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SPEAKER

VLADIMIR KARA-MURZA - V

MEGHAN McCAIN: M

V: Over the past several years those of us involved in the [unclear] have been blessed with the opportunity to work with many political leaders across the globe who have shown that despite the stereotype there is still room in politics for principle, but I can think of no one more deserving of tonight's recognition than Senator John McCain. Foresight and consistency are not the most frequent commodities in politics especially when they are coupled with the commitment to always speak the truth regardless of expediency, but then again John McCain was not really a politician. He was a Statesman in a truer sense of his term. When it came to Russia he always spoke loudly and clearly both against the abusive of the Putin regime and against Western leaders who were all too eager to turn a blind eye. He first warned of Putin's coming authoritarianism in February 2000 when most of the Western establishment was still enamoured with this newcomer who spoke fluent German and said nice words about law and order. He first warned of Putin's coming attack on Ukraine six years before it happened and when Bill Browder came to Washington to propose the idea of a law that would deny [unclear] human rights abusers, the hospitality of Western democracies and when Russian opposition Boris [unclear] came to emphasise why this was so important as protection for Russian citizens, John McCain became the most committed and most passionate supporter not relenting until the day in December 2012 when the Magnitsky Act became a reality. Among the biggest lies propagated by the Kremlin was the one about John McCain being an enemy of Russia, for them the friends of Russia are those Western politicians who are willing to cut deals with our oppressors and trade their reputations for bonuses and directorships in Kremlin controlled companies. John McCain was a true friend of Russia, he was a friend of the Russian people, whether in a busy Senate session or in time of recess when Washington goes quiet we could always count on him to speak out for Russian political prisoners, to defend our rights to free elections and free assembly defied by our self-appointed rulers, to advocate for those threatened, harassed or attacked for their political beliefs. Politics as its best is about making a difference. That difference can be in passing a law, in changing a policy, in securing an infrastructure project for John McCain the difference was in saving lives. I know this to be true for many activists and political prisoners around the world, but I can speak from first-hand experience. I know that I would not be standing here or anywhere tonight if he hadn't take to the Senate floor last year to speak on my behalf when I could not say anything myself lying in a coma after being poisoned in Moscow. International attention is the only protection in such cases and he was always willing to walk that extra mile, no words can adequate express my gratitude. He wanted to save another life, the last we met together, John McCain, Boris [unclear] and I, he pleaded with Boris not to return to Russia. He said he feared for his life. I have no choice it is my country, I have to fight for it, Boris responded. This was January of 2014, just over a year later he was dead gunned down on a bridge in the Kremlin's shadow. John McCain was heartbroken, but he never questioned why Boris made the decision to return. He understood better than anyone what it means to fight for a cause greater than oneself. It is thanks in very large part to Senator John McCain that the street in front of Russia's Embassy in Washington now bears the name of Boris Nemtsov. There have only been two posthumous recognitions with this award, one for Boris Nemtsov, one tonight for John McCain. I know that they are watching us now as they continue that conversation unfinished in January of 2014 and for as long as I live I will consider

it the greatest privilege to have known and to have worked with these two men of personified courage, integrity and honour. On behalf of the Global Magnitsky Justice Campaign I would like to present Meghan McCain for the 2018 Human Rights Award for her dad, a Statesman, a patriot and a freedom fighter, Senator John Sydney McCain in recognition that his legacy will long continue to inspire all of those who are standing up for liberty and justice.

M: Thank you so much, Vladimir. Thank you all so much for having me here in London tonight. I am really so happy to be surrounded all of you. I can't tell you how nice it is to be among all of you tonight. Thank you so much for honouring my father with The Magnitsky Human Rights Award. In the long months since his passing we have been blessed to receive so many accolades, so many tributes, so many remembrances for him and his work. At The National Cathedral in Washington DC just two months the great immences, American Life gathered to honour him, generals, admirals, congressmen, senators, presidents all joined in the memory of my father, John McCain with their own lives and legacies there were illuminated by his. The admiration of his nation and the gratitude of his country would have meant a great deal to my father. I know he saw it from the heavens and I know it moved him as much as it moved me, my mother and all those who loved him in his life. The praise of the mighty would have meant less to him not because he was ungrateful, but because he understood the fleeting nature of power and I suspect he would have been a bit worried to learn from the first time he was popular in Washington DC. Let me tell you what meant something to John McCain; country meant something to him, a lifetime in service from [unclear] to freshman [unclear] to tenacious prisoner to elected servant was testament enough to that. John McCain looked at the American flag and saw something more than a symbol, something more than a patriot pride. He saw a call of duty. Duty meant something to him. I reflect again and again as I think of my father's life and he didn't need to do any of it. He was the son and grandson of great admirals and had no need to burnish the family name. He was a United States naval officer and had no need to volunteer for the dangerous [unclear]. He was a prisoner of an inventively brutal capture for long years and no need to resist and persist as he did, no one would even have blamed him had he broken. He was a war hero returning home to a good career and the promise of good money in the private sector and he had no need to enter the turmoil and frequent pain of public service. He was an old man with a loving family and a really beautiful ranch in Arizona and he had no need to spend his final days, his last year of grace on life rendering a last few services to America. He knew all this, but he also knew who he was. You all in here know who he was too because you saw long with the rest of the world that duty defined him, but love also meant something to him. He was a ferocious power with the things he opposed in life if whether the brutal regime of the Vietnamese communists or the inequities of American politics or the [unclear] that webs patriotism into something dark and inclusionary, but his verocity and anonymity were never functions of hate, never products of disdain, never outcomes of bitterness or loathing. John McCain loved so much and so well and so encompassingly that he could not have helped, but stand against all that threatened the objects of his love. He loved his country, he loved his inheritance as an American, he loved his State, he loved his liberty and he loved him family very much. I know because I was the privilege of my life to live in the warmth and

comfort of his love. I saw what he had driven to do, I saw what sort of man it made him and living up to that example in extending the same fighting love he gave to me is the challenge that I take on for the rest of my life. Country, duty, love all meant something to John McCain and there was something else that meant something to him, something that drew him across the great drama of his own life to a meeting many years ago with you, Bill Browder. To a determined sponsorship of legislation that honoured the sacrifice of Sergei Magnitsky to this award here tonight this evening because justice meant something to my father, John McCain. There is something else John McCain had no need to do, he had no need to take note of all the injustices clouding the big wide world, he had no need to resume any responsibility for seeing memory preserved against violated attorneys, for seeing defiance acknowledged against the abuse of power, for seeing resistance sustained an autocrats might yet he did all of these things. He did it because his heart was handed to the call of justice. One day I walked into my father's office for a short meeting many years ago to tell the story of Sergei Magnitsky and no doubt meet yet another prudential rejection, he walked into the office of a man who was the precise opposite of the dictator whose operatus killed Sergei Magnitsky. Bill, I know you didn't know who John McCain was then when the meeting began, but you did by the end of the meeting. The world is a fine place and worth fighting for and I hate very much to leave it, this was my father's favourite quote he edited all the time. As Hemingway's Robert Jordan is preparing to fight and die at the close of for whom the bell tolls. He really did believe it. He who lost his youth to the inhumane torments of the [unclear] looked upon the world more aware of its cruelties more than anything else and said to himself the world is a fine place. Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the gulf between John McCain and the man he enraged with the sponsorship of both The Magnitsky Act and The Global Magnitsky Act, the bloody handed dictator of Russia, Vladimir Putin. John McCain suffered the world's worst and he believed that the world was a fine place. Vladimir Putin was in a palace and he believes the world is a dark place. John McCain defended and vindicated the memory of ordinary men and women with integrity like Sergei Magnitsky. Vladimir Putin has been murdered. John McCain was a strong man. Vladimir Putin is a weak man's idea of a strong man. John McCain on his death was remembered with gratitude and praised by the nation he served and loved. Vladimir Putin knows well that when the greatest risk to his own life is his own people and that he will be remembered as a tyrant and a thief. John McCain went to his creator hopeful of mercy. Vladimir Putin will stand before God one day in dread of justice. It is typical of my father that he could not resist one final act from beyond the grave reminding the lily likes of Putin that truth and time are on the side of justice. A dictator does not rest easy until the whole of society bends to his will, this is dreadful and parative and the source of every success, this is also his weakness because he armed with a whole array of worldly power and might may be exposed and revealed by a single man armed only with the truth. It might be a man like Sergei Magnitsky who held fast to the truth on the corruption that he uncovered, on the collusion between criminals and the favourites of the Russian State. He was killed for it. It might be a man like Boris Nemtsov who warned the world again and again, over years and years about the emerging nature of the Putin regime. Who told us if only we had listened that the Russia was slipping back into the dictatorship more subtle and in some ways more potent than the Soviet Union. We must reflect for a moment on Nemtsov like

my father could easily have chosen a path not strewn with danger and death. So many men in his position most of them in fact chose to be bought out by Putin and his State. The offer was open to Boris Nemtsov too. Submit, be silent and live well. The Vladimir Putin you see does not demand total [unclear] from his subjects, he simply requires that they not speak the truth. Boris Nemtsov knew he could be prosperous and wealthy. He knew he could be safe. He knew that all it would take would be to be acquiesce to one giant lie that Vladimir Putin is good and good for Russian and all the numberlessness, little lies subsidiary to it. No one would blame if he did, nearly everyone else did, nearly everyone else would. This is why my father admired Boris Nemtsov, Boris Nemtsov would not. In fact, Boris Nemtsov, rejected the opportunity to be part of the system, rejected the opportunity for safety, security and wealth. Boris Nemtsov could not bear to part with the truth. Boris in the eyes of Vladimir Putin and therefore infinitely better in the eyes of John McCain, Boris Nemtsov told the truth, openly, publicly, repeatedly. Putin tried jailing him and it didn't work. He tried restricting him it didn't work. He tried harassing him it didn't work. Nothing worked. So in the end of the evening of February 27, 2015 Boris Nemtsov was shot seven times at close range on the [unclear] Bridge just below the walls of the Kremlin as Vladimir Putin inside the man who dared tell the truth about him died outside. It is important to understand what the death of Nemtsov was. It was a failure. It was a failure of Putin and his State who could not in over a decade of repression figure out a way to silence and suppress this one man. Unable to persuade him, unable to buy him, unable to intimidate him and in the end Vladimir Putin had to kill. Just one month before the murder, John McCain met with Boris Nemtsov [unclear] under Russian threat. [Unclear] told my father this. You know Senator, Putin really hates you. Do you know why he hates you Senator? It's because he is afraid of you and the reason deep down you will always stand by your principles and that frightens him because unlike you he is a man without principles. My father was absolutely delighted. Now that Boris is dead and my father is gone their fight for freedom and Russia and the world goes on, it is carried on by the men and women who see by their same lights and walk in their same paths. It is carried on by the likes of Vladimir Kara-Murza right here. When they write the history of the restoration of Russian freedom and they will many names will come to the fore. They will be the names of the patriots and heroes who helped [unclear] the faith and belief that Russians too deserve to exercise the God given rights inherited in all men. Magnitsky, Nemtsov and Kara-Murza. Vladimir Kara-Murza too could have opted for a safe and easy acquiescence tyranny of Vladimir Putin yet Vladimir Kara-Murza too chose like his friend, Boris, to fight for truth instead. Like his friend, Boris, Putin has tried to kill him twice, both times though through providence and the intervention of men like my father, Vladimir Kara-Murza survived the assassination attempts sent against him from inside the Kremlin walls. It was a close run thing, but thank God he lived and still he fights. My father considered it an honour that Vladimir consented to be one of his pallbearers, there is no record of what Vladimir Putin thought. There is a myth these days that the world is entering a new era of strong men and autocrats animated by a new nationalism, the recaptures of glorious past and repacked it for a fraught future. It is a myth that enjoys adherence far beyond Russia even as it is central to the Russian regime today. There are those, I am ashamed to say, even if America who look at it and ask what is so bad about it and wonder why we can't have a bit of it for ourselves.

My father would have been quick to answer this question tonight, because it is a fraud, because we've seen it before and beat it every single time and because we are Americans. How he enraged the tyrants in a small way he knew it. He understood them, but they never understood him. They never understood a life of honour. They never understood a commitment to duty. They never understood a patriotism ground in love. They never understood the humility that makes a man strong. John McCain was hated in [unclear] Baghdad, in dark Moscow, in the fortresses in [unclear], in the dungeons in Hanoway, in the compounds in Beijing, in the [unclear] gatherings in Damascus and [unclear] and in every place where dictators and tyrants and oppressors gathered among themselves. This is where he was hated. This is also where he was loved. He was loved in every one of those same places in Baghdad, in Moscow, in Pyungyan, in Hanoway, in Beijing, in Damascus and Tehrain, but not in the palaces, he was loved in the streets. The ordinary man and woman in every one of these places was and is born with the same [unclear] God given rights that John McCain was. In a time when too many Americans seemed to believe that dignity, respect and worth are due only to themselves, John McCain, knew that the most humble fruit vendor, the most lowly peasant, the most lowly despised outcast and the most forgotten prisoner are all equally splendid and beloved in the sight of the Lord. John McCain didn't forget them. John McCain didn't forget Sergei Magnitsky. That's why they don't forget John McCain. They will remember him and honour him for years and years to come, but not for so many years to come as their oppressors, their dictators, their [unclear] and autocrats will hear his name and continue to shudder in fear. Though I want to tell you something here and my father would agree they are going to remember you too in the exact same way. What greater measures are there in life well lived than that. You are all gathered here to give my father The Magnitsky Human Rights Award and it's an absolute honour here to accept it on his behalf. I began here by noting all the accolades and admiration my father has received since his passing especially in Washington DC. I hope it is clear now that this award this evening would have meant so much to him as likely maybe even a little bit more than others. My only sorrow is that he is not here to receive it himself. Every day without him is a day diminished by his absence and the diagnosis of his final illness, his countdown the days I had left with him and now I countdown the days until I can see him again. I trust that I will and when I do he will be clothed in glory with every tale wiped away and with him will be the people that he loved and served. The oppressed of the earth, the simple people who never lost faith in God and freedom despite the darkest dungeons, despite the cruellest tyrant, with him will be all whom he tried to free, with him will be all those who sacrificed he honoured and with him will be all whose memory he kept alive and with him above all else will be Sergei Magnitsky. Thank you.

END OF TRANSCRIPT