

Advancing The Freedom Agenda

President Bush Discusses Freedom Agenda, Lays Out Plans To Ensure That America Continues To Offer Hope To Those Languishing In Tyranny

Today, President Bush observed Captive Nations Week and discussed the progress of his Freedom Agenda while calling on future Presidents and Congresses to continue leading the cause of freedom worldwide. Different Presidents, from different eras and parties, have acted to defend and advance the cause of liberty. Because we were steadfast in liberty's defense, the cause of freedom has prevailed, and we will prevail again. It is in our interest to continue liberty's advance – because we know from history that the advance of freedom is necessary for our security and peace.

Leading The Cause Of Freedom Requires Combating Hopelessness In Struggling Nations

To protect America, we must defeat the ideology of hatred by spreading the hope of freedom. Over the past seven years, this is exactly what the Administration has done. Recently, the President issued National Security Presidential Directive 58: Institutionalizing the Freedom Agenda to offer a guidepost to future Administrations, codifying many of the policies and practices he has put in place to promote freedom worldwide. The challenge for America in the years ahead is to continue to help people in struggling nations achieve freedom from corruption, disease, poverty, hunger, and tyranny. In the years ahead, America must continue to:

- 1. Use our foreign assistance to promote democracy and good government.** Over the past seven years, we have more than doubled the Federal budget for democracy, governance, and human rights programs. We have increased the budget for the National Endowment for Democracy by more than 150 percent since 2001.
 - **President Bush has transformed the way we deliver aid by creating the Millennium Challenge Account, which offers support to developing nations that fight corruption, govern justly, open up their economies, and invest in the health and education of their people.**
 - **Increased aid alone will not help nations overcome institutional challenges that hold entire societies back.** To be effective, our aid must be targeted to encourage the development of free and accountable institutions. America's generosity must remain tied to the promotion of transparency, accountability, and prosperity.
- 2. Promote free trade and open investment.** Over the past seven years, we expanded the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which is spreading prosperity by dramatically increasing trade between the United States and Africa. We have implemented free trade agreements with 11 countries.
 - **We are also striving to complete an ambitious Doha trade agreement, which will open up new markets for American goods and services and help alleviate poverty around the world.** America must reject the false temptation of protectionism, and remain open to the world.
- 3. Lead the fight against disease.** We are working in 15 African nations to cut the number of malaria-related deaths in half. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is supporting treatment for more than 1.7 million people. Congress will soon pass legislation to significantly expand this vital initiative.
 - **We are expanding our efforts to train health workers for the poorest countries, and to treat key neglected tropical diseases such as river blindness and hookworm.** America must continue this commitment, so we can lift the shadow of malaria and HIV/AIDS once and for all.
- 4. Lead the fight against global hunger.** Americans are answering the call to feed the hungry. This year, the United States has provided more than \$1.8 billion in new funds to bolster global food security. We are the world's largest provider of food aid, but we must transform the way that our food aid is delivered. One innovative proposal is to purchase up to 25 percent of our food assistance directly from farmers in the developing world.

➤ **This assistance would help build up local agriculture and help break the cycle of famine.** President Bush calls on Congress to approve this measure as soon as possible. America must find other innovative ways to alleviate hunger while promoting greater self-reliance in developing nations.

5. Lead the cause of human rights. Over the past seven years, we have spoken out against human rights abuses by tyrannical regimes like those in Iran, Sudan, Syria, and Zimbabwe. We also have spoken candidly about human rights with nations with whom America has good relations, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and China. In keeping with this commitment, today President Bush renewed his call for the release of all prisoners of conscience around the world – including Ayman Nour of Egypt, Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, Oscar Biscet of Cuba, and Riad Seif of Syria.

➤ **To ensure our government continues to speak out for those who have no other voice, President Bush recently issued a directive instructing all senior U.S. officials serving in undemocratic countries to maintain regular contact with political dissidents and democracy activists.** America must always stand with those seeking freedom – and never hesitate to shine the light of conscience on abuses of human rights across the world.

➤ **Today, President Bush met with several individuals who have suffered terribly in the cause of freedom – and who inspire our country with their resolve and resilience.** The President's message for all those throughout the world who still languish in tyranny is that they are not alone. America hears them. Millions of American citizens stand with them and hope still lives – even in bleak places and in dark moments.

The Best Way To Defeat The Terrorists Is To Offer A Hopeful Alternative Based On Human Liberty

We have seen a hopeful beginning for the cause of liberty at the start of the 21st century. Over the last seven years, we have seen citizens in Afghanistan and Iraq emerge from tyranny to establish representative governments. We have seen citizens in Georgia and Ukraine stand up for their right to free and fair elections. We have seen people in Lebanon take to the streets to demand their independence. We have seen strides toward democracy taken by nations such as Kuwait, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, and Pakistan.