

## **Remarks for Amendment on Disclosures of Payments from Foreign Governments**

Chairman Nugent and Ranking Member McGovern,

I have a proposed amendment to the rules of the House to require any witnesses that come before Congressional committees to disclose their potential financial conflicts of interest with foreign governments.

As you are aware, lobbyists for foreign governments are required by the Foreign Agents Registration Act to register as foreign agents with the Department of justice. But there is no similar requirement for think tank experts appearing before congressional

committees. My amendment would require witnesses to disclose any payments they received from foreign governments, just as we require witnesses to disclose any grants or contracts they receive they receive from the federal government.

The *New York Times* recently revealed that a number of influential think tanks have received tens of millions of dollars in financial support from foreign governments. The Brookings Institution, for example, receives 12 percent of its annual funding from foreign governments, and the Atlantic Council has relied on foreign governments to provide between 5 and 20 percent of its annual budget.

Several researchers told the *New York Times* that they believed this financial support influenced their research products. While this funding may not distort the testimony of these witnesses, this financial support should be disclosed for Members to appropriately assess potential conflicts.

Representatives from these think tanks have testified before the Foreign Affairs and Armed Services committees numerous times without disclosing their connections to these foreign governments. Experts from CSIS testified at least 17 times, experts from Brookings testified at least 10 times, and experts

from the Atlantic Council testified at least five times.

Foreign governments seeking to influence U.S. foreign policy date back to the 1950s. But in this age, the American people have a reasonable expectation that these links will be transparent and allow for the appearance of a conflict of interest to be aired publicly. Amending the House Rules to include disclosure of the funds that entities receive from foreign governments would be a common sense reform to increase the integrity of the information Congress receives.

This isn't a partisan issue. Groups with perceived liberal and conservative bents have been identified as receiving these funds. Requiring these entities to disclose any potential influence of foreign governments on their work is vital to assessing this advice appropriately as we make decisions about the best policies to protect our national security. Just this week, Congress has been focused on Iraq and Syria and has looked to these experts to make key U.S. foreign policy decisions. We will likely continue to rely on many of these think tanks to provide insights and advice. I hope the committee will adopt this

reform and look forward to addressing any questions or concerns.