

Defending Democracy and a Rules-Based Order

A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES



A Message from the Co-Chairs

For seven decades, free nations have drawn upon common principles to advance freedom, increase prosperity, and secure peace. The resulting order, built on the foundation of democratic values and human dignity, has brought better lives for our citizens and billions of people around the world. But today, this order is under threat, both internally and externally. With Europe facing inward and US leadership uncertain, what has been achieved since 1945, and again from 1989, is at risk.

In March 2018, we launched an initiative, under the auspices of the Atlantic Council and Canada's Centre for International Governance Innovation, aimed at revitalizing the rules-based democratic order and reaffirming public support for its key tenets. We were joined by a distinguished group of former officials, business leaders, strategists, and activists to begin to identify those key principles that are at the heart of securing and advancing a rules-based order that reflects our common values.

Since this initial meeting, the task force that was organized to move this effort forward has engaged in a series of roundtable workshops and discussions, to hear from a broad array of voices as to the core values that it aims to secure. The task force heard from policymakers and legislators, business and private-sector leaders, students and the next generation, and representatives from local communities, civil society, and the faith-based community. Participants have included representatives from leading democracies around the world, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

These efforts have resulted in a **Declaration of Principles for Freedom, Prosperity, and Peace**—including seven statements that we believe reflect the common aspirations of the human spirit. This declaration is intended to provide a framework around which political leaders and citizens in democracies worldwide can coalesce to demonstrate their support for the values and principles underpinning the rules-based order.

We humbly recognize that these principles are only a starting point. To succeed, concrete actions must be taken to help realize these principles. This will take time, and much will depend on the will and determination of those in positions of power and influence to advance them. But we hope that this effort can serve as a first step toward a tangible plan of action that governments, private entities, and individuals around the world can look to as a guidepost for adapting, revitalizing, and defending the rules-based order that meets the needs of the twenty-first century.

Sincerely,



Madeleine Albright, co-chair
Former Secretary of State, United States



Carl Bildt, co-chair
Former Prime Minister, Sweden



Stephen Hadley, co-chair
Former National Security Advisor, United States



Yoriko Kawaguchi, co-chair
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Japan

A Call to Action

In March 2018, the Atlantic Council, in coordination with the Centre for International Governance Innovation, launched an initiative to revitalize, adapt, and defend a rules-based order. A high-level task force of distinguished former officials representing leading democracies around the world convened to begin charting a course of action.

The starting point for this effort is a **Declaration of Principles** that articulates the fundamental values of a rules-based order—democracy, free and open markets, alliances, and the rule of law. The declaration will serve two important purposes:

- provide a clear and compelling statement of values, a “north star” around which political leaders in democracies worldwide can coalesce to reaffirm their support for a rules-based order and generate concrete action to advance and defend these values; and
- provide a rallying cry to mobilize bipartisan public support in favor of shared values in the United States, Europe, Asia, and leading democracies around the world.

Over the past twelve months, the Atlantic Council has organized a series of roundtables and workshops, engaging a wide range of interlocutors to develop these principles. In September 2018, senior officials from ten major democracies discussed the challenges facing the rules-based order at the D-10 Strategy Forum in Seoul. In November 2018, the Atlantic Council and NAFSA: Association of International Educators hosted a Student Roundtable Dialogue with a spirited group of students from universities in and around Washington, DC.

Later in November, the Atlantic Council organized a Strategists Roundtable in Washington, which

brought together business and philanthropic leaders, representatives of the entertainment and technology sectors, and several incoming members of Congress to solicit additional views and ideas, particularly on public-engagement strategies. In December, the Sagamore Institute in Indianapolis hosted a Heartland Roundtable bringing together local community and business leaders, educators, and representatives of the faith-based community for an engaging discussion on the principles.

Finally, in January 2019, the Atlantic Council hosted a workshop with the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs on alternative scenarios that could emerge if the current order were to unravel, and what risks those scenarios would pose to the interests of the United States and its democratic partners around the world.

From Principles to Strategy

Principles are only the starting point; to succeed, they must be followed by action. As the initiative moves into its next phase, the Atlantic Council will seek to launch an orchestrated public engagement campaign designed to rebuild bipartisan support for democratic values and the fundamental tenets of a rules-based order. The initiative will also focus on developing concrete strategies and recommendations for policymakers in leading democracies to adapt and secure the order.

Finally, the initiative will involve establishing a platform for dialogue among other global powers to identify areas of convergence on mutually-acceptable rules and norms. Ultimately, the aim is to strengthen cooperation among the world’s democracies to advance an order that reflects our common values, while at the same time seeking to ensure that all major global powers have a stake in a peaceful and stable international system.

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TASK FORCE ON ADVANCING A DEMOCRATIC ORDER

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