

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Committee, JSCFADT \(REPS\)](#)
Subject: submission: Inquiry into supporting democracy in our region
Date: Friday, 14 October 2022 8:36:15 AM

to the committee,

An obstacle to supporting the sovereignty and independence of our immediate neighbours is managing perceptions of political interference and fear of externally imposed regime change. A weakness of small states is their vulnerability -due to scale- to espionage compounded by their reliance on foreign funded civil society groups. Suspicions of covert objectives beyond stated overt objectives. It's important to understand that Foreign Aid can be perceived as simply more D.F.A.T. boots on the ground. It is therefore important to ensure that foreign aid always has the objective of establishing capacity for domestic organization due to the fact that locals with all of the social capital tied to the local population and land will act in their own interest to strengthen their social capital rather than seeking performative short-term objectives. Aid organizations run for and by the local people. Ensuring long term secure employment for locals through such efforts will further reduce expectations or employee beliefs in covert performance objectives by the autonomy inherent to stable secure employment. The explicit objectives of granting democratic autonomy and promoting civil society will earn trust and improve relations.

Robert Heron

[REDACTED]