

U.S. Human Rights and Democracy Strategy

The United States, under the leadership of President Bush and Congress, has made promoting freedom the bedrock of foreign policy. The President's vision of a world where freedom reigns has been clearly articulated throughout his tenure, but nowhere more vividly than in his recent Inaugural and State of the Union addresses. This same vision is reflected in foreign affairs legislation which gives us the tools necessary to make this vision a reality.

Freedom and human dignity are indivisible. It follows that our policies are aimed at expanding liberties. Our policy to foster democracy and human rights springs from American ideals and our national interest. We pursue this policy both because it is right and because it addresses the fear, hatred and inequality that contribute to injustice, terrorism, violence and instability.

The United States devotes significant energy and resources toward the promotion of democracy globally. The Department of State takes a leading role in integrating our democracy promotion efforts into all aspects of our foreign policy.

In implementing its human rights and democracy strategy, the United States employs a wide range of diplomatic, informational, and economic tools to advance its foreign policy objectives. American officials engage governments, multilateral institutions, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals around the world to encourage improved human rights practices and transition to democracy.

The annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the International Religious Freedom Report and this report are examples of the use of such informational tools. The United States also offers economic, financial and technical assistance to countries and organizations seeking help to address human rights or democracy challenges, including through bilateral and multilateral programs, as well as via international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Democracy and governance programs provide technical assistance and other support to strengthen capacity and develop democratic states and institutions that are responsive and accountable to citizens. Programs are organized around core concepts considered the key building blocks of democracy. Democracy programs promote the rule of law and human rights, transparent and fair elections coupled with a competitive political process, an open and free media environment, stronger civil society, greater citizen participation in government, and governance structures that are efficient, responsive and accountable.

For governments that have shown the will to reform, the United States offers financial, technical and political assistance to their efforts. For governments that lack the will to reform, as a longstanding pillar of its foreign policy, the United States can withhold support for, or suspend such assistance when a country fails to take sufficient steps to achieve progress in its human rights practices. In either event, the United States will work with and provide assistance to those within a society who are working peacefully for democratic processes.

The timing and selection of the tools' uses are tailored to each situation. We choose the tool or combination of tools that we believe will best advance the President's foreign policy goals. A list of some significant legislation on this subject can be found at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/42314.htm.

Our fight for human rights will continue so long as regimes infringe upon the freedom of their citizens and until the citizens are able to build strong, democratic institutions of their own design that are capable of protecting those freedoms in the future. Although this challenge is formidable, we are committed to upholding the principal and practice of democracy. Working together as Americans and with our friends and allies in the community of democracies, we can forge a path toward freedom for all persons around the globe.

**Freedom and
human dignity
are indivisible.**