



Democracy and Human Rights

Excerpts from recent speeches by Governor Bill Clinton

U.S. foreign policy cannot be divorced from the moral principles most Americans share. We cannot disregard how other governments treat their own people, whether their domestic institutions are democratic or repressive, whether they help encourage or check illegal conduct beyond their borders.

It should matter to us how others govern themselves. Democracies don't go to war with each other. The French and British have nuclear weapons, but we don't fear annihilation at their hands. Democracies don't sponsor terrorist acts against each other. They are more likely to be reliable trading partners, protect the global environment, and abide by international law.

Over time, democracy is a stabilizing force. It provides non-violent means for resolving disputes. Democracies do a better job of protecting ethnic, religious and other minorities. And elections can help resolve fratricidal civil wars.

Yet President Bush too often has hesitated when democratic forces needed our support in challenging the status quo. The administration continues to coddle China, despite its continuing crackdown on democratic reforms, its brutal subjugation of Tibet, its irresponsible exports of nuclear and missile technology, its support for the homicidal Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and its abusive trade practices. I believe the President erred when he secretly rushed envoys to resume cordial relations with China barely a month after the massacre in Tiananmen Square; when he spurned Yeltsin before the Moscow coup; when he poured cold water on Baltic and Ukrainian aspirations for self-determination and independence; and when he initially refused to help the Kurds.

We should regard increased funding for democratic assistance as a legitimate part of our national security budget. We should support groups like the National Endowment for Democracy, which work openly rather than covertly to promote democratic pluralism and free markets abroad. I would encourage both the Agency for International Development and the U.S. Information Agency to channel more of their resources to promoting democracy. And just as

Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America helped bring the truth to the people of those societies, we should create a Radio Free Asia to carry news and hope to China and elsewhere.

Finally, just as President Kennedy launched the Peace Corps 30 years ago, we should create a Democracy Corps today that will send thousands of talented American volunteers to countries that need their legal, financial, political expertise.

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