Not too long ago, our world was steadily becoming more peaceful. Greater numbers of individuals in more regions enjoyed prospects for a longer, healthier life. But now, democracy and the post-war international order that came with it are in crisis. Countries whose institutions developed outside the post-war democratic consensus are increasingly powerful. Many Western democracies turn inward, while authoritarian states are proliferating. We need to understand why this is happening, so we can identify ways to change course.

The mission of the Center for Democracy and Global Governance (CDGG) at UC San Diego's School of Global Policy and Strategy is to produce high-quality, data-driven research that expands understanding of how governments, industries, and non-governmental institutions can improve the function of democracy and the fate of the democratic world order. Our research involves multiple specialties, which enhances our ability to characterize urgent problems while suggesting pathways to solutions.

The stakes couldn't be higher. At a time of democratic erosion, humanity confronts challenges that depend more than ever on international cooperation. Climate change is already intensifying storms and wildfires; it is parching crops, putting many fragile countries into greater peril. In 2020, the world struggles to cope with the global COVID-19 pandemic, with inconsistent public health protocols and uneven resources hastening its spread. Poverty and food insecurity deepen, with weakened multilateral coordination putting ambitious goals out of reach. Human rights are at stake.

Yet this is also a time of astonishing technological capacity and promise, a time when the full flower of human liberty may exceed these challenges and set us on a new path to common prosperity. With your support, CDGG will develop the programs, research, and connections needed to convert actionable knowledge into processes the world needs to thrive.
GLOBAL CHALLENGES
For all the talk of ending globalization, when it comes to the flow of capital, goods, ideas, disease, and pollution the planet remains intrinsically interconnected. Cooperation is essential to solving common problems and advancing opportunities. Over the last “American Century” the idea of democratic transparency and accountability has been built into how the United States and the western alliance have engaged with the rest of the world—including how we craft and support international institutions. Today, the United States is abandoning and undermining those institutions across the board—the United Nations’ Paris Agreement, the World Health Organization, World Trade Organization, and many others. Meanwhile, autocrats are on the rise, actively undermining these institutions and building new ones of their own.

The Center for Democracy and Global Governance (CDGG) will document and analyze this shift away from democratic principles of transparency and accountability and explain why some institutions have proved more durable than others. We will, as well, propose reforms in international law and within key countries to help restore a more democratic order.

AMERICAN LIBERTY
The United States, once the international crucible of democratic practice, now falters in its role as exemplar: on public health, protection of minorities, the environment, equality of opportunity and many other elements. CDGG wants to understand how these trends are affecting politics inside the country and also possible impacts on the spread of the American model overseas.

Measuring these patterns is hard, but new technologies can help. For example, the CDGG will use new machine learning technologies to analyze political speeches and other forms of communication aimed at national, state, and local audiences. With that information, we will analyze how factors like political polarization, income inequality, and the quality of governing systems explain changes in how people talk and think about the legitimacy of America’s political institutions.

THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS
Foreign investment has become increasingly integrated into almost every modern economy. It is both vital for social prosperity in low and high income countries and it is often the epicenter of political controversy. Despite the growth of risk analysis in business, efforts to understand how shifts in democratic principles and behaviors are affecting the ability of firms and governments to mobilize investment and commercial engagement. Today, a major uncertainty is whether faltering democracy puts in question the best and most accountable investments in countries that until now were considered worthwhile risks, such as Brazil, Russia, South Africa and Turkey.

The CDGG will assess how the erosion of democracy has been affecting the prospects and identity of investors and companies as they engage overseas. It will also look at how better policy strategies could restore confidence around commercial engagement in the places where the spread of capital and democratic values is most needed.
CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

PHILANTHROPIC OPPORTUNITY

In true public-private partnership, philanthropists who fund the independent inquiry of the Center for Democracy and Global Governance (CDGG) are vital to connecting leading academic research with people, firms, and governments that are solving real problems in the world.

RESEARCH

Resources for CDGG research can be targeted to select initiatives or used to develop the internal infrastructure needed for scholarship. To build out its presence in the field, CDGG will rely on a new cohort of post-doctoral scholars and advanced PhD Students. Named post-doctoral fellowships and commitments to research will help us advance promising projects. The Center also looks for philanthropic support aligned with major projects, such as the three identified above.

NEXT-GENERATION MENTORSHIP

Following the School of Global Policy and Strategy’s excellent tradition of building close connections between GPS students and faculty on the forefront of policy research, CDGG will invite student participation in related research. Named fellowships will help us recruit ambitious new generations of thought leaders.

DEVELOPING OUR PLATFORM

CDGG’s success relies wholly on the quality of the academic networks across the UC San Diego campus and beyond. Research explaining the impacts of policy on the environment and human health relies on direct contributions by experts in multiple domains.

We anticipate hosting a number of events to draw together thinkers in all disciplines, beginning with a look back at the 2020 election, a conference in spring 2021 and other events. Much like the instantly renowned UC San Diego Forum on U.S.-China Relations, we envision these events to be a convergence of academic expertise and industrial and political experience. Underwriting support of events will assure their sustainability and standard-setting achievement.