

Center for Strategic and International Studies

## Online Event

# “CSIS Urban Legends Series: U.S. Cities as Foreign Policy Leaders”

RECORDING DATE:

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FEATURING:

**Ambassador Nina Hachigian,**

*Deputy Mayor for International Affairs of Los Angeles*

**Representative Ted Lieu (D-CA-33),**

*Member,*

*House Foreign Affairs Committee*

CSIS EXPERTS:

**Jacob Kurtzer,**

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Jacob Kurtzer:

Thank you very much for joining us today. My name is Jake Kurtzer. I'm the director of the Humanitarian Agenda at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. We're delighted and grateful to our guests today, Ambassador Nina Hachigian and Representative Ted Lieu, for joining us for this exciting discussion. Together with our own Judd Devermont we have three of Los Angeles' finest represented on the virtual stage today. A reminder for all of our viewers that this event will be posted online in its entirety, and we encourage your questions, that can be submitted via the website or in the link that'll be dropped in the chat shortly.

Today's discussion is the result of the convergence of three areas of work and thinking. At CSIS we've been discussing some of the dominant global trends that are important for our analysis of foreign policy. A number of us have started to focus in on urbanization globally and the sectoral and regional implications of a rapidly urbanizing global population. Along with Erol Yayboke, Judd, Caitlin, and I wrote a short piece last year speaking to the way in which urbanization impacts food security, humanitarian action, and migration, and particularly in the African continent.

Second, there's a prevailing consensus that we must do a better job collectively making the case about how foreign policy impacts domestic life. The African Program, led by Judd, recently carried out an incredible project highlighting why Africa matters to U.S. cities, connecting the interests of very metropolitan areas with the African continent and demonstrating that foreign policy matters to people in Boise, and Albuquerque, and elsewhere.

Third, and most salient for today's discussion, is the increasing realization that with 80 percent of the American population living in cities, and with the unfortunate gridlock at the national level, our cities and state governments are truly taking the lead on pressing issues of national and global concern. This theme was expressed clearly in Ambassador Hachigian's work so far in Los Angeles, and it's described clearly in her article in *Foreign Affairs*. And it's an idea championed in a bipartisan and bicameral way in Congress, including by Representative Lieu in his City and State Diplomacy Act. So we're very grateful for both the ambassador and the congressman for joining us.

I'll do a brief bio and then turn it over to my colleagues. Ambassador Nina Hachigian is the first deputy mayor of international affairs for Los Angeles, and the only one in the United States. She has responsibility to build relationships with foreign partners and elevate Los Angeles' international leadership on climate inclusion and innovation. Prior to joining the mayor's office, the ambassador previously served as the ambassador to ASEAN, the Association for Southeast Asian Nations, was a senior VP at the Center for American Progress, the director at the RAND Center for Asia-Pacific policy and served on the White House National Security Council staff in the Clinton administration.

Congressman Lieu represents California's 33rd Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives, serving in the House Judiciary Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee, and as co-chair of the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee. Congressman Lieu is also a former active duty officer in the U.S. Air Force, and currently serves as a colonel in the Reserves, stationed at Los Angeles Air Force Base. Thank you so much for joining us.

I'm going to now turn it over to my friend and colleague, Caitlin Welsh, director of the CSIS Food Security Program, to moderate our conversation. Over to you, Caitlin.

Caitlin Welsh: Thank you so much, Jacob. And welcome to our guests and to our audience. I'd like to begin with questions for the Deputy Mayor Hachigian. First, Jake has already mentioned the essay that you and Mayor Garcetti recently published in *Foreign Affairs*. And this essay illustrated the many ways that cities can and do engage internationally for their own benefit, and ways cities can help shape and advance U.S. foreign and domestic policies. So for our audience, can you provide some highlights of this?

Nina Hachigian: Sure. It's great to be here. Thanks for having me. Am I – yeah, I am unmuted. Good. (Laughs.) Thanks for having this conversation, which I – you know, is one that's near and dear to my heart, of course. Thanks to CSIS. So in that article, Mayor Garcetti and I started first just to describe the kinds of work that we do at the international level, for those who don't know what American cities are up to.

So the – first we try to bring jobs and economic growth to L.A. through our foreign policy. So we work to attract foreign direct investment, promote tourism, and win and gear up for events like the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games that will come to L.A. then. L.A. and the British government have been collaborating to spur innovation on mobility by connecting our initiatives and introducing our companies to one another. We're collaborating with Japan on its green hydrogen technology. We have many foreign partners interested in our clean tech sector.

We support exports from our local businesses with the trade missions. We look at what flights we can generate, because nonstop flights are not only important for foreign policy, actually – if you want to be a close partner – but are also big economic drivers. We also cultivate ties with particularly important partners for us. You know, it was – we were concerned about, especially in the first years, the Trump administration's relationship with Mexico. So we started a formal binational citizens commission. It was the first city-nation program at its time, that we knew about anyway, that was – and our partner was the Mexican Foreign Ministry, you know, to thicken and deepen ties there.

With the war last year between Armenia and Azerbaijan, we worked closely with the local Armenian community to try to get the Trump administration to act, for example. And we also participate in a wide variety of networks that are aimed at solving global problems. So we are a founding member the U-20, which is the G-20's kind of urban counterpart, which pushes G-20 to advance urban and generally more progressive priorities.

And I remember very distinctly in 2018 we were in Buenos Aires for the first meeting and I was able to say, along with Dallas and Chicago who were also there, and New York, that, you know, despite what everyone there was hearing – you know, there were representatives from, you know, Paris, Tokyo, Seoul, you know, Jakarta and others – that despite what they were hearing from the White House, that American cities remained open to the world, that we valued our foreign partners and they cherished democratic values still.

And this past year we assembled a coalition to insist on ambitious climate language, over the objections of Moscow and Beijing. We started a gender equity network for cities recently. So Tokyo, London, Freetown, Mexico City, Barcelona are our partners on that. And then I'd say, you know – (laughs) – especially for now, in an era of transnational threats, we do do a lot of – you know, we are frontline workers on national security issues.

Obviously, with Covid we did a lot, and without really any national guidance – testing centers, feeding seniors, getting cash to our most vulnerable communities, you know, helping small businesses. I mean, those can – you know, I can talk forever about just that. And it's great to have a federal partner now, but still it's us that has to put the vaccines, you know, in the arms. And then the climate emergency is another place where we are working very hard, have very ambitious climate goals.

So, anyway, we went through all that – (laughs) – sort of the what we do. And then finally I'll just say that we – you know, we gave a few suggestions to the incoming team. Like, you know, you should really focus on the threats that affect Americans where they live, and that, you know, diplomats should not just be bringing American solutions to other places, but also looking for them in other places.

Ms. Welsh: OK. Well, it's a great segue to my next question. You've served in several leadership positions at the federal level, what do you think are the main benefits to the federal government of diplomacy, as engaged in by cities?

Ms. Hachigian: I would say that there are a lot – there's a lot of untapped benefits, but I would say that, you know, first of all, when it comes to transnational threats to makes great sense to partner with cities and states who are, you know, doing that frontline work. On climate change, the mayor chairs a group called the C-40, which is a global network of megacities, and mega-emitters, who are all pledging to hit very ambitious climate goals. And so, I mean,

that's a perfect, you know, partner to have, you know, to reduce climate change, for example.

I think, you know, the State Department and the federal government more generally could work with cities and states to establish more subnational ties for important partners. I think local leaders are good at conveying the importance of international policy to American wellbeing. And they're not really called on to do that very often. But that's another, you know, potential area. And then finally, you know, our competitors on the global stage have not ignored American cities and states. And I think it's, you know, important in terms of getting a full picture of what their activity is in the United States to talk to global leaders about that.

Ms. Welsh: Great. Thank you. Your essay concluded with this: We in Los Angeles and leaders in other global cities are ready and willing to partner with the Biden administration to unite the country around a foreign policy that works for Americans and for the world. So what do you think are the highest potential opportunities for this administration to work with cities to advance foreign and domestic policy priorities?

Ms. Hachigian: Yeah, thanks. So I would say climate is one. Sustainable Development goals might be another, because as – you know, during the time when our national government was not measuring or part of the whole SDG agenda, cities – American cities and some, I think, states – but cities for sure have been. And so we've learned a lot in the meantime about how measure, so that's another potential area. Covid, obviously, and pandemic diseases in the future. And I would say a couple of – one other thing, which is that at the end of the day people grow in cities. So future ideas, future leaders, future soldiers, future diplomats are all grown at the local level – future innovators.

And so, you know, systemic racism, the problem – the continuing problems probably especially with Covid of gender equity, are two problems where we ought to be all working hand-in-hand, because we need every American to be – to live up to their full potential in order for us to have any chance of competing on the global stage with China, for example, which has four times our population. And so, you know, providing early childcare – early quality childcare so that every – you know, every American can really live up to the best that they can be.

So all those domestic – many domestic priorities also end up affecting our foreign policy. And finally, I would say – and this might be a good segue to Congressman Lieu – (laughs) – I think it would be good to establish a subnational diplomacy office in the State Department to coordinate all of this work.

Ms. Welsh: Perfect. Thank you so much, Deputy Mayor Hachigian. And that is, indeed, a perfect segue. Welcome, Representative Lieu.

Representative  
Ted Lieu (D-CA):

Thank you for inviting me, Caitlin.

Ms. Welsh:

Yes, of course. Of course. I'd like to begin by talking about the Cities and State Diplomacy Act. In 2019 you co-sponsored this legislation in the House. And I'd like to know, what benefits do you think this act would bring to cities and states and the federal government?

Rep. Lieu:

Thank you, Caitlin, for your question. And I'd like to thank the Center for Strategic and International Studies for hosting this wonderful event. I started off as a councilman in the city of Torrance. We're actually the headquarters of Honda of North America. We have a number of different international companies in the city of Torrance. And we have a sister city agreement with Kashiwa, Japan. And in the California state legislature I remember working with Governor Jerry Brown and supporting the governor's office when he signed an MOU with Israel on water technology and other technologies.

And so I've been thinking about these issues as a local elected official about things that local governments have been doing with foreign countries. And then when I got to Congress it became pretty clear to me we've got one State Department and 19,500-and-some cities and towns. And there's really no way for one State Department to be able to do what it needs to do without coordinating with all these cities and states that are already doing diplomacy with foreign countries, and cities in other countries. So it would be much more efficient, make a lot more sense if you actually had a State Department helping these cities and states do their diplomacy.

So the legislature would establish an office in the State Department that deals with basically subnational diplomacy. And then it would also authorize the State Department to send personnel to various cities and states and help them on specific projects, or trips, or other events they're doing with foreign states or cities in foreign countries. It's very clear to me that with every passing month the globe becomes more interconnected. I mean, we're living in a global economy. We're living in a time where it's simply better for America to have more outreach with our foreign cities and foreign states, especially when you think about this pandemic.

I was on a conference call with Dr. Fauci yesterday, as well as other administration officials. There are several variants now that are in the United States. One originated primarily in the United Kingdom, the other originated primarily in South Africa. And one of the reasons you get variants with this virus is when a lot of people get infected the chances of variations increase. So to keep America safer, not only do we have to vaccinate as many people in the United States as possible, but also work with other countries to make sure they vaccinate as many of their population as possible, because we're so globally interconnected.

Ms. Welsh: Great. Thank you so much. Thank you for that survey. I'd like to touch on another important potential impact of this – of this act, which has to do with China. Senator Chris Murphy, who co-sponsored this legislation in the Senate, said that this legislation helps us play the long game in competing with Beijing on the world stage. So how would that – how would that happen?

Rep. Lieu: So if you in geopolitics see where there's a vacuum, eventually a foreign power is going to start taking up that vacuum. And so when the U.S. recedes, you'll see other foreign powers – including China – start to take up that space. One thing that I know all of us have realized is cities and states will sign agreements with – in the U.S., cities and states will sign agreements with foreign countries as well as cities in foreign countries, and sign contracts. And China has been doing that, right, with a lot of different entities around the world.

So I think the United States should do what we can to make sure that if a city or state is going to have agreements with other countries, that we get the best agreement that we can – or agreements with foreign cities – that we get the best agreements we can. Or, start getting cities and states to think about even doing this, right? With over 19,500 cities and towns in the U.S. – and I can guarantee you, some of them have not thought about doing this at all. And hopefully this legislation, if it becomes law, will get them to think about doing some of these things. And then you can start having contracts go to American entities, American cities, American states, American businesses, instead of those of foreign entities.

Ms. Welsh: Thank you. And I did notice that the draft legislation defines a city as any place with a population greater than 100,000. So it certainly does include, you know, a vast number of cities and towns across our country and enable them to benefit from the act as well. And I'd like to turn to talk about what about this particular moment in our country's history might make subnational engagement make sense.

So of course, the federal government has the primary role conducting diplomacy on behalf of our country, but at the federal level the – our federal government has been besieged by partisan politics for this century, and particularly over the last four years. Do you think that there's anything about politics today that presents openings for cities to engage in diplomacy? And do you think global engagement led by cities might be even more useful today than it has been in the past?

Rep. Lieu: So cities and states are at different levels of global engagement. Some really haven't done it. And some, like Los Angeles, are doing a great job, under the leadership of Nina as well as Mayor Garcetti. And again, let me go back to this pandemic to show how important connections with foreign cities and foreign states are. Los Angeles ended up getting a bunch of PPE at the

beginning states of this pandemic not from the federal government but from foreign countries. The state of Maryland did something similar. And so – as well as the state of New York.

And so you do see the importance of having relationships with foreign cities and foreign countries, because sometimes you're going to need to get materials and other things that they may have that you can't immediately get yourself. We also know that cities and states, when they do these trips, or delegations, or meetings, they tend to be nonpartisan. Cities are nonpartisan, in and of itself. And that is also one way to break through the partisanship. You now have a lot of cities doing this subnational diplomacy where there's no partisanship whatsoever. And if we can assist these cities, I think that helps not just the local cities, but also our country as a whole as well.

Ms. Welsh: OK. Thank you so much, Representative Lieu. We'll return to you with some follow up questions, and then to the deputy mayor, in a few minutes. And finally, though, I'd like to turn to CSIS Africa Program Director, and L.A. native, Judd Devermont.

Judd Devermont: Hey, Caitlin.

Ms. Welsh: Hi, Judd. I'd like to talk with you first about your own program and the direction you've taken your program. You've made cities – African cities and U.S. cities – a priority. And so why have you chosen to focus on cities? And can you explain some of your recent work?

Mr. Devermont: Yeah, sure. Well, first, let me just say how delighted and honored I am to be on the same panel with Deputy Mayor Hachigian and Congressman Lieu. One of us is not like the other, so I'm happy to be, you know, with two very prominent leaders in the United States.

But we did this project because the Beltway argument doesn't work. When we talk about terrorism, or piracy, or humanitarian challenges in Africa, that really doesn't resonate with Americans. In fact, we know it's true. According to a study by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, only 1 percent of Americans think Africa is the most important region for national security.

So if the ambassador and Congressman Lieu are talking about how do we showcase the role of U.S. cities in foreign policy as leaders, we wanted to show why foreign policy leadership matters to U.S. cities. And it's really consonant with something that Secretary of State Blinken just said. He said: In everything we do, the first question we have to ask ourselves is how is this going to benefit our fellow Americans?

So the CSIS Africa Program wanted to take this city-level view to look at how foreign policy, especially towards Africa, enriches the lives of

Americans. And I call it the hometown argument. And we looked at Africa's relationship with 15 cities. I didn't pick Los Angeles, which is my actual hometown, but I could have, and the conclusion would have been the same. Trade with Africa adds to a city's tax base and creates jobs. Obviously, Los Angeles' entertainment industry gets this. They're engaging with African artists and filmmakers and telling African stories.

Many of a city's political leaders engage on African issues. And the California National Guard actually has a state partnership program with Nigeria. It's just one example of those kind of connections. Africa diaspora adds to a city's cultural life. My first exposure to eating Ethiopian food was on a trip to Fairfax Avenue to Little Ethiopia. And of course, Africa elevates our academic institutions and our research. I'm a proud graduate of UCLA. I know firsthand the contributions of African scholars, at the wonderful Fowler Museum on campus.

And finally, cities engage with the continent in religious activities and through philanthropic endeavors. And so I think when you look at those relationships in those dimensions, I think Americans can relate to and understand why our leadership, our partnership, our open doors – as Nina said earlier – why that's so important.

Ms. Welsh: Thanks for that. Looking back and then looking ahead. Based on your own experience – your vast experience with policymaking in Africa, has the U.S. government made good use of opportunities to engage at the subnational level? So looking back, and then looking ahead, what do you think are the greatest potential opportunities for the Biden administration to do this when it comes to Africa?

Mr. Devermont: Yeah. I mean, frankly, I don't think that we've done a great job. Most of the city and subnational engagement has really been one-off, based on one U.S. diplomat's interest, or maybe an embassy's fascination with a particular African municipal counterpart. And so that doesn't really lead to a lasting partnership. It's really, you know, very fleeting. It's not about city hall as an institution, for example.

And the same goes for, I mean, I think some of the sister-city programs. I mean, Congressman Lieu talked about the relationship between Torrance and individual programs are fantastic. But as a whole, they're very episodic. They're really dependent on, you know, what those two cities have. L.A. has 25 sister cities, one of them being Lusaka, Zambia. Thank you for that. But, you know, decentralized is good, but I think there could be some more structure. I think that's what the act that Congressman Lieu was talking about, about how do we get this right.

I think one of the best examples of how to do this is the State Partnership Program, which the National Guard does. They do that with multiple cities or in multiple countries and states. But here's what I'm hopeful about – not

only this legislation, which I hope has a good run this year, but President Biden has talked about urbanization. In fact, when he was a candidate he said that he wanted to start an urbanization initiative. It would include partnerships with U.S. cities. And it would be focused on, at least for African cities, critical sectors like energy access, climate change, transportation, and water management. So I'm really hopeful that we can see more from that statement and get, you know, what is really sort the transformation that's most important on the continent.

Ms. Welsh: Thank you. I want to turn to talk about some of the cities on the continent of Africa that are experiencing a lot of the challenges that you noted President Biden has already mentioned. And those are small and medium-sized cities. So global cities garner much attention and discussions about subnational diplomacy, for good reason. But globally, megacities are home to only one in eight urban residents. And across Africa it's the small and medium-sized cities that, first of all, will be urbanizing most quickly and, second of all, have the highest rates of poverty, and many of these other challenges as well.

So when it comes to Africa in particular, how do we ensure that conversations about subnational diplomacy are not dominated by global cities, as important as they are, and that we do engage these small and medium-sized cities?

Mr. Devermont: Yeah. I think that if we spent all our time on Lagos and Johannesburg, I think we're going to miss some of the opportunities and challenges that come in the early stage. So, you know, what I would recommend, both as a specific Biden initiative or as part of the subnational office that Congressman Lieu is supporting, is that we think about a tiered approach toward cities. So there are the megacities or the meta-cities of over 20 [m]illion that we have to work on that probably are the most exposed to climate change, that have the teeming populations, that already are attract magnets for U.S. investment.

But then have a second tier, you know, in cities like Ibadan in Nigeria, you know, cities that are – that's probably not a small city, actually. You really can select any Nigerian city and get to 100,000 people only. But you know, you want to have two tiers. We want to focus on primary cities and capital cities, and then also have a tier around what I would call secondary cities. Because those are different challenges and their growth trajectories are moving even faster than the biggest cities.

Ms. Welsh: Yeah, absolutely. Well, I happen to agree with all of that, Judd. And we will come back to you with some follow-up questions, but I'd like to have a conversation among all panelists right now. I do have some follow-up questions for you, and then I invite you to comment on some of the things that you heard each other say.

My first question is for Representative Lieu. And just a pretty simple question. Do you plan to reintroduce this legislation in the 117th Congress?

Mr. Devermont: Sir, I think you're muted.

Rep. Lieu: Thank you. So, yes, we will introduce – reintroduce this legislation. It is bipartisan legislation that we've done with Representative Joe Wilson, a Republican from South Carolina. And it is also legislation that passed last term in the House. We also got it inserted into the NDAA – the National Defense Authorization Act. Unfortunately, the Trump administration opposed it. So that's why it didn't make it in the final version of the NDAA. We believe the Biden administration has a different view. And so we are hopeful we can get this bill signed into law this term.

And I do – I want to make sure I'm not misleading anyone. It's true we have over 19,500 cities and towns. It's also true, Caitlin, as you mentioned, that this bill focuses on cities of over 100,000 people. Hopefully, we will expand it over time to more and more cities. But I don't want people to get the impression that all of a sudden the State Department is going to be helping 19,500 cities. That's not the immediate intent of the bill. It is to help cities of over 100,000 people.

Ms. Welsh: OK, great. Thank you. That's actually a great segue for my next question for all of you. And it's about funding for cities for international engagement. When speaking with the Deputy Mayor Ambassador Hachigian, you did mention that there's a challenge at the city level, that budget lines for things like engaging in C-40 or U-20 or ICLEI, or any of the other global urban networks is – that funding is minimal. So is there a need? And is there a place for federal funding for city-level engagement globally?

Ms. Hachigian: Yeah, that's a really important point. And it's why American cities are kind of new to this game, whereas our European, African, Latin America, Asian city partners have been, you know, networking and doing a lot of outreach. There is – there is basically zero money. For example, if we wanted to join the UCLG, which is a giant city network, and I can't even remember what it costs. It's a few thousand dollars a year. That is not – that is not, you know, money that we have. I mean, we are lucky to have, you know, a good, small office, because Mayor Garcetti understands. He has a global vision and he understands the value that we bring. But it's a hard case to make for a lot of – for a lot of mayors and, you know, even governors.

So in many foreign countries it is the national government that funds – that funds city international work. And that happens – it happens in London, I know. Or it happens in Japan. It happens all over Europe. And so the answer is, yes. I think that would be hugely important. I think that the legislation also seconds people, foreign service officers I think, which would be incredible for many cities, to have that kind of boost in capacity. These cities have no way to pay for those people. But if they were to come

without – you know, for free, which they do – you know, they go to many places for free – you know, universities and so forth – that would be a huge benefit.

Ms. Welsh: Yeah, absolutely.

Ms. Hachigian: You could set up – you could set up even a fund that cities compete for to do certain things – hosting events or starting a particular kind of exchange program – you know, that match the priorities of the administration. That would be one way to do it.

Ms. Welsh: Yeah. I do have some questions from the panelists that I'd like to – sorry – from the audience that I'd like to turn to soon. But to Representative Lieu and Judd, is there anything on this topic or anything else you'd like to comment on first?

Rep. Lieu: I'll look forward to the audience questions.

Ms. Welsh: OK, great. Judd, anything for you?

Mr. Devermont: No, I'm ready for the questions. Let's go.

Ms. Welsh: Great. (Laughs.) So this is from a fellow CSIS colleague, Erol Yayboke, who is asking – and this is a great follow up to what you were – one thing you were just mentioning, Deputy Mayor. Which is: What role do immigrants and refugees play in Los Angeles, especially with regard to creating linkages to other parts of the world? And what benefits arise from such connections?

Ms. Hachigian: Yeah, I mean, huge role. You know, they are – I mean, they are those people-to-people ties that sort of determine where our priorities are, in many cases, and who – you know, who bring – who bring ideas, who bring – who are often the engines of cooperation. So they play an enormous role. You know, one thing we haven't really talked about is the cultural richness that we get from foreign connections. And a lot of that is, you know, through our diaspora populations.

But we've also had countries set up, you know, specific, you know, institutions in our city, like Japan brought Japan House to L.A. It's one of three Japan Houses in the world. I think San Paulo and London are the other two. Where, you know, there's all kinds of offerings on, you know, how to make sushi and this manga author, et cetera. Thomas Mann House is another example of a German government intervention, and we have a bunch of others. And so that richness is, you know, part of what makes our city great. And, you know, our city is 38 percent, roughly, foreign born. So we are immigrants.

Ms. Welsh: Mmm hmm. Well, I know that cultural richness is one of the topics that Judd's *Why Africa Matters to U.S. Cities* – that that project focused on.

Mr. Devermont: Can I just add something here, Caitlin?

Ms. Welsh: Yeah.

Mr. Devermont: Because, you know, when we did the research, right, we made sure that we had red states and blue states and big cities and small cities, and across the United States. And I would say, every city that we've looked at – and a lot of this was very random in terms of cities we picked – city leadership opened its doors to immigrants. You know, Boise, Idaho, for example, punches way above its weight in terms of welcoming immigrants to their community. Salt Lake City – maybe perhaps tapping into the Mormon faith – has been incredibly welcoming of refugees. And whether it's a humanistic commitment or it is because that immigrants bring, you know, new labor – new energy. I mean, it's really remarkable that at the city level, in my survey and study, that the support for immigrants and refugees is so high.

Ms. Welsh: Thanks, Judd. I will represent small cities and note that in my own hometown of Erie, Pennsylvania, one in five city residents are refugees today. So likewise, for huge cities and for small cities as well.

Turning to a question from the audience. And this is L.A.-specific. How does L.A. define outcomes and measure the success of your work? And also, how does L.A. prioritize the issues and countries that you would like to work with? You know, an overarching strategy for all of the – of the global work that you're doing.

Mr. Hachigian: In terms of measuring, sometimes it's difficult. We do have programs where we are educating – well, bringing opportunities and skills to young Angelenos. So we have – we have a program that I love dearly where we worked with community college district and American Airlines to bring college students abroad on their first trips. So for about 30 percent it was their first time on an airplane. And these were 90-ish percent people of color. And, you know, many first-generation Americans, first generation to go to college. And these were really life – well, maybe an exaggeration to say life changing – but certainly big moments in the lives of these young people and affected their trajectories afterward.

So in that case, for that program, we can just count the number of students – (laughs) – who we've managed to serve. We have a – we have a program coming up next week that's particularly targeted to Black and brown students in the L.A. area. Just having different speakers talk about different kinds of international careers. So that's another one where we can just, you know, count the number of students that attend. But in other areas, like cultural, you know, ties, it's harder. Even with FDI it's harder – foreign direct investment – because much of it just happens without our

intervention. And so we can measure FDI numbers, which we do. But, you know, so that's basically what we do.

And then in terms of the question about whether we have a strategy, there are, you know, countries that have long-standing relationships with the city, and mostly based on the diaspora populations that are here or that have, you know, generated a lot of investments and FDI over the years. And so we tend to focus on those, but not exclusively. We're always open to, you know, new kinds of relationships. But we – you know, we also have an eye to serving the folks who are here who care a lot about particular relationships. But we also look at, you know, how many tourists from – you know, who are the top international tourists? Who are the top international job creators in our city? And, you know, to make sure that we are keeping an eye out for what we can do to help those relationships.

Ms. Welsh: OK. Thank you. Seems like there's a whole variety of metrics that you use for these engagements.

My next question I think is best for Representative Lieu. And it's about resolution mechanisms. For instances, when local, state, and federal foreign policies might conflict. So again, of course, the federal government has the ultimate responsibility for conducting diplomacy on behalf of our country. But when it comes to subnational diplomacy, I imagine there could be – and there probably are – instances where there are conflicts at those different levels. So do you think the legislation – well, does the legislation anticipate those conflicts and propose resolution mechanisms?

Rep. Lieu: So thank you for that question. Subnational diplomacy has been happening and is going to continue to happen. So one of the reasons that I argue for support of this bill is it actually would help prevent conflicts. Sometimes there may be things said by city officials, or state officials, or policies done that they may not be fully aware that may conflict with what the State Department's trying to do. So all the more why we need coordination and assistance from the State Department to cities and counties and states when they are doing subnational diplomacy.

Ms. Welsh: OK, great. Thank you. Thanks for mentioning that coordination mechanism, which obviously is an incredibly important aspect of the legislation.

Next question. Let's see. There's a question here about mandates to buy American, and if those – this question is: Have you overcome municipal mandates or municipal preferences to buy American or to buy state/local – state or local in your purchase agreements with international cities?

Rep. Lieu: So the president has made an announcement about prioritizing buy American through executive order. My bill doesn't specifically say "buy American," but I am fully supportive of buy American policies.

Ms. Welsh: Great. Do you see a specific role for public-private partnerships when it comes to this specific legislation, or just to the subnational diplomacy that we're talking about?

Rep. Lieu: So it would hopefully result in additional agreements and MOUs between cities, and counties, and states in America with foreign countries and foreign cities. And that, I would think, would naturally lead to more public and private partnerships as well.

Ms. Welsh: Yeah, OK. OK, great. I think that that – that's pretty exhausts the questions from the audience, which have been great questions so far. I'd like to offer a chance for each of you to give some concluding remarks. Perhaps there's a question that you wished had been asked but wasn't asked. So, you know, is there anything you'd like to say before we turn it over to Jake? And we can start with the deputy mayor.

Ms. Hachigian: Yeah. I just want to say thanks, and that it's great that think tanks like you in Washington are paying attention to this subject, because I do think – having served both at the federal level and at the local level – that there is a lot of potential for more collaboration. I think that hopefully Congressman Lieu's legislation will pass. But that'll be just the beginning. You know, a small office in the State Department is not going to be able to do all – is not going to be able to really do everything that I think would be – would be good and beneficial, both to localities and to federal foreign policy. So look forward to this new era.

Ms. Welsh: Thank you, deputy mayor. Representative Lieu.

Rep. Lieu: So I wanted to thank you again for inviting me, and everyone for participating. Subnational diplomacy is happening now. It's going to happen in the future. And the federal government can either ignore it or we can help it. And it seems to me to make a lot more sense to assist cities and counties and states with subnational diplomacy. Los Angeles has been doing a terrific job, and I want to commend Nina for the great work she's put in, as well as Mayor Garcetti. And many of you watching are very influential and high-powered individuals. So if you know anyone in the State Department, tell them my bill is really great and they should support it. Thank you.

Ms. Welsh: (Laughs.) Thank you, Representative Lieu. Judd.

Mr. Devermont: Yeah. Thanks again for doing this. You know, this is such important work for all of our programs, and so we're just honored to have the deputy major and congressman here. I want to just sort of reflect back on our history. In the '60s and the '70s, the State Department – through the U.S. Information Service – used to spend a considerable amount of staff time and some money to take African leaders out of the Beltway, out of the Acela corridor,

taking them to Honolulu, taking them to Fresno, visiting universities, and doing the people-to-people talk that Los Angeles is doing on its own. And so I hope as we think about this subnational diplomacy, how do we facilitate those ties and get back to that point?

And then the last thing that I just wanted to say is that I really like Deputy Mayor Hachigian's point about ideas grow at the local level. I think diplomacy can grow at the local level. This is an opportunity for us to be innovative, to try new things. It doesn't have to be every single city in America, but I think we can take some calculated risks here and try to get to the 21st century diplomacy that we need to be at through the city-to-city engagement. So I think this is a great opportunity and I'm really looking forward to seeing the bill pass. Thanks.

Ms. Welsh: Great. Thank you, Judd. I'd like to thank, once again, Deputy Mayor Hachigian, Representative Lieu, and Judd. And with this, I'll turn it over to Jake.

Mr. Kurtzer: Yeah, thanks. You know, if I wasn't sold on the importance of cities before today's event, I am now. We – Judd, Caitlin, and Erol and I – were chatting last year. And we were talking about urbanization, but we all said: Yes. This is so important for our individual sectors, right? My work focuses on humanitarian issues. And as the representative talked about, you know, Covid has shown us really clearly how interconnected the globe is.

And I was struck by – you know, Ambassador Hachigian, you talked about we need to reach people where they live, right? And this is where people live. And local leaders are better at understanding the needs of the population, at explaining what they need. And so, you know, the idea of using cities to both bring solutions and look for solutions internationally I think is a really important trend that we're very eager to look forward to working on.

So thank you both again for joining us. Thanks to our audience for joining us. All of – all of us are open to ideas. And if your city – you know, if you're hosting a humanitarian organization or if you have a refugee program that you're proud of, reach out to us and we can – we can help contribute to making this piece of legislation a reality, the city-to-city diplomacy, you know, really kick off. So thank you all for joining us. We wish you a great afternoon. And we look forward to working with you in the future.

(END)