

I write in support of the proposed Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act – a bill that I believe will, if enacted, defend our core values as a nation and protect our national security interests by countering instability around the world that arises from the commission of mass atrocities. The prevention of genocide and other mass atrocities and the promotion of accountability for war criminals are issues that have always received solid bipartisan support and few things attest to this fact more than my own career path across four presidential administrations. Over the last quarter century, I have served in a variety of prosecutorial and diplomatic roles with the US Government, and on postings from the USG to the United Nations and European Union, focused on atrocity prevention and accountability. This includes service as US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues for the last two and a half years of the George W Bush Administration and most of the first year of the Obama Administration.

Since the early-1990's, I have seen the US Government significantly enhance its understanding of the scope of problems associated with the commission of mass atrocities, its willingness to address them, and its capacity to do so. Many of the measures undertaken, however, have been *ad hoc* in nature and have been reinvented with each change of administration. The Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act seeks to incorporate the lessons learned over the last twenty-five years and to secure the advances that have been made in this field over successive presidential administrations. Some key provisions that accomplish this are the following:

- Establishment of a Mass Atrocity Task Force would help ensure that representatives from across the government adequately consider and coordinate policies and actions when addressing the risk of mass atrocities;
- Training of Foreign Service Officers on recognizing patterns of escalation and signs of potential mass atrocities would help build atrocity prevention into the work of our diplomats in the field, would enhance our early warning capabilities, and would allow us to move more expeditiously when addressing these threats;
- Requesting that the Director of National Intelligence include in his or her annual Congressional testimony a review of atrocity risks would ensure that Congress is better informed of potential crises and thus better equipped to anticipate needs and to respond to atrocities when they do occur; and,
- Creation of a Complex Crises Fund will enable the Department of State and USAID to more quickly and effectively identify and respond to potential atrocities.

As someone who has spent virtually their entire professional career dealing with the effects of genocide and mass atrocities and the instability that invariably ensues, I strongly urge you to support this bill. It will significantly enhance our nation's ability to counter this threat.

Ambassador Clint Williamson (Ret)