



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Repairing Ties in Turkey, Obama Reaches Out to Muslim World



U.S. President Barack Obama addresses the Turkish parliament in Ankara, 04/06/09

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama completed his first overseas tour in Turkey, where he said America’s new efforts to engage with the Muslim world are part of his administration’s commitment to a foreign policy rooted in mutual respect and seeking common solutions to global challenges.

“I know that the trust that binds the United States and Turkey has been strained, and I know that strain is shared in many places where the Muslim faith is practiced. So let me say this as clearly as I can: The United States is

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Malaria Communities Program Launched

On Thursday, April 9, 2009 the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in collaboration with Fayyaa Integrated Development Association (FIDA) launched a malaria prevention and treatment program as part of the U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI) Malaria Communities Program. The program will benefit more than 1.7 million Ethiopians by increasing

community awareness about malaria prevention and control.

The program, worth U.S. \$1.5 million over three years, aims to reduce malaria morbidity and mortality in Jimma, Illuababor and East Shoa Zones of the Oromiya Region. The malaria prevention and treatment program implemented by FIDA will focus particularly on extending malaria preven-

tion and control activities in communities most affected by malaria, with specific attention to pregnant mothers and children under five years old.

Oromiya Regional Health Bureau Head Shalo Dhaba and representatives from the Federal Ministry of Health joined USAID Acting Mission Director Nancy Estes for the official launch held at the

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not, and will never be, at war with Islam," Obama said in an April 6 address to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Turkey's capital, Ankara.

"Our partnership with the Muslim world is critical not just in rolling back the violent ideologies that people of all faiths reject, but also to strengthen opportunity for all its people."

Close ties between the United States and the Republic of Turkey date back to the 1947 implementation of the Truman Doctrine aimed at strengthening the Muslim-majority state's economic and military self-reliance — a goal promoted from the Cold War era to the present day through close bilateral diplomacy and as a partnership between two of the largest military forces in the 28-nation NATO alliance.

Washington-Ankara diplomacy was strained by the Turkish parliament's 2003 decision to block U.S.-led coalition forces from using Turkey as a launching pad into neighboring Iraq. Obama's visit is the latest step by the new administration in repairing relations.

"Turkey is a critical ally. Turkey is an important part of Europe. And Turkey and the United States must stand together — and work together — to overcome the challenges of our time," Obama said,

citing Turkey's global role in both the recent G20 London summit on the global financial crisis and NATO's 60th Anniversary Summit in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany. "Because of the strength of our alliance and the endurance of

"This economic cooperation only reinforces the common security that Europe and the United States share with Turkey as a NATO ally, and the common values that we share as democracies," Obama said.



Obama lays a wreath at the tomb of Turkish Republic founder Kemal Ataturk.

Obama expressed support for Turkey's European Union membership bid, praising its progress on a wide range of reforms. "Turkey is bound to Europe by more than the bridges over the Bosphorus. Centuries of shared history, culture and commerce bring you together. Europe gains by the diversity of ethnicity, tradition and faith — it is not diminished by it. And Turkish membership would broaden and strengthen Europe's foundation once more," Obama said.

our friendship, both America and Turkey are stronger and the world is more secure."

American engagement with Turkey and the broader Muslim world is much more than shared security challenges, Obama said. Expanding U.S.-Turkish trade, cooperation on renewable energy investments and climate change, as well as continued support for Turkish efforts to deliver Caspian-region oil and gas to European markets all figured prominently in talks between Obama and Turkish President Abdullah Gül and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Turkey and the United States share a commitment to working for peace in the Middle East. In 2008, Turkey hosted talks between its southern neighbor, Syria, and Israel, and played a pivotal role in securing a cease-fire in Gaza earlier this year.

"Like the United States, you seek a future of opportunity and statehood for the Palestinians. So now, working together, we must not give into pessimism and mistrust. We must pursue every opportunity for progress," Obama said.

Turkey could also play a key role in

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Malaria Communities Program Launched . . .

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Ghion Hotel. In her remarks, Ms. Estes said, "Ethiopia has made tremendous strides in scaling up malaria prevention and control efforts. Now is exactly the time to keep up the momentum and continue to save lives."

The malaria prevention and treatment program will increase community awareness to create demand for and increase the use of key malaria interventions, as well as improve the quality of malaria diagnosis and treatment services in private facilities. It will also link to existing health services, integrating malaria prevention and control programs to antenatal care clinics, prevention of mother to child transmission services, and existing FIDA HIV/AIDS prevention and home and commu-

nity-based care services. As part of the program, FIDA also plans to improve the capacity of civic based organizations, faith based organizations, and Health Extension Workers to bolster malaria prevention and treatment support at the community level, getting key malaria messages to households.

The program is funded by the American people through PMI, an initiative which aims to halve malaria deaths in 15 African countries using proven malaria interventions. PMI is a collaborative U.S. Government effort led by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in conjunction with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of State, and the White House. Activities supported by PMI in Ethiopia primarily focus on

Oromiya Regional State, the country's largest administrative regional state and the regional state bearing the brunt of the country's malaria burden. Activities are planned and implemented in close collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia's Federal Ministry of Health and the Oromia Regional Health Bureau.

"FIDA is an indigenous organization with six years experience implementing community level health and other development programs in more than three regions in Ethiopia. FIDA emphasizes community capacity building in its programs, developing community ownership and strengthening stakeholder partnerships," said FIDA Executive Director Anbessu Tolla during the ceremony. ♦

Repairing Ties in Turkey, Obama Reaches Out to Muslim World . . .

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new U.S. efforts to engage with Iran, Obama said.

"The United States seeks engagement based on mutual interest and mutual respect. We want Iran to play its rightful role in the community of nations," Obama said. "But Iran's leaders must choose whether they will try to build a weapon or build a better future for their people."

Obama also recognized Turkey as an essential partner in international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan — a top foreign policy priority for the Obama White House. Approximately 800 Turkish troops are serv-

ing in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission, while former Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin served as the alliance's top civilian official in Kabul from 2003 to 2006. As the Obama administration consults with allies to forge a new international strategy in Afghanistan, Turkey could continue to play a key role, Obama said.

"The world has come too far to let this region backslide," Obama said. "That is why we are increasing our efforts to train Afghans to sustain their own security, and to reconcile former adversaries. That's why we are increasing our support for the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, so that we stand on the side not

only of security, but also of opportunity and the promise of a better life."

A transcript of Obama's speech to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/April/20090406112929eaifas0.5201685.html?CP.rss=true>) is available on [America.gov](http://www.america.gov).

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

Obama Seeks World Free of Nuclear Weapons

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama vowed that the United States will take concrete steps toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

“We will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same,” Obama said in an April 5 speech in Hradcanske Square outside the medieval Prague Castle in the Czech Republic. “To reduce our warheads and stockpiles, we will negotiate a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with the Russians this year.”

Obama said he and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev began the weapons-reduction process while attending the G20 Financial Summit in London April 1–2. The current START-I Treaty between the two countries expires December 5 this year.

At the U.S.-European Union Summit in Prague, Obama said he and Medvedev will seek to include all nuclear weapons states in the process of reducing arsenals.

Obama is on an eight-day trip to Europe that marks his entry on the world stage. He began in London at the G20 summit, and then attended the 2009 NATO Summit held in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany, April 3–4 before arriving in Prague for the U.S.-EU Summit. He concludes the trip April 6 in Ankara and Istanbul, Turkey.

“To achieve a global ban on nuclear testing, my administration will immediately and aggressively pursue U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. After more



President Barack Obama delivers his public speech on the Hradcanske square near the Prague Castle in Prague, Czech Republic, on Sunday, April 5, 2009. (AP Photo)

than five decades of talks, it is time for the testing of nuclear weapons to finally be banned,” Obama said.

Obama said that if the world is serious about halting the spread of nuclear weapons, then it must also be equally serious about stopping the production of weapons-grade materials used to create them. “Together we will strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a basis for cooperation,” the president said.

The Czech Republic is one of two East European nations selected for a limited U.S. missile defense system. The United States plans to locate 10 silo-launched anti-missile rockets in Poland that are designed to knock down intercontinental ballistic missiles, and a radar early-warning system in the Czech Republic.

The system is designed to protect U.S. allies from a potential threat posed by a rogue nation with nuclear weapons, such as Iran or North Korea. North Korea launched a three-stage Taepodong-2 missile April 4 that fell harmlessly into the Pacific Ocean shortly after liftoff.

“As long as the threat from Iran persists, we will go forward with a missile system that is cost-effective and proven,” the president said. “If the Iranian threat is eliminated, we will have a stronger basis for security, and the driving force for missile-defense construction in Europe will be removed.”

The president said North Korea’s actions April 4 illustrate why every effort needs to be made to address the threats posed by the possession of nuclear weapons. And Obama said his administration will seek engagement with Iran based on mutual interests and mutual respect. Because of the threat of terrorists obtaining nuclear weapons, Obama said he is launching a new international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials worldwide within four years. “We will set new standards, expand our cooperation with Russia, pursue new partnerships to lock down these sensitive materials,” he 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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Obama Makes Unannounced Visit to Iraq

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama made a surprise visit to Iraq April 7, where he said that a gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces will help cement security gains as the Iraqi government continues gaining strength.

“You have given Iraq the opportunity to stand on its own as a democratic country,” Obama told U.S. troops at Camp Victory outside Baghdad. “It is time for us to transition to the Iraqis. They need to take responsibility for their country and for their sovereignty.”

Obama arrived in Iraq from neighboring Turkey, the final leg of a weeklong European tour that included stops at the G20 summit in London, the 60th Anniversary NATO Summit in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany, and talks with European Union leaders in Prague, where Obama called for a global reduction in nuclear weapon stockpiles. Earlier on April 7, Obama talked about efforts to stabilize Iraq — a major issue during his 2008 presidential election campaign — in a roundtable discussion with Turkish students at Istanbul’s Mimar Sinan University.

“I opposed the war in Iraq. I thought it was a bad idea,” Obama said. “Now that we’re there, I have a responsibility to make sure that as we bring troops out, that we do so in a careful enough way that we don’t see a complete collapse into violence.”

After meeting with U.S. troops, Obama and National Security Advisor James Jones met with coalition

commander General Ray Odierno at the al-Faw Palace, where Obama also held brief talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and President Jalal Talabani. Obama visited Iraq twice as a member of the U.S. Senate, but this trip was his first as president.

Obama praised political progress, but acknowledged that security gains remain fragile, as seen by a car bombing in Baghdad’s Sadr City neighborhood earlier in the day. A series of explosions killed 37 people, according to news reports. “It is important for people to know that there is still a lot of work to do here,” Obama said.

“You’ve seen a greater willingness on the part of all the factions in Iraq to resolve their issues politically and through nonviolent means. But with the national elections coming up, many of the unresolved issues may be brought to a head,” Obama said. “It’s very important for us to use all of our influence to encourage parties to resolve these issues in ways that are equitable and fair.”

On February 27, Obama announced his administration’s plans to withdraw approximately 142,000 U.S. troops from Iraq. Forces will pull back to bases outside major cities by June 30, when they will begin preparing to leave the country. Force levels are expected to remain relatively constant until after Iraqi general elections this December, then the withdrawal process will begin in earnest.

Going into 2011, when all U.S. forces are to leave Iraq under the terms of a Status of Forces Agreement between the United States and Iraq, a residual force of be-

tween 35,000 and 50,000 U.S. troops will remain, tasked with training, equipping and advising Iraqi security forces; conducting targeted counterterrorism missions; and protecting U.S. civilian and military efforts. Obama has said he would like to complete the withdrawal ahead of schedule on a 19-month timetable.

“The drawdown of our military should send a clear signal that Iraq’s future is now its own responsibility. The long-term success of the Iraqi nation will depend upon decisions made by Iraq’s leaders and the fortitude of the Iraqi people,” Obama said.

As combat brigades gradually are withdrawn, Obama said, the United States will pursue the second part of its strategy: sustained diplomacy for a more peaceful and prosperous Iraq. Leading that effort will be the new U.S. ambassador to Iraq, Christopher Hill, who is moving from his post as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs and chief negotiator in the Six-Party Talks on North Korea’s nuclear weapons program.

Iraqis “are going to have to focus on providing government services that encourage confidence among their citizens,” Obama said. “We can’t do it for them. But what we can do is make sure that we are a stalwart partner, that we are working alongside them, that we are committed to their success.”

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

Obama Condemns North Korea's Missile Launch

By Merle Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama condemned North Korea's launch of a long-range Taepodong-2 missile April 4 as a threat to the security of North-east Asia and international peace and security.

"With this provocative act, North Korea has ignored its international obligations, rejected unequivocal calls for restraint, and further isolated itself from the community of nations," Obama said April 5 in Prague, where he gave a speech on nuclear proliferation.

Obama identified the rocket fired by the North Koreans as a Taepodong-2 missile, which has a range of more than 6,700 kilometers, putting it within striking distance of Alaska, Hawaii and most of East Asia.

Obama was in Prague on April 5 to attend the U.S.-European Union Summit before concluding his eight-day trip to Europe in Turkey on April 6. He attended the G20 Financial Summit in London April 1-2, and the 2009 NATO Summit in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany, April 3-4.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command and the U.S. Northern Command, at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado, acknowledged April 5 that North Korea launched the three-stage Taepo-

dong-2 missile at 10:30 p.m. EDT April 4 (0230 GMT). "Stage one of the missile fell into the Sea of Japan/East Sea. The remaining stages along with the payload itself landed in the Pacific Ocean," the Northern

design problems brought on by merging a foreign design with the design of North Korea's medium-range Rodong ballistic missiles. This has led to structural flight problems, according to western arms analysts.

The missile has never flown successfully.

North Korean officials said in advance of the launch that it was intended to put an "experimental communications satellite" into orbit, but western analysts said the launch was intended to test the Taepodong-2. The initial launch was delayed because of high winds in the area.

According to Northern Command, at no time was the North Korean missile a threat to North America or Hawaii. Japan and the United States had been closely monitoring the launch

since before North Korean officials announced they intended to launch it.

Obama said the launch was clearly in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1718, which forbids North Korea from further nuclear testing or ballistic missile launches. The October 2006 resolution imposed arms and financial sanctions on North Korea after it conducted its first nuclear test.

The U.N. Security Council was scheduled to meet in an emergency mid-afternoon session April 5 in New York. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is trav-

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South Koreans protest April 5 against North Korea's firing of a ballistic missile.

Command said in a prepared statement.

The missile apparently flew over Japan, but there have been no reports of debris falling on Japanese cities or the countryside, Japanese officials said in published news reports.

The missile was launched from the coastal Musudan-ri launch site in the North Hamgyong province near the tip of the East Korea Bay in northeastern North Korea, both the South Korean and U.S. governments said. The launch site was once called Taepodong, which is the source of the missile's name. The Taepodong-2 has suffered from

G20 Pledges \$1.1 Trillion for Economic Recovery

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Leaders of the world's most powerful economies have pledged \$1.1 trillion to restore credit, economic growth and jobs in the world economy.

"Together with the measures we have each taken nationally, this constitutes a global plan for recovery on an unprecedented scale," the leaders said in a communiqué issued April 2 at the conclusion of the G20 London Summit. The gathering of leaders was held in the Docklands, a former shipping area on the Thames River that has undergone major redevelopment.

An emergency re-sources account of the International Monetary

Fund (IMF), which is the emergency lender for nations in financial crisis, will be expanded to \$750 billion, with an additional \$250 billion for new Special Drawing Rights — an international reserve asset used by the IMF to supplement the existing reserves of member countries. The G20 leaders also agreed to provide at least \$100 billion of additional lending to multilateral development banks, and ensure \$250 billion of support for trade finance.

The leaders also agreed to get additional resources from IMF gold sales for finance for the poorest countries.

"By acting together to fulfill these pledges we will bring the world

economy out of recession and prevent a crisis like this from recurring in the future," the communiqué said.

Both IMF and World Bank economists have forecast that the world economy will shrink in 2009 for the first time since World War II.



G20 leaders at the London Summit

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who hosted the financial summit of the most advanced and largest emerging-market countries, said after the meeting that this accord, which also includes regulatory reforms of financial institutions, "reflects a very high degree of consensus and agreement between all of us."

"Today the largest countries of the world have agreed on a global plan for economic recovery and reform," Brown said. The plan addresses two broad areas of concern raised by the United States and several European nations — more economic stimulus paired with more regulatory reform.

The London Summit Leaders' Statement calls for the following measures:

More regulation of financial institutions, instruments and markets, including hedge funds, which are unregulated investment vehicles used by institutional investors and the wealthy.

New principles on executive pay and compensation to avoid schemes that encourage excessive risk taking and reward failure.

A new Financial Stability Board with a strengthened mandate that includes all G20 countries, Spain and the European Commission to collaborate with the IMF and provide early warning of significant economic changes

and financial risks that need to be addressed.

Encouraging tax haven countries to comply with rules and regulations from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to fight money laundering and tax evasion, or face public condemnation and potential economic sanctions.

After recovery occurs, encouraging commercial banks to build up more capital reserves during healthy economic times to act as a buffer against future economic downturns.

Requiring credit rating agencies to adhere to an international code of good practices and eliminate con-

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Obama Condemns North Korea's Missile Launch . . .

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eling with the president in Europe, was working throughout the morning to build international consensus on condemning North Korea's missile launch.

"We will immediately consult with our allies in the region, including Japan and the Republic of Korea, and members of the U.N. Security Council to bring this matter before the council," Obama said in Prague. "I urge North Korea to abide fully by the resolutions of the U.N. Security Council and to refrain from further provocative actions."

The United States and the European Union issued a joint statement April 5 saying they were ready to work with others in urging North Korea to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons and hostile threats aimed at its neighbors.

"This action demands a response from the international community, including from the U.N. Security Council, to demonstrate that its resolutions cannot be defied with

impunity," the joint statement said.

The chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee, Howard Berman, issued a statement in Washington calling the missile test an unnecessary provocation that only serves to raise tensions in the region.

"It is alarming that North Korea carried out this missile launch in direct defiance of the international community," Berman said.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he regretted North Korea's actions given the strong international appeal not to conduct the missile test. "Given the volatility in the region, as well as a stalemate in interaction among the concerned parties, such a launch is not conducive to efforts to promote dialogue, regional peace and stability," Ban said in a statement from Paris.

"Preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is a high priority for my administration," Obama said in Prague. "The United States is

fully committed to maintaining security and stability in Northeast Asia and we will continue working for the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks."

Negotiations in the Six-Party process — which includes the host China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia and the United States — stalled after North Korea refused to provide full disclosure of its nuclear weapons development program for international verification. The Six-Party process was set up to try and remove all nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula.

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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G20 Pledges \$1.1 Trillion for Economic Recovery . . .

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licts of interest with other financial institutions to avoid providing unrealistic ratings of securities.

Aggressively discouraging trade protectionism among nations, and remaining committed to reaching an ambitious and balanced conclusion to the international-trade-liberalizing Doha Development Round of trade negotiations, "which is urgently needed." Finishing work on the

trade agreement could boost the global economy by at least \$150 billion annually, according to the statement.

"For the first time, we have a common approach to cleaning up banks around the world, to restructuring of the world financial system. We have maintained our commitment to help the world's poorest," Brown said at a news briefing. "This is a collective action of people around the world working at their best."

The G20 nations represent the world's most powerful economies, with 90 percent of the world's economic output, 80 percent of world trade and two-thirds of the world's population.

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United States to Seek Membership on U.N. Human Rights Council

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States believes that working within the U.N. Human Rights Council is the best way to improve the council's goal of thwarting global human rights abuses, says the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice announced March 31 that the United States will seek a seat on the council this year.

The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 elected members. Its mission is to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights globally, State Department acting deputy spokesman Gordon Duguid said in a prepared statement.

"Human rights are an essential element of American global foreign policy," Clinton said. "With others, we will engage in the work of improving the U.N. human rights system to advance the vision of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights."

The next round of elections to the council will be May 15 in the U.N. General Assembly, and members will be elected to three-year terms. The council, created in March 2006 to replace the largely dysfunctional

Rice said working within the council is a more effective way to promote and protect human rights. "Those who suffer from abuse and oppression around the world, as well as those who dedicate their lives to

advancing human rights, need the council to be balanced and credible," she said.

The Obama administration's decision was welcomed by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. In a statement released April 1, Ban said it marked "a concrete embodiment of the US commitment to a 'new era of engagement.'"



The 10th regular session of the U.N. Human Rights Council opened in Geneva March 2.

U.N. Commission on Human Rights, is scheduled to undergo a formal review of its structure and procedures in 2011.

The United States chose not to join the council at its inception in 2006. It began participating as an observer in March to begin addressing violations of human rights worldwide.

"The United States helped to found the United Nations and retains a vital stake in advancing that organization's genuine commitment to the human rights values that we share with other member nations," Clinton said.

"Full U.S. engagement on human rights issues is an important step toward realizing the goal of an inclusive and vibrant intergovernmental process to protect human rights around the globe," Ban said.

In a conference call with journalists, Rice said the United States sees no inherent benefit from being critical of the council from the outside without having significant influence on its decisions.

Duguid said the decision to rejoin the Human Rights Council is in keeping with the Obama administration's "new era of engagement"

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Some Americans Directly Confronting Legacy of Slavery

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Woodstock, Virginia, resident Phoebe Kilby suspected there was a connection between her white family and the black Kilbys who lived in nearby Front Royal. After confirming through research that her family had once owned the ancestors of the Front Royal Kilbys as slaves, she decided to make contact with Betty Kilby, an African American, and begin a dialogue as a way of personally addressing what some describe as America's original sin: African slavery.

At Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, where she works as associate director of development at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Phoebe discovered the program Coming to the Table (CTTT), an initiative by descendants of slaveholders and descendants of enslaved people to connect with each other, share their histories and discuss the legacies of slavery, including race relations. The program takes its name from a speech by civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., who envisioned a day when "the sons of former slaves and sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood."

Program director Amy Potter told America.gov that CTTT began when the university's grounds supervisor, Will Hairston, a descendant of one of the largest slaveholding families in Virginia and North Carolina, approached her with his experience of participating in the black Hairston family reunions. He was surprised at how warmly he was received, but through further



Betty (left) and Phoebe (right) Kilby are working to confront the trauma of slavery passed down through generations.

conversations began to understand the personal pain that was left over from the past. At that time, Potter worked with EMU's Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience program and saw how, through relationships like the Hairstons', it was possible to address the inherited trauma of slavery.

"As time went on, people would call me who had heard about this and knew they were descendants of a slaveholder. ... [They] realized that they had identified descendants of the people their family had enslaved and wanted to get in touch with them. So I and the other people who were involved talked them through the process," she said.

HISTORY CAN BE UNKNOWN, UNWANTED

Potter says CTTT participants "have acknowledged the history and faced the difficult issues. They are interested in a relationship with each other, and they are enjoying being in a relationship with each other."

Other Americans become angry at the idea of revisiting the past. "If it honestly was dead and in the past

... they probably wouldn't be too upset about it," and would instead be merely uninterested, she said.

Most have little or no idea that slavery or slaveholding is a part of their family history, especially if they have moved away from ancestral homes. Information might have been lost or omitted due to shame or a simple lack of curiosity.

Phoebe Kilby told America.gov that when she asked her father about the black Kilbys living nearby, he insisted there was no connection. She said that on Betty Kilby's side, "her grandparents wouldn't talk about it. ... It was a source of shame. Her father suspected, but was afraid to look."



Eastern Mennonite University gathered slave and slaveholder descendants for a remembrance ritual in 2006.

Phoebe researched court records and discovered proof of the relationship. When she found contact information for Betty in 2007, she wrote an e-mail. "My name is Phoebe Kilby, and I am white. ... I suspect that our families had a relationship in the past." The reply from Betty was positive. In the subject line, Betty wrote "Hello cousin."

But Betty had to do some soul

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searching, Potter said. She had experienced racism from whites and been targeted as one of the first African-American schoolchildren to integrate Front Royal's public schools in the 1950s. Betty wondered what her ancestors would think of the contact. "It wasn't until she really thought about her grandmother and her father, what they taught in their life, that she realized they would have been OK with it, and that was a step that she needed to go through mentally in order to meet Phoebe," Potter said.

CONFRONTING THE PAST HELPS UNITE THE NATION

Although an initiative may be refused or ignored, Potter said, many people attempt to connect because they want to learn more about their ancestors.

Confronting the past is not easy.

Rape could be a component of slavery, as evidenced by many lighter-skinned descendants of slaves.

"What do you do with that? That's not easy when you've created this reality about your family, that they're good people and just like you," Potter said.

Phoebe said much of the brutal reality of slavery has been covered up. "But it was there, and it wasn't that long ago."

Betty and Phoebe now speak in seminars together to share their stories and their ways to heal together. "It has been a very enriching experience," Phoebe said, and it has opened her eyes to African-American struggles ranging from social inequality to educational barriers.

During his presidential campaign, Barack Obama, whose own heritage includes white slaveholders, said Americans still have not worked

through the complexities of racial relations and historically accumulated pain. "We have no choice if we are to continue on the path of a more perfect union," he said March 19, 2008.

Potter said Obama's election has opened up opportunities for more frank conversations about slavery in the mainstream media than ever before and encouraged a conversation that "was not allowed at all 10 years ago." And, although CTTT participants are few, "the number is growing," she said. "Something is happening."

More information on Coming to the Table (<http://www.emu.edu/cjp/comingtothetable>) is available on the program's Web site.

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United States to Seek Membership on U.N. Human Rights Council . . .

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with other nations.

Nigerian Ambassador Martin Uhomobhi, the current president of the Human Rights Council, issued a statement in Geneva, where the council is based, saying, "I warmly welcome the engagement."

"Should the U.S. become a full-fledged member of the council, I am confident they would continue to provide valuable input," Uhomobhi said.

The chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee, Howard Berman, said the United States has stayed on the sidelines of the Human Rights Council for too long.

"I strongly support the administration's decision to engage with the United Nations Human Rights Council by running for a seat this year. The global forum has become increasingly dysfunctional and politicized, with virtually no guidance from the United States," Berman said in a prepared statement.

Berman said the council's "pathological focus on demonizing Israel" has prevented it from examining human rights crises in Zimbabwe, Sudan and other countries that have essentially escaped scrutiny.

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U.S. Adds \$80 Million to International School Feeding Program

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is adding \$80 million in food commodities to a school feeding program for developing countries that are committed to universal education.

“No child in the world should go to bed hungry, and this additional funding will help remedy the very sad reality that across the globe, every night many do,” Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said April 7 in announcing the added resources for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program for fiscal year 2009. With the additional resources, the McGovern-Dole program will distribute \$175.5 million worth of food commodities in fiscal 2009.

Vilsack said Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Uganda have been added to the program.

“As a result of this effort, 655,000 poor children will eat a nutritious meal during their school day. By combining nutrition assistance with education, this investment will create opportunity for some of the poorest children in the world,” Vilsack said at the International Food Aid Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

The previously allocated assistance benefits nearly 4.2 million children in 19 countries in Africa, Asia and

Latin America, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The McGovern-Dole program is named for George McGovern, a former senator and former U.S. ambassador to the U.N. food agencies, and for former Senate leader Bob Dole. In 2008, McGovern and Dole were awarded the World Food Prize for their work fighting world hunger.



McGovern-Dole School Feeding Project at St. Elizabeth Primary School, Kenya

Vilsack’s announcement came after President Obama on April 2 called on Congress to double the amount of funds allocated for fiscal year 2010 to help poor countries develop their agricultural sectors.

The funding boost proposed by Obama would bring U.S. agricultural assistance to more than \$1 billion in fiscal 2010 and would help achieve the goals of cutting in half the proportion of people suffering from hunger by decreasing food prices in local markets.

The additional funds, if approved, would be concentrated in the following areas:

Expanding the development and use of technology in collaboration with U.S. agricultural research universities.

Boosting access to quality seeds, fertilizers, irrigation equipment and rural credit.

Linking small producers to markets.

Organizing farmers into cooperatives, establishing warehouse receipt systems and connecting goods to local and regional markets.

Building social safety nets in the

form of more access to jobs, education and health care.

Improving national and regional transportation corridors.

Encouraging private investment in agricultural development.

Building partnerships between the private and nonprofit sectors.

Obama’s call echoes recent legislation introduced by senators Dick Lugar and Bob Casey to boost agri-

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Gates Foundation Awards Additional \$255 Million to Combat Polio

By Nancy L. Pontius
Special Correspondent

Littleton, Colorado — To support the global campaign against polio-myelitis (polio) — a contagious virus that paralyzes and sometimes kills young children — the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded two challenge grants (the most recent in January for \$255 million) to the service organization Rotary International. Together, the two grants total \$355 million and must be matched by new donations of \$200 million over the next three years.

The grants support the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), a partnership launched in 1988 by the World Health Organization (WHO), Rotary International, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and UNICEF, working together with national governments. For this initiative, the U.S. government has contributed approximately \$1.3 billion since 1991. There also have been donations from private U.S. organizations and individuals, including contributions from U.S. Rotary Clubs of almost \$204 million.

“Rotarians, government leaders and health professionals have made a phenomenal commitment, so polio [currently] afflicts only a small number of the world’s children,” Bill Gates, co-chair of the Gates Foun-

ation, said in announcing the new grant in January. “However, complete elimination of the polio virus is difficult and will continue to be difficult for a number of years. Rotary in particular has inspired my own personal commitment to get deeply involved in achieving eradication.”



Bill Gates, at the 2009 Rotary International Assembly in San Diego, announces a new \$255 million challenge grant for polio eradication.

“The contribution by the Gates Foundation and matching funds from Rotary come at a very strategic moment, providing additional momentum to get across the finish line to complete the worldwide eradication of polio,” Dr. Steve Cochi, senior adviser on polio eradication at CDC’s Global Immunization Division, told America.gov.

In January, the United Kingdom announced a contribution of \$150 million to the GPEI, and Germany gave \$130 million. Other countries, including Canada and Russia, also have made significant donations. “Since 1988, the GPEI has been very successful in reducing polio

cases by over 99 percent,” Cochi said. “Polio has been eliminated from more than 200 countries by proven strategies, and we are very close to victory globally, but are stalled at the threshold of success by difficulties in the four remaining polio-endemic countries— Nigeria, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan — where polio has never been completely eradicated.”

Polio is a highly infectious, potentially fatal disease that invades the nervous system and causes muscle paralysis in a matter of hours. Polio has no cure but can be prevented through multiple vaccinations. “People can be infected with polio and silently transmit the virus to others without displaying symptoms, which can pose a challenge to controlling the epidemic spread of the virus,” Cochi said.

TOP PRIORITIES

“The key issue now is stopping the spread of polio through people infected in the polio-endemic countries who might travel anywhere in the world,” Cochi said. “For example, over 20 countries in Africa had previously eliminated polio, only to become re-infected by importation of the virus from Nigeria, and had to work hard to eliminate polio a second time, and in some cases several times, as a result of numerous importations from Nigeria.”

“[Therefore] the whole world remains vulnerable to the threat of

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Gates Foundation Awards Additional \$255 Million to Combat Polio . . .

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polio, and vaccinations must continue everywhere to keep the barrier in place," he added.

"The Gates challenge grant will focus on efforts in the polio-endemic countries, and other high-risk countries, including Sudan, Chad and Ethiopia," Carol Pandak, manager of Rotary's PolioPlus program, told America.gov. In the polio-endemic countries, issues to be resolved include low vaccine effectiveness (northern India), low vaccination coverage rates (Nigeria), and access problems due to conflict and insecurity (Afghanistan and Pakistan), she added.

ROTARY POLIO PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

"Local Rotarians on PolioPlus committees in those four countries are our main focal points to [connect] with WHO, CDC and UNICEF at the country level, and to motivate their own governments' immunization activities," said Pandak.

For example, in Nigeria, she said, "Nigerian Rotarians are engaging local leaders at state and local government levels to dialogue and to enhance accountability at the lowest level of government, to support high quality polio immunization activities."

Bill Gates visited Nigeria in January to learn more. In Abuja, Gates commended the renewed resolve he saw firsthand, and expressed optimism that leaders at all levels of the country will help create a movement to protect Nigerian children from polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases.



Mr. Bill Gates participated in Nigeria's Immunization Plus Days programs in January, 2009.

Rotary International has contributed nearly \$850 million to date and countless volunteer hours to immunize more than 2 billion children in 122 countries.

U.S. Rotarians travel to help with polio immunization campaigns. Polio-survivor Ann Lee Hussey of Maine has participated in immunization day activities 12 times, most recently going to Kaduna, Nigeria in March. In February, Noelle Galperin of Florida led a group of 45 to India with a three-day effort to distribute live polio vaccines to nearly 80,000 children.

HOPEFUL SIGNS

Since 1988, more than 2 billion children in 125 countries have been vaccinated. In 2008 alone, campaigns in 36 countries provided 2.46 billion vaccine doses to 340 million children.

In 2008, some 1,659 cases of polio occurred worldwide, a reduction of more than 99 percent from 1988 levels. In 2009, some 169 cases had occurred as of March 25.

"The key [to polio eradication] is political will, good management and high quality implementation of proven strategies to prevent the disease," Cochi said.

"We have demonstrated that polio can be eliminated in the most difficult places in the world," Pandak said. "It is definitely possible."

More information is available on the GPEI Web site (<http://www.polioeradication.org/>).

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

New Medical Protocol Aims to Prevent Bloodstream Infections

By Erika Gebel
Special Correspondent

Baltimore — Hospitals are havens of healing, but they also house dangerous germs that can and do infect patients. Hospital-acquired bloodstream infections are common, deadly and, according to research, preventable. Dr. Peter Pronovost has developed a program to help prevent bloodstream infections and is sharing it with the world.



Dr. Peter Pronovost

Catheters — tubes placed into a neck, chest or groin blood vessel — can deliver medication and fluids to — or provide a blood sample from — patients in a hospital, but they also can introduce dangerous bacteria directly into a patient's bloodstream. According to Pronovost, a professor at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and director of the Johns Hopkins Quality and Safety Research Group (QSRG), 80,000 patients become infected through a catheter each year in the United States with around 30,000 deaths. At a cost of \$45,000 per infection, the annual expense of these infections could reach \$2.3 billion, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The impact these infections have globally is unclear. "Most other countries aren't measuring bloodstream infections. A crucial first step is that we want to know how big of a problem we are dealing with," Pronovost said. "But even in developing countries this might be an issue."

The World Health Organization is teaming up with QSRG to bring the Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program (CUSP) to Spain, Peru and Chile beginning in April. Representatives of the United Kingdom are working directly with QSRG to introduce CUSP to their nation, also in April.

CUSP, a collaborative effort among QSRG, the Health Research and Educational Trust and the Michigan Health and Hospital Association's Keystone Center for Patient Safety and Quality, ran throughout Michigan for 18 months and reduced catheter-related bloodstream infection rates by 66 percent, saving an estimated 2,000 lives and \$200 million.

"This is by far the largest, most robust and sustained improvement we've seen [in bloodstream infection rates], and people are hungry for things that work," Pronovost said. Because of the dramatic reduction in infection rates observed in Michigan, CUSP is expanding. On February 1, the program was rolled out in 30 other states.

STUDY SHOWS CATHETER-RELATED INFECTIONS ARE PREVENTABLE

It was not always clear that it was possible to prevent catheter-related bloodstream infections. "We thought for years that these infections were inevitable," Pronovost said, but the Michigan study shows that they are not. At the heart of CUSP's success is simplifying complicated and lengthy patient-safety guidelines. "What was needed was summarizing evidence in a simple checklist. Turn a 100-page document into just five different things."

By following a short protocol — essentially a checklist — each time a catheter is placed, health care providers appear to use good technique more often. The checklist is five steps: Wash your hands; clean



Dr. Terry Bowers discusses catheters with medical fellows at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan.

the patient's skin; put on a cap, gown and mask; avoid placing the catheter on groin; and take out lines when you do not need them. But the checklist is only part of the program.

"CUSP is a system that allows doc-

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United States Hosts 32nd Meeting of Antarctic Treaty Nations

*By Cheryl Pellerin
Staff Writer*

Washington — At a critical time for the Antarctic Peninsula, which scientists say is one of the fastest-warming places on Earth, and the increasing loss of summer ice in the Arctic Ocean, the first joint session of officials representing the Antarctic Treaty and the Arctic Council convened April 6 in Baltimore.

The historic meeting marks the start of the 32nd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, hosted by the United States in Baltimore April 6–17. Nearly 400 diplomats, Antarctic program managers and logistics experts, along with polar scientists from 47 countries, will discuss environmental protection, polar science and tourism.

Calling the Antarctic “one of the planet’s most remote, beautiful and dangerous places,” Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton opened the joint session April 6.

“The Antarctic is important for humanity’s understanding of our planet and our ability to anticipate and mitigate the changes caused by global warming,” she said. “With the [April 4] collapse of an ice bridge that holds in place the Wilkins Ice Shelf in the Antarctic, we are reminded that global warming has already had enormous effects

on our planet and we have no time to lose in tackling this crisis.”

Clinton said attention also is needed in the Arctic, adding, “I’m very pleased the Obama administration has made it clear that we are committed to working with you and leading in our efforts, advancing toward Copenhagen to take united action on behalf of our response to

of the Antarctic Treaty and at the conclusion of the 2007–2009 International Polar Year, a coordinated polar research effort among scientists from more than 60 nations.

U.S. initiatives to be presented at the meeting include proposals to limit the size of vessels that can land passengers in Antarctica and to establish higher standards for the use of lifeboats aboard tourist vessels that visit the southernmost continent.



Secretary Clinton and other officials at the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting and the Arctic Council joint session, April 6

global climate change.”

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (the 15th Conference of the Parties), hosted by Denmark, will take place in Copenhagen December 7–18 to draft an ambitious global climate agreement for the period beginning in 2012 when the first commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol expires. Ministers and officials from 192 countries will participate.

The Baltimore meeting occurs on the 50th anniversary of the signing

Arctic Council member states are Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States. Permanent participants on the council include Arctic organizations of indigenous people. The council chairmanship rotates every two years; Denmark holds the chairmanship from 2009 to 2011.

The Antarctic Treaty, signed in the United States in 1959 by 12 nations, begins with the words,

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United States Hosts 32nd Meeting of Antarctic Treaty Nations . . .

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“Recognizing that it is in the interest of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes . . .” (See “New South Pole Station Continues 50-Year Scientific Mission (<http://www.america.gov/st/english/2008/January/20080124164230lcnirellep0.6572992.html>).”)

The treaty guarantees freedom of scientific investigation on the southernmost continent, and treaty protocols prohibit such activities as oil, gas and mineral exploration. The treaty was the first multilateral arms-control agreement, banning nuclear explosions and military activity in the area.

The original members, called consultative nations, were Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, the French Republic, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, the former Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States. The treaty entered into force on June 23, 1961.

By May 2000, 16 more nations agreed to the treaty and conducted scientific research in Antarctica — Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, India, Italy, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and Uruguay. Russia carried forward the signatory privileges and responsibilities established by the

former Soviet Union.

Since then, another 18 nations have consented to the treaty — Austria, Belarus, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Papua New Guinea, Ro-



Ice chunks float in the Arctic Ocean as the sun sets near Barrow, Alaska.

mania, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Turkey and Venezuela. They agree to abide by the treaty and can attend consultative meetings as observers.

The 46 Antarctic Treaty nations represent about two-thirds of the world’s population.

ZONE OF PEACE

The treaty establishes Antarctica as a zone of peace. It prohibits “any measures of a military nature,” including the testing of weapons, and prohibits nuclear explosions and

disposing of radioactive waste. The treaty provides a right of on-site inspection of all stations and installations in Antarctica to ensure compliance with its provisions.

To achieve these purposes, the Antarctic Treaty addresses legal and political issues concerning claims of territorial sovereignty in Antarctica. It provides that no acts or activities carried out while the treaty is in force will constitute the basis for a claim.

Seven countries — Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom — have made claims to parts of Antarctica. One sector is unclaimed.

More information

about the Antarctic Treaty (<http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/antarct/anttrty.jsp>) is available on the U.S. National Science Foundation Office of Polar Programs Web site and on the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat (<http://www.ats.aq/>) Web site.

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See also

<http://www.america.gov/>

Telling America's story

New Medical Protocol Aims to Prevent Bloodstream . .

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tors and nurses to help each other out," Pronovost said. "It gives them tools to practice teamwork behavior and to set goals every day."

The first step in the program is educating hospital staff on the science of safety, using materials provided by Pronovost. Then, teams made up of hospital staff members work to identify defects in their hospital and come up with interventions to improve outcomes. After implementing an intervention, the team monitors the results to determine whether it has developed a viable solution. "At the end of the day, the monitoring is most important," Pronovost said.

In addition, CUSP is flexible, and could be useful in stemming the rates of any hospital-acquired infection, according to Pronovost. Bloodstream infections can enter the body through routes other than catheters, and other types of diseases, like

pneumonia and Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), can be spread in hospital settings.

Any hospital can follow the CUSP protocol. "We've put all the training materials online," Pronovost said. "We have a Web site with these modules that will be free and open to the public with all components to this program."

"It's time we improve health and safety," he said.

Additional information on the CUSP approach to improving patient safety (http://www.jhsph.edu/ctlit/training/patient_safety.html) is available on the Web site of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

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U.S. Adds \$80 Million to International School Feeding Program . . .

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cultural assistance. The senators aim to increase funding in subsequent years, reaching \$2.5 billion in fiscal year 2014. The bill also calls for establishing a U.S. coordinator for food security charged with developing a government-wide strategy to fight hunger. The legislation was approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee March 31.

The push for more funding for agricultural research and development has been endorsed by such anti-hunger groups as the Partnership to Cut Hunger in Africa and InterAction.

Later in April, Vilsack will attend a meeting of agriculture ministers

from the Group of Eight countries — the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Russia. Joining them at the meeting in Italy will be agriculture leaders from Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa, Egypt and the Czech Republic. The European Union's commissioner of agriculture and leaders from the World Bank and three agencies of the United Nations — the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization — also will participate.

The full text of a press release on expansion of the McGovern-Dole program (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_10B?

contentid=2009/04/0090.xml) and a fact sheet on U.S. food aid programs (<http://www.fas.usda.gov/info/factsheets/Food Aid.pdf>) (PDF, 100 K) are available on USDA's Web site.

A fact sheet on the proposal to increase agricultural development funds (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/April/20090402170952xjsnommis4.413348e-02.html>) is available on America.gov.

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