



EAST ASIA  
AND THE PACIFIC

*“For me the approach of Christmas Eve last week also marked the approach of freedom. It was the time when I finally emerged from the prisons of the Chinese Community Party, a joyous day made possible by the efforts and sacrifice of my wife, He Xintong, and my daughter, Xu Jin, by support from friends in the United States and many other countries around the world, and by the governments of the United States and other democracies.”*

**– Xu Wenli,  
founder of the Democracy Movement in China, December 31, 2002**

tive juncture in April 2003. Three years after the coup and mutiny of 2000, Fiji has returned to constitutional democracy. In recognition of this and upon completion of an Article 98 agreement at year's end, the United States fully normalized its relationship by restoring full military bilateral assistance to Fiji.

Reports in recent years of incidents of police brutality, and more generally of susceptibility to corruption within the police force, led the Government to appoint a former senior officer in the Australian Federal Police as Police Commissioner. The U.S. strategy to address these issues includes investment in the professional development of the military, police and security forces of Fiji. To this end, the United States sent a number of Fijian military and police officers for training under Pacific Command's Title 10 engagement program and other programs. With the resumption of full bilateral military assistance, the United States will also resume International Military Education and Training programs for Fiji security forces to foster increased professionalization and a greater respect for human rights.

The U.S. Embassy has developed close contacts at every level with a broad spectrum of political leaders, trade union organizers, academics, military contacts, police, legal experts, religious figures and women's rights advocates. A boost in support from Washington provided the Embassy with a unique opportunity to step up its engagement with human rights, labor, women's and media freedom advocates on a number of important issues. It also enabled the Embassy to strengthen its reporting and understanding of the impact of key legislation, including the Family Law Act, the Industrial Relations Act (Labor issues) and the now-dormant Media Bill, which would have restricted media freedom in Fiji.

On the public diplomacy front, the release of the State Department's 2002 Country Report on Human Rights Practices was met with larger than expected local interest and publicity. Although

the report drew both praise and criticism, it provided a useful tool for eliciting feedback and establishing dialogue with different groups in Fiji. The Embassy also used the International Religious Freedom report to broaden its contact with a variety of religious leaders from the majority Methodist church to the minority Muslim community.

In March, the Embassy sent two participants from the Fiji-based organization Homes of Hope to participate in a two-week Trafficking in Persons course in Washington, D.C. Although the Embassy has not been able to document cases of forced labor and prostitution among illegal migrants, there are indications that it could become an emerging problem in Fiji.

## INDONESIA

The Republic of Indonesia, headed by President Megawati Soekarnoputri, made progress in 2003 in its transition from decades of repression and authoritarian rule to a more pluralistic and representative democracy. The overall human rights record, however, remained poor. Soldiers and police officers committed widespread violations, including extrajudicial killings and torture, notably in Aceh and Papua Provinces. A weak and corrupt judicial system frequently failed to hold violators accountable. The military took greater steps to punish human rights abusers within its ranks but – as with the civilian justice system – the punishment in many cases did not match the offense. The Government frequently failed to uphold adequately the fundamental rights of children, women, peaceful protestors, disabled persons, religious minorities and indigenous groups.

The United States undertook aggressive and varied efforts to promote human rights in Indonesia. The Ambassador and other embassy officials frequently highlighted publicly the need for protection of human rights and invested time, energy and resources into helping counter problems such as trafficking in persons, religious intolerance and



threats to press freedom. President Bush traveled to Indonesia in 2003, reiterating U.S. support of Indonesia's democratization and calling for conflict resolution in Aceh and access to Aceh by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international aid workers and independent media.

Because many human rights violations in Indonesia involved the security forces, the United States focused human rights efforts on pushing for military reform and accountability, professionalizing the police and developing civil society institutions essential for sustaining the democratic transition. The United States closely monitored all trials involving active duty soldiers indicted for crimes against humanity, and spoke out when actions (or inaction) by prosecutors called into question the overall fairness of the judicial process, as was the case at the East Timor Ad Hoc Tribunal. The United States encouraged the military to improve from the inside out, through continued exposure to the Expanded International Military Education and Training program. This program, which also involved a number of civilians, highlighted ways to strengthen civilian oversight of the military and promote respect for human rights. Some courses sought to improve the military justice system, while others

boosted the investigative capacity of military police. U.S. officials frequently met Indonesian military officials and encouraged military reform.

The United States took steps to help professionalize the national police force, aiming not only at improving police conduct, but helping the police combat human rights abusers, including people traffickers and terrorists. A program on Civil Disorder Management proved particularly successful. In Surabaya, where excessive force by police had reached alarming proportions, the number of persons shot by police plummeted during the year. The chief of police credited the United States with calling his attention to the issue.

As part of outreach efforts to the Muslim community, U.S. officials made dozens of visits to Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and day schools (madrasahs), openly exchanging viewpoints on pluralism, tolerance and respect for human rights. The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor sent the leaders of approximately 40 pesantren to the United States for a three-week program on religious pluralism, civic education and educational development, and funded the visit of a noted

American scholar to the cities of Yogyakarta, Mataram and Makassar, where he held seminars on religious tolerance. The United States also provided funding to organizations working with pesantren, including a consortium promoting voter education. At the university level, a multi-year grant helped implement a civic education program throughout the Muhammadiyah university system. A separate grant helped the Institute for Islam and Social Studies in Yogyakarta conduct training on human rights and courses promoting tolerance. Promoting an environment where Indonesians can freely exercise their civil and political rights is critical to the U.S. foreign policy objective of fostering pluralism and tolerance as a means to countering extremism.

To strengthen rule of law in Indonesia, the United States supported legal reform activities. U.S. funding of two Indonesian NGOs helped provide technical assistance so that the Supreme Court could publish a six-volume blueprint for reform of the top court and the national court system it begins overseeing in April 2004. The United States also helped Indonesia Corruption Watch address judicial corruption by monitoring court sessions.

In advance of the 2004 nationwide legislative elections, which will be followed by the first-ever direct presidential election, the United States provided extensive and crucial election assistance, including technical support to national and regional electoral authorities, help with voter education programs and monitoring initiatives to protect ballot integrity. This assistance will bolster the election process in what will be one of the world's most complex elections: 585,000 polling stations for more than 147 million voters, who speak more than 250 languages and dialects.

In Aceh, the United States was the chief financial supporter of the Henri Dunant Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, which helped to broker the ceasefire agreement (COHA) between the Indonesian Government and the Free Aceh Movement during the first four months of 2003.

This support helped bring about a substantial reduction in human rights violations while the ceasefire remained in effect. After the COHA collapsed and the Government declared martial law, U.S. officials, including Deputy Assistant of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Elizabeth Dugan, frequently urged the Government to protect noncombatants' rights and allow access to humanitarian groups and journalists. The United States supported civil society organizations that assisted human rights victims and advocated peaceful resolution of the conflict, and helped fund the International Catholic Migration Committee's treatment of torture victims. Although the U.S. Agency for International Development was blocked from administering humanitarian aid in Aceh after the declaration of martial law, the Mission continued to support local NGOs and media groups attempting to monitor the humanitarian situation in Aceh.

In Papua, where separatist sentiment ran high and human rights violations continued, the United States took steps to improve monitoring and investigation of human rights abuses. The United States continued to demand justice for the August 2002 killings of two U.S. citizens near the city of Timika, and received commitments from Indonesian authorities to work with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to resolve this case. The United States also conveyed concerns over severe rights abuses in the Central Highlands following an April raid on a government arsenal; the National Human Rights Commission subsequently opened an official investigation into the Highlands case. Thanks to advocacy work by U.S.-funded NGOs, the Commission also launched a probe into the 2001 Wasior incident, during which 12 civilians were killed. The United States also backed efforts to enshrine Adat (traditional) rights into law, to increase basic awareness of rights among Papua's most isolated communities and support the work of the Papua branch of the Committee for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence.

Press freedom came under strain, with thugs occasionally assaulting journalists and politicians and tycoons punitively pursuing criminal or civil legal actions against editors and reporters. The Ambassador demonstrated U.S. commitment to press freedom by meeting assaulted journalists and speaking out when courts failed to defend press freedom. By supporting the South East Asian Press Alliance, the United States monitored the extent of violence and intimidation against journalists in Indonesia. The United States also sponsored the translation and publication of a book on press professionalism, whose author conducted media workshops on free and ethical media. In support of freedom of speech, senior U.S. officials conveyed to the Government concern over the growing number of peaceful protesters jailed for “insulting the President” or “spreading hatred against the Government.”

To safeguard women’s rights, the United States worked with local partners, such as the Foundation for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Foundation to Assist in the Protection of Women, to raise awareness of domestic violence, support a media campaign to inform women of their rights, empower women through pesantren programs, create a national database of potential women candidates for political parties and study how police treat female trafficking victims. The United States placed a number of women-related documentaries and news clips on local television. Dozens of women took part in International Visitor, Voluntary Visitor, Fulbright Summer Institute and other programs, many of which focused on human rights issues. U.S. support of the National Commission on Violence against Women resulted in the Indonesian Government’s decision to establish regional women’s crisis centers. The United States also funded the Women’s Journal Foundation, which produced a monthly magazine and a weekly radio show that reached 158 stations.

In Maluku and North Maluku, violence between Muslims and Christians subsided in 2003, while in Central Sulawesi, following a decline in violence throughout most of the year, an upsurge in violence was observed in October and November. All three provinces continued to need extensive reconciliation and reconstruction work. In Central Sulawesi, U.S. funding helped the NGO CARE with community development projects and built homes for those displaced by the conflict. In the same province and in Maluku, our funding helped the NGO Mercy Corps provide income generation projects to aid those rendered jobless by the conflict. The NGO International Medical Corps used U.S. funds to provide emergency and primary health care to Maluku residents on remote islands where sectarian violence had destroyed health facilities. U.S. officials regularly met religious leaders to urge mutual respect and cooperation, while at the same time calling for justice for those who perpetrated severe human rights abuses in the past.



IFES

The United States worked with the International Labor Organization and the Solidarity Center (ACILS) to raise awareness and combat the problem of child labor. The United States devoted substantial funding to protect children from sexual exploitation, trafficking and hazardous work on fishing platforms and in footwear factories. The United States supported the People's Crisis Center in Aceh to rescue children victimized by the conflict, particularly those with physical or mental trauma. Our funding provided for a "Safe House" where children could receive counseling and education.

Trafficking in persons remained a serious problem. Sub-grants to approximately 30 NGOs permitted them to carry out local anti-trafficking efforts with an emphasis on prevention and rehabilitation. In July, the U.S. Embassy, ACILS and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) organized Indonesia's first national anti-trafficking conference, with the Ministry of Women's Empowerment as co-sponsor. Earlier in the year, ACILS and ICMC provided technical assistance to the Ministry to develop and implement a national anti-trafficking action plan and draft an anti-trafficking bill.

## DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The United States continues to be seriously concerned about North Korea's abysmal human rights record and the ongoing humanitarian crisis faced by the North Korean people. The Government's human rights record remained extremely poor, and it continued to commit numerous serious abuses. The United States is working to raise awareness of the severity of North Korea's human rights abuses and humanitarian issues before the international community and American audiences, as well as to raise these concerns directly with the North Korean regime. The United States provides funding to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) reporting on human rights conditions in North Korea and is also a primary contributor of

food aid. The United States is also working to end the forced repatriation of North Koreans from China, as these returnees may face serious abuses, including torture and sometimes execution.

During multilateral talks with the North Korean Government in April 2003, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly made clear that an improvement in relations with the United States depends on progress by North Korea in a number of areas, including respecting human rights. During the year, President Bush, Secretary of State Powell and Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Lorne Craner also focused international attention on the deplorable human rights conditions inside North Korea. The United States also regularly raises concerns about North Korea in multilateral fora and bilaterally with other governments. The United States regularly consults with other countries about the human rights situation in North Korea and ways to improve it. The United States has also supported Japanese efforts to resolve concerns about North Korea's admitted abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s.

The United States continues to be a major provider of food aid to North Korea based on humanitarian considerations and provided 100,000 metric tons of food aid in response to the World Food Program's (WFP) appeal in 2003. U.S. food aid contributions are based on demonstrated need in North Korea, competing needs elsewhere in the world, and donors' ability to have access to all vulnerable groups and monitor distribution. The United States continues to be seriously concerned by North Korean restrictions that undermine the ability of the humanitarian community to assess the needs of all vulnerable groups in the country and to monitor the distribution of aid. The Government does not permit WFP officials and other aid workers to visit or distribute assistance in 43 of the 206 counties in the country, prohibits random monitoring visits and does not allow direct interviews with benefi-