

The Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) mourns the loss of Ambassador Mark Palmer, who passed away this week following a long fight against cancer. Ambassador Palmer was one of POMED's most important supporters, a member of our Board of Advisers since 2007, and one of the world's leading champions of democracy and human rights. No one has better exemplified POMED's founding principles and our mission of supporting democracy through research, advocacy, and dialogue.

For more than 25 years, Ambassador Palmer was a leading pro-democracy voice within the U.S. government, where he helped establish the National Endowment for Democracy and served as Ambassador to Hungary from 1986 to 1990, supporting Hungary's transition from dictatorship to its first free, multiparty elections in 1990.

After leaving government, he played a key role in numerous pro-democracy nongovernmental organizations. In addition to serving on POMED's Board of Advisers, he also served on the Board of Freedom House and was a co-founder of the Council for a Community of Democracies. He also supported democracy by investing directly in independent media in Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East.

Ambassador Palmer also authored the book *Breaking the Real Axis of Evil: How to Oust the World's Last Dictators by 2025*. Its policy recommendations formed the basis for the ADVANCE Democracy Act, a key piece of legislation passed by Congress in July 2007 requiring numerous steps to elevate the promotion of democracy and human rights as a goal of U.S. foreign policy.

His example will continue to guide and inspire us at the Project on Middle East Democracy to examine how genuine democracies can develop in the Middle East and how the U.S. can best support that process.