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Eddie Bernice Johnson

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October 1, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State of the United States
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

As a strong proponent of peace and diplomacy, I acknowledge that the Department of State has done significant work on promoting democracy in the countries of the post-soviet space. Nevertheless, this turned out to be an extensive and complicated process with unintended consequences, characterized by acute structural disharmony, not only imperiling the future of these post-Soviet space countries but fraught with dangers for the rest of the world.

During the last twenty years, the countries of the former Soviet Union have developed internal problems that must be resolved, taking their Russian neighbor's intentions into account. In order for the problems of the last twenty years to not extend any farther, intensified activity with non-profit organizations is necessary.

During my time advocating for peace and diplomacy, I have personally seen the benefits that can come from understanding differing cultures. Cooperation, respect, and understanding are the keys to sustaining peace. Allowing and supporting intercultural dialogue between countries can help us build a bridge to peace and diplomacy.

Post-Soviet states would benefit greatly from sharing culture and art with the United States and with each other. This is why I am advocating strongly for Department of State to fund projects that focus on bridging the gap to peace through cultural understanding. One particular non-profit organization that places an importance on geopolitical and cultural awareness is the Fermata Arts Foundation. The aim of the Fermata Arts Foundation is to provide new spaces for intercultural encounters through art and expression.

For this reason, I strongly believe that funding non-profit organizations like Fermata Arts Foundation will not only build peace and enhance diplomacy on a personal and grassroots level, but it will also foster intercultural communication on the public and state level. Thank you for your time and consideration. If I may be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Eddie Bernice Johnson

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress