

May 7, 2003: Commission Annual Report Press Conference

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON - The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent and bipartisan federal agency advising the Administration and Congress, will publicly release its fourth Annual Report and country reports on Afghanistan, Belarus, Laos, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Vietnam, containing policy recommendations to the President, Secretary of State, and Congress, at a press conference on Tuesday, May 13, 2003, at the National Press Club. The Annual Report reflects the USCIRF's work from May 2002 through April 2003. The USCIRF is the only government commission in the world with a mandate to review and report violations of religious freedom abroad. By May 1 of each year, the Commission is required to submit to the President, the Secretary of State, and the Congress an annual report containing its recommendations. The report includes an overview of the Commission's mandate and activities, a critique of the State Department's annual report on religious freedom and its implementation of the International Religious Freedom Act, and Commission recommendations on particular countries. The Annual Report also reviews religious freedom in those states designated "countries of particular concern" by the USCIRF. Commissioners are Felice D. Gaer, Firuz Kazemzadeh, Richard Land, Bishop William F. Murphy, Leila Nadya Sadat, Nina Shea, Hon. Charles R. Stith, Dean Michael K. Young, and Ambassador John V. Hanford III, Ex-Offio. Commissioners will discuss highlights of the reports and recommendations and take questions from the media. Who: United States Commission on International Religious Freedom What: Press Conference, Annual Report and policy recommendations When: Tuesday, May 13, 2003, 9:30-11:00 a.m. Where: National Press Club, Holeman Lounge, 13th Floor Copies of the Annual Report and individual country reports will be available at the press conference and will also be posted on the Commission's Web site at www.uscirf.gov. They can also be obtained by contacting the Communications department at (202) 523-3240. Interviews with Commissioners may be arranged by contacting Anne Johnson, Director of Communications, at (202) 523-3240, ext. 27.

Felice D. Gaer, Chair

- Dean Michael K. Young, Vice Chair Firuz Kazemzadeh Richard D. Land Bishop William Francis Murphy Leila Nadya Sadat Nina Shea The Hon. Charles R. Stith The Hon. Shirin Tahir-Kheli Joseph R. Crapa, Executive Director