

Comments by Gene P. Mater

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

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My professional background includes a range of print and broadcast experience in the United States and abroad.

My media work began in 1945 in Germany, when I was assigned to an Army psychological warfare team that was later integrated into military government. In that capacity, I started several German newspapers and helped establish the postwar German news agency.

Forty-five years later -- after working as a reporter and as an editor on three US newspapers, working as a newsman in Europe, and then holding various management positions at CBS -- once again I was helping to start media outlets, this time in Central and Eastern Europe and various parts of the former Soviet Union after the collapse of communism.

Because of this experience, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and to share what I have learned.

As one who believes that a democratic society cannot exist without a free press, I suggest that Senator Lugar's

proposed legislation can go a long way in helping other countries achieve what we enjoy.

I would like to offer two major comments about the thrust of the proposal.

First, teaching journalism 101 is necessary but what is equally important is teaching how to run any media outlet as a profitable venture to assure sustainability and the strength needed to fight efforts at government control.

And second, I would urge that the efforts to carry out the assigned tasks be given to US professionals and professional organizations rather than to groups, government agencies and individuals having no media experience of their own.