

# Transcending National Boundaries

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In today's world, any number of challenges affect all of us around the globe. Among the most important issues that America and the international community face are those that transcend national boundaries: for example, the development and use of new technologies and scientific advances; the observance of human rights; public health; stewardship of the environment; and energy resources.

An increasingly globalized world generates immense opportunities for improving the lives of Americans and people around the world. Yet there are also significant transnational threats. We know that oppression and extremism in one region or country can lead to terrible consequences across the globe. Infectious diseases, such as malaria, AIDS, tuberculosis, and influenza, do not respect regional or national boundaries, and a catastrophic outbreak of a pandemic influenza for which we were not prepared could result in outcomes on the scale of a major military conflict. The effects of resource constraints or environmental degradation in one area can quickly impact others. The scourge of human trafficking devastates lives, erodes government authority, and fuels organized crime.

The bureaus and offices that comprise the State Department's Office of Democracy and Global Affairs focus on global issues. We are at the forefront of America's efforts around the world to expand freedom and human rights for all people, regardless of sex, race, or religion; preserve a cleaner, sustainable environment; and alleviate human suffering by combating poverty and promoting health and education. We pursue those goals because it is the right thing to do, and because we thereby embrace our heritage, our opportunity, and our global responsibility. At



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the same time, we promote our vital interests: Global issues directly and deeply impact our national security.

The U.S. National Intelligence Council, in close consultation with private sector experts, has issued a set of reports that look to global trends 15 years in the future. One of its key conclusions is that "the quality of governance, both nationally and internationally, will substantially determine how well states and societies cope with ... global forces." The reports make clear, as experience has borne out, that authoritarian and failed states often lead to internal conflict, forced migration, the exportation of terrorism and other violence,

and mismanagement of resources, and create conditions that stall economic development and the advancement of health. How governments treat not just other nations but their own people, in other words, helps determine global opportunities and challenges that affect us all. Secretary Rice has emphasized that a key component of U.S. foreign policy is transformational diplomacy, through which we work with partners around the world to foster and sustain democratic, well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system. Our bureaus and offices help lead that crucial work. The point is not to impose our precise model on others, but to pursue positive change—to employ our diplomatic strength to assist foreign citizens in bettering their lives and taking control of their own futures.

In that work and in our other endeavors, we seek and implement innovative approaches to addressing global challenges. We coordinate extensively with other

countries around the world, and we engage in efforts that bring governments and the private sector together to achieve progress on transnational issues. For example, the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate brings together the governments and private sectors of six key countries to address energy, economic, and environmental goals through concrete, effective steps; the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza promotes timely and sustained high-level cooperation in countering the threat posed by pandemic influenza; and the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council helps provide Afghan women the skills, education, and microfinancing that will allow them to improve the lives of all Afghans. And we work closely with nongovernmental organizations and other elements of civil society on the ground in particular countries, to ensure that strategic

goals translate into concrete, effective results. Our bureaus and offices also engage with established multinational organizations, as well as new ones that can play important roles, such as the Community of Democracies and the U.N. Democracy Fund.

I thank you for reading about the bureaus and offices in the State Department that are dedicated to global affairs. The issues that we work on are complex, dynamic, and vitally important. Our mission is to pursue adaptive, effective approaches to those issues. In the essays that follow, I hope you get a sense of the efforts we are taking—every day, around the world—to do so. ■

*<http://www.state.gov/gf>*



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After delivering remarks on "Finishing the Global Fight Against Polio" at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., Under Secretary Paula Dobriansky (right) talks with Michael E. Brown (center), the dean of the Elliott School of International Affairs, and Meredith Stakem, a student at the school.