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## What We Will Do in 2004

### Secretary Colin L. Powell

Op-Ed

New York Times

January 1, 2004

As we Americans turn the last page of our calendars, many of us are moved to review the achievements of the year gone by and to make resolutions for the year ahead. This can be a frustrating business if one dwells on subjects like exercise and dieting, but the twin task of stock-taking and resolution-making is a worthy discipline — and not just for individuals.

We in the Bush administration have also taken stock and made resolutions. We do so with confidence because President Bush's vision is clear and right: America's formidable power must continue to be deployed on behalf of principles that are simultaneously American, but that are also beyond and greater than ourselves.

We resolve, of course, to expand freedom, and we are focused in particular on Afghanistan and Iraq. The Afghan people now have a constitution, a rapidly advancing market economy, and new hope as they look toward national elections. The aspirations of a free and talented Iraqi nation are also taking wing, now that Saddam Hussein's murderous and dangerous regime is no more. We are working to return sovereignty to the Iraqi people through a fair and open process and to ensure that the country receives the maximum feasible debt relief. As the Coalition Provisional Authority closes its doors on June 30, in accord with the Nov. 15 transition plan, we will open an embassy in Baghdad.

While our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq will continue in 2004, we are resolved as well to turn the president's goal of a free and democratic Middle East into a reality. We will expand the Middle East Partnership Initiative to encourage political, economic and educational reform throughout the region. We will also stand by the Iranian people, and others living under oppressive regimes, as they strive for freedom.

This struggle will not be confined to the Middle East. We are working for the advent of a free Cuba, and toward democratic reform in other countries whose people are denied liberty. And we are resolved to support the young democracies that have risen in Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa. The consolidation of freedom in many new but often fragile democracies will shape the aspirations of people everywhere, assuring that the 21st century will be a century of liberty worldwide.

Our efforts will apply to individuals as well as nations. In 2003 we freed thousands from oppression through President Bush's program to combat human trafficking — whether for prostitution or forced labor or to turn children into soldiers. We

have saved lives and redeemed the enslaved, and we will do more in 2004. Also in 2004, the president's plan for H.I.V. and AIDS relief will help free millions worldwide from the devastation of this horrible disease.

We resolve to promote prosperity, too. A new international consensus is helping poorer countries develop themselves through good governance, sound economic, trade and environmental policies and wise investments in their people. The centerpiece of our program for development, to be started in 2004, is the Millennium Challenge Account — an incentive system that makes assistance contingent on political and economic reform.

We also made important strides in 2003 toward a more open international trade and investment climate, signing free trade pacts with Chile, Singapore and the countries of Central America. In 2004 the president will lead the effort to reinvigorate our global free trade strategy, and to advance regional and bilateral free trade as opportunities arise. His proposal to develop a Middle East free trade agreement is high on the agenda.

We are resolved, as well, for peace. Freedom cannot flourish and prosperity cannot advance without security, and this we are determined to achieve. Americans are safer as 2004 begins than they were a year ago. Afghanistan is no longer a devil's playground for terrorists, nor is Iraq an incubator for weapons of mass murder that could have fallen into terrorists' hands.

Al Qaeda remains a great danger — the main reason for our current heightened security posture. But its members are increasingly on the run, in hiding, in jail or dead. Its finances and communications are being disrupted, and closer intelligence and law enforcement cooperation among peace-loving countries is making headway against terrorist plots.

Iran has felt our sustained pressure and that of our allies to come clean on its nuclear weapons program, and has begun to do so. And Libya has renounced terrorism and weapons of mass destruction thanks to the president's robust counterproliferation strategy and bold British and American diplomacy. In our own hemisphere, narco-traffickers and terrorists are on the defensive thanks to strong United States support for a resolute Colombian government.

The war on terrorism remains our first priority, but success in that war depends on constructive ties among the world's major powers. These we pursue without respite; America's relations with Russia, China and India all improved in 2003. Ties with allies old and new have been strengthened as well, despite the growing pains of adjustment to a new era. Indeed, both NATO and the European Union will expand this year, which is good news for international security.

Our partnerships remain strong as do the institutions of international cooperation. We will rely on both to advance freedom, prosperity and peace in 2004. As we work to restore a liberated Iraq to its people, we invite the United Nations and the international community to help Iraqis establish a new citadel of free minds and free markets in the Middle East. With our NATO allies we will support the Afghan people as they heal their wounds and chart their future.

With China, Japan, Russia and South Korea we will continue to tackle the problem of North Korea's dangerous nuclear weapons programs. We seek peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula, but we will not reward threats from Pyongyang or provide incentive for blackmail. With our quartet partners — the United Nations, the European Union and Russia — we will help Israelis and Palestinians achieve peace, so that a free Palestine will exist alongside a secure and democratic Jewish state in Israel.

We are resolved, too, to share the burden to bring longstanding conflicts in Sudan, Liberia, Northern Ireland and elsewhere to an end. Such achievements will build momentum for the success of American diplomacy worldwide.

Freedom, prosperity and peace are not separate principles, or separable policy goals. Each reinforces the other, so serving any one requires an integrated policy that serves all three. The challenges are many, for the world is full of trouble. But it is also full of opportunities, and we are resolved to seize every one of them. If some of us drop a few pounds in the process, that's O.K., too.

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