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Fact Sheet

Office of the Spokesman

Washington, DC

Institutionalizing The Freedom Agenda: President Bush Calls On Future Presidents And Congresses To Continue Leading The Cause Of Freedom Worldwide

On July 17, 2008, President Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 58: Institutionalizing the Freedom Agenda. This directive codifies the policies and practices for promoting freedom put in place by this Administration. Yesterday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke to the State Department's Advisory Committee on Democracy Promotion and discussed with them the goal of this Administration for this Directive to serve as a blueprint for future Administrations to promote democracy and freedom systematically.

Championing Freedom Is A National Security Imperative

Governments that respect the human rights of their own people are more likely to uphold responsible conduct toward other nations. The advancement of freedom is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability, reducing regional conflicts, countering terrorism and terror-supporting extremism, and extending peace and prosperity.

This NSPD calls on Cabinet and sub-Cabinet officials meeting with foreign leaders to communicate consistently the United States' priorities on democracy promotion. The NSPD provides mechanisms for establishing priorities for the use of diplomatic and material resources, and for developing, overseeing and implementing targeted strategies to end tyranny and promote democratic institutions so that our support for liberty continues systematically and strategically, and makes a difference.

The NSPD states that it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in the world. This policy goal was established and elaborated in the 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States of America, which declares the promotion of freedom, justice, human dignity, and effective democratic institutions to be central goals of our national security.

As prescribed in the 2006 NSS, to promote this policy, the United States will:

- Speak out honestly against abuses of human rights;
- Publicly support and hold high-level meetings with democratic reformers;
- Use foreign assistance to support democratic elections and institutions and human rights;
- Support civilian control of the military and military respect for human rights;
- Apply sanctions targeted at oppressors and oppressive regimes while sparing the oppressed;
- Partner with other democratic nations to promote freedom and human rights in specific countries and regions, and discourage other nations from supporting oppressive regimes;
- Strengthen and build new initiatives like the Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership, the Broader Middle East and North Africa's Forum for the Future, the Community of Democracies, and the UN Democracy Fund;
- Form creative partnerships with civil society to support and reinforce their work;
- Work with existing international and regional institutions to help implement democratic commitments and establish democracy charters in regions that lack them;
- Support condemnation in multilateral institutions of violations of human rights and freedoms;
- Encourage investment in and assistance to nations committed to the rule of law, combating corruption and democratic accountability, and
- Conclude free trade agreements that encourage the rule of law and good governance.

Under the NSPD, the Secretary of State, in coordination with other departments and agencies, will seek to establish stronger cooperation with other democratic countries to:

- Promote and protect fundamental freedoms, shared democratic principles and practices, and the rule of law;
- Develop, adopt, and pursue strategies to advance common interests through new and existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms; and
- Provide political, economic, security, and other support to fellow and new democracies.

President Bush Has Made Advancing Freedom A Hallmark Of his Presidency

The President has more than doubled funding for democracy, governance, and human rights programs since taking office, and his Budget continues to increase funding in these areas. The Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request strengthens governance and the rule of law and fosters independent media, democratic political parties, voter education, election monitoring, and human rights. The FY 2009 Budget requests \$1.72 billion for these activities, up from approximately \$1.36 billion in FY 2008 and \$650 million in FY 2001. This Administration has increased the budget for the National Endowment for Democracy by more than 150 percent since 2001.

The President has directed the Secretary of State to advance freedom with the following initiatives:

- Launching the Global Human Rights Defenders Fund in 2007 to provide assistance to activists and organizations facing extraordinary financial, legal, or medical needs as a direct result of government repression. President Bush himself has met with over 180 activists from more than 40 countries.
- Establishing training programs in how to develop and implement democracy promotion strategies and is working to ensure that such training is provided all Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of Mission, Foreign Service members focused on internal political developments and human rights, and all USAID officers responsible for democracy promotion programs.
- Increasing professional incentives for members of the Foreign Service and other Department employees who perform well assignments relating to the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights.
- Instructing senior U.S. officials in undemocratic countries to maintain regular contact with political dissidents and human rights activists, and facilitate meetings with other senior U.S. officials, including the President, in Washington or in the host country. Embassy officials will reach out to independent media outlets and facilitate interaction between such outlets and visiting U.S. officials. Chiefs of Mission in open societies will reach out

to and support dissidents in exile from undemocratic regimes in their host country and encourage their host governments to do the same.

- As directed by the President, the Secretary of State launched and will maintain www.America.gov, which is dedicated to the promotion of democracy and human rights to facilitate increased access to information regarding the United States and its commitment to democratic values. The Secretary of State and other appropriate departments and agencies will seek additional means and venues to communicate more effectively the United States' commitment to promoting human rights and democratic values, as set forth in this directive.

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