



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE www.usip.org

SPECIAL REPORT

1200 17th Street NW • Washington, DC 20036 • 202.457.1700 • fax 202.429.6063

ABOUT THE REPORT

As part of its Human Rights Implementation Project, the United States Institute of Peace held a symposium on Capitol Hill last fall. It focused primarily on how the United States's traditional commitment to advancing human rights and democracy fits into the new order created by the war on terrorism.

Speakers included President Jimmy Carter; Ambassador Max M. Kampelman; Professor Shibley Telhami, University of Maryland; Morton Halperin, senior fellow, Council on Foreign Relations; Andrew Natsios, administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development; Stephen J. Solarz, senior counselor, APCO Worldwide; Lorne Craner, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights, and labor; Elliott Abrams, senior director for democracy, human rights, and international operations, National Security Council; Professor John Norton Moore, University of Virginia; John Kamm, executive director, Dui Hua Foundation; William Clatanoff, assistant U.S. trade representative for labor; Holly Burkhalter, advocacy director, Physicians for Human Rights; and Marc Leland, president, Marc Leland & Associates. Also featured were Congressmen Tom Lantos and Frank Wolf, co-directors of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

This report was prepared by Kathy Ward under the direction of Debra Liang-Fenton, program officer in the Institute's Research and Studies Program.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policies.

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CONTENTS

The Human Rights Imperative	2
Fighting Terrorism and Promoting Human Rights	3
Pursuing Human Rights and Democracy	5
Setting Priorities	6
Business and Rights	8
Conclusions	11

Advancing Human Rights and Peace in a Complex World

Briefly . . .

- Pursuing human rights and democracy is essential to success in the war on terrorism and to overall efforts to secure peace. It is, however, a long-term process. Balancing must always be done between those long-term goals and immediate needs, including ending the terrorist threat.
- Democracy, a pillar of respect for the rights and value of each individual, remains key to obtaining lasting peace and a resolution to a number of scourges that face the world today, including terrorism, famine, corruption, and refugee flows.
- The war on terrorism has brought specific changes to how policymakers think. There is a greater focus on the Muslim world. The United States is developing new relationships with nations that will allow new dialogue on human rights. In the U.S. government and among the American public there is also a heightened awareness of the importance of foreign affairs.
- These changes provide opportunities to further fundamental goals, including the advancement of human rights and democracy. However, there is a difference between knowing what needs to be done and being effective in its application.
- Winning hearts and minds through the battle of ideas is a critical element of the war on terrorism. This involves doing a better job of explaining universal concepts of human rights, including labor rights. It also involves providing people with the means to turn those ideas into reality in their own societies. There is an important role for trade and business specialists in this process. The U.S. government must improve its capabilities in these areas.
- The United States must stay the course in order to succeed. Military victory alone is not sufficient. In addition to winning the military and ideological battles, the United States and the international community must devote substantial resources to rebuilding failed states affected by the war, most immediately Afghanistan. Failure to do so would undermine progress and could create conditions that foster new wars and new threats to international security. The United Nations must play a leading role in Afghanistan's post-war political transition and reconstruction.

The Human Rights Imperative in U.S. Foreign Policy

Jimmy Carter

In pre-recorded remarks, former president Carter noted that a commitment to the pursuit of liberty and freedom has bound together the United States since its earliest days. Because human rights is a critical component of how Americans define themselves and their nation, the United States creates a more responsible America every time it takes the lead in efforts to secure peace and advance human rights at home and abroad. With its awesome resources, the United States must function as a responsible world citizen in the global community. The nation should continue to support free elections and democratic development around the world. It should also support international justice efforts including ad hoc international tribunals and the establishment of the permanent International Criminal Court to prosecute genocide and crimes against humanity. The United States should pursue policy paths that will lead to responsible, moral, and just governance worldwide and it must do so with sensitivity and without arrogance. The nation has much to be proud of, but must also remain humble in light of the struggles it has faced and those that lie ahead.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

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Max M. Kampelman

Democracy and human rights are reflected in the way America defines itself. Democracy is the political expression of the national faith. These values are an integral part of U.S. power. They must also guide U.S. policy. Human rights are critical for the advancement of democracy, and the spread of democracy is critical for creating a more stable, prosperous world.

Human rights are already more widely respected than ever before and their reach continues to spread. Technology and globalization have brought awareness of the possibility of a better, freer life to many who have been shut out from enjoying many of the advances that have been made.

The changes have also created a backlash among those who feel threatened by them. Some think the changes are hostile to their beliefs and say they are ready to resist these with every means at their disposal. The future will not be easy for Muslim nations with closed political systems, where the only available outlet for criticism of government policies and corruption is today's Islamic fundamentalism.

The United States is indeed under attack from some who feel threatened by these changes, but it can prevail by continuing its commitment to its fundamental principles, including liberty, respect for human rights, and democracy. Democracy can succeed and spread. It does have support in countries in which it has been suppressed.

Only by addressing these issues abroad can the United States find security for itself. Technological advances and threats that do not respect borders mean that no nation can enjoy true security in isolation. Humanity's requirements are increasingly turning national boundaries into patterns of lace through which flow many ingredients, including ideas, natural resources, money, people, crime, and terrorism. The changes that have taken place are immense and will only accelerate as science presses ahead. Each person must understand that every nation has a mutual responsibility for the peoples in every other nation.

Democracy is the bulwark of peace and stability in the midst of these changes. It is the best protection against many of the threats the United States faces, including war, terrorism and fanaticism. Those who believe that democracy works best must understand that it will work best for them only to the extent that it works well for others.

Spreading democracy is the unfinished business of humanity. With this as the message of its foreign policy, the United States will not only have the strength of a national consensus behind its policy, it will also help to produce a world consensus in support of government based on human dignity—a realistic assurance of peace.

Fighting Terrorism and Promoting Human Rights: Mutually Exclusive Objectives?

Shibley Telhami, Moderator

The war the United States faces is not a clash of religions. It is a clash of political views. U.S. enemies use the language of religion because it is an organizing tool to which they have access—not out of any true sense of faith. If they lost access to religious establishments, they would find another way to further their goals. The absence of democracy contributes significantly to the existence of militancy.

The United States has two missions in responding to September 11. The first is to exercise its right to self-defense. It can do this on its own. It does not require authorization by the international community. The second mission is to conduct the broader war on terrorism. It requires working with the international community in effective coalitions. This will require difficult choices and tradeoffs.

In planning its response, the United States must remember that many people in nations associated with terrorist activity believe they must choose between anarchy and repression. The United States must also remember that the repressive leaders of some of these nations are very good at making their citizens think there are no other options. The challenge for the United States is to help people find other options. It cannot create those options on its own, but it can help people in those societies create options for themselves.

At the same time, the United States must be realistic. Every democratization process is unpredictable and can include a period of anarchy. The United States cannot expect to transform the Middle East—particularly in the midst of the current crisis.

The United States' short-term mission should focus on:

- *Pressuring governments with which it works.* While making necessary tradeoffs, the United States should continue to make statements supporting human rights and democracy in these nations. That will provide symbolic support to liberals in those societies who want to challenge repressive regimes. The United States should make statements without expecting substantial responses from the governments.
- *Encouraging economic reform.* Much of the anger in the region is the result of the absence of economic development, even more than it is the result of the absence of political participation. If the United States first assembles a package primarily focused on economic reform and transparency, that in time would also foster political reform.

Morton Halperin

Fighting terrorism and promoting human rights are not mutually exclusive objectives. The events of September 11 show that a commitment to promoting democracy and human rights is essential to addressing the problems the world faces, including terrorism. However, balancing must be done. As the United States moves forward, it should take practical steps, including:

- *Begin by protecting human rights at home.* The nation must be careful not to surrender at home the very rights it promotes abroad. Provisions in recent U.S. anti-terrorism legislation raise serious concerns.
- *Be honest about what it is doing.* The United States should be honest, for example, about why it is giving aid to countries involved in the war on terrorism. If it is giving aid to non-democratic countries because they are cooperating in the fight against terrorism then that is the reason that should be given. This is better than pretending that these nations have better records on human rights and democracy than they do. The money to assist these countries should come out of the defense budget.

Because human rights is a critical component of how Americans define themselves and their nation, the United States creates a more responsible America every time it takes the lead in efforts to secure peace and advance human rights at home and abroad.

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- *Remember that promoting democracy is not inconsistent with the war on terrorism.* In fact, the United States should focus more on positive democratic forces around the world. It should strengthen those forces and give priority to key nations at critical stages in the transition to democracy. Many of these nations are Muslim.
- *Work with Pakistan and India.* The United States should do much more with Pakistan, but must not do anything that would derail the important progress made on strengthening the critical U.S.-India bilateral relationship. India remains very important to the United States.
- *Make the United Nations more effective.* There is no way to deal with the future of Afghanistan or many other aspects of the war against terrorism without giving a central role to the United Nations and relying on its powers—including Chapter VII action (which allows the use of force). The United States must invest the time and resources necessary to make the United Nations a more effective partner. It must strengthen the voice of democracies at the United Nations. The United States should strengthen the existing fledgling caucus of democracies and encourage that caucus to press the United Nations to be more responsive to democratic values. The majority of UN member states are democracies and their concerns as such should be better reflected in the decisions and work of the organization.

The United States and the international community must take a new look at the root causes of humanitarian tragedies. It must be acknowledged that political undercurrents often lie behind large-scale famines. . . . Scholars have repeatedly indicated that there is no incident in all of recorded history of a famine in a democracy.

Andrew Natsios

All rights are not equal: of all rights, the right to survive is the most important. The right to survive is in danger in Afghanistan and ensuring it must be the priority. Half of the people of Afghanistan risk starvation. It may be too late to stop the famine but a number of deaths can still be curtailed.

The drought in Afghanistan started well before September 11. Longstanding assistance requests by humanitarian aid agencies had gone largely unmet. September 11 brought attention back to Afghanistan and with that pledges for humanitarian assistance have increased. Ironically, more Afghan lives may be saved than would have been if September 11 had not taken place.

Sending aid is not enough in the long run. The United States and the international community must take a new look at the root causes of humanitarian tragedies. It must be acknowledged that political undercurrents often lie behind large-scale famines—for example, Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge and the famine in Ukraine earlier in the 20th century. Scholars have repeatedly indicated that there is no incident in all of recorded history of a famine in a democracy. The current drought in Afghanistan falls into the same pattern. There is a clear political and ethnic overlay. Most of the severely affected people are Hazaras, Tajiks, and Uzbeks. These three groups opposed the Taliban and also had the greatest number of atrocities committed against them by the Taliban even well before September 11.

While focusing on the right to survive, the United States must also work harder on efforts to win hearts and minds by providing people with better access to more information about the world. Madrassas (schools run by Muslim religious authorities) provide a wonderful influence for many children throughout the Muslim world. Too many children in Pakistan, however, are currently receiving distorted understandings of the world through some madrassas. The U.S. Agency for International Development is considering options to address this problem of people cut off from interaction with or exposure to the outside world.

Stephen J. Solarz, Respondent

Fighting terrorism and promoting human rights are not mutually exclusive, but they are also not always mutually compatible. The United States must determine exactly where

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and under what circumstances promoting democracy can contribute to the campaign against terrorism. Promoting democracy may not be essential to the terrorism campaign. In fact, as in World War II, the United States has needed to cooperate with non-democratic states. However, changes in international realities mean that the United States will not adopt attitudes toward its new non-democratic partners that echo its World War II era attitude toward Stalin. Yet, this is also not the moment for the United States to press nations such as Pakistan and Uzbekistan on establishing democracy as a precondition for cooperating in the war on terrorism. Democracy in those nations is a desirable goal, but it cannot be the primary U.S. concern in the short-term. Pressing these nations on democracy would endanger their willingness to support the United States against terrorism, and the United States cannot afford that. The United States also must recognize it has little leverage with some of these actors. What the United States can and should avoid is continuing such compromises any longer than is necessary.

The United States must also remember that while the absence of democracy contributes to terrorism, too much can be made of that relationship in understanding the current conflict. The absence of democracy does not seem to be a major motivating factor for Osama bin Laden, or to be related to any of the causes he invokes to garner support. Democracy, for all its virtues, is not a panacea for every problem.

UN Security Council resolutions can give the U.S. cause added political legitimacy around the world. They can also make it easier for other governments to justify cooperating with the United States. However, as the war moves into new phases, the United States will face new difficulties. The ability to garner Security Council support is limited by the veto power of China and Russia. The United States should not limit its ability to protect its most vital interests by backing into a position in which its ability to act is limited by its ability to obtain Security Council endorsement.

The right to survive is most important and one hopes that in waging the military campaign the United States is also clearly focused on the risk of collateral damage. At the same time, people must remember that a potentially far greater loss of life could result in Afghanistan from the famine. Now that the Taliban is gone, it is time that the international community work to avert the potentially horrendous consequences of the famine.

Finally, the United States must address the collapse of the Pakistani education system. It is one of the reasons the extremist madrassas have gained a foothold there. Breaking the grip of these madrassas on the education of young Afghanis is essential. The United States should facilitate the financing of the reconstruction of the public school system.

Pursuing Human Rights and Democracy in the National Interest

Tom Lantos

Respect for human rights becomes even more important in wartime. The right to be safe from terrorist attacks is fundamental. The question of Iraq must be addressed and also other problems including Hamas and Hezbollah. In the later phases of the war on terrorism, fissures will arise in the international coalition and inside Washington. As support weakens, some may be tempted to use language that sweeps important issues under the rug and obfuscates the truth. That must not be done.

September 11 has been a wake-up call to the United States. It has pulled the nation out of a fascination with the trivial and focused attention on important issues of U.S. relations with the rest of the world. The United States must make the most of this opportunity and remain faithful to its paramount commitment to fighting for the values of human rights.

The United States must also think ahead in terms of Afghanistan. The United States cannot afford failed states. Nation building is necessary. The post-military phase in Afghanistan will require a United Nations umbrella and a large UN component. It should

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be supported by a peacekeeping force of Nordic and Baltic troops—perhaps with a Turkish component as well. Germany and Japan should be called on to step up aid for the rebuilding of the country. Saudi Arabia should also shoulder a larger share of the costs. In other words, the important task of nation building in Afghanistan will require a coordinated, multilateral effort.

Frank Wolf

America has been given many gifts and it has a commensurate responsibility to the world. The United States must care about the poor and hungry. It must care about human rights and must use some of its resources to promote those rights around the world.

September 11 has clearly changed the mood in Congress, but Congress will maintain its strong interest in human rights—including issues previously on the agenda such as Sudan, China, and conflict diamonds.

In fact, September 11 may actually increase congressional attention to human rights. It may encourage more members of Congress to focus on foreign affairs and human rights. These events make clear that it is time for the United States to strengthen its engagements abroad. Part of that will involve doing a better job of telling the story of America and its values to the rest of the world.

The United States must also remember that the campaign ahead will be difficult and will require facing difficult truths and difficult choices. This is not just about Afghanistan and bin Laden. The fight against terrorism will be a long-term effort requiring perseverance around the world and in handling the aftermath of the end of the Taliban regime.

Lorne Craner

U.S. national interests are paramount in determining U.S. foreign policy. The Bush administration must pay particular attention to nations important to those interests, even if those nations have poor records concerning democracy or human rights. However, promoting human rights and democracy is an important part of U.S. national interests and engaging with countries does not mean forsaking the longstanding and ongoing U.S. commitment to those issues. When involved with nations with poor records in human rights and/or democracy, the Bush administration is committed to staying the course—engaging the governments and societies on these issues and working for real progress.

In countries that have already made the transition to democracy, the administration will increase governance assistance. The 1980s focused on elections. The 1990s concentrated on the demand side of governance—civil society. Those efforts will continue, but the new challenge is to help new democratic rulers govern in a manner that advances democratic practices and economic well-being while also ending corruption. That includes emphasizing labor rights and working with America's corporations. U.S. companies are laboratories of innovation and repositories of experience and relationships. And an increasing number of businesses are interested in advancing human rights and giving back to the communities in which they operate.

Setting Priorities

Elliott Abrams

September 11 has not undercut the administration's commitment to human rights. It has, however, changed the landscape in which that commitment is carried out. For example, the administration has increased its attention to the Islamic world and it is facing up to the difficult question of how to encourage rule of law and respect for human rights in numerous countries in the Islamic world where neither of these matters are in

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very good shape. People in these countries often believe they must choose between secular tyranny and religious tyranny. The challenge for the United States is to help people to understand that they have another option.

Some characterize the current war against terrorism as one in which the United States is trying to impose its particular ways on others. The United States must counter those concerns by reasserting that it is advancing universal human rights principles recognized as such by the international community. This is not a new argument, but it is important to restate it in light of recent events.

The United States faces a situation reminiscent of the Cold War in certain ways. Both situations involve close relationships with non-democratic nations. Some non-democratic states will disappoint the United States over time because of their unwillingness to enlist seriously in the war against terrorism. The willingness of others to work with the United States, however, may create opportunities for the United States to improve bilateral relations and to talk with those nations about human rights. When that is the case, the question becomes, as it was in the Cold War, whether one employs public statements or quiet diplomacy.

The administration's policy toward a country may change as opportunities come and go. However, it is important to note that the Bush administration has clearly sought to tell these governments—and probably has been clearer in private than in public—that cooperation against terror does not buy U.S. government silence on human rights. For example, the administration has continued to express its concerns to the governments of Sudan and China about ongoing human rights violations by those governments.

Human rights officials in the U.S. government are integrated into the planning process of the campaign against terrorism. For example, while properly not involved in battle planning, the NSC Democracy Directorate is well integrated into the process of planning future relations with a large group of relevant countries. The point is that while much of the public attention in the early days of the war has been on the military campaign, terrorism is a form of political warfare and defeating it will require more than military action. There is definitely an important role for U.S. military action, but ultimately the battle against terrorism is a political struggle that requires winning hearts and minds. The United States must pay careful attention to that fact, for our history shows that while the United States successfully wages military campaigns, it too often loses the political battles that must be won to consolidate military victories.

There is a difference, however, between knowing that the political battle must be won and actually being able to win that battle. The U.S. government needs new methods to fight this type of ideological and intellectual struggle. Those methods should include a version of Radio Liberty for Afghanistan. The Voice of America cannot fill that role because of restrictions in its charter.

John Norton Moore, Respondent

September 11 was a watershed. In its aftermath the United States and its people now see the rest of the world and their relationship to it in a new light. As the nation's policymakers respond, the following points must be remembered:

1. September 11 and its aftermath is not a clash of civilizations or religions. It is a political clash between democracy and anti-modernist statistis opposed to human freedom and democracy.
2. The United States was not attacked for doing something wrong. The attack was not at heart about any of the causes Osama bin Laden invokes to rally support. The United States was attacked because of the ideals it represents on human freedom and democracy. The argument that the United States is anti-Islamic is specious. The last three wars the United States fought (Kuwait, Bosnia, and Kosovo), plus its intervention in Somalia, were all fought to protect Muslims.

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3. The source of the hatred and violence witnessed on September 11 is a regime bent on using any available means of force to achieve a statist utopia. It is a cause that is attempting to hijack one of the world's great religions. It is also the product of the international community's poor track record of responding effectively to terrorism.
4. To overcome those extremists, the United States must sometimes cooperate with non-democratic governments. The United States did so in World War II, of course, in the struggle against fascism. However, the United States government will not, and should not, turn a blind eye to human rights violations by its allies. It will continue its engagement on human rights. In fact, the new alliances may create new opportunities to further human rights.
5. It is important to stay the course. There is a perception among some that the United States may not. This time, however, it will. The United States and the rest of the international community must put in place in Afghanistan a government that will bring that country through a transition toward a democratic future. The United Nations also must play a critical role in that process.
6. The U.S. military's extensive efforts to avoid civilian casualties should be noted and commended.
7. There are reasons for optimism. The United States has defeated far greater threats in the past. The international community supports the United States. NATO has invoked Article 5 for the first time in its history. Similar action has been taken under the Rio Treaty.

There are strong links between low respect for human rights/absence of democracy and the occurrence of many major ills: major war, terrorism, corruption, and refugee flows, for example. Research shows that over the course of the 20th century, more people were killed by their own governments than were killed as casualties of war.

The achievement of respect for human rights is tied to the achievement of democracy. There are strong links between low respect for human rights/absence of democracy and the occurrence of many major ills: major war, terrorism, corruption, and refugee flows, for example. Research shows that over the course of the 20th century, more people were killed by their own governments than were killed as casualties of war. Other research demonstrates that refugee flows overwhelmingly originate in non-democratic countries. Economic growth also goes hand-in-hand with democracy and human freedom.

But as critical as it is to work for democracy, that is not enough. Unfortunately, as most of the world works for democracy, there are those who are prepared to commit democide to keep the world from reaching those goals. A critical part of the effort to counter those forces must be incentives by the international community. There must be a full range of incentives (including rewards for productive activities and deterrents to negative ones) that can be used to overcome failed governments and destructive forces. Deterrence of those opposed to human freedom is as important in the short run as support for democracy and the rule of law is in the long run.

The desperation caused by poverty is often cited to explain the frustrations that foster extremist ideology. To create the stability that respect for human rights can foster, human rights efforts must address economic rights and needs as well as political rights.

Business and Rights

The desperation caused by poverty is often cited to explain the frustrations that foster extremist ideology. To create the stability that respect for human rights can foster, human rights efforts must address economic rights and needs as well as political rights. One panel during the meeting addressed two critical aspects of the economic component of the equation: the role of business in promoting human rights, and the importance of labor rights.

John Kamm

To say that trade is good for human rights is to put the cart before the horse. It is human rights that are good for business. When business people realize this, it will unleash a terrific force for promoting human rights.

Promoting human rights opens markets and enhances creativity. Productivity also increases when the basic rights of workers in the factory are respected. An examination of the history of China's economic reform shows cases where the government's recognition of a right preceded the opening of a market. For example, the Chinese government's decision to ease rules allowing its citizens to travel within China created a market for airplanes. Similarly, allowing people in Guangdong to watch Hong Kong television increased local demand for television sets. Promoting human rights is also good for business in the area of the rule of law. It encourages respect for the law, an independent judiciary, and compliance with international standards. It can also improve a company's image.

Business people can be good at promoting human rights. Governments tend to see business people as friends or at least allies with shared interests. This can create an element of trust. Business people are also often familiar with the nation's culture and know how to deal with government officials in a way that produces results. Finally, business people should be good at promoting human rights, because they are skilled at salesmanship. Salesmanship is the art of convincing people they need something they think they do not need. That skill can be applied to promoting human rights to governments as well.

Using these skills and their positions in the nations in which they operate, business people can promote human rights both in the workplace and in the general environment. In the workplace they can design and implement codes of conduct. They can promote free association—not only through trade unions, but also via other types of associations that may not be seen as so politically charged, such as quality associations and safety associations. Business people can also protect their workers against arbitrary detention and forced abortions. Business people can give their workers access to more and better tools of communication, including providing them with more opportunities to travel for work. Finally, business people can promote human rights in the workplace by strictly enforcing rules against corruption. Corruption is the handmaiden of human rights violations in many countries.

Business people can also take many simple steps to promote a better general environment for the respect of human rights. They can monitor human rights conditions where they operate and provide that information to non-governmental organizations. They can lobby governments to make systemic reforms to strengthen human rights. This includes strengthening intellectual property rights and encouraging Red Cross access to prisoners. Finally, business people can intervene on behalf of people jailed for non-violently expressing their political or religious beliefs. This has had a positive impact in past cases. It is important as a matter of respect for the rights and dignity of the individual. It is also important to realizing the dreams of those who want to see a better future for a nation. Outsiders will not be the driving force for change in a country. The people of that nation will fill that role. However, outsiders can assist by helping those agents for change get out of prison so they can do their work. The basis of the free enterprise system is individuals making free choices. If individuals cannot make free choices, the free enterprise system does not work.

It is also important to overcome the false dichotomy often posited between promoting systemic reform and working on individual cases. One can only promote systemic reform by working on individual cases. One cannot promote human rights without talking about human beings.

The U.S. government can also contribute to the promotion of human rights. The U.S. government's human rights reports are a very effective tool. The Chinese government, for example, takes those reports very seriously. The reporting could be even more effective if the government enhanced and expanded the reporting so that it could differentiate between different regions and actors within a single country. This would increase the sense of individual accountability at a lower bureaucratic level and encourage those actors to compete against each other to produce better human rights records. It would

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also be helpful if the U.S. government created incentives for companies that do a good job of promoting human rights.

William Clatanoff

Respect for workers' rights is basic to a broader environment of respect for all human rights. No regime respects political and civil rights if it does not first respect workers' rights.

Respect for workers' rights is basic to a broader environment of respect for all human rights. No regime respects political and civil rights if it does not first respect workers' rights. Work is important. It provides people with a means to satisfy wants and needs for themselves and their families. It gives them a sense of self worth. And it is often a way in which they are defined by the societies in which they live. People want to prosper. They have a right to have the opportunity to succeed.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) is often overlooked in the United States as a human rights organization, but it is just that. In addition to much other work on labor rights, in 1998 it passed the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights of Work. The declaration culls from many other sources, including treaties, a set of basic labor rights—rights so fundamental that all nations are bound to honor them. These rights are: (1) freedom of association; (2) the right of collective bargaining; (3) abolition of forced, bonded, or slave labor; (4) elimination of child labor; and (5) non-discrimination for employment based on race, gender, ethnicity, or village.

But rights require enforcement. There are several ways to enforce them:

- creating and enforcing good domestic legislation;
- sanctions, applied by one or more countries against another to force the target country to enforce its laws; or
- enforcement by businesses.

The last is associated with codes of conduct. There are many such codes. Some are empty words. Others are better and are becoming more meaningful, often because of pressure on companies from market forces, including consumer demand to avoid association with labor exploitation. The other major market force improving enforcement is the opening of markets through the breaking up of economies that previously only had one employer—often the government. With multiple employers comes competition between employers to attract the best workers. That fosters better treatment of those workers and respect for workers' rights.

Holly Burkhalter, Respondent

Globalization, increased visibility, and efforts by human rights campaigners to find new ways to tackle ongoing problems have accelerated the interaction between business and human rights communities.

Globalization, increased visibility, and efforts by human rights campaigners to find new ways to tackle ongoing problems have accelerated the interaction between business and human rights communities. The interaction takes at least four major forms. The first is through attention to workers' rights. The second is through business people highlighting human rights and encouraging improvements in the human rights conditions in which they operate. The third is through the creation of conversations about moral standards and expectations of corporations relating to economic rights. Examples include the conversation surrounding the Nestle baby food boycott and recent pressure on pharmaceutical companies concerning the pricing of HIV/AIDS drugs. The fourth form is through efforts relating to the relationship between commodities, their exploitation, and conflict. The conflict diamonds campaign is a good example. In this form, the goal is more than encouraging the industry in question to stop harmful practices. It is also to encourage business to take proactive measures to create and maintain the peaceful environments that are good for business. All these lines of interaction between the business and human rights communities are not, however, a substitute for actions including debt relief, large-scale foreign aid, and responsible policies by the affected governments.

Marc Leland, Moderator

Pressing for action on a human rights issue can have negative effects as well. For example, pressure on pharmaceutical companies could lead them to develop fewer new AIDS drugs. On child labor, if one simply demands that a family's child stops working that could take away the income that keeps the family from starving. The same holds true in some situations for the advancement of women's rights and religious freedom. The point is that there are always tradeoffs. It is also important to remember that with regard to punitive measures, such as the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, unilateral action may not produce the desired results when others not bound by those measures do not voluntarily go along with them. The lesson is that many of the goals discussed in terms of outside action producing changes in a government's behavior in a global marketplace only work if there is global cooperation.

Conclusions

While the landscape has changed since September 11, the importance of human rights to achieving U.S. foreign policy goals has not. U.S. government officials at the meeting stressed that the government's commitment to advancing human rights and democracy has not changed either. Both are considered critical for undermining support for extremism and creating stable societies that are less likely to experience war, famine, terrorism, and other forces that erode growth and stability.

However, interests and needs must be balanced. Tradeoffs must be made. The war on terrorism requires the United States to work with and offer assistance to nations that are not democratic and that have poor human rights records. The United States must be honest about why it is assisting them and cannot expect those nations to quickly change their track records in these areas. However, since democracy and human rights are critical to long-term stability, which these nations need, the United States must find ways in public and private to continue to press for progress toward those ends. Those efforts will lend support to the people in these countries who can bring about change. It will help them create the middle space necessary to avoid the either-or choice between repression and anarchy that many feel they now face. This is not a quick process, and the United States must be prepared to stay the course.

The way ahead will be difficult as well. Coalition support is critical. While there is strong, broad support for the anti-terrorism campaign during the phase that targets Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, that support will likely fray or at least be seriously tested when attention is turned to others responsible for terrorism. An effort against Iraq would clearly fall into this category.

A critical part of keeping support strong at home and abroad, and of ensuring long-term success, is conducting a successful campaign in the battle of ideas—to win hearts and minds. This will be especially challenging in certain parts of the international community, particularly in the Islamic world. While the U.S. government understands what must be done, there is a difference between understanding what must be done and being able to do it well. The U.S. government must deepen its intellectual capital for this battle and improve its tools to carry out the campaign. This will take time, but it is important.

More generally, there is opportunity in the midst of the tragedy of September 11. It has been a wake-up call: for the international community, for the American people, and for parts of the U.S. government that did not previously pay as much attention to the importance of U.S. engagement in international affairs and to the support of human rights and democracy in particular. We should seize the opportunity.

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Since democracy and human rights are critical to long-term stability, . . . the United States must find ways in public and private to continue to press for progress toward those ends. Those efforts will lend support to the people in these countries who can bring about change.

For more information on this topic, see our web site (www.usip.org), which has an online edition of this report containing links to related web sites, as well as additional information on the subject.

SPECIAL REPORT 86

Human Rights Implementation Project

In 1999, the U.S. Institute of Peace's Research and Studies Program launched a new initiative on human rights implementation. This project seeks to critically examine human rights policies implemented by the U.S. government in order to identify ways these policies might be improved.

The Human Rights Implementation Project is exploring the following questions:

- What role do human rights issues play in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy?
- How successful or unsuccessful has the U.S. government been in improving human rights practices abroad?
- What are the key challenges to implementing an effective human rights policy?
- What roles have the Executive Branch, the Congress, other governmental agencies, and the non-governmental and business communities played in promoting human rights?
- How can policymakers maximize their impact on human rights protection and promotion?

The Institute is exploring these broad questions from the vantage point of a non-partisan, congressionally funded institution committed to expanding the understanding of international conflict and the means to prevent, manage, and resolve it.

To learn more about the Human Rights Implementation Project, contact program officer Debra Liang-Fenton at (202) 429-3822 or <debra@usip.org>.



**United States
Institute of Peace**

1200 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036