

Remarks by Rick Wicks

representing the
Association to Unite the Democracies (AUD)
<http://www.unionnow.org/>

Distinguished Speakers and Participants, Members of the Press, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am here on behalf of the Association to Unite the Democracies to welcome you to this conference which we have sponsored through our Euro-Atlantic Institute of International Integration Studies.

Since long before the Cold War - when the enemy was not the Soviet Union, but Nazi Germany - our organization has worked hard to unite the democracies. At that time our organization's magazine was titled "Freedom and Union".

The founders of the American Republic believed in freedom and union more than two centuries ago. Those who fought to end slavery and to preserve that Republic in the period leading up to our great Civil War used to do a toast to "freedom and union, one and inseparable, now and forever".

We too believe that our freedoms can be better protected and that our democratic values can be better supported and strengthened through Union.

Since Clarence Streit founded the Association to Unite the Democracies in 1939 (under the name Federal Union), he and others in our organization have contributed to a variety of successful federative efforts, from the founding of NATO and the OECD to the founding of the European Community.

In the 1980s the Association to Unite the Democracies was in the vanguard in exploring whether and how Russia could be integrated with these and other Euro-Atlantic organizations. Today we are here to continue all those earlier efforts.

Clarence Streit wrote a book called "Union Now", which, incidentally, is also the name of our website. But that was over 60 years ago.

While we still advocate "union now", we recognize that things take time, and that smaller steps may sometimes be better than none.

We welcome you and encourage you in your exploration of steps both large and small, narrow and wide, that may lead to greater integration of Russia into the Euro-Atlantic world.

We firmly believe that this is the way to greater peace and security, prosperity, and freedom and justice, for all of us.

Welcome.