

Ambassador Pardew's Remarks
***Coalition 2000* Awards Ceremony for Local Ombudsman Program**

July 19, 2004 - Center for the Study of Democracy

It is an honor to join you to mark an important step in the development of the ombudsman institution in Bulgaria. The creation of this institution will provide an important tool to the Bulgarian government in its efforts to counter corruption and increase transparency. It will also strengthen Bulgarian public confidence in the processes of democratic government.

The organizations we recognize here this evening are important to fulfilling the goal of the appointment of a National Ombudsman. Bulgaria needs an individual in this position who is committed to good governance, with a high degree of integrity and most importantly, completely non-partisan. Over the last six years the U.S., through USAID, has committed a great deal of time and resources to help lay the groundwork for the creation this position. We will continue to assist in this effort, through training of ombudsman staff, supporting the drafting of internal rules and regulations and the development of public awareness campaigns. The institution of ombudsman has been a great success in Bulgaria at the local level and we join our Bulgarian colleagues in presenting local success as a model for introduction of the ombudsman at a national level soon.

I would like to thank *Coalition 2000* and the Center for the Study of Democracy for their dedication and hard work over the past six years in this endeavor. The

United States looks forward to working together with you as we aim for the eventual creation of the position of National Ombudsman in Bulgaria.

Thank you.