. It looks like the Nordics, the Dutch, the French, the Germans and the Spanish are the pickup hockey team we want to be part of and working constantly with to sustain the democratic experiment in Europe. These are the democracies that give us some leverage. They're the team we want to be on, and I don't think there's another one. I don't think the Americans are coming back to this part of the world.

Finally—and I'll stop here—the message of our country is incredibly optimistic in a troubled world. We are a very pragmatic, practical people who get up every morning and make this enormous country work. People admire the fact that we do it so well. This is a message of hope and optimism that the whole world needs, and I hope we have the investment in our diplomatic resources and the shrewdness of focus that allow us to spread that message of hope and optimism to this part of the world.

Thanks so much for listening. I'm happy to take any questions you may have.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Ignatieff.

We are going to go straight to Secretary General Chungong. If you can also take around 10 to 12 minutes, we'll then open up the floor to questions. Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Martin Chungong (Secretary General, Inter-Parliamentary Union):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. It gives me great pleasure to address your august committee this morning.

Of course, I am appearing before you as the secretary general of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, but most of the views I'm going to express today are my own and should not be construed as the official views of the organization.

As I address your committee this morning, the image that comes to mind is this mass movement that has been recurrent in France since November last year, called the *gilets jaunes*, or yellow vests. This vest epitomizes a level of discontent, anger and disenchantment among the European population and has fuelled a lot of violence that has no place in a democracy, especially in a liberal democracy.

You may then ask why it is that the very foundations of democracy are being rocked in the bastion of democracy that Europe should be. I think what is happening in Europe is reminiscent of what is happening in the rest of the world. The world has become a big village, and there are a number of factors that might be general, but also specific to Europe. If you asked me, I would say that the factors are at once political, societal and economic.

When we look at what is happening in Europe, we have the impression, and people feel, that their economy is failing them. There is growth in GDP in Europe, but the benefits are not being felt by the ordinary person. We see recently, for instance, that retirees in France have been complaining about their pension, which [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].... It does not compare....

● (0905)

**The Chair:** Mr. Secretary General, we're having some problems with the video. We'll suspend briefly while we get it back online.

● (0905)

(Pause)

● (0905)

**The Chair:** We're resuming.

Secretary General, please go ahead.

**Mr. Martin Chungong:** Okay, thank you. I'm very sorry for that.

I was just saying that people really believe that their economic systems are failing them, that these systems are not beneficial to the ordinary person. They feel that the system is heavily skewed in favour of the wealthy.

If you look at the political scene, too, you realize that there is a lot of disenchantment with the institutions of governance, in Europe in particular. While you have more informed citizens who want to be more involved in democratic processes, we see that opportunities for democratic consultation are shrinking. They boil down just to elections taking place every four to five years, whereas given the modern means of communication, the democratic engagement has to be more frequent and regular.

We also look at external factors, such as the influx of migrants into Europe that is fuelling discontent, that is fuelling xenophobia, because there is anxiety among the indigenous populations in Europe that migrants are taking over their jobs, are taking over those opportunities that accrue to them.

We can name any number of factors, but I do want mention also the issue of terrorism that is emerging in Europe. This terrorism is fuelled by conflict, intolerance and the development of hate speech. This has created a foundation for populism in Europe, whereby politicians are becoming unscrupulous and playing on the sentiment of anxiety among the population.

Let me just take a few moments to say a few words about how parliaments feature in all of this. We think parliaments, as institutions of democracy, have to restore popular trust in institutions of governance in Europe, as well as in the rest of the world. For this to happen, parliaments have to start from within. They have to be seen to be representative. They have to be seen to be more accessible and accountable to citizens, and they have to be seen to be delivering and being relevant. We believe it is important for us to move from the abstract conception of democracy and parliament to reality, looking at how parliaments can deliver for their citizens across the board. This is something that is important.

We also think when you talk of representative parliaments, you are not talking only of numbers; you are not talking of the number of women in parliament or the number of young people in parliament, but you are also talking about the ability of a parliament to address issues that appeal to the cross-section of society.

If I could dwell a little on representation, we see that Europe is just slightly above the global average when it comes to women's representation in parliament. The global average is 24.3%, whereas in Europe it's 28%. This is not enough. If we want to achieve gender equality, then we should be looking at more....

[*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

Also, another point that needs to be addressed, and this is based on a study that we carried out last year, is violence against women, sexism, sexual harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct against women parliamentarians. When we did a survey of European parliaments, we realized that at least 85% of women reported having been subject to some form of violence, psychological, physical or otherwise. This is unacceptable because it's a major obstacle to women's political participation.

I also think parliaments should address the issue of youth empowerment. Many youth are apathetic to governance processes, to democracy today, because they believe their voice is not being taken into account. They see that their interests such as climate change, employment and educational opportunities, all of these, are not being factored into decision-making processes. It is important that we involve them in decision-making. It is important that we increase their numbers in parliaments so that democracy can be rejuvenated.

Those are some crucial points that parliaments need to address when it comes to restoring trust in democracy and the institutions thereof.

Let me just conclude by saying that I'm always an optimist. I do not think democracy, liberal democracy, is about to die. It will not die. It has proven its resilience over the years.

● (0910)

By the way, it is the only system of government of similar values that is self-correcting.

I want to go back to what I mentioned at the beginning, the *gilets jaunes* movement in France. If it were an authoritarian regime, the government would have sent troops, the military, to quell the riots in Paris, but no, being a democracy, albeit an imperfect one, the government decided to hold a general debate to listen to the people, to their concerns, and see how this could be addressed. That is the value of democracy, which we want to promote.

We also think it's important for us to reaffirm the validity and values of multilateralism. We work as a government in a global village, and the issues that we need to deal with in countries cut across national borders. We cannot be seen to be doing things in an isolationist manner. We want to call out those people who are calling into question the very foundations of multilateralism.

We have to work together at the interparliamentary level and at the parliamentary level. We think that parliaments have to stick together to reaffirm the validity of those values of democracy that have to do with freedom and respect for human rights.

Then, one particular thing I want to point out is that parliaments are under threat because their members are under threat. Even in Europe, which, as I said, is supposed to be a bastion of democracy, we see what is happening in Turkey where parliamentarians are arrested and thrown into jail because they have sought to express their views and perform their duties as members of parliament. This is unacceptable. This has to be addressed in a robust manner, not only within national borders, but also in the form of co-operation between parliaments in the form of parliamentary solidarity between members of parliament whose colleagues' parliaments' integrity would be jeopardized, which is not good for democracy.

I would like to stop at this point and answer any questions that members of the committee may have.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary General.

I thank you also, Mr. Ignatieff.

We're now going to go straight to question, beginning with MP Genuis, please.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** It's a pleasure to be here, Mr. Ignatieff. I remember when we first met when you spoke at Carleton University when I was a student. There were many protestors there who disagreed with your views on certain things. I wasn't among the protestors, though. I was just there to listen.

I want to ask for your reflections on a number of things that have come up over the course of the study. First of all, I think it's important that we don't conflate opposition to certain aspects of European integration, even people who are in favour of their countries leaving the EU, with opposition to liberal democratic values. In fact, much Euroscepticism is presented in fundamentally democratic terms, that is, as a critique of what is perceived as the undemocratic overreach of central European institutions. I'm curious for your comment on whether you would agree in principle that some people perceive threats to democracy coming from centralization and power taken by unelected bureaucrats in Brussels. I don't mean that pejoratively, but it is part of the discourse. I would be curious about your response to that concern.

● (0915)

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** I think you're putting your finger on some important points. I think it would be grotesque to denounce the people who want to leave the European Union and are campaigning for Brexit as hostile to liberal democratic views. A lot of what they're saying is, “We want to restore British liberal democracy. We want to restore British parliamentary sovereignty.”

It's eminently democratic, eminently liberal, and the debate, despite bringing the country to the edge of a complete seizing-up of its institutions, has been eminently civil and democratic.

On the other side, it's clear that there are lots of Europeans who are hostile to further centralization of power in Brussels. They are not anti-democratic forces. They are often eminently democratic. The difficulty in the central nations in Europe is that the campaign against Brussels that you see being led from Hungary, for example, doesn't have very much to do with democracy. It claims to be a defence of Hungarian democracy, but it's in some real way the defence of a single-party state and its clique to define the terms of the debate and shut other people out. It runs against Brussels Monday through Friday in the domestic media and then cashes Brussels' cheques on Saturday and Sunday. That's a very unpleasant thing to watch.

Where I would step back, finally, is to say that what's good about Europe is that there is ongoing, passionate debate in 27 national countries about how to balance the appropriate national sovereignty of national parliaments and national governments with the appropriate authority to be given to European institutions.

I don't think they're overweening; I don't think they're too powerful. I would make a bit of a case that they should be stronger still, since.... If you take the example—

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Can I just jump in because I wanted to ask a follow-up question?

I understand there is a lot we could say in the debates about European integration. As I say, I don't really think it's my business to have strong opinions one way or the other.

I did want to follow up on some of the comments you made about Hungary. You referenced indirectly the Sargentini report. That report obviously wasn't viewed as favourable for the government of Hungary, but here's what the report said about the elections:

> In its preliminary findings and conclusions, adopted on 9 April 2018, the limited election observation mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights stated that the technical administration of the elections was professional and transparent, fundamental rights and freedoms were respected.... The election administration fulfilled its mandate in a professional and transparent manner and enjoyed overall confidence among stakeholders.

There's confidence, according to the Sargentini report, in election administration. The criticisms of Hungarian democracy that were made in that report refer to—in the context of the elections, an "adverse climate"—concerns about government advertising and single-member constituencies. Again, these are important debates. I will observe—and you'll remember these discussions well—that issues like government advertising, the relative merits of single-member constituencies and the tone of debate overall are part of our democratic conversation in Canada as well.

I do wonder. As we talk about threats to liberal democracy, we compare Canada with other countries, and your comment about the Atlantic getting wider.... If we saw things like the SNC-Lavalin affair taking place in countries in central Europe, I wonder what the tone of criticism would be there and what people would say about what that says about the importance of the rule of law and the independence of institutions.

We're running tight on time, and I want to give you a chance to respond, but do you agree with the findings of the Sargentini report in this respect? Do you have further thoughts on their conclusions about the administration of the elections?

● (0920)

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** Eighty per cent of the media in Hungary is controlled by the government. The space for independent political debate is shrinking all the time. The capacity of the constitutional court and the courts to oversee and guarantee election integrity is diminishing.

Yes, there was an election in 2018. The OSCE did judge it to be fair. This is not a country where democracy has disappeared, but a country where democracy is in danger. With respect, sir, I think you're drawing a kind of continuity between controversies in Canada and controversies in Hungary, and it seems to me to be normalizing a situation in Hungary that just isn't normal. This country has been diverting, in a very serious structural way over eight years, from the norms of European liberal democracy. It just seems an empirical fact. It seems—

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I didn't mean it as normalization. I wouldn't want us to normalize the SNC-Lavalin affair. To your comment about media control, we're having a debate in this country about a $600-million media bailout package from government where the government is—

**The Chair:** MP Genuis, I'm sorry, but you're over time. Thank you.

We're now going to move to MP Sidhu, please.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to share my time with my colleague Borys.

It's nice to see you again, sir. It's been a while, actually. Welcome aboard.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** Thank you.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** The term "liberal democracy" can cause some confusion. You have been quoted as saying that one cannot have democracy unless it's liberal. Could you please explore a little more the technicalities of liberalism and which elements, therefore, make up democracy?

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** Well, I certainly don't mean Liberal, with a capital "L", and I hope that everybody around the table is liberal democrat in the sense that they believe in majority rule balanced by minority rights. That's a key part of liberal democracy. The rule of law, the separation and independence of the judiciary, a free media.... The genius of liberal democracy is that you balance majority rule with a lot of other institutions—the courts, the press, independent regulators—to make sure that the system is balanced. Therefore, minorities don't get crushed and majorities don't steamroll. Parliaments have a say, but it has to be consistent with the law. It's a balancing system, Mr. Sidhu. That's what we mean by liberal democracy. I think it commands widespread support—universal support—across our political divides in Canada. It's one of the great sources of our strength.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** Borys, go ahead.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Professor Ignatieff, you've been quoted as saying that Hungary has moved away from communism and not towards liberal democracy. You address some of this in your answers to questions. It's headed towards a single-party state ratified by a democracy. Could you please explain that comment a little more succinctly? In your opening remarks, you not only referenced Budapest, but also mentioned Prague and Warsaw. What is this model of a single-party state ratified by a democracy?

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** The Orbán regime has won three or four mandates. Once it wins an election, it then sets about to increasingly control the media, to put independent media out of business, and then to begin to change the constitution and suppress the independence of the courts. It then imposes increasingly centralized controls over the economy in the sense that it uses political power systematically to reward its own cronies. That's what I mean by consolidating a single-party state. It takes a long time. The fact that it is ratified by democracy is important because that's the source of its legitimacy.

You quite rightly raise the question of how far this applies in other places. It think Hungary has taken it much further than anywhere else. The opposition in Poland is much more vigorous, but the ruling party has used some of the Hungarian tool kit on the constitutional court in Poland, as you'll be aware. The Czech Republic is a more mixed story.

Essentially, it's political regimes that, instead of supporting, sustaining, respecting and defending counter-majoritarian power—whether it's the courts, the media, independent regulators or Europe—seek to consolidate power in a very small number of regime hands.

● (0925)

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Following up on that, it is interesting that that they're going through this process but are also using populism as one of their most important methods of continuing and building their support. In 2015, the Orbán regime targeted Syrian refugees. It proved to be very effective. In 2016, the targets were the UN, the EU, and those bodies forcing migrants onto Hungary. Soon afterwards, it was the NGO community. In particular, George Soros was an ideal target and was portrayed as a Jewish banker philanthrope who supported the degenerate values in open society and liberalism, which ran counter to Mr. Orbán's slogan of "God, homeland, family" and this whole concept of a Christian illiberal democracy.

The consequence is that you and the Central European University, a highly respected and prestigious institution, are being forced into Vienna. You haven't spoken of Vienna, but the government there is a coalition government. The junior party in that coalition is a far right xenophobic party. Their foreign minister was supported by this far right party and they in fact are having a tremendous influence on the politics within Austria. Do you feel somewhat unnerved that you may see similar processes in your new location in Vienna?

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** Some people say I'm going from the frying pan into the fire. I hope not. We've had very good co-operation from the coalition government, but you're quite right to indicate that there is a far right party. Let's understand that it is a constitutional party. There are parties that cross out of the constitutional order altogether and incite violence against other people. The FPÖ is not yet in that place, but you're right to be concerned, and it illuminates the problem: the increasing rightward turn of the political formations in central and eastern Europe. As you say, these are formations that depend on the continuous mobilization of their base by the creation of enemies, and you listed who those enemies are.

I do think that for a Canadian audience it's extremely important to notice the recurrent anti-Semitic tone and the recurrent anti-Semitic tropes here. This should concern all Canadians. The attack is not simply on George Soros; it's a reprise on the cosmopolitan rootless speculator who destroys ordinary God-fearing Christian lives. We know where that stuff comes from, and it's poison every time you hear it, wherever you hear it. I think Canadians ought to be concerned about that.

They have targeted the university that I have the honour to lead, I hope not because I'm leading it, because it's been 25 years as an independent institution here. It allows me to come back to what I said in answer to a previous question. The key challenge, I think, to democracy in Europe is the hostility towards counter-majoritarian institutions everywhere: hostility towards the media, hostility towards the courts, hostility towards civil society that asks probing questions and hostility to any of the independent regulators, in favour of a vision that the people must rule, the people must decide.

Well, that's not democracy. Democracy is this balancing between legitimate majority opinion, which must always be sovereign, and the countervailing power represented by universities, courts, etc.

● (0930)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Ignatieff.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** That's the key issue.

**The Chair:** you. I have to move to the next questioner.

MP Caron, *s'il vous plaît*.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Thank you.

I want to apologize to Mr. Chungong, because I'll be asking Mr. Ignatieff my questions, at least the first two.

Mr. Ignatieff, I want to address the issue of Canada's image around the world and of how Europeans may view Canada. You pointed out that this image was evolving and that the influence had diminished. I want to give you a possible explanation.

Canada's image had been relatively stable and consistent over the years. We've been increasingly seeing polarized images of Canada. For example, regarding the issue of migrants, at the start of the current government's mandate, we were talking about the intake of refugees and the fact that Canada was an open country.

This morning, I attended a breakfast organized by Amnesty International, where we were told about this vision of Canada as a welcoming country. We were told that now, at the end of the mandate, the discourse concerns issues such as asylum or political asylum shopping. This is completely contrary to the vision announced at the start of the mandate.

From your perspective, does this inconsistency in government positions lead to the diminished influence noticeable in Europe?

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** Mr. Caron, with all due respect, I think that Europeans have very little awareness or knowledge of Canada's domestic policies. They still hold a very positive view of Canada as both a host country and a bilingual country, where two languages are spoken.

Despite all the internal controversies—you addressed some of them—I believe that Europeans still hold a very positive view of Canada. However, they insist that our model isn't their model. They're much more hesitant about multiculturalism, and they want to resist a future that follows the Canadian model. Of course, it depends on the country, but this is especially true in the Eastern countries.

Thank you for the question.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** I mentioned the migrant issue, but we could have also talked about Canada's evolving role when it comes to our international commitments, particularly our peacekeeping forces. Perhaps domestic policies go unnoticed in Europe. However, we still have international commitments or an international presence, which is also evolving compared to what we used to know 15 or 20 years ago.

My second question concerns the models. You spoke about multiculturalism and how the principle has been implemented in Canada. This model may not be welcome—I don't know whether that's the right word—or accepted in Europe, for example. The model is less and less accepted.

Even in Canada, the model is evolving. Even though most provinces in the country still accept multiculturalism as the main value, in Quebec, for example, the principle of interculturalism has been gaining momentum for a number of years now. Multiculturalism was developed somewhat in opposition to the American melting pot. We could choose from the two models.

If Quebec adopts interculturalism, is there a chance that Europe will adopt neither a multiculturalism nor a melting pot model, but a more suitable model? If so, what model is emerging that could serve as a barrier to the rise of authoritarianism?

● (0935)

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** Mr. Caron, still with all due respect, I've never understood what "interculturalism" means exactly. It's a little beyond me.

I know that a big discussion is being held across Canada, and not only in Quebec, on the right way to integrate newcomers to Canada. I think that a number of models are needed. I'm not attached to a single model. I think that integration is carried out one way in Vancouver and another way in Toronto, and that a third model exists in Montreal.

I think that we must encourage these differences and be confined only to the limits of a liberal democracy, which are the limits set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** The question has a second component.

How could a different model in Europe be developed in order to find common ground against the rise of authoritarianism in some countries, such as Hungary and Poland? Is it possible to do so?

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** I hope so.

To turn the page here in Hungary, there needs to be an internal opposition. This depends on the Hungarians and the opposition forces in the current government. I don't have any lessons to share with them, since I'm not involved in politics in Canada and Hungary.

Obviously, the European authorities must get involved. These authorities include the European Court, European Commission and European Council, which are the only major organizations that can halt the descent into pure authoritarianism.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

We will now move to MP Saini, please.

**Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Good morning, Mr. Ignatieff. It's a pleasure to have you here today with us.

I want to start with Hungary, since you are there and your experience there is quite vast.

There seems to be a conversion of Mr. Orbán from being someone who was a young activist to someone who has become an authoritarian. He was educated at Oxford under the auspices of a George Soros scholarship. Some of his cabinet members and his spokesperson are graduates of the CEU.

I'm wondering why there's no opposition within his party. Is it just that everybody's following him blindly? What's the situation?

Second of all, what's his appeal within the Visegrad Group of nations? Not only is he changing the fundamental democracy of Hungary, but he's also changing the democracy of the Visegrad nations.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** This the story of what has happened to the European transition from communism to liberal democracy in general.

Orbán's story is the story, in a way, of the whole region. He begins, as you quite rightly say, as an anti-communist insurgent, and has—all credit to him—a very courageous role in calling for the withdrawal of Russian troops in 1989.

I think he then begins to see that there's a space on the right that is not occupied by the liberal transition elite and, like a clever politician, begins to flow into that space. I think he's influenced by international tendencies. He starts as a CSU Christian democrat conservative on the German model, and then begins to move steadily to the right.

The question of how far right he will go is a question of how far the European institutions step in to restrain him.

I think he's trying to perfect a kind of Christian democracy mark 2—not the Christian democracy of Adenauer or De Gasperi in the post-war period, but a Christian democracy in which Christianity is really a symbol for hostility to Muslims and foreigners. Whatever else Christianity is, it's also a language of mercy, but you don't hear that very much.

As for your question about Visegrad, I think he is a model for the Poles; they have adopted some of his actions on the Constitutional Court of Hungary very directly. I think the Czechs are much more reticent. I think the Austrians like his immigration policy, but don't like some other aspects of his illiberalism.

I would not overemphasize his impact in the Visegrad Group.

● (0940)

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Just following up on that, you know that article 7 was triggered against Poland.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** Yes.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Article 7 was triggered against Hungary. Is there not a weakening, because this story with Orbán is not new? It's been going on since 2011-12 when the European Parliament first noticed that. Now, six or seven years later, Poland and Hungary have had article 7 triggered against them. What has been the response of the European Parliament?

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** It's very slow. Europe proceeds by kind of an elephantine consensus formation because it's 27 people. Canada will recognize how this is because we're a federation. Everything happens slowly in Canada in that way for good reasons, but I think we're coming to a crunch point. For example, the European People's Party, the largest bloc in the parliament, has said to Victor Orbán, "You either make a deal to allow my university, ECU, to stay or we're throwing you out of the EPP". At that point, real consequences start to come into play. If he's thrown out of the EPP, then he won't have the power, the access or the resources he has had from being in the dominant group in Parliament. That might be the first time, in a way, that things start to happen.

The other avenue, of course, is the European Court of Justice.

The mills of European politics grind very, very slowly, and people like me are impatient at how slow they are.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Whatever remaining time I have, I'll give to my colleague Ms. Vandenbeld.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Thank you very much. It's very good to see you again, Professor Ignatieff.

I'm very pleased to have you here and very happy that you mentioned that we should not forget about the Balkans, and particularly the former Yugoslavia, which is a scenario that I know you've written extensively on.

When we talk about the distance between North America and Europe, there is within the public memory the more recent intervention in the former Yugoslavia, followed by a significant period of Canadians' going through OSCE and multilateral institutions to provide expertise on democratic transitions. I think at that time there was a tremendous amount of hope, and the idea of democracy brought with it great expectation.

I'm wondering whether or not the resurgence of nationalist impulses and authoritarianism, anti-pluralism, and even in many cases a backsliding on gender equality.... In many transition countries, women were more economically empowered, educated and involved in political institutions, such as they were, before the democratic transition. In some ways the high expectations, the inability to meet those expectations, the corruption and a number of other forces are perhaps the reasons why there is a backsliding. Does that mean that for a country like Canada, there may be an opportunity through OSCE and other institutions to provide that kind of expertise, not to export our democratic model, but to be able to provide that kind of expertise for institutions?

I do want to bring Mr. Chungong into the conversation as well, because parliamentary institutions.... I was a senior adviser to the parliament of Kosovo when Kosovo declared independence, and overnight it had to be a modern parliament. There were many, many Canadians involved in that.

Could both of you, perhaps, comment on what Canada's role might be in that regard?

● (0945)

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff:** I pay tribute to your years of experience in the Balkans. As you know, it's a frozen conflict. As you know, the phenomenon of this consolidation into a single party state is very advanced in Serbia. It's not great in lots of other parts. These are countries that have not made a transition even to democracy, really, let alone liberal democracy.

The worry for Canada is that Europe, the OSCE and the EU have essentially departed from the Balkans. They're just not present. I think the only way that Canada can re-engage is if it convinces a kind of hockey team of Canadians, Nordics, and Dutch folk and maybe some Germans to re-engage as a team and to say that this thing is stuck and that the reason we need to engage is not for Boy Scout humanitarian stuff, but to stop the possibility of war. Canada needs to say that we were there in the 1990s—exactly what you're saying—and did our best to stop people being killed and that we want to stop people being killed again.

I'm a little pessimistic about the Balkans and do hope that, in your report, you make the Balkans front and centre. It's the one place in this part of the world where there is a danger of conflict, in addition, needless to say, to eastern Ukraine, which is a—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Ignatieff.

I'm sorry. I want to get to MP Kusie for a final question because we're starting to run over time.

MP Kusie, please go ahead.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Ignatieff. I've never met you, but I have read your book, *Fire and Ashes*. Two stories really stood out for me. One was when your father was passed over for.... I know he went on to be ambassador to Yugoslavia, but the one posting was the only time you saw him cry. That was very significant for me, as well as when Bob Rae's brother said, "Back!" to you at the leadership convention. Those were very powerful moments for me.

My question is for Secretary General Chungong.

Sir, what has been the impact of your being the first non-European IPU secretary general? What unique perspective has that brought to your perspective on democracy in Europe? Have the Europeans recognized your unique perspective in regard to this challenge as the first non-European IPU secretary general?

**Mr. Martin Chungong:** Thank you very much for that question.

I [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] general, but I was elected as the secretary general of a global organization that embraces a variety of political systems and democratic experiences. That is how we have been promoting diversity within the organization.

[*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. We've lost the secretary general.

With that, we will ask if he can send us a briefing note on that so we can add it.

Thank you for your question, Ms. Kusie.

We are going to suspend briefly while we get our next panel of witnesses into place.

Professor Ignatieff, thank you very much for joining us this morning. In absentia, thank you also to Secretary General Chungong.

With that, we shall suspend.

● (0945)

(Pause)

● (0950)

**The Chair:** Members, if I can ask you to please take your seats, we will resume.

We're now going to have our second panel of witnesses this morning as we continue our study on threats to liberal democracy in Europe.

I would like to welcome, first of all, Dr. Jason Stanley. He is the Jacob Urowsky Professor of Philosophy at Yale University and the author of five books. Professor Stanley's most recent book is entitled *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them*. It explores the ideology of fascism and the various techniques that fascists adopt to gain and maintain power.

I would also like to welcome Dr. Timothy Snyder, the Richard C. Levin Professor of History from Yale University, who is joining us by video conference from Vienna, Austria. Dr. Snyder's research and writing focus on modern eastern European political history and on the dynamics of international crisis in European political history. He published the book *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* in 2018, and *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* in 2017.

We can begin with you, please, Professor Stanley. Then we will move to Professor Snyder. You can take around 10 to 12 minutes for your testimony. Then we will open it up for members' questions.

Professor Stanley.

**Professor Jason Stanley (Jacob Urowsky Professor of Philosophy, Yale University, As an Individual):** I'm going to start by answering a question that arose in the previous panel, about how I think about liberal democracy.

I'm a philosopher. We think of liberal democracy as based on two values, liberty and equality. Core to both of these values is truth. You can't have liberty without truth. Nobody thinks the people of North Korea are free, if they're going to vote for their leader each time, because they've been lied to.

You can, then, have a majority vote and not have liberal democracy, because if you don't have access to truth, then you're not going to have any sense of who to vote for or what to do. You're not going to be free; you're going to be operating on lies. You can't have equality without truth, because political equality is speaking truth to power. Liberal democracy is a system designed to preserve these two values, liberty and equality, that we cherish so much.

Thank you to the committee for having me here, because I think of Canada as representing these values to the world right now.

It's characteristic for political philosophers to divide democracy into a voting system, a set of institutions, and a culture. We can think of the attack on liberal democracy that's happening right now as an attack on the institutions and the culture. Illiberal democracy is the idea that you can attack the institutions and the culture and let the majority voting system remain.

We learned of the attack on liberal democracy and what the key institutions are. Jair Bolsonaro just announced that he's going to cut funding to philosophy and sociology departments in universities; CEU is attacked in Hungary; universities are attacked. The education system is central to liberal democracy. This method of dismantling the institutions of liberal democracy focuses on courts and universities. We pay attention to courts, but we need to pay attention to universities as well. This method involves these politicians who exploit this method, trying to transform universities into job training centres instead of places where people learn their citizenship. We need to pay attention to this.

The culture of liberal democracy is a culture that values liberty and equality. The secretary general, in the previous panel, spoke of extreme rhetoric. Extreme rhetoric destroys the norm of equality—gender equality and equality of religious minorities, etc.

Since I'm a philosopher, it is my vocation to dissent from previous witnesses, so I will take that opportunity here. I've spoken of the method to attack liberal democracy. I think it's useful to think of it as a method, not an ideology. I think that, say, Viktor Orbán, is after power and he's using a method to achieve power. This is a method.

Previous witnesses have described this method as populism. I'm going to dissent from that. First, I think populism is ill-defined. I can think of no way of defining populism whereby it doesn't rule some people who are perfectly liberal. I also think it's unfair, because if we look at the crisis of liberal democracy, we have to look at the failure of elites, such as the Iraq war and the financial crisis. I'm reluctant to place the blame, in the attack on liberal democracy, on populism, when fake news was most prevalent in 2003 in my country and in the UK. The problems, then, have been caused by elites, and people are quite right to be suspicious of them.

Populism? Yes, Venezuela has terrible problems: it's a kleptocracy. If you want to describe what's happening, it's somewhat different from what's happening elsewhere, particularly in Europe. I think the problem we face is ethnonationalism—and indeed, as I've argued in my work and Professor Snyder has as well, neo-fascism.

Yascha Mounk in previous witness testimony tried to argue against this. He said, well, it's not islamophobia, because Erdogan is one of the people we have to think about, and Erdogan is clearly not islamophobic. But I think that's a wrong way to think about it. The problem is ultranationalism, and islamophobia is going to appear when the ultranationalism is Christian ultranationalism. White nationalism is going to be the form of ethnonationalism when it's my country, the United States—or, indeed, your country. Islamophobia and white nationalism are instances of the problem of ethnonationalism.

● (0955)

The problem is far-right ethnonationalism. That's the method that cynical politicians are using to distract people from the actual problems they face. I don't think it's a violation of law, because, as the case of Hungary and Poland, and increasingly my country, you can change the law.

We need to pay attention to the structure of these neo-fascist far-right ultranationalist movements. We need to understand them as they arise to identify them, and there are some core elements. They talk about a revitalization of some ultranationalist pride. They appeal to dominant group victimization, as in the loss of their culture in the face of minority groups and gender equality, the loss of male hegemony.

They're harshly anti-feminist. CEU was targeted for gender ideology. Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil has been targeting institutions for gender ideology and feminism. The European University of St. Petersburg was targeted for gender ideology. We have to pay attention to the way in which these movements centre feminism as a target. They centre institutions and the press, as was discussed in the previous panel, with these old tropes of anti-Semitism where dominant institutions, like the press and universities, are targeted as left-wing indoctrination centres run by shadowy anti-nationalist elites.

They seek a one-party state. They seek to represent the other party and minority groups as sort of betrayers and traitors. They portray immigrants and minority groups as criminals, as threats to law and order, as lazy and a drain on the state. You have this paradox in the United States where immigrants are both lazy drains on the state and here to steal jobs.

What Canada represents, given this attack on the norms of liberalism, is a country that has successfully absorbed minority groups and immigrants, and welcomes immigrants. Canada, more than my country, is struggling with the memories of its settler colonialist past and indigenous peoples, because a core part of this movement is trying to erase the problems of the past. It's trying to say we should be proud of the dominant group's victory and domination.

If you want to preserve liberal democracy, you want to preserve the memory of the problems, the memory of the history of the country, warts and sins and all. It's no surprise that Germany is a core liberal democratic nation, because its education system focuses very seriously on remembering the past.

Canada's increasing confrontation with indigenous issues is, in fact, part of Canada's liberal democratic culture, a culture that includes gender equality, tolerance of religious minorities and immigration, and support for universities—not transforming universities into job training centres but keeping them as places where you confront the past and have critical discussions of policy.

Finally, I'll end with the point that this is a method that's being used. We have cynical politicians. All these politicians run anti-corruption campaigns, which is funny. Putin ran an anti-corruption campaign in, I think, 2011. My president ran an anti-corruption campaign, but corruption doesn't mean corruption, right? It means that the wrong people are in charge.

Anti-corruption means that the wrong people are in charge, women, minority groups, etc. Anti-corruption means that the non-dominant group has been given a voice. These are signs, when terms mean the reverse of what they do, when anti-corruption is cynically used as a method to bring corrupt politicians into power.

● (1000)

We need to both make sure that institutions are not corrupt, of course, so they can't be used so cynically, and also need to be especially attentive to the cynical use of anti-corruption campaigns.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Professor Stanley.

We will move now straight to Professor Snyder, again, joining us from Vienna, Austria.

Please go ahead, Professor Snyder.

**Professor Timothy David Snyder (Richard C. Levin Professor of History, Yale University, As an Individual):** Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify to this committee. I wish you all success as you begin this project.

What I would like to do is to make a very brief list in this initial set of remarks of seven areas that I, as a historian, believe are areas of concern, but then also areas of opportunity. That is to say, I think each of these areas demonstrates a risk to liberal democracy, but also an opportunity for liberal democracy to defend itself.

In my remarks, I'll be focusing on the history of the recent past, although I will range a bit into the earlier part of the 20th century. I presume that's where all of our minds go when we worry about the end of liberal democracy.

That is my first point, by the way. Liberal democracy is not a state of nature; it's not a feature of the way that the universe is. Liberal democracy is a set of institutions, values and practices in which people have to believe. There has never been a moment when liberal democracy was alone in the world and unchallenged. Liberal democracy only exists insofar as the people who are in favour of it are willing to make a case. Therefore, my first area of concern or first area of opportunity would be precisely that: ethics.

A great mistake that we have made in the western liberal democracies in the last 30 years is to fall into a kind of determinism, to believe that history had come to an end, to believe that there were no alternatives to liberal democracy. This is ironic, of course, because the problem with communism, before 1989, was precisely determinism: the certainty that one could deduce the future from the present.

We've fallen into that same trap. When you believe that there are no alternatives or if you say that history doesn't matter, what you're doing is depriving your own democratic society of a sense of responsibility. If democracy is going to happen regardless of what we do, then no particular citizen has to do a thing. That's the spirit in which democracy is going to die. Therefore, the first point is ethics.

The second point is time. This may seem like a strange one. You're probably looking at your watches, wondering how much longer I'm going to talk. Maybe your phone is itching in your pocket. Democracy requires a sense of time. For people to believe that their votes matter, they have to be reflecting on the past. They have to be thinking about the choices that are before them in the present, and they have to have a sense that the future is coming.

This may seem like a very simple point, but it's precisely this normal continuity, normal flow of time that the enemies of democracy attack. They attack it on two fronts. The first is that they use technology to get us all excited and obsessed about the emotions of any particular moment, so that the present seems to go on forever and we never think about the past or the future.

The second method, as Professor Stanley also observed, is to drive nations or formally dominant groups into a kind of mythical version of the past, where we were always right and they were always wrong, where we were always the victims and we therefore are always the deserving ones now. That kind of rhetoric, whether it's Mr. Putin or Mr. Trump or Mr. Orbán, is absolutely ubiquitous. It's one of the very few things that's absolutely common across all the people who are challenging democracy.

The third area of concern or opportunity—again, this is very big—is humanity. I'm going to be very literal here. Democracy means rule by the people, but in the 21st century, we've entered a moment where people are spending an awful lot of time on, and their brains are very often divided by, entities that are not human. The average American spends 11 hours a day in front of a screen. The way that we think is increasingly determined by the algorithms that have been designed to distract us or to draw us into particular directions. There's a very strong body of research showing that the behaviourist techniques used on the Internet, on social platforms in particular, tend to polarize us politically as well. That's a specific consequence of the world we're living in now.

This is a very basic point. There are digital beings in our lives. They don't function according to human laws; they function according to other laws. Neither they nor usually the people who program them have any affiliation whatsoever with the idea of democracy, so we need to be very sure that the people are in fact ruling.

To give a dramatic example, in the Russian intervention in American politics in 2016, the main agents that the Russian Federation used to try to determine the outcome of the presidential elections were, of course, digital beings. However, these were digital beings designed by American companies. The people who ran those companies generally favoured the other presidential candidate, that is to say Hillary Clinton. So there's a question here about who or what is really in charge.

The fourth and very much related point—and here I'd like to echo Professor Stanley's remarks—is factuality. Without factuality, a public sphere is impossible. If there isn't factuality, we have nothing to talk about. There's no common subject. There's no way for us to meet in the public sphere and share opinions, if there isn't a common body of facts.

● (1005)

The rule of law is also impossible without factuality. Court proceedings do not seem meaningful unless there can be findings of fact upon which there is general agreement. This has obvious policy implications, because despite what a very strong Anglo-Saxon tradition says, facts do not grow out of the ground. Facts actually require labour. Fiction is cheap. In fact, fiction is free, but facts require labour, which means that states that are interested in preserving democracy have to invest heavily in factuality, which is to say in journalism, and, in particular, in local journalism. It also means that countries like Canada, which are embattled regions but which speak an important language, might consider investing in a foreign policy that projects investigative journalism beyond its own borders.

The fifth point, the fifth area of concern, an area of opportunity, is mobility. It's very hard for people to take democracy seriously when they do not believe that their vote has some kind of an effect on their own ability to change their lives, to move forward in some sense towards something that they want. We know from history, from the history of the Great Depression, for example, that the sense of stasis, the sense that one cannot move forward, tends to radicalize people or lead them towards what we now call “protest votes”, as in the United States in 2016. Mr. Trump was correct, sociologically speaking, when he said that the American dream is dead. This is one reason why he did so much better than people expected.

This is connected to the sixth area of concern, one that Professor Stanley mentioned, which I would also like to highlight, which is equality. People can believe in democracy only if they believe that it's their vote that's making the difference, their participation as citizens, as opposed to, let's say, dark money, campaign contributions, or individuals who for reasons of wealth have qualitatively more influence than they do. When people believe that they're no longer living in an equal society, they're vulnerable to various temptations such as protest votes. They're also vulnerable, as we've seen in places as far afield as Ukraine or the United States, to the idea of voting for an oligarch on the logic that if the oligarchs are in charge anyway, you might as well vote for the oligarch who at least makes some attempt to appeal to us.

Another very important reason why equality is important is communication. If you allow inequalities of wealth and income to become too great in a democratic society, people no longer believe—and they're right—that they're living in the same world. They no longer believe they have things to say to one another. The people who are the wealthiest will also be tempted to escape with their resources and also with their minds.

This is connected to the seventh and final point that I want to make, which has to do with energy. It's interesting that when one tries to define what populism is, or when one is asked what all these various populist movements have in common, the two things that these various movements that we call populist tend to have in common are actually quite strange: They all like Mr. Putin and they all deny that global warming is happening. Those are two things that seem very far afield, I would venture, from normal democratic politics or the interests of the people, which are things that populism is supposed to be about, but nevertheless it's true. Every time a new so-called populist parliamentary party appears in a European parliament, whether it's AfD in Germany, or just yesterday Vox in Spain, those two things always hold. They always like Putin, and they always say that global warming is not happening.

I think this is very suggestive of where one needs to go in a democracy. In a democracy one needs to make sure that electoral proceedings are not influenced too much by hydrocarbon oligarchy. In a democracy one also needs to make sure that the problem with global warming is being taken care of, because, if it's not, then people lose their sense of the future, and democracy starts to seem senseless.

These are the seven areas of concern I wanted to highlight: ethics, time, humanity, factuality, mobility, equality and energy.

Thank you very much for your attention.

● (1010)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much to both of our witnesses.

We have a little housekeeping to do here, because a vote in Parliament has been called for 22 minutes from now. My suggestion is that we seek unanimous consent to go for another 10 minutes, and that each of the parties get two minutes or so just to get an initial question out, and then I would welcome any other members who have questions to submit them in writing and we can ask our two witnesses to provide answers in writing, if that's okay. This will allow us to at least proceed.

First of all, do we have unanimous consent to proceed?

Thank you.

With your two minutes, MP Kusie, please lead.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Thank you, Chair.

Professor Stanley, I'm a graduate of Rutgers. I'm sorry you downgraded to Yale.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** In your opening comments you said that "You can't have liberty without truth" and that "political equality is speaking truth to power." Professor Stanley, I would suggest that you look into the recent happenings here in Canada in regard to the SNC-Lavalin scam, as well as the unfortunate resignation of the previous attorney general from cabinet as a result of these principles being compromised.

My question is actually in regard to your third major comment, which is that you perceive the main problem to be the existence of extreme rhetoric. I believe that where we've seen that played out significantly here in Canada is in the use of "Twitter-plomacy". For example, our Minister of Foreign Affairs made comments on Twitter regarding a captive in Saudi Arabia, using a tweet as a potential means of diplomacy rather than the historical channels of diplomacy.

What would you say the effects of social media and social media diplomacy are for this problem that we're seeing within the world? What factor does that play, please?

● (1015)

**Prof. Jason Stanley:** Professor Snyder talked about machines taking the place of democratic deliberation. They impose a certain structure on us—a 280-character structure, or 130. In my country, of course, one sees the effects of that. One sees the effect of social media structuring discussion, and it's not how democratic deliberations should work.

I know Professor Snyder is writing a book on this, so I'd invite him to weigh in.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Prof. Timothy David Snyder:** Can I comment?

**The Chair:** Yes. Take 30 seconds, please, sir. Go ahead.

**Prof. Timothy David Snyder:** With Twitter in particular you have two problems. One is that Twitter ends up defining the problem. In American relations with North Korea, for example, it is what happens on Twitter rather than what happens in the real world that ends up mattering. The second problem is the constant diversion. That is, there are things actually happening in the real world that demand our attention, but because Twitter comes at us so fast we're unable to react to the things that actually exist.

It's a weird way to think about it, but Twitter is actually a way that we try to approach.... We act like machines. We're fast. We're senseless. We're going for yes or no. We're going for emotions. That is the kind of thing that draws us away from democracy. A charismatic, talented politician [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] is a perfect Twitter politician.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Snyder.

MP Wrzesnewskyj, please.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Unfortunately, because of the time limitation, I will throw two questions out if there is time to answer either of them.

Professor Snyder, in the previous hour Professor Ignatieff stated that states that were under communist rule have been evolving to single-party states ratified by democracy. Ukraine appears to have bucked that trend. We've seen two pro-democracy revolutions in 15 years and a revolution at the ballot box just this past week. How does the history of the "Bloodlands" and time impact on Ukraine's democratic evolution?

Professor Stanley, in the epilogue to your book, *How Fascism Works*, you write at length of the dangers of the normalization of the fascist myth. How is normalization of ethnonationalism taking place today?

**Prof. Jason Stanley:** Do you want to start, Tim? I'll finish it off.

**Prof. Timothy David Snyder:** Ukraine, perhaps more than other places in Europe and in the west, understands that one has to have a relationship with other democratic countries in order to be a democracy. That is what I take to be the central meaning of the Maidan.

Another central meaning of what you correctly call the pro-democratic revolutions in the Ukraine is to emphasize equality. In both cases—2004 and 2014— the problem was not only a neighbouring state—Russia—which opposes democracy, but also a threat that we face here as well, which is oligarchy.

Finally, Ukraine is the front line on the battleground for factuality. Many of the most courageous and interesting reporters who are working on issues not only of the war, but of inequality and tax evasion in general, are precisely Ukrainians. They're doing a service.

**Prof. Jason Stanley:** On ethnonationalism, as both Professor Snyder and I emphasize, a common theme everywhere is this idea that we once were great and we're going to return to it. We see that in Hungary, in the United States, and in Turkey. As our colleague, Greg Grandin, has argued, it particularly affects countries that are able to call back to some kind of imperial past, and then they say that they've lost their great past.

Maybe Canada's liberal democracy is so healthy because they don't face that issue. Turkey goes back to the Ottoman Empire. In the United States is the idea there has been this humiliation by the acceptance of the global world order. In the U.K., the idea the EU invaded the U.K. is promulgated among supporters of Brexit. That only makes sense if you think of the U.K. as an empire, so—

● (1020)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Stanley.

This is like the rapid-fire round. It's not easy for academics or politicians.

With that, we're going to move to MP Caron for the final two minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Thank you.

Professor Stanley, in a Vox column, you were asked about the possibility that the current rise of fascism or authoritarianism is in fact a response. It can work, because it establishes another mythical reality that ultimately contrasts with the profound tediousness of how our policies work in a liberal democracy.

Our committee work is very boring for the average Canadian or the average citizen of a democracy. How can we deal with this? How can we promote our democracy, first of all, and make it attractive in order to find common ground against the rise of fascism or authoritarianism?

The question is also for Mr. Snyder.

[*English*]

**Prof. Jason Stanley:** It's the education system. You must preserve your pre-K and your university education humanities and history and not make them into job-training centres, and you must teach the history of gender.

You must teach the bad parts of history and what minority groups went through so that people value truth and recognize when they're being lied to. Also, there's journalism. You must fund journalism—alternative sources of journalism. These methods target the media and universities for a reason.

**Prof. Timothy David Snyder:** I think people who believe in liberalism and democracy have to go on the offensive. They have to say "these are good things" as opposed to just saying "we're the normal people when everyone else is abnormal". I think they also have to go on the offensive in the sense of [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] the problems of authoritarianism. Authoritarianism is attractive now because people have forgotten what the bad parts of it are. As it stagnates and as leaders begin to die, it's going to look less attractive. The tragedy would be if the liberals of democracy give up before we reach that moment, but I think we have to be able to make a case that what we have is not just normal but that it's just really a whole lot better.

**The Chair:** I want to thank all four witnesses from today's session for their testimony and particularly for their understanding. This is parliamentary democracy at work this morning: we have a vote right in the middle of testimony.

Thank you very much for joining us. We will be sending you some questions, I'm sure. Feel free to reply in writing, and we'll make sure they get entered as part of the testimony.

With that, we shall adjourn.