



Remarks on Democracy, Constitutional and Economic Reform

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
October 11, 2005

Thank you very much. (Inaudible) in Kyrgyzstan at a time of excitement and a time of promise. We watched with great interest the (inaudible.) We watched with great interest the Kyrgyz people who (inaudible) and to give themselves a chance for democracy. We know that the aspiration for democracy and for freedom and for liberty is a universal one. And the United States will stand with the people of Kyrgyzstan as they continue the journey toward the development of a stable and free democracy.

We know, too, that a democracy must deliver for its people, that democracy often raises the hopes and expectations of people for a better life. And so at the same time that we discussed and support political reform and today we will have a chance to discuss constitutional reform. We also will want to discuss with you economic reform, the integration of the Kyrgyz economy into the international economic system ways that the economy can grow and ways that jobs and a better life can be delivered for the Kyrgyz people.

I'm delighted to be joined by those who are now responsible to the people of Kyrgyzstan for their economic and political development. I look forward to a discussion of the issues before us of economic and political reform. I know that there is a vibrant civil society in Kyrgyzstan as well as a government that is moving toward reform and I want to urge the Constitutional Council to complete the reform process by the end of 2005, forming a new constitution in open partnership with Parliament and the full range of society.

I want to laud the President and the Prime Minister for the work that they are doing on political and economic reform and also on matters of anticorruption. The World Bank has often said that corruption is a tax on the poor, and that it makes it extremely difficult to develop economically. And so efforts to root out corruption are extremely important. But I came here to Kyrgyzstan so that you might know whether in government or in civil society, that you will have a steady friend in the United States, who believes too in democratic values, and that as those democratic values take root here in Kyrgyzstan relations between the United States and Kyrgyzstan will only grow.

I look forward to continuing to return to Kyrgyzstan over the years to see the progress that is being made, but a very good start has been made here. We are very proud of what has been achieved here and we look forward to partnership as you move forward on the road to democracy. It is often difficult, the road to democracy, but it is most certainly worth it.

Spasiba.

(Applause.)

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