

Silas Everett presents the following: good afternoon everyone my name is silas everett i'm the country representative from the asia foundation in cambodia and i arrived there last year in january and before that i was in timor-leste for five years and i would like to thank odi and i'd like to thank elena for the very nice introduction and for claire's opening remarks which i think set the stage very nicely um i have to say i'm skating on thin ice i'm very much more in the stream of things and not reflecting um as much on them so this was actually a great opportunity to take a little bit of time to begin to reflect on some of these issues which i think are very challenging to pick through particularly as a practitioner so in today's uh in the presentation i'll just go through some of the well kind of personal experiences in timor-leste and and in cambodia and see what i might be able to tease out for some reflection and hopefully maybe filling in um on on some of the things that claire's raised all right i'm keeping it simple um two points um the first one is picking up on sort of diplomas um sort of quote on you know the elections of the only game in town um and by that i i think um what you know we we clearly what i clearly see in cambodia and timor-leste is elections are the only game in town um the rule without winning at the ballot box um is increasingly uh untenable in both those countries as it is around the globe and yet it's this uh issue of the liberal democracy um the the the that gives cause for concern we see we're seeing a weak translation of legitimacy through the ballot box and i think it for all of us practitioner researcher or just those of interest should give us some healthy doubt uh and and cause for concern about thinking about elections as sort of the sharp end of legitimacy of providing legitimacy in these countries and um nowhere do i think that's more relevant a question than in conflict-affected countries um for reasons that i would like to to share with you um from these from from cambodia and from timor-leste if we take legitimacy as the acceptance of political authority then one measure of whether elections can improve legitimacy in emerging political orders is the degree to which voters and the losing parties accept the results of those elections and in cambodia almost every election that's been held so far has been strongly contested by the opposition from threats of succession to threats of national boycott uh calling for the government to stand down and most recently the opposition party the cnrp contested the results of the 2013 elections on the basis of widespread fraud their cnrp is currently boycotting parliament it was a very close election and it frankly caught everybody by surprise the opposition party according to official figures were within percentage points of um carrying the popular vote um and those are according to official figures there are now concerns um over the next round of national elections to be held in 2018 huntsman's ruling cpp party is seeking now to claw back some of that lost legitimacy but it's unclear what this electoral pressure will breed what mixture of reform what what what types of potential repression will be taken by the cpp is unclear at this point um it's worth noting that more pressure applied um doesn't necessarily um lead to reform um it could lead to more repression but perhaps more importantly and central to this question of legitimacy and the outcome of the elections is that the cpp is seemingly inextricable from the state apparatus including the military and in many ways cambodia operates as a single party state under a a personalized rule of hunsen so an opposition victory in elections doesn't mean that the opposition will be able to govern so more electoral pressure on the cpp is not necessarily going to lead to developmental results but instead could lead to further crisis despite this the cnrp with the expectations of winning the 2018 elections outright is pushing for deeper electoral reform as a condition for it to take seats in the national assembly to end its boycott so it's important to note that elections as a process of legitimization do not appear to be in question they're the the game in town but um and but there's concerns over quality and fairness um and uh and what the potential outcomes of the elections are so elections in cambodia could lead to reform they could also lead to repression they could also lead to crisis is what i assert but subject to discussion by contrast in timor-leste the only election that was not accepted by the opposition was in 2007 fretlin at that time um which is the largest political party um to make the transition from uh in in the post-conflict period had won the plurality of seats however a newly formed cnrp cnrt under uh shananna guzmau was able to form a coalition government and fretlin claimed that the government was not legitimate and threatened mass demonstrations this this didn't happen and in 2012 cnrt won the elections with the plurality of of the of seats and formed a coalition government so in fretlane it accepted the results timor-less elections are in one sense producing increasingly legitimate outcomes but in another sense elections have contributed to establishing a uni-polar political order fretlin as weakened if not somewhat subsumed opposition appears to be exerting far less pressure over the management of government thus while legitimizing the political order elections and timor-leste have produced conditions where there is less accountability arguably and less transparency so um and all of this could have dramatic consequences over time or less development and that's a point that i'd like to take up later um in this in this

discussion all right so that that was my key point number one election to the only game in town problems problematic um the number the other one is that legitimacy is dynamic and as i was thinking through really how to compare timor and cambodia a few things popped out um i think we generally understand that legitimacy shifts in the war to peace transition i think that's generally understood i think so i would i would just like to dig in a little bit on on that and my experience in um in these countries um i first want to say that um the transition from from word of peace um you know in cambodia it was moving out of the the k the kim rouge period uh genocide two to three million people were killed and for um east timor for timor-leste they suffered 24 years of military occupation under the indonesians so um there is a there's a strong uh you could say sentiment um there's a there's a hierarchy of needs and frankly i would assert or put out there that that people's expectations are for security for physical security and it's something that seems very natural and some of the higher order questions get pushed off in terms of of what makes a legitimate government so i think it's natural that we should think about the people's expectations and demands and needs is is changing as well so if we accept that physical that first physical security is needed before let's say economic security then what constitutes legitimacy shifts and the old ways at which legitimacy is derived don't necessarily work anymore and i've been given a note for three minutes so i'm not sure how much i can get into it but um but i'll try to to give some illustrations of this point in cambodia and touch on two more last all right this is where the slides come in actually you might be wondering at this point why do we have so many slides um so in cambodia the consolidation of power stability and growth if you if you look at elections at cambodia over the last two decades the the cpp which is in blue has um steadily gained electoral legitimacy and then in last year's elections where the question mark is in between there something happened um the cpp's popularity seems to have slipped overnight and so we've been i've been asking this question of what happened why did people vote the way they did in last year's elections um we've been we had public opinion polls over the last uh decade and this is um an iri public opinion poll five months before the election it showed that there is high support for the for the government i believe the country is headed in the right direction and then the elections happened in june then boom down at 55 so um sort of this question of why why does uh you know is the bias in public opinion polling and what's what's driving that um the um but it's worth noting that what created the legitimacy and a lot in both the ruling party as well as observers um maybe critical note that legitimacy has been really uh very much a part of securing stability and it's a virtuous cycle of greater stability greater economic growth um the this this uh consolidation of uh political power as well uh contributed to that i think anybody has seen cambodia the 1997 coup and moving forward so a great consolidation of power behind the cpp so um to in a way the satisfaction of legitimate the satisfaction of people's needs and demands could be hypothesized that people were getting their their needs met but then the question is then well what happens so i just put i left thailand up there in vietnam and laos because just to show that kim it wasn't just cambodia that's growing today thailand is uh has minimum wage three times that of cambodia and there's approximately there was up until about 700 000 cambodians migrants in working illegally and without documentation in thailand so in terms of looking at this i think a lot of times we tend to point our fingers and we say okay well the country's corrupt and we don't really think of corruption in the value of corruption and what corruption is bringing and i would assert that there's informal networks and you know we can say patronage or neptune or whatever but it there's a function that it plays and that what's happened in cambodia is a fairly consistent story about corruption but i think what we don't really understand is what has that been able to do to be able to consolidate power and to be able to lead the country into a position where their economic activity and takeoff can begin now i am no way saying that we should this is an acceptable state it's just a state that it's worth understanding can i go just one more yes all right minus minus one number that's okay um this is a map of the electorate in cambodia just to point out that the green areas is where cpp lost votes this is the areas where there was the basically rice growing areas in cambodia and it's also the areas where people come up most against the state because of rice production the other areas are in forested areas areas that don't depend so much on on state intervention so um my my thinking at this point as we go through is the legitimacy has has actually shifted that people have gotten stability the problem is is that um what created that stability is also creating um an attention for people the pocketbook politics they there's niggling corruption uh when if you're a rice farmer you have to pay for seed fertilizer transport milling you're coming up against a state structure that's uh nickel and diming you so to speak in americanism um so this uh so this question is why didn't the cpp catch that the legitimacy like if if this is true let's say then why didn't the cpp catch that legitimacy had actually shifted what was it that prevented them from understanding that they

were going to have a difficult time at the ballot box last year what was what was that and i think a lot of that has to do with the fact that it's very difficult in a political order that is unipolar and is highly hierarchical to get feedback it fundamentally lacks feedback and the other thing is um the that states are all you know partly coercive but that there's also fear in society and people might not be willing to to participate to give their feedback and it's very difficult for a state to understand actually in that situation um how to respond so final slide sorry um what does this mean for timor-leste i just um the blue line represents the shananna guzmao's uh cnrp party they after fretlin which is the orange one dropped off uh has dropped them legitimacy since the 2006 crisis um that shananna guzmao has essentially consolidated power but that consolidation um that's that's at play is it challenged now to produce developmental goods that will satisfy the legitimacy of the of the population is is what um is what i think we're going to be coming up against particularly as the petroleum fund runs down and we we start uh we the question starts coming up is where did all the money go um from from that so thank you very much uh for allowing me a couple more minutes sorry for going on appreciate it and i have some ideas and recommendations which i find to talk about like great thank you so much silas now we turn to david who will be speaking about the african context um sierra leone and liberia