

PREFACE



Advancing human rights and democracy around the world not only reflects our nation's deepest values, it is profoundly within our interests. For a world where fundamental freedoms are respected and citizens can elect accountable, representative governments is a world of hope and opportunity, where conflict and chaos do not rage and tyranny and terrorism cannot thrive.

The United States' work for human rights and democracy enjoys strong bipartisan backing here at home, and we do much of it in partnership with our allies and friends overseas. Americans can take pride in the international human rights instruments we have helped to shape and uphold. We stand in solidarity with the extraordinary men and women around the world who take great personal risks to shed light on human rights abuses and press for democratic change – courageous people like Oswaldo Payá in Cuba, Morgan Tsvangirai in Zimbabwe and Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma.

On every continent, we are making important, long-term investments in democracy. We are helping to build democratic institutions. We are working with non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups, opposition parties, minority communities, women's organizations and labor movements to develop dynamic civil societies. We are promoting good governance to create conditions for economic growth and sustainable development. We are helping to free the flow of information and to ensure free and fair elections. And through our exchange and other programs, we are acquainting rising generations with democratic ideas and processes. Georgia's Mikheil Saakashvili is only one of many young leaders who have participated in U.S.-sponsored exchange programs and returned home determined to advance reform. In 2003, Saakashvili led the peaceful "Revolution of Roses," which ultimately resulted in new, democratic elections. Now President Saakashvili and his people face the great challenge of putting the democratic ideals that they have embraced into daily practice, and we are doing our utmost to help them succeed.

This congressionally mandated annual report, *Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record*, shows how the United States worked worldwide in 2003 and 2004 to expose and remedy human rights violations and to foster the evolution of vibrant, stable democracies. As President Bush has said: "The message to those who long for liberty and those who work for reform is that they can be certain they have a strong and constant ally in the United States of America."

Colin L. Powell
Secretary of State

The events in Georgia in November 2003 brought with them many significant lessons, certainly to the people of Georgia who for years have sought more political transparency and economic reforms, and also to many others throughout the world, in all segments of society and political life, who dream of freedom and democracy. Perhaps they held a lesson for those remaining in the world who rule through oppression and fear as well. But for the U.S. Government, the lesson is straightforward and profound: Effective U.S. diplomacy means reaching out beyond government circles and developing and nurturing a broad range of long-term allies.

In February 2004, Secretary of State Powell communicated the following message to U.S. embassies and consulates throughout the world, to remind them of the value of this important lesson:

UNCLASSIFIED TELEGRAM

February 13, 2004

To: ALL STATE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES
Origin: DRL
From: SECSTATE WASHDC (STATE 32940 - IMMEDIATE)
TAGS: KDEM, PGOV, PHUM, GG
Captions: None
Subject: REACHING OUT TO ALLIES BEYOND HOST GOVERNMENTS
Ref: None

Last month, I attended the inauguration of Mikheil Saakashvili as President of Georgia. This dynamic, young politician came to power by leading the people of Georgia to reject corruption and rigged elections and to demand democracy. The resignation of President Shevardnadze and the peaceful transfer of power were genuinely historic, and I was struck by the gratitude expressed by the new government and civil society leaders for the many years of strong U.S. support for Georgia and its people.

The reason for such strong pro-American feelings is simple - good diplomacy, including public diplomacy. Over the past decade, Embassy Tbilisi, while maintaining strong relations with the Shevardnadze government, also consistently stood on the side of democracy and reached out to individuals and groups outside the government. President Saakashvili was an IV participant and studied law in the United States. American NGOs funded by the U.S. Government have worked with opposition political parties and civil society in Georgia to help them build the capacity to constitute an effective, unified democratic force in the country. We also pressed the government for years to accept and work with these groups and to carry out other political and economic reforms.

Maintaining government-to-government relations must remain a priority. When in addition you are reaching out beyond the government, and also beyond current elites of power and influence, you are forging relationships that will serve us well into the future, and help those struggling for democracy to develop the party structures, independent media and other institutions necessary to achieve it. As the lesson of Georgia shows us, it is never clear where - or when - the next generation's leaders will emerge. Host governments may not always appreciate such outreach, but they must learn that you are simply doing your jobs as professionals.

What I saw last month was that through good diplomacy and good assistance programs, the United States had not just made friends with a new government, but we have a friendship with the Georgian people that will last for generations. This is a model worth replicating.

Keep up the good work.

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