



# Weekly Special Report



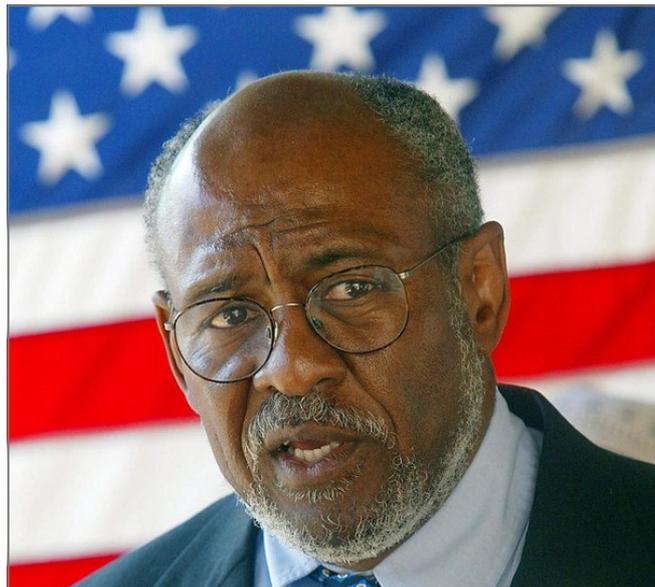
Produced by the Public Affairs Section

## INSIDE

## Ambassador Carson Optimistic About Africa's Long-term Future

By Charles W. Corey  
Staff Writer

Washington — Africa is “enormously important” to the United States, and while the continent has recorded advances in democracy and governance, economic development and the resolution of violent conflicts, more progress must be made, as “the greatest moments in Africa’s long history have not yet been written,” Ambassador Johnnie Carson told a Senate committee April 29.



Ambassador Johnnie Carson

Speaking at his confirmation hearing to be assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Carson told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee he remains

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Senate Committee Reviews U.S.-Africa Relationship

By Charles W. Corey  
Staff Writer

Washington — Piracy and maritime security, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ethiopia, corruption, and freedom of the press — all important issues in the U.S.-Africa relationship — were addressed April 29 by Assistant Secretary of

State for African Affairs-designate Johnnie Carson before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

As part of his confirmation hearing, Carson engaged in a wide-ranging question-and-answer session with senators on various aspects of the U.S.-Africa relationship.

Carson is a career diplomat, former Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania and a lifelong friend of Africa. He served as the U.S. ambassador to Kenya (1999–2003), Zimbabwe (1995–1997) and Uganda (1991–1994) and in diplomatic posts in Portugal, Botswana, Mozambique

*(Continued on page 3)*

### AMERICAN NEWS

Obama Marks His First 100 Days (P 4)

Key to Obama Foreign Policy Is Expanded Global Engagement (P 5)

### PEACE AND SECURITY

Terrorist Attacks Fell 18 Percent in 2008, Report Says (P 6)

Obama Seeks Close Coordination with Afghan, Pakistani Leaders (P 8)

Biden Urges Israel to End Settlements, Back Two-State Solution (P 9)

### DEMOCRACY & HUMAN RIGHTS

Attacking Journalists Hurts All Society, Democracy Advocates Say (P 10)

Increasing Numbers of Journalists Are Being Imprisoned or Killed (P 12)

### GLOBAL HEALTH

Preparation for Avian Flu Helps Nations Fight H1N1 Pandemic (P 13)

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## Ambassador Carson Optimistic About Africa's Long-term Future . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

optimistic about Africa's long-term future and believes the continent has the capacity to overcome its past problems and meet its current challenges.

Carson is a career diplomat, former Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania and a lifelong friend of Africa. He served as the U.S. ambassador to Kenya (1999–2003), Zimbabwe (1995–1997) and Uganda (1991–1994) and in diplomatic posts in Portugal, Botswana, Mozambique and Nigeria.

During the past decade, he told the lawmakers, Africa has made advances in three important areas: democracy and governance, economic development, and conflict resolution.

On democracy and governance, Carson cited the recent elections in Ghana and South Africa, saying those events "are not unique and represent a positive aspect of Africa's unfolding democratic history. Africans support democracy, and since the early 1990s, dozens of African countries have embraced democratic rule."

On economic progress, Carson said African countries have made measurable strides in liberalizing their economies, embracing free-market reforms and adopting pro-business policies. Prior to the onset of the global financial crisis, he said, Africa enjoyed nearly a decade of steady economic growth.

And on conflict resolution, Carson said the number of violent conflicts in Africa has declined in the past 10 years. "The bloody and often bar-

baric civil wars that ripped apart Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s have ended. The hot war that erupted along the Ethiopian-Eritrea border has gone dormant, and the massive intervention that threatened to cripple and divide the Congo has now faded away." African leaders, he said, "recognize the negative impact violent conflicts can have on their region and many of them have demonstrated a willingness to assume greater responsibility for preventing and responding to conflicts."

Despite these "very meaningful achievements," he said, Africa still faces serious challenges in all of these areas. "Africa's democratic gains cannot be taken for granted. Democratic institutions across the continent remain fragile and vulnerable to authoritarian leaders and ambitious soldiers. In the past 12 months, African militaries have intervened illegally in at least four different African countries."

Additionally, he said, "deeply flawed elections in a number of states over the last several years, including in Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, have caused deep concern at home and abroad."

Africa's strong decade-long economic performance is also in jeopardy, he warned, because of the current global financial crisis. "The steep rise in fuel, food and fertilizer costs last summer and the wild swings in commodity prices threaten to erode some of Africa's recent economic gains and to throw Africa's poorest nations back into indebtedness and deeper poverty," Carson said.

Although the overall level of vio-

lence and war in Africa has declined sharply, "several complex and deeply rooted political conflicts persist in Somalia, Sudan and the eastern Congo," he said. "Somalia's deep decline has generated an epidemic of piracy, a massive influx of refugees into Kenya and a growing concern about cross-border terrorism," he added.

Sudan, he said, "faces two major challenges in Darfur and in southern Sudan," and challenges remain in the Great Lakes region of eastern Congo, where several rebel groups continue to defy government authority and terrorize the population.

Carson said the United States has "significant political, economic and humanitarian interests in wanting to help Africa deal with its most pressing challenges." If confirmed, he pledged to focus on four key areas: strengthening Africa's democratic institutions and adherence to the rule of law; working with African countries to prevent conflict and to build local peacekeeping capacity; fostering sustained economic development and growth; and partnering with Africa to combat threats like health pandemics, climate change and narcotrafficking.

Additionally, Carson cited the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as being two "cornerstones of the U.S. strategy to jump-start Africa's economic development and encourage pro-growth policies."

MCA has signed compacts or grant agreements with 10 African countries and AGOA has allowed 40 African nations to benefit from prefer-

*(Continued on page 7)*

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## Senate Committee Reviews U.S.-Africa Relationship . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

and Nigeria.

Asked about ongoing piracy off the coast of Somalia, Carson said the problem is directly related to the absence of any government or law enforcement there and a breakdown of the formal and informal economy. The United States, he said, "needs to be positioned wherever we can with diplomatic representation in the region to help facilitate the efforts to find solutions ... in Somalia."

The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, who chaired the hearing for the full committee, Democrat Russ Feingold, told Carson the United States needs "a full-court diplomatic push to engage a wide range of actors within Somalia and stakeholders in the wider region, both in the Horn of Africa and also in the Middle East."

Carson said much of that push is already under way. "The United States is a part of a Contact Group of largely Western European and maritime powers working to devise rules and regulations that will improve the security of shipping through the Red Sea and the northern part of the Indian Ocean," he told the lawmakers. The Contact Group has had a number of meetings "to work out details on how they can help address this issue."

Carson cited "an unprecedented level of cooperation among navies of the world to deal with this issue," and said the United States government has been very active in working with maritime shipping companies in the United States,

encouraging them to adopt policies that will make it harder for pirates to capture or to attack their ships as they move through the region.

Asked about the appointment of President Obama's new special envoy for Sudan, retired Air Force Major General Scott Gration, Carson termed that selection "a wonderful choice." Carson described Gration as "a man who is very much dedicated to the job and the assignment that he has been given and a man who has an enormous amount of experience in Africa as well."

Turning to Zimbabwe, Carson called it an "extraordinarily tragic" case. "We have seen Robert Mugabe take Zimbabwe, a once very successful, economically strong country, down to the lowest level. It is a country that has extraordinary agricultural and mineral potential. It has a citizenship that is broadly well educated for Africa. But under Robert Mugabe's dictatorial, authoritarian leadership he has basically destroyed the country in order to maintain himself and a small group of leaders in power."

Carson said the United States has "worked very hard" for change there and that effort has resulted in some progress. "We now have a transition government in place with the leader of the opposition, Morgan Tsvangirai, serving as the prime minister, but Mugabe and the key leadership of [Mugabe's political party] continue to control the instruments of power in that country ... the intelligence services, the police and the military. They also have enormous control over the central bank and the reserve bank. Until we see changes in those areas, it is unlikely we will see any real change

in the governance of that country."

Looking at the political situation in Kenya, Carson called Kenya the "strongest partner" of the United States in the Horn of Africa. "We have our greatest economic ties there. We have our strongest military ties there as well, and it has been an important partner with the United States." Carson added that the United States is "deeply concerned" over the stalemated political situation there and pledged that, if confirmed, he would do everything he could to help address the political impasse.

Asked to comment on reports of arbitrary arrests in Ethiopia, Carson acknowledged that "Ethiopia has, in fact, been a strong partner in the effort to combat extremism emanating from Somalia." He added, however, that the United States "needs to have a broad and balanced relationship with Ethiopia — one that is based on a common set of shared ideals and principles based on democratic values." He said it is "extremely important that Ethiopia ... try not to close down its democratic space, that it allows its political opposition, its civil society to participate broadly in the political life of that country." He also called for Ethiopia to allow a free press and trade unions to operate there.

On the broader issue of press freedom across the continent, Carson underlined the importance of a free press as a major pillar of democracy. He said press freedom has improved on the continent over the past 20 years, aided by the introduction of electronic media, telephones and Internet and radio broadcasts both local and interna-

*(Continued on page 7)*

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## Obama Marks His First 100 Days

*By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer*

**Washington** — Marking an odyssey that began 100 days ago when he became the first African-American president in U.S. history, President Obama reflected for long moments before the nation on what his presidency has achieved and what still needs to be done.

"I think we're off to a good start. But it's just a start. I'm proud of what we've achieved, but I'm not content," Obama said in an April 29 hourlong, nationally televised press conference from the East Room of the White House.

"We still confront threats ranging from terrorism to nuclear proliferation as well as pandemic flu. And all this means you can expect an unrelenting, unyielding effort from this administration to strengthen our prosperity and our security — in the second hundred days, and the third hundred days, and all the days after that," the president said.

### THE FIRST 100 DAYS

The first 100 days is not an official measure of an American presidency. By tradition, it has become a way of taking stock, of pausing to reflect on the words and actions of a candidate-turned-president who no longer is running for office. The tradition dates back to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who, after taking office in 1933, was able in the first 100 days to push through 15 major pieces of legislation aimed primarily at helping America recover from the economic devastation of the Great Depression.



*President Barack Obama responds to questions during a prime time news conference in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Wednesday April 29, 2009. The news conference marks his 100th day in office.  
(AP Photo/Ron Edmonds)*

Some news media analysts have tried to compare Obama's first hundred days to those of Roosevelt, but historians and political scientists say there is nothing magical about the number.

"I think people are always looking for a marker or some sort of guidepost," said Ross Baker, a political science professor at Rutgers University, according to Reuters.

For Obama, it has been a period marked by significant changes in foreign affairs, and difficult but straightforward economic policies. And now his administration has had to develop a rapid response to the H1N1 flu, commonly known as swine flu, which is sweeping across the world.

### A FRESH APPROACH ON FOREIGN POLICY

"I campaigned on the promise that I would change the direction of our nation's foreign policy — and we've begun to do that," the president said.

While campaigning for president, Obama set three overarching goals for U.S. foreign policy: re-establish America's standing in the world; create an open dialogue with friends, partners and adversaries based on mutual respect; and work together in building and strengthening partnerships.

The United States has begun to end its combat mission in Iraq, fulfilling a significant pledge Obama made to the American people and one that he said was essential to strengthen U.S. security and to strengthen the Iraqi people. In the first month of his new administration, Obama pledged to remove U.S. combat forces from Iraq in a responsible way. And in a speech to U.S. Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Obama said, "Let me say this as plainly as I can: By August 31, 2010, our combat mission in Iraq will end."

On Afghanistan and Pakistan, Obama said he forged with NATO allies a new strategy targeted at the terrorist group al-Qaida and the former Taliban regime. It is believed that the remnants of both groups are hiding in the rugged mountains that divide the two nations in Southwest Asia. Before leaving for the G20 Financial Summit in London in early April, Obama an-

*(Continued on page 11)*

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## Key to Obama Foreign Policy Is Expanded Global Engagement

*By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.*  
*Staff Writer*

**Washington** — President Obama set three major foreign policy goals when his administration began 100 days go: re-establish America's standing in the world; create dialogue with friends, partners and adversaries based on mutual respect; and work together in building partnerships.

"We believe in advancing not only the United States' interests, but also interests globally," Mike Hammer, a spokesman for the National Security Council, said at a Washington Foreign Press Center briefing April 29.

President Obama acknowledged that he is pleased with the progress his administration has made since taking office, but he is not satisfied with the present. "I'm confident in the future, but I'm not content with the present," the president said at a brief town-hall meeting in a suburb of St. Louis on April 29.

Obama was scheduled to conduct a nationally televised press conference from the East Room of the White House the evening of April 29 to mark his first 100 days in office.

"We have begun to pick ourselves up and dust ourselves off, and we've begun the work of remaking America," Obama said.

Hammer, who briefed the press on U.S. foreign policy engagement, said that in the first 48 hours of this presidency, Obama issued executive orders to close the detention center on the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, within a year, to address the treatment and legal status of detainees, and to

ban enhanced interrogation methods. "From that he has moved on to conduct reviews of foreign policy and you've seen the results of some of those reviews," Hammer said.

Currently, there are 241 detainees being held at the Guantanamo center, according to the Pentagon, but the United States has begun to actively plan for their release. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced April 29 in Berlin that 30 detainees have been cleared for release under an aggressive review program. Holder has appealed for Europe's assistance in taking detainees so that the facility can be closed over the next nine months.

On Iraq, Obama pledged while seeking the presidency to remove U.S. combat forces from the country in a responsible way, Hammer said. A month into office Obama said, in a speech to U.S. Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, "Let me say this as plainly as I can: by August 31, 2010, our combat mission in Iraq will end."

"On Afghanistan and Pakistan, you have seen the unveiling of a comprehensive strategy that ... focuses not only on the military and the need to ensure that we protect the security of the United States and its allies, but also that goes forward in addressing the very real problems that exist there," Hammer said.

On May 6–7 in Washington, Obama will hold trilateral meetings with Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari. The president has scheduled meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to resolve issues

surrounding Middle East peace talks that resumed with the 2007 Annapolis Conference initiated by President Bush.

"We will be looking to see what is possible," Hammer said.

As part of his foreign policy engagement, Obama traveled to Europe in early April to address the global economic crisis at the G20 Financial Summit in London; then to the NATO Summit to address Afghanistan and Pakistan and the need to revitalize the North Atlantic Alliance; and additional trips to Canada, Mexico and Turkey; the European Union Summit; and the Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

"So it's been a very busy first hundred days, but the president's view is not one of measuring at the 100-day mark, but rather to seeing how we are laying the foundation to then go further in terms of what we believe is an important agenda that includes not only the economy, not only national security, but an expanded view of national security that includes energy and climate-change issues, issues of addressing poverty [and] disease," Hammer said.

Additionally, the president has been conducting bilateral meetings with numerous world leaders both in Washington and at the events in Europe and at the Summit of the Americas, Hammer said.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog ( <http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/> ). ♦

## Terrorist Attacks Fell 18 Percent in 2008, Report Says

**By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.**  
**Staff Writer**

**Washington** — The number of terrorism attacks worldwide in 2008 fell 18 percent from 2007 levels, and the number of deaths from attacks last year fell 30 percent from 2007, the State Department reported in its latest annual report on terrorism.

“Al-Qaida and associated networks continued to lose ground, both structurally and in the court of world opinion, but remained the greatest terrorist threat to the United States and its partners in 2008,” according to the report’s strategic assessment section. County Reports on Terrorism 2008 was sent to the U.S. Congress April 30.

Based on statistics compiled for the report by the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the number of worldwide attacks by terrorists in 2008 was 11,770, which is an 18 percent decline from the 14,506 attacks in 2007. The number of deaths in 2008 due to terrorist attacks was 15,765, a decline of 30 percent from 22,508 deaths in 2007.

The NCTC also reported that 19 U.S. citizens were killed in terrorist attacks last year, compared with 33 deaths in 2007.

Progress in slowing the growth of terrorism worldwide has resulted from aggressive efforts by the

United States and its partners using intensified law enforcement, intelligence gathering and sharing, and new counterterrorism laws, said Ronald Schlicher, the State Department’s acting coordinator for counterterrorism. Added to that has been significant success in blocking terrorist financing. Al-Qaida has been actively engaged in trying to raise money wherever it can, he said.

“The terrorist groups of greatest concern — because of their global reach — share many of the characteristics of a global insurgency: propaganda campaigns, grass roots support, transnational ideology, and political and territorial ambitions,” the report said.

Another reason cited for the decline in terrorism after nearly a decade of steady increases is that there have been significant achievements in eliminating terrorist group leaders, the report said.

“These efforts buy us time to carry out the nonlethal and longer-term elements of a comprehensive counterterrorist strategy: disrupting terrorist operations, communications, propaganda, subversion efforts, planning and funding, and preventing radicalization before it takes root,” the annual report said.

The State Department has developed a regional approach that it has found successful in disrupting terrorist groups, Schlicher said. It is being called the regional strategic initiative.

Schlicher said the State Department’s anti-terrorist training program has trained more than 6,000 government officials over the past 25 years, often using tailored programs for specific regions and sections of the world.

“Without state sponsors, terrorist groups would have greater difficulty obtaining the funds, weapons, materials and secure areas they require

*(Continued on page 7)*



*Spain Marks Fifth Anniversary of Train Bombings*

The NCTC said that in 2008, terrorist use of kidnappings for ransom increased significantly. This signals that terrorist funding from traditional sources is being disrupted.

Schlicher said that building an international consensus against terrorism and terrorist groups has made it increasingly difficult for the various groups to recruit new members, obtain arms and munitions, and raise funds from sympathizers elsewhere in the world.

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## Ambassador Carson Optimistic About Africa's Long-term Future . . .

*(Continued from page 2)*

ential access to American markets, he said. "These two programs, as well as others, have been very successful and very popular. But we — and others in the industrialized world — must do more," he added.

Carson said he would like to see expansion of AGOA to allow high-value agricultural and semi-processed exports from Africa. Carson also called for a renewed and sustained emphasis on Africa's agricultural sector, where more than 70 percent of Africans directly or indirectly derive their income.

Fifteen percent of America's oil comes from Africa, he told the law-

makers, and the continent supplies the majority of the liquefied natural gas consumed in the eastern United States. "Africa's economic potential is vast and its importance as a trading partner will continue to grow," he said.

Carson's nomination was endorsed at the Senate hearing by two members of the U.S. House of Representatives: Democratic Congressman Donald Payne, chairman of a House subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, and Republican Congressman Ed Royce, a former chairman of that subcommittee. Payne praised Carson as a lifelong friend of Africa and as a man of "patience, integrity and high principle." Royce called Carson a man

who has "all the makings of an excellent assistant secretary of state."

Carson's nomination must be confirmed by the full Senate.

The full text of Carson's opening statement ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/April/20090429170028eaifas0.2521784.html> ) is available on America.gov.

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>)* ♦

## Senate Committee Reviews U.S.-Africa Relationship . . .

*(Continued from page 3)*

tional. A free press, he said, provides information and "a check on government excesses. It allows individuals to make their governments and organizations more accountable and is the backbone of good democracies."

Carson said that, if confirmed, he will speak out against corruption, which he called a cancer on the economy of any country. Corruption is "particularly devastating on the African economies," he said, "because they tend to be weak and small." In too many places around the continent, Carson said, there is a misuse of resources that undermines the integrity of government budgets and development objectives.

Carson's nomination must be confirmed by the full Senate. ♦

## Terrorist Attacks Fell 18 Percent in 2008, Report Says . . .

*(Continued from page 6)*

to plan and conduct operations," the report said. "The United States will continue to insist that these countries end the support they give to terrorist groups." Countries cited in the report include Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria. North Korea was removed from the list on October 11, 2008, the report said, because it no longer provided material support and assistance to terrorists or terrorist organizations.

The 2008 Country Reports on Terrorism ( <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/index.htm> ) can be obtained from the State Department Web site.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog ( <http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/> ).

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## Obama Seeks Close Coordination with Afghan, Pakistani Leaders

**By Stephen Kaufman**  
**Staff Writer**

**Washington** — The presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan are arriving for meetings with President Obama and other senior U.S. officials to try to develop closer trilateral coordination against terrorism and to address the impact of the global economic crisis in their countries.

State Department acting spokesman Robert Wood said May 4 that he expects the May 6 discussions in Washington between Obama, President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan will be “very productive.” Wood said he hopes they will send a signal to people in the region that “their concerns are our concerns and that we have to confront these violent extremists so that they cannot recruit further and do more harm to the region than they've already done.”

The real purpose of the talks, Wood said, is to coordinate activities to deal with “the fundamental problems that Pakistan and Afghanistan face,” citing both terrorism concerns and economic troubles, with the goal of “better deliver[ing] services and government to the peoples of those countries.”

“Now is the time for us to act,” Wood said. “We've been very concerned about how this situation has deteriorated over time. And we think everybody has the same view, with regard to what needs to be done.”

Wood welcomed recent Pakistani military operations against the Tali-

ban as “an indication that they understand the nature of this threat” from violent extremists. He said the Obama administration is encouraging Pakistan to continue taking similar steps. Pakistani forces have been engaging Taliban insurgents in the Buner Valley, which is about 100 kilometers northwest of Islamabad, the capital.

He described the situation in Pakistan as complex, and said the government is fragile because it does not have the resources to meet some of its political and economic challenges. “We in the international community need to do what we can to support Pakistan as it tries to meet these challenges,” he said.

At the White House, press secretary Robert Gibbs told reporters the president wants a strong relationship with both Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as an understanding that “not just the United States faces security concerns.”

“Each individual government has security concerns about extremists in the area, and this is the beginning of a long process to coordinate our strategy,” Gibbs said.

In an April 29 news conference, Obama said the United States wants to respect Pakistan’s national sovereignty, but has “huge national security interests” in making sure the nuclear-armed country is stable and does not fall under the control of violent extremists. (See “News Conference by President Obama on First 100 Days in Office ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/April/20090430100147eaifas0.8484156.html&distid=ucs> ).”)

“I am gravely concerned about the situation in Pakistan not because I think that they're immediately going to be overrun and the Taliban would take over in Pakistan; more concerned that the civilian government there right now is very fragile and don't seem to have the capacity to deliver basic services — schools, health care, rule of law, a judicial system that works for the majority of people. And so as a consequence it is very difficult for them to gain the support and the loyalty of their people,” Obama said.

He said some in Pakistan’s military are beginning to see “that the obsession with India as the mortal threat to Pakistan has been misguided, and that their biggest threat right now comes internally” from militant extremists.

“We want to continue to encourage Pakistan to move in that direction. And we will provide them all the cooperation that we can,” Obama said.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog ( <http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/> ).

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## Biden Urges Israel to End Settlements, Back Two-State Solution

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — The status quo that has existed in the Middle East over the past 10 years has not served the interests of the United States or Israel, Vice President Biden told U.S. supporters of Israel.

There are obligations to be met by all parties to bring peace efforts to a successful conclusion, Biden said, and those include the Palestinian Authority's fight against terror and incitement against Israel, and Israel's work toward a two-state solution with the Palestinians and an end to its building of settlements.

"This is a 'show me' deal, not based on faith; show me," Biden said May 5 at the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in Washington.

"Israel has to work towards a two-state solution. You're not going to like my saying this, but [don't] build more settlements, dismantle existing outposts, and allow the Palestinians freedom of movement based on their first actions."

The U.S. commitment to Israel's peace and security is "not negotiable" and "not a matter of change" under the Obama administration, Biden said. The "basic responsibility" of the United States is to ensure "that there will always, always be a place for Jews of the world to

go ... and that place always must be Israel."

The United States is working to build stability in the region by ending the war in Iraq and refocusing its efforts on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and "by engaging all countries in the region, including those with whom we have overwhelming disagreements, in order to advance our national security interests."



*US Vice President Joe Biden in Washington, DC, January 2009. Biden has urged Arab states to build on their 2002 peace initiative by starting now to make "meaningful gestures" toward ending Israel's isolation. (AFP/Nicholas Kamm)*

The vice president said the United States will pursue "direct, principled diplomacy with Iran, with the overriding goal of preventing it from acquiring nuclear weapons," which he said would risk an arms race in the region "that would make every country less secure."

The United States has approached Iran in the spirit of mutual respect, offering Iran a path "to take its rightful place in the community of nations, politically and economically," Biden said. But if engagement is unsuccessful, "we have

greater international support to consider other options."

Iran has played a dangerous role in the Middle East by supporting organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah, and undermining other entities in the region. Iran has been able to exploit the conflict to its advantage, Biden said.

The continuation of the conflict between Israel, the Palestinians and Israel's Arab neighbors provides Iran with "a playing field to extend its influence, sponsor extremist elements, [and] inflame public opinion."

Biden said Russia, the United States, the United Nations and the European Union, collectively known as the Quartet, must support the Palestinian Authority with funding and tools to help it govern the West Bank and assist Palestinians in Gaza.

He said the training provided by the United States and its partners to a reformed Palestinian security force "has impressed everyone, including the Israeli security officers, with its recent demonstrations of professionalism and effectiveness," and the Obama administration is seeking further funding from Congress to expand the program.

Biden called on Arab states to build on the 2002 Arab peace initiative and "make meaningful gestures to show the Israeli leadership and the

*(Continued on page 15)*

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## Attacking Journalists Hurts All Society, Democracy Advocates Say

By **Jim Fisher-Thompson**  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — If journalists are persecuted, imprisoned or killed, society as a whole is the victim, say media and democracy advocates speaking in advance of World Press Freedom Day.

The United Nations highlighted the importance of a free media by establishing World Press Freedom Day in 1993, setting aside May 3 each year to remember slain and imprisoned journalists. This year's theme is the safety of journalists.

Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Karen Stewart told America.gov that "by attacking journalists you are attacking a very basic fundamental of a free society," the right of citizens to have free and open access to information.

"And without those freedoms you cannot have democracy," the former ambassador to Belarus said April 27. In Belarus, "the embassy worked very hard to support journalists in very trying, repressive circumstances with programs like legal assistance training and funding of external radio operations."

An independent media brings transparency and accountability to government — indispensable elements for a healthy economy as well as democracy, Stewart said.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists reports that in 2008 some 41 journalists were killed while doing their jobs and 125

were imprisoned. A new trend, according to the organization, is "the arrest of Internet journalists — bloggers, Web-based reporters and online editors [who] now account for more than one-third of the journalists jailed around the globe."



Don Podesta, consulting manager and editor for the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), a part of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), also highlighted the importance of journalistic freedom.

Podesta, a former Washington Post reporter and foreign correspondent in South America, said Americans "have to promote free and independent media around the world, and that means protecting journalists, because you can't have robust democracies without them — it's that simple."

CIMA's main goal, Podesta said, is "to help journalists in the develop-

ing world by providing information, networks and research on the important role of media in sustaining democracies around the world."

A 2008 report compiled by CIMA/NED called "Empowering Independent Media" states that in many political settings, "violence against journalists is prevalent."

Some of the reasons for this include:

Media laws are often weak and selectively enforced.

Governments control and censor the media.

Cooperation for access to information is lacking.

Too few lawyers are willing to defend or protect journalists.

Carl Gershman, president of the NED, said, "If journalists are being harassed and even killed with impunity, then nothing we [nongovernmental organizations] do to improve their professionalism will be enough to ensure a free press."

The danger for the press, especially investigative reporters, is "greater today than ever, especially in Somalia, Iraq and Russia," Gershman said. "It is a difficult time with a lot of repression from governments fighting what they see as threats from an independent media."

As a show of bipartisan support for international press freedom, U.S. lawmakers set up the Congressional Caucus for Freedom of the Press in May 2006. The aim of the caucus is to advance press freedom worldwide by combating censorship and

*(Continued on page 11)*

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## Obama Marks His First 100 Days . . .

*(Continued from page 4)*

nounced a comprehensive strategy that focuses not only on the military and the need to ensure the security of the United States and its allies, but also one that addresses the very real problems that exist there.

The president told reporters that he is “gravely concerned about the situation in Pakistan, not because I think that they’re immediately going to be overrun and the Taliban would take over in Pakistan; [I am] more concerned that the civilian government there right now is very fragile and [they] don’t seem to have the capacity to deliver basic services — schools, health care, rule of law, a judicial system that works for the majority of the people.”

For those reasons, Obama said, it is imperative that the United States and its allies help Pakistan help Pakistanis. “We will provide them all the cooperation that we can,” he said. On May 6–7, Obama will hold trilateral meetings with Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and Paki-

stan President Asif Ali Zardari in Washington.

### GUANTÁNAMO DETENTION CENTER

In the first 48 hours of the Obama presidency, he issued executive orders to close the detention center on the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, within a year, to address the treatment and legal status of detainees, and to ban enhanced and exceedingly harsh interrogation methods.

“We have rejected the false choice between our security and our ideals by closing the detention center at Guantánamo Bay and by banning torture without exception,” the president said.

As part of the renewed foreign policy engagement, Obama traveled to Europe in early April for the G20 Summit in London where leaders addressed the economic crisis; then to the NATO Summit to address Afghanistan and Pakistan and the need to revitalize the North Atlantic Alliance; and additional trips to

Canada, Mexico and Turkey, the European Union Summit, and the Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

“We’ve renewed our diplomatic efforts to deal with challenges ranging from the global economic crisis to the spread of nuclear weapons,” Obama said.

A transcript of the president’s press conference ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/April/20090430100147eaifas0.8484156.html?CP.rss=true> ) is available on America.gov.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov’s blog ( <http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/> ).

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>)* ♦

## Attacking Journalists Hurts All Society, Democracy Advocates Say . . .

*(Continued from page 10)*

the persecution of journalists. The caucus is co-chaired by Senator Richard Lugar (Republican of Indiana), Senator Chris Dodd (Democrat of Connecticut), Representative Adam Schiff (Democrat of California) and Representative Mike Pence (Republican of Indiana).

In a press release, Dodd said, “Journalists and representatives of the press are on the front lines of freedom of information. When they

are harmed or intimidated, the victim is not only them but democracy.”

Schiff said, “Where there is no freedom of the press, there is no freedom.” He added, “Journalists should not have to work in fear of governments throwing them in jail or harming them or their families simply for doing their job.”

See also “Journalism Under Siege ( <http://www.america.gov/journalism-siege.html> )” and

“Increasing Numbers of Journalists Are Being Imprisoned or Killed ( <http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2009/April/20090430121420ajesrom0.8194391.html&distid=ucs> ).”

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>)* ♦

## Increasing Numbers of Journalists Are Being Imprisoned or Killed

By Jane Morse  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — There has been a disturbing upswing in the number of journalists being imprisoned or killed, and more online journalists are being jailed by autocratic governments, say experts who spoke at a conference marking World Press Freedom Day.

The fall of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s brought an era of journalistic freedom, according to Joel Simon, executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). But in recent years, there has been a reversal, with more journalists being imprisoned or killed, he said.

CPJ is an independent, nonprofit organization founded in 1981 to promote press freedom worldwide by defending the rights of journalists to report the news without fear of reprisal. According to CPJ's research, 11 journalists worldwide have been killed for their work in the first four months of 2009; since January 1992, some 734 journalists have been killed. Iraq is the deadliest country in which journalists work; at least 88 journalists have been killed there, mainly by insurgents and militias, since the war began in 2003.

Many more journalists, CPJ found, have been imprisoned — 125 in 2008 alone. Among the 29 nations CPJ identified as jailing journalists, China jails the most, followed by Cuba, Burma, Eritrea and Uzbekistan.

According to Rodney Pinder, since the September 11 attacks on the United States, parts of the world have been more dangerous for jour-

nalists. The war on terrorism "gives autocratic governments an excuse to crack down on the flow of information," he said. Pinder is the director of the International News Safety Institute, a Brussels-based organization dedicated to the safety of news media personnel.

Pinder said only one in four journalists killed was covering combat, and in two-thirds of the cases the killers have not been identified. "Murder is cheap censorship," he observed. "Terror increases self censorship." Both close the window on information flow, he said.

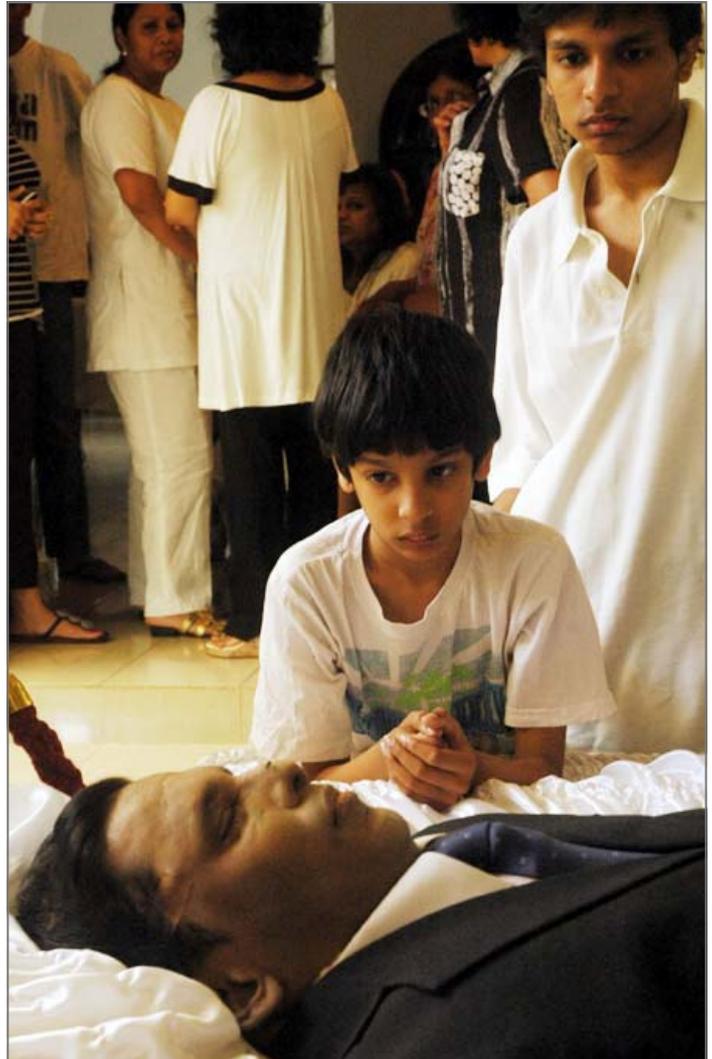
Simon and Pinder were among the panelists April 29 at an annual Press Freedom Day meeting co-hosted by the Congressional Caucus for the Freedom of the Press and the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA).

The Congressional Caucus for the Freedom of the Press was launched in 2006 as a bipartisan caucus aimed at advancing press freedom around the world. It is co-chaired by Senator Richard Lugar (Republican of Indiana), Senator Chris Dodd

(Democrat of Connecticut), Representative Adam Schiff (Democrat of California) and Representative Mike Pence (Republican of Indiana).

CIMA supports media worldwide via research and assistance programs. It is part of the National Endowment for Democracy, a private, congressionally supported organization created in 1983 to strengthen democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts.

*(Continued on page 15)*



*Lasantha Wickremetunga, winner of the 2009 UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize, was killed January 8.*

## Preparation for Avian Flu Helps Nations Fight H1N1 Pandemic

*By Cheryl Pellerin  
Science Writer*

**Washington** — Outbreaks of the novel strain of H1N1 influenza continue worldwide, infecting at least 331 people in 11 countries, with suspected cases in the thousands. In Mexico, schools, theaters, restaurants and other nonessential services are closed for five days beginning May 1.

On April 29, the World Health Organization (WHO) raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to phase 5, a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and a notice to countries that it is time to organize, communicate and implement planned mitigation measures.

In an April 30 briefing, Dr. Keiji Fukuda, WHO assistant director-general for health security and environment, said there were no immediate plans to move to phase 6, which indicates that a global pandemic is under way.

Mexico so far has reported 97 laboratory-confirmed cases with seven deaths, the United States has confirmed 109 cases with one death, and the following countries have confirmed cases but no deaths: Austria (one case), Canada (19), Germany (three), Israel (two), Netherlands (one), New Zealand (three), Spain (13), Switzerland (one) and the United Kingdom (eight). (See "Swine Flu Outbreaks Mobilize International Public Health Effort (<http://www.america.gov/st/scitech-english/2009/April/200904271633351cnirellep0.4592554.html&distid=ucs> ).")

On April 29, the United States announced it would provide \$5 million

to WHO and the Pan American Health Organization to support Mexico's efforts to contain the spread of H1N1. The funds will provide equipment and supplies to help with disease diagnosis and medical treatment for those suffering from the infection.

"The government of Mexico in concert with authorities around the world is taking strong action to contain the spread of H1N1 influenza

and assess the dangers it may pose," Chargé d'Affaires Leslie Bassett at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City said in a statement.

"The United States, as a neighbor and friend, is collaborating with Mexico and the international community to address this global concern."

Through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States is working closely on the ground and around the world with Mexican health authorities and international organizations.

### HELP FROM H5N1

Despite the growing number of H1N1 infections and uncertainties surrounding the outbreak, health officials are crediting the global response to another potential pandemic flu — highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza — with preparing countries to meet the current challenge.

"The world is better prepared for an influenza pandemic than at any time in history," WHO Director-General



*Bishop Kearny High School in New York City is closed April 30 as a precaution against the spread of the new H1N1 flu.*

Dr. Margaret Chan said in an April 29 briefing. "Preparedness measures undertaken because of the threat from H5N1 avian influenza were an investment and we are now benefiting from this investment. For the first time in history, we can track the evolution of a pandemic in real time."

In 1996, scientists isolated highly pathogenic H5N1 avian flu virus from a farmed goose in Guangdong province, China. The next year, in 1997, H5N1 outbreaks occurred in

*(Continued on page 14)*

## Preparation for Avian Flu Helps Nations Fight H1N1 Pandemic . . .

(Continued from page 13)

poultry at farms and live-animal markets in Hong Kong and — the first known human infections — in 18 people, six of whom died.

Six years later, in 2003, outbreaks among poultry occurred in South Korea and Thailand and the virus began to spread. Today, as of April 23, H5N1 has killed or prompted the destruction of hundreds of millions of domesticated and wild birds in more than 60 countries, infected 421 people in 15 countries and killed 257 of them.

### PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

The international focus on avian flu generated action worldwide. Nearly all governments put in place basic planning for pandemic flu activities. National surveillance systems with supporting laboratory and field investigation services were reinforced. Networks of laboratories, surveillance systems and response mechanisms enhanced regional capacity to detect and respond to pandemic flu and other diseases.

In that effort, the United States provided \$949 million to support international actions in more than 100 nations targeting preparedness and communication, surveillance and detection, and response and containment.

"If you look at what we have been practicing for the past five years and what we've been planning for,

pandemic flu was number one," CDC Acting Director Dr. Richard Besser said at an April 30 briefing.

"While microbes don't read the [pandemic mitigation] plan and you need to move away from the plan pretty soon after day one," he added, "the fact that we've been exercising several times a year for a pandemic and state and local health

Discussions are ongoing, he added, but "we would complete the production of next year's seasonal flu vaccine ... and then manufacturers would switch over to manufacturing vaccines for this H1N1 disease."

Besser said if the decision is made to produce an H1N1 vaccine, some doses might be ready by September or October.



*Some travelers coming from Cancun, Mexico, wear protective masks against the swine flu virus, as they arrive at the airport in Duesseldorf, Germany, on Thursday April 30, 2009. (AP Photo/Frank Augstein)*

More information about H1N1 is available on special pages at the Web sites of the CDC ( <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> ) and WHO ( <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html> ).

Continuing coverage of the H1N1 pandemic is available on [America.gov](http://www.america.gov) at Tracking the H1N1 Flu Pandemic ( [http://www.america.gov/h1n1\\_flu.html](http://www.america.gov/h1n1_flu.html) ).

departments have been getting tremendous resources for this has meant that when it arrived, we didn't have to sit down first and say, 'Let's talk about flu.' With a lot of emerging infections that's where the conversation is starting."

Besser said CDC scientists have isolated the H1N1 strain and are growing supplies of it for distribution to vaccine manufacturers if experts decide that a vaccine should be produced against the novel virus.

[www.america.gov/h1n1\\_flu.html](http://www.america.gov/h1n1_flu.html) ).

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See also

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Telling America's story

**Biden Urges Israel to End Settlements, . . .**

*(Continued from page 9)*

people that the promise of ending Israel's isolation in the region is real and genuine."

Hamas, which controls Gaza, can achieve legitimacy only when it renounces violence, recognizes Israel's existence and agrees to abide by previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements, Biden said. "These are not unreasonable demands; they're basic standards of international conduct."

Biden also demanded the "immediate and unconditional release" of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who has been held by Hamas since 2006.

The vice president also said the United States will explore opportunities for peace between Israel and Syria, which he said could "reshape the region," but cannot come at the expense of Israel's security or Lebanon's sovereignty and independ-

ence.

"We understand the immensity of the challenge ... [and] the hard choices that must be made," Biden said. But he said the path that has been pursued in recent years will not bring Israel or the Palestinians peace or security, nor provide the region with the stability and progress it needs.

A transcript of Biden's remarks ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/May/20090505161557eaifas0.7528955.html&distid=ucs> ) is available on America.gov.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog ( <http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/> ). ♦

**Increasing Numbers of Journalists Are Being Imprisoned or Killed . . .**

*(Continued from page 12)*

**PUBLISHING ONLINE BECOMES DANGEROUS**

Despotic governments, Simon said, have launched a "counteroffensive on Internet journalists." In a prison census released in 2008, CPJ found that more Internet journalists are jailed worldwide than journalists working in any other medium. In China, for example, 24 of the 28 reporters known to be imprisoned are online journalists.

Militant extremists are increasingly using the Internet to speak directly to their followers. And killing journalists who disagree with them, Simon said, "is cheap and an excellent way to spread fear."

CPJ, Simon said, is working with a coalition of human rights groups, academics and Internet companies on the Global Network Initiative, an effort to establish guidelines for information industries to protect freedom of expression and privacy. CPJ is looking at legislation, he said, that would compel Internet service providers to follow a "road map" when governments seek to enlist them in acts of censorship or surveillance that violate international standards of human rights.

As declared by the United Nations General Assembly, May 3 is World Press Freedom Day. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines the right of freedom of expression. Each year, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization marks World Press Freedom Day by conferring its World Press Free-

dom Prize on an individual or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to the defense of press freedom.

The 2009 prize will be awarded posthumously to Sri Lankan journalist Lasantha Wickrematunga, who was murdered in January. A lawyer as well as an investigative reporter, Wickrematunga campaigned against the conflict between Sri Lanka's army and the Tamil Tigers insurgent group, as well as against government efforts to curb the media.

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>)* ♦