

**2004 Human Rights and
Democracy Achievement
Award Winners**

This third annual edition of *Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2004-2005* presents a picture of how the United States is engaged worldwide with people and institutions dedicated to building freer societies. Fostering democracy and human rights is a strategic decision founded on the understanding that given the opportunity, people will choose governments that are accountable to the governed, exercise rule of law, and respect human rights.

The annual Human Rights and Democracy Achievement Award for exceptional achievement in the field of human rights and democracy recognizes the work by officers of foreign affairs agencies abroad. It is intended to pay tribute to outstanding research and reporting on human rights and democratic developments and, above all, the advancement of strategies and institutions that will deepen respect for human rights and democracy.

Michael Goldman of Embassy Tashkent was selected as winner of this year's award for exceptional achievement in the field of human rights and democracy. Mr. Goldman was selected from an impressive group of nine candidates nominated by their Ambassadors in a year in which issues of democracy and human rights moved even further to the forefront of the foreign policy process.

In the challenging human rights environment of Uzbekistan, Michael Goldman succeeded in advancing the U.S. human rights agenda. Ambassador Purnell wrote: "the fact that there has been progress at all is a testament to Mike's energy, creativity and diplomatic skills." Michael's cables on wide-ranging abuses, arbitrary arrests, renewed harassment of the opposition and imprisonment of political and religious leaders led to the Secretary's determination in July that Uzbekistan had not made sufficient progress in meeting its obligations under the 2002 Strategic Partnership Declaration. His reporting on female members of the banned Party of Islamic Liberation and other developments provided the United States with insights into the complexity of the Government of Uzbekistan's handling of democratic issues. Mike facilitated a series of lunches between Freedom House's director and the Ministry of Internal Affairs that led to an unprecedented roundtable on torture between law enforcement officials and human rights advocates. His efforts also led to the release of independent journalist Ruslan Sharipov, and he is currently working on the establishment of an inter-ministerial investigative commission on human rights.

Choosing the winner of this year's award was a challenge because of the number of other superior candidates nominated by their Ambassadors. All of them deserve the Department's praise and gratitude:

Kim Kambourian in Buenos Aires was commended for “exceptional contributions to the 2003 Human Rights Report.” She also won praise for her activism in monitoring child labor abuses, reporting on the investigations and trial for the terrorist bombing of The Jewish Community Center (Amia) in 1994, and her energy and insightfulness in demonstrating to the country team that Argentina deserved designation as A Tier 2 country because of the severity of the trafficking in persons problem.

Tobin Bradley, while serving in Dhiqar Province in Iraq, pioneered the use of food ration cards for the election of local officials, thereby demonstrating to the UN the feasibility of this mechanism for Iraq's National Elections. By increasing the political participation of women, fostering reforms in parliamentary procedures, and supporting city councils in building increasing independence in their work, he won the praise of then-Ambassador Bremer and other senior officials for “One of the most impressive examples of democratic institution building in Iraq.”

Through painstaking documentation and program activism, **David Brooks** in Lima first raised Embassy Lima's attention, then the Department's, and finally all of Peru's to the major problem of trafficking in persons there. His work with the Government resulted in the creation of new government mechanisms, legislation and enforcement actions to confront the problem. This work also provided David with case materials he used for conducting international seminars about the TIP problem for the Organization of American States and the International Organization for Migration.

Sharon Umber in Minsk supported dozens of Belarusian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), independent newspapers and opposition groups and reported meticulously on oppressive legal proceedings against them. She raised the issue of excessive punishment for minor crimes to the highest levels of government and helped independent newspapers, the Belarus Helsinki Commission, and Belarusian Association of Journalists confront government harassment of independent media. She also organized the coverage, monitoring and post-election analysis of the parliamentary election and referendum.

Richard Swart in Niamey effectively managed Human Rights and Democracy Funds to help organize political party registration and the work of both domestic and international observers to enable Niger to achieve its highest voter turnout in “free and fair” elections. His advocacy work in child labor persuaded the U.S. Department of Labor to identify Niger as a country that is a good candidate for educational grants in areas with high incidence of exploitative child labor, and he organized training to support anti-TIP legislative efforts.

Her activism and detailed reporting made **Dana Banks** in Port-Au-Prince “the public face of the embassy’s human rights efforts.” Her work provided balance to information from the Government in the high profile case of Father Jean-Juste, advanced the investigation of labor rights abuses in Haiti’s first free trade zone and supported the World Bank affiliate’s mediation efforts, and provided timely reports and guidance for U.S. responses to Government handling of a controversial death squad re-trial.

The professionalism, analytical depth and determination that **Benjamin Weber** in Shanghai brought to his human rights work enabled him to gain access to and report on key experiences for expanding external perspectives on China’s civil activist, the complexity of the Protestant religious experience, and the changing role of women in China. His information about infringements on religious freedom was central in both academic forums and in developing the new Shanghai legislation on religious activities in China.

Despite the efforts of the Government of Laos to withhold information and control its citizens, **Gregory Chapman** in Vientiane was “alone of all diplomats in Vientiane, in gaining access to families of dissidents, key NGO go-betweens, and the press.” He elucidated the situation of the Hmong population, providing U.S. Government agencies with facts against the misinformation that had surrounded them, and his reporting on Laotian religious activity won kudos for going “the extra mile” in support of religious freedom.

The Assistant Secretary's award for exceptional achievement in the field of human rights and democracy recognizes work by officers of foreign affairs agencies abroad. It is intended to pay tribute to outstanding research and reporting on human rights and democratic developments, and above all the advancement of strategies and institutions that will deepen respect for human rights and democracy.

Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record is produced by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, but just as we have many partners in the work of strengthening human rights and democracy, we have benefited from the contributions of many others to this report. Other bureaus of the State Department and U.S. Embassies abroad, the U.S. Agency for International Development and other U.S. government agencies come together to advance democracy and human rights in many ways. We hope that this volume captures the totality of what we do as a team to identify and respond to the world’s most pressing human rights and democracy needs.

Michael G. Kozak
Acting Assistant Secretary of State
for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor