Frank Fahrenkopf
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Transcript

Hello, my name is Frank Fahrenkopf. I have spent quite a bit of time in my life in politics, and also in promoting democracy around the world. I became chairman of the Republican National Committee in 1983, but prior to that time, I was involved in promoting democracy around the world, and perhaps efforts of how it could be achieved.

The work that was done promoting democracy, and how would the United States [promote democracy], and perhaps the political parties and government could promote democracy around the world. Bill Brock, who was a former chairman of the Republican National Committee, who was also our trade ambassador for a time, and a senator from the state of Tennessee, was very involved. A representative of the United States Chamber of Commerce, another former ambassador, Mike Samuels, was very involved. Allen Weinstein was very involved. George Agree was very involved. These are people who were looking at what was happening around the world and trying to ascertain whether or not there was a way that those of us in the United States who enjoy our democracy could promote it and help it in other places where it didn't exist.

I really got involved when I became Chairman of the State Chairmen. Now, that is not the national chairman of the Republican Party. That didn't take place until I was elected in December of ‘82. The Chairman of the chairmen was the chairman of all the state chairmen. Each state in the United States had a Republican chairman elected by the Republican Party in that state. And then, all of them elected me to be their chairman.

So, I was approached by the White House in that capacity, along with a personal friend who worked in the White House and was very, very involved, Ed Rollins, who was in the political office. And we were asked to go to Munich, as observers, to an organization that had been created, by Margaret Thatcher. [It was called the European Democrat Union, the (EDU), an organization of Conservative Center Right Political Parties in Europe]. We were to go and observe [the meeting] and then we were also to go forward into Bonn, which was then the capital of Germany, and talk to the German stiftungs.

Now, the German stiftungs were organizations that were created by the German legislature after the war, [and a stiftung] was like a think tank, and each of the [German] parties had a think tank, and they were funded by the federal government of Germany to do their research and come up with their philosophy, and so forth. We went to Bonn, and we met with the leaders of the stifungs. We spent a tremendous amount of time with [Helmut Kohl who was the head of the CDU party]. He later became the Prime Minister. And we'd spent time with him, we'd spent time with all of them. And we came back pretty much with a view that the German stiftungs work. [It was good work]. They spent a lot of time, were organized and [were at that time focused] on Latin America.

In fact, soon after that trip, after I became [RNC] chairman, Chuck Manatt, the chairman of the Democratic Party, and I] went down to Venezuela as the guest of one of the German stiftungs that was doing democracy work down there. But we just figured [the German Stiftung plan wouldn't work in the U.S.], as there would be no way that we could convince the Congress of the United States to directly fund money that would go from the government, the taxpayer, directly into the political parties. And we reported to the White House, and it was shortly thereafter that the great speech, the democracy speech that was [given] by President Reagan on his trip to London, when he spoke to Parliament and talked about the tremendous importance of democracy for mankind, and that we had to fight for democracy. It didn't just exist, you had to fight intellectually, and we're not only talking about weapons being involved in war, that's not what he was talking about in that speech. But he was talking about the need for democracies that exist to help those who are trying to achieve a democracy by making sure that they had the right ideas, the right concepts, and so forth. And that speech promoted a tremendous amount of support.

I think, if I had to be very, very honest, and I will, I don't think that the National Endowment for Democracy or IRI or NDI, or the others would exist if it hadn't been for a congressman from the state of Florida. He was the, I believe, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. I don't know, we can go back and judge that. His name was Dante Fascell. He was a Democrat, and was a strong supporter of creating organizations such as we became with NED.

So, NED was to be made up [initially] of four institutes. That's what they were called at the time. It was going to be the Republican Institute, the Democratic Institute, an Institute of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and one of Organized Labor. And at that time, I was the chairman of the Republican National Committee, and I created what is now IRI. Chuck Manatt was the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and he created the Democrat Institute.

Mike Samuels, [who] represented the Chamber of Commerce,and they created [the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute]. And then Lane Kirkland, who headed the AFL-CIO, was the one who represented the labor union. So these would be the four institutes that would be made up by the National Endowment for Democracy, and the National Endowment for Democracy would be able to fund them, to do some of the work of democracy around the world.

Chuck and I, as chairman of the parties, had to resign as [party chairman]. I resigned as chairman of the Republican [Party] because, of course, we couldn't receive…I couldn't be on the board of NED and receive federal money and then just give it to the Republican Institute. So I resigned and I was elected to the board of NED. [Congressman Robert Lagomarisino replaced me as a chairman of the Republican institute, before John McCain served]. [I had gone to the President and asked him who would you like to succeed me as chairman of the institute]? And he said Representative Robert Lagomarsino of California, whose district represented where the ranch was, the ranch where the Reagans went on every chance they had to do a break.

So I resigned, and I was elected to the board of NED. Chuck Manatt did the same thing, he stepped down. I don't remember who replaced him, to be very candid with you at this point in

time, and he went on the [NED] board. Jay Van Andel, one of the founders of Amway, represented the Chamber of Commerce, and he was elected to the [NED] board, and then Lane Kirkland, representing the labor unions, [was elected to the board]. Under the [provisions of NED], each of us would serve one term of 10 years. So we could only serve for 10 years. The other members of the board that would be elected…I forget whether we did 1-year terms or two-year terms, but the four of us were going to be the creators and serve for 10 years [only].

Now, when the NED legislation was introduced, there was not widespread support of it. There were many, many members of Congress and others in one area at the State Department. It was -AID, the Agency for International Development, that said, why do we need this? That's what we're supposed to be doing. AID's supposed to be doing that. We shouldn't be doing this. There were some congressmen who were far right and far left, I must say, and senators who were not supportive of it. But again, as I said, we had the remarkable support of that congressman from the wonderful state of Florida, who worked very, very hard and met many times with President Reagan. They worked together and were supportive. And eventually, we were, in fact, created. The NED legislation, I think, got through in November of 1983, and we began our work. [The democracy work of these organizations would have not been possible if we had not gotten the legislation passed].

In addition, one of the things you remember when I early indicated we went to Munich, the city of Munich, Ed Rollins and I, there were two purposes of going. One was to look at what the stiftungs were doing when we went on to Bonn. The other was to study this concept of a political party organization, not country organizations, of the EDU, the European Democrat Union, and whether that would work.

Well, we began working very, very hard in the Republican Party to see whether or not that's something that we, with Margaret's assistance and help, [that we could] create a larger organization, the International Democratic Union, the IDU. And, eventually, that got going.

Vice President Bush and I flew to London, for a meeting that Margaret had called in [1983]… well, 40 years ago, last year or so. And we had representatives of [18 European political parties], most of them were from Europe. There were 19 parties that signed the document to create the international Democratic Union. It was also the Republican Party. I had gotten Chuck Manatt invited to also come, because the Democratic Party at that time when he was chairman was much less far left as they are now, in my opinion, and there was no strong party interest in joining the IDU, [I think Chuck would have liked to have joined]. And the IDU was created during that meeting. As I have stated, there were 19 parties that signed the document to create the International Democrat Union, even though Vice President Bush and I were present at that meeting and sitting at that table, when the time came to sign the charter to create the organization, I was the chairman of the Republican Party, so I signed it as the party representative, rather than Vice President Bush. Now, I think it was 10 of the 19 were prime ministers of their countries, because under the parliamentary form of government, as you know, the party that wins control and elects the prime minister, that prime minister is the head of the party. And so we had Margaret, we had [Helmut kohl], we had Jacques Chirac, many, many

European countries. And, we began our work, working with, in many ways, in conjunction with what IRI was doing.

When I became chairman of the [RNC] in 1982, at the [GOP] convention of 1984 and the conventions of 1988, I invited the party leaders from the IDU to come to the conventions and see how we ran the conventions, to meet people, and all the rest of it. So, we worked very, very, very closely together for a long period of time.

[The Labor Union Chairman Lane Kirkland was very influential in what the NED board did, as I indicated]. One of the first things where it became [evident] how strong he was was with regard to [electing a President of the NED] when we created it. He nominated a man that I did not know. I not only did not know him, I'd never even heard of him, named Carl Gershman. Chuck Manatt, chairman of the Democrats, and also a new board member, had also not heard of him. But we had worked from the very beginning, going back to the late 70s, when the first beginning of discussions about doing something in this field, Allen Weinstein was someone who had been there, and Chuck and I knew him, and we liked his work, and so Chuck and I were supporters of Allen Weinstein. So there was a sort of deadlock for a while. It then turned out that I happened to be in New York City making a speech as Chairman of the Republican Party when there was also… a Dinner [in the city honoring Kirkland's wife]. His wife was a survivor of the German camps, and she was being honored, and I was invited to attend, and [I did so]. Vice President George Herbert Walker Bush was there, and he asked me, the Kirklands, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and Bill Casey, the head of the CIA. Whether or not we wanted a ride back to Washington on Air Force Two, we accepted. And we were all on the plane, it was a short flight.

Now, Vice President Bush did not participate in the discussion that I'm now going to talk to you about. He just listened, he didn't put an oar in the water, but Kirkland threw out the name of Gershman again, and so I just listened, and I indicated to them that Chuck and I, coming from parties, thought what's wrong with getting a Republican or a Democrat who has the facilities and ability to do the job, rather than someone that was not a party person, but was a socialist? Jeane Kirkpatrick, who I have tremendous respect for, and was a dear, dear personal friend of my wife and I, and who had been our United Nations ambassador, spoke up and supported Carl very, very strongly, indicating that when she was at the United Nations, that Carl was on her staff, and she had tremendous respect for him. [Bill Casey also supported Carl]. It then became clear that there was tremendous support among people who we would have to work with and would want the support of, that Carl should be the person. The next day after we got back [to DC], I went to lunch with Chuck Manatt, and we said, look, maybe we can work with Allen Weinstein on other things, and we eventually did work with Allen Weinstein on other democracy [programs]. But we have supported Carl, and Carl became our first President of the National Endowment of Democracy. [Carl Gershman became the first President of the National Endowment for Democracy].

I spoke on the anniversary of his retirement from NED, and said what a tremendous job he had done over those years, particularly in the beginning years when it was so hard. And one of the things he did, which was one of [his] very wise decisions, was the staff he put together. And one

of the members of that staff was Alexander Haig's daughter. Alexander Haig was my doubles tennis partner, almost every Saturday to Sunday for many, many years, but his daughter, Barbara went to work for Carl, and was there right to [his retirement]. In fact, I think she just left within the last year, and did a tremendous job. So, that led to the tremendous success worldwide that NED has had, and the work that they were promoting and going forth with.

Now, I think at this point, I want to stop for just a moment and go back to the discussions of the International Democrat Union because the work that that organization, still in existence now…it was also back in, I think, in June of '83 it was created, and it's still out there, it's now headed by the former Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper. It has worked around the world. Again, while it's [political] parties to party, it works most often, of course, with political parties that are working for democratic reasons and purposes, and wanting democratic elections, and so forth. And it has been a remarkable creation that came out of, in a way, when I think back of it, is that trip that Ed Rollins and I took to Munich many, many years ago, where the ideas that were developed, and those ideas, really, when you think about it, were originated, were brought to, really, fruition, because of Margaret Thatcher.

And, of course, the relationship that existed between Margaret Thatcher and President Reagan and Pope John Paul [which was very very strong], I mean, there are many who believe that those three people were the most instrumental people in bringing down the Berlin Wall and the promotion of democracy throughout Europe.

That work continues. The work of IRI and NDI has been severely damaged, however, by what has happened following the second election of President Trump, when there has been a remarkable, non-understandable, to me, and the work that's being done by the Democratic Unions. It's just something that, you know, if they threw the baby out with the bathwater, that old expression.

Sure, there was a lot of spending at State and other divisions of government in Washington, D.C, where money was being wasted. But, I don't know how you can say that the work that was being done by IRI, NDI, by the unions, by the Chamber, etc., was not something worthwhile and shouldn't have been done. We're hopeful now that we're getting little bits and pieces of it back, both IRI and NDI. We're still working, [while] presented tremendous problems to us, where we had personnel and staff all over the world, whose kids were in school in these countries, and so forth, and suddenly we didn't exist, and how are we going to get them home? How are we going to get them resettled? It was a tremendous unnecessary, as far as I'm concerned, cut, in what occurred. So, I'm hopeful that the…slowly, beginning of money coming back.

There's also some money from outside that's been contributed to some of the organizations. Howard Buffett, for example, is one of the individuals who's been very supportive of…he's been a great supporter of the Commission on Presidential Debates, which Paul Kirk and I created, and has also been working with IRI, and we're hoping there are other people who can assist, but I mean, we're talking about a lot of money, a lot of time, a lot of effort, and hopeful that it's going to continue.

So that's as much as I have to say, folks. If there's something I've left out, you want me to go back and cover, let me know.

Note: Narrative in the transcript added after the recordings is shown in brackets.