Embassy of the United States, Addis Ababa

Volume 10, Issue 14

April 10, 2008

Weekly Special Report

Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

AFRICAN NEWS

Banker Calls for New Global Food Policy, More Investment in Africa (P 4)

Liberians Soon May Be Getting More Mail, with U.S. Help (P 5)

AMERICAN NEWS

Congressional Hearing on Virtual Worlds Simulcast in Second Life (P 6)

Book: Congressional Elections (P 8)

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

NATO Summit Concludes with Commitments for Future Work (P 9)

Bush, Putin Chart Course Ahead for U.S.-Russian Relations (P 11)

ECONOMICS AND TRADE

Federal Reserve's Moves Calm Markets, Create Controversy (P 12)

Debate Begins over U.S. Government Role in Capital Markets (P 14)

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Newspaperman Ben Bradlee Says Good Reporters Dig for Truth (P 16)

Child Soldiers a National and Global Security Issue, Expert Says (P 17)

HEALTH ISSUES

World Health Day Targets Human Effects of Climate Change (P 19)

Best Practices to Fight HIV/AIDS Is Focus of Uganda Meeting (P 21)

Building Islam in Detroit Photo Exhibit Makes Final Stop in Bahir Dar

U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Counselor Michael McClellan (second from right) and Haji Mohammed Sultan, Head of the Amhara Regional State Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, cutting ribbon at the opening along with Ato Demeke Mekonnen, Vice-President of Amhara Regional State, (left) and U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Specialists Ato Yohannes Berhahu (right)

The final stop of the five-city tour of "Building Islam in Detroit" exhibit was Bahar Dar, where the crowds of people visited the Mulualem Hall to learn how immigrant Muslims from many different countries and language groups came together to build a faith-based community around their Islamic faith. Public Affairs Counselor Michael McClellan opened the exhibit, along with Haji Mohammed Sultan, Head of the Amhara Regional State Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, and Ato Demeke Mekonnen, Vice-President of Amhara Regional State. Over 200 persons attended the opening with hundreds more visiting over the next three days the

(Continued on page 2)

Recent Developments Signal Progress in Iraq, Envoy Crocker Says

By Merle D. Kellerhals, Jr. Staff Writer

Gen. David Petraeus, left, listens as Ambassador Ryan Crocker testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, April 8, 2008, before the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the status of the war in Iraq. (AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

Washington -- There has been substantial progress in Iraq over the past seven months, though immense challenges remain and gains have been both uneven and frustratingly slow, says U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker.

"Sustaining that progress will require continuing U.S. resolve and commitment. What has been achieved is substantial, but it is also reversible," Crocker says. Crocker and

(Continued on page 3)

Building Islam in Detroit Photo Exhibit Makes Final Stop in Bahir Dar . . .

(Continued from page 1)

exhibit was open.

In his opening remarks, Mr. McClellan noted that "separation of church and state" in America gives everyone of all faiths the freedom to believe and practice their faith as they wish. Many Muslims have found more freedom to practice their faith in America than they had in their own countries, where they may have been persecuted over sectarian differences. As Muslims from Lebanon, Albania, Indonesia, Pakistan, Mali, and other countries came together in Detroit, they set aside ethnic, linguistic, and sectarian differences in order to build a faith-based community that also provided social services and activities to help young people grow in their faith tradition.

Mr. McClellan gives opening remarks with Cultural Specialist Ato Yohannes behind

Invited guests at the photo exhibition

In a lecture at Bahir Dar University, McClellan spoke on "Islam in America: An Historical Perspective," in which he described how Muslim immigrants came to America over some 400 years. Most of the early arrivals were in fact African slaves who were unable to hold onto their faith over time as they blended into the larger non-Muslim slave community. However, this changed in the late 1800s as immigrants from countries with large Muslim populations began to arrive in America, mostly from the Balkans, the Middle East, and eventually South Asia. African-Americans, too, began converting to Islam in the early 20th century in a movement that initially had heavy political and racial overtones, but has since come to be fully assimilated into mainstream Sunni Islam.

The exhibit also showed how Muslims in Detroit reach out to their non-Muslim neighbors to build bridges of mutual understanding between communities, seeking to learn about the Christian and Jewish communities, while also teaching others about their own faith and practices. This openness to others and this effort to develop respect and understanding between communities has clearly paid off for everyone in Detroit, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

Although many Muslims today see the United States as "anti Muslim," McClellan pointed out in the question-and-answer session that in fact the United States has led the recognition of a majority-Muslim state in Europe (Kosovo), supported the Bosnian Muslims in the face of genocide and ethnic cleansing, led an international effort to deliver the people of Iraq from brutal dictatorship, the Afghan people from Taliban oppression, today is leading the effort to establish an independent Palestinian state, and continues to be the largest aid donor to Muslim countries around the world. By supporting democratic movements and advancing human rights throughout the Muslim world, the United States is in fact a great friend to Muslims. "Building Islam in Detroit" is testament to the fact that Muslim immigrants are well-received in America, settle down and integrate quickly, and find full freedom to express themselves religiously, politically, and socially.

As an "American Islam" begins to take root in the United States, Muslims and non-Muslims are learning that there is no contradiction between being a Muslim and an American and that the American values of tolerance, respect, and freedom to practice one's faith make the United States a welcoming land for Muslims. ♦

Recent Developments Signal Progress in Iraq, Envoy Crocker Says . . .

(Continued from page 1)

General David Petraeus, who commands the U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq, testified April 8 before the Senate Armed Services Committee and also were scheduled to testify at a second hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Further oversight hearings before the House Armed Services Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee were scheduled for April 9.

Central to the oversight hearings is the question of whether U.S. forces should continue to be withdrawn from Iraq and whether current policy in Iraq should be changed to shift more political, economic and military responsibility to the Iraqi government, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin said.

One reasons for the surge in combat forces in Iraq announced by President Bush in 2007 was to give the Iraqi government time to launch reconciliation and unification efforts across the country, Crocker said in prepared testimony. By September 2007, Crocker said, it was disappointing that Iraq had not enacted some key laws to accomplish these goals.

"In the last several months, however, Iraq's parliament has formulated, debated vigorously, and in many cases passed legislation dealing with vital issues of reconciliation and nation building," Crocker said. He cited a new pension law, de-Baathification reform and a far-reaching amnesty law. And the Iraqi parliament has passed a Provincial Powers Law that is an extraordinary step in defining the relationship between the federal and provincial governments, he said. The law establishes the fundamental nature of the state, similar to the complexity of the U.S. development of states' rights in a federal system of government, he said. The law calls for provincial elections by October 1. An election law now is under discussion that will set the standards for these elections, he said.

"The passage of the 2008 budget, with record amounts for capital expenditures, ensures that the federal and provincial governments will have the resources for public spending," Crocker said. "These laws are not perfect and much depends on their implementation, but they are important steps."

Crocker said the political and economic progress of the past few months is significant, but fragile and reversible.

"Iraq has the potential to develop into a stable, secure multiethnic, multisectarian democracy under the rule of law. Whether it realizes that potential is ultimately up to the Iraqi people," Crocker testified. "Our support, however, will continue to be critical."

Crocker said that he cannot guarantee success in Iraq, but is convinced that a major departure from the current engagement would bring failure.

SECURITY CONCERNS ADDRESSED

Petraeus, testifying along with Crocker at the hearings, said that since September 2007 the levels of violence and civilian death have been reduced substantially. He also said al-Qaida-in-Iraq and a number of other extremist elements have been dealt serious blows, while the capabilities of the Iraqi security force have grown.

"Nonetheless, the situation in certain areas is still unsatisfactory and innumerable challenges remain. Moreover, as events in the past two weeks have reminded us and as I have repeatedly cautioned, the progress made since last spring is fragile and reversible," Petraeus said.

But Petraeus also said security in Iraq has improved in the past seven months since a September 2007 congressional hearing on Iraq policies. "And it is significantly better than it was 15 months ago when Iraq was on the brink of civil war and the decision was made to deploy additional U.S. forces to Iraq," he said. Recent security progress has been enhanced by increased numbers of both U.S.-led coalition forces and Iraqi security forces in conducting counterinsurgency operations across the country. These forces have deployed together to safeguard Iraqis, pursue al-Qaida-in-Iraq, combat criminal and militia extremists and foster the conditions for improved reconciliation. This enabled political and economic progress, he said.

Petraeus said he was recommending to President Bush that after the withdrawal of the last surge brigade unit in July, coalition forces engage in a 45-day period of consolidation and evaluation. "At the end of that period, we will commence a process of assessment to examine conditions on the ground and, over time, determine when we can make recommendations for further reductions [in coalition forces]," he said. Petraeus said this approach does not allow for establishment of a set withdrawal timetable. ♦

Banker Calls for New Global Food Policy, More Investment in Africa

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington -- A "New Deal" for global food policy is urgently needed -- and sovereign wealth funds should invest $30 billion in Africa to help fuel the continent's long-term economic growth and development -- says World Bank Group President Robert B. Zoellick.

In an April 2 speech before the Center for Global Development in Washington, Zoellick warned that such a new food policy is needed because as financial markets have tumbled, food prices have soared. The New Deal is a term coined by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the 1930s to describe programs to alleviate poverty and boost a weak economy in the United States.

Tanzanian farmers in the town of Arusha, Tanzania

"Since 2005, the prices of staples have jumped 80 percent. Last month, the real price of rice hit a 19-year high; the real price of wheat rose to a 28-year high and to almost twice the average price of the last 25 years.

"The good news for some farmers adds a crushing load to the most vulnerable -- children, as young as 4 or 5, [who are] forced to flee the safety of their rural communities to fight for food in teeming cities," he said. Food riots threaten societal breakdown, and mothers are deprived of nutrition for healthy babies, he added.

Citing World Bank statistics, Zoellick estimated that 33 countries around the world face potential social unrest because of the acute hike in food and energy prices. "For these countries, where [the amount of money available for] food comprises from half to three-quarters of consumption, there is no margin for survival," he warned.

"The realities of demography, changing diets, energy prices and biofuels, and climate changes suggest that high -- and volatile -- food prices will be with us for years to come," he said.

The New Deal for global food policy would meet that challenge. "This New Deal should focus not only on hunger and malnutrition, access to food and its supply, but also the interconnections with energy, yields, climate change, investment, the marginalization of women and others, and economic resiliency and growth. Food policy needs to gain the attention of the highest political levels, because no one country or group can meet these interconnected challenges," Zoellick said.

The immediate needs of many countries must be met, he said, while noting that the United Nations World Food Programme is now in need of at least $500 million in additional food supplies to meet emergency calls.

The United States is committed to the goal of global food security through its international food assistance and other foreign assistance programs. In fiscal year 2007, the United States provided more than $2.1 billion in food aid to 78 developing countries, reaching tens of millions of people worldwide.

A New Deal for global food policy, Zoellick told his audience, will require a stronger delivery system to overcome fragmentation in food security, health, agriculture, water, sanitation and rural infrastructure and inequitable policies based on gender.

President Bush has been pushing U.S. lawmakers to allow the U.S. government to spend food aid money to buy crops in poor countries.

The World Bank Group can help, Zoellick said, by backing emergency measures that support the poor while encouraging incentives to produce and market food as part of sustainable development. He cited the World Bank's World Development Report 2008, on agriculture for development, for pointing the way forward. "We can help create a 'Green Revolution' for sub-Saharan Africa by assisting countries to boost productivity throughout the agricultural value chain and help smallholder farmers to break the cycle of poverty."

Additionally, he said, the World Bank plans to "almost double" its own lending for agriculture in Africa, from $450 million to $800 million, and can help countries and farmers manage systemic risks, including using financial innovations to counter weather variability, such

(Continued on page 13)

Liberians Soon May Be Getting More Mail, with U.S. Help

By Derek Repp
Staff Writer

Washington -- Following 14 years of civil war and destruction, Liberia is trying to rebuild its infrastructure and institutions and restore peace and security, and as part of that effort, the United States is helping to deliver the mail to millions of Liberians who want to be in contact with each other and the rest of the world.

The Liberian postal system is one of many institutions destroyed by the country's long-running conflict. On March 25, 2008, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), with the help of other U.S. government agencies, delivered thousands of dollars' worth of postal equipment to Liberia. It has been training Liberians in the use of that equipment and in ways to set up an efficient postal service.

Liberia's postal system was gravely damaged during the country's civil war, and the lack of security meant that many Liberians lost trust in the system. Today, most Liberians are unaware that a postal system exists in their country.

The postal ministry and main post office were gutted during the war and turned into shelters for refugees. In December 2007, when a delegation from the USPS visited, the building was nothing but a concrete frame with remnants of looted postal equipment. There was even a pile of mail left over from before the war that was waiting to be delivered.

The postal personnel system was equally devastated. There has been no training of personnel in more than a decade, and many of the postal workers from before the civil war rapidly are approaching retirement.

Despite the hurdles, Liberia's newly elected government is trying to rebuild its mail delivery system, one of the most basic and most needed public services.

"A functioning postal service is vital to any country, especially to a war-torn country like Liberia, where it is essential for their recovery and reconstruction efforts," said Alexander Lazaroff, a USPS chief postal inspector and chief security officer. Lazaroff was a member of the U.S. delegation that traveled to Liberia to donate the equipment. He pointed out that a postal system would provide employment, promote commerce and trade and provide a necessary vehicle for individuals to stay in contact with each other.

The plan to donate USPS supplies and services to Liberia began in 2007, when U.S. Ambassador to Liberia David Booth requested U.S. assistance.

The USPS recognized the need and, with other U.S. agencies, finally was able to deliver the equipment -- which consisted of letter-sorting cases, sack racks and other mail handling equipment that will facilitate more efficient mail services.

Many parts of the U.S. government helped the USPS transport the donated postal equipment to Liberia: the Department of State, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Marines and the Department of Defense all pitched in to transport the equipment and supplies. In Liberia, the U.S. Embassy staff coordinated the deliveries.

The USPS also trained Liberian postal workers in December 2007. Thirty Liberians participated in a two-day training session on postal security.

"Training is essential to the efficient operation of the post as they rebuild and solidify their operation," says Oscar Villanueva, a USPS inspector in charge of global security, who helped with the training. "A good security program provides confidence in the postal system, improves quality of service and promotes use of the mail," he said.

While they were in Liberia, the USPS delegation also conducted an analysis of Liberia's postal system and made recommendations for its ongoing development, noting that in the long term, Liberia will have to decide on the most appropriate delivery system, create a budgeting process and establish an address system.

Following his trip to Liberia, Lazaroff said: "I think this effort took place at a pivotal moment in the re-emergence of this burgeoning democracy. At a time when there is so much need for assistance in every segment of Liberian society, it is comforting to know that the mail will get through."

(USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: http://usinfo.state.gov) ♦

Congressional Hearing on Virtual Worlds Simulcast in Second Life

By Cheryl Pellerin
Staff Writer

Washington -- Participation in Internet-based virtual worlds is growing planetwide, and citizens (called avatars) from Second Life, one of the popular multiverses, have started showing up in real life -- most recently in the chambers of the U.S. House of Representatives.

A House telecommunications and Internet subcommittee heard testimony April 1 from several experts, including Second Life founder Philip Rosedale, during an information-gathering session on virtual worlds.

Composite of photos of Philip Rosedale and his avatar Philip Linden

The hearing was streamed live into a three-dimensional (3-D) model of the House hearing room in Second Life, and a gathering of in-world residents watched the proceedings from their seats. Massachusetts Democrat Representative Edward Markey, the subcommittee chairman, presided over both meetings -- in person in Washington and as an avatar in Second Life.

"If we want to foster the best of what this medium has to offer," Markey said, "we must consider the policies that will be conducive to such growth. These include upgrading our broadband infrastructure and speed, fostering openness and innovation in our Internet policies and ensuring that we bridge digital divides in our country so that all Americans can benefit."

"The Second Life grid is the next step in the fulfillment of the Internet's promise, where people create and consume content and interact with each other in a 3-D environment," Rosedale, chief executive of Linden Lab, the company that runs Second Life, told the subcommittee.

"The potential for commerce, education, entertainment and other interaction in a 3-D environment filled with other people," he added, "is far greater than in the flat and isolated two-dimensional world of the World Wide Web."

Also in the Second Life audience were avatars belonging to journalists; to Second Life board member Mitchell Kapor, who founded Lotus Development Corporation; and to representatives of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which has had an island in Second Life since early 2007.

LIVING SECOND LIFE

Second Life opened in 2003, created by Linden Lab, a San Francisco-based company that Rosedale founded in 1999 to create a new form of shared experience. Its residents own and build the virtual world's digital infrastructure, including homes, vehicles, nightclubs, stores, landscapes, clothing, games, islands, schools, companies, government organizations, libraries and more.

Anyone can sign up for a free membership by registering with Second Life and creating an avatar -- a member's persona in the virtual world. This virtual world, says Linden Lab, teems with people, entertainment, experiences and opportunity. It even has an economy based on Linden dollars -- about 265 Lindens to the U.S. dollar.

Today in Second Life there are 6 million registered users: 50,000 to 60,000 are online or "in-world" at any one time, and 900,000 have been in-world during the past 30 days. The users are from more than

(Continued on page 7)

Congressional Hearing on Virtual Worlds Simulcast in Second Life . . .

(Continued from page 6)

100 real-life countries and more than 70 percent of users are from outside the United States.

IN-WORLD APPLICATIONS

A broad range of educational, scientific, nonprofit, cultural and governmental groups have embraced virtual worlds, including Second Life.

Susan Tenby, senior manager for community development for TechSoup, a San Francisco-based organization that provides technology services for nonprofits, testified that Second Life "has rapidly emerged as the leading virtual world for nonprofits around the world," and cited some examples of Second Life-based nonprofit-hosted activities:

An avatar looks over Second Life's Capitol Hill, fashioned after the one in Washington. (State Dept./avatar Mercy Paine)

A humanitarian aid worker recently returned from Sudan describes the plight of Sudanese refugees to an international audience;

Patrons bid on shimmering gowns during a fundraising gala and silent auction for cancer research; and

Teenagers create sets, costumes and lighting to shoot an educational video about child soldiers in Uganda.

Even governments use Second Life as a base to engage an international audience. Maldives was the first nation to open a virtual embassy in Second Life, and several nations, including Sweden, also have established diplomatic representation.

In the United States, the University of Southern California (USC) Center on Public Diplomacy's Virtual World Project explores new ways to practice public diplomacy in Second Life.

The center has worked with the U.S. State Department to host in-world International Information Program initiatives such as a Virtual Vibe Jazz Fest and, for the Second Life Educators group, a program on "Accessibility in the 3-D Environment: Virtual Worlds and People with Disabilities," both in 2007.

Second Life sits at the intersection of three deeply significant trends, said Larry Johnson, chief executive of the New Media Consortium, a nonprofit association of more than 250 colleges, universities and museums that focuses on emerging technologies.

"The first trend is an increasing focus on people as the organizing principle of the network," he said, "which has been fueled by hundreds of social networking applications, the anytime, anywhere access of wireless networks, and the clear desire of people to connect seamlessly in real time via these networks."

The second trend is the increasing ability of computing and communication devices to represent data and information visually across three dimensions and distribute the information in real time. The third is allowing users to generate content. ♦

Book: Congressional Elections

(The following article is taken from the U.S. Department of State publication USA Elections in Brief.)

Elections for the U.S. Congress can be as competitive and important as those for president. This is because of the central role that Congress plays in making laws.

Unlike a parliamentary system where the chief executive comes from the parliament, the American system, as noted, separates the legislature and the presidency. Presidents and legislators are elected separately. Although a sitting president may propose laws to Congress, they have to be drafted in Congress by his allies within that institution, and must be passed by the Congress before being sent back to the president for his signature. The House and Senate are legally and politically independent of the will of the president.

Within Congress, party discipline is less strictly observed in the American system than in parliamentary systems. It is fairly easy for members of Congress to vote on policies as they think best, including what they think best for winning their own reelection. As a result, congressional leaders must put together a winning coalition one member at a time, rather than count on automatic support from highly disciplined parties. This makes every congressional legislative victory difficult to obtain. Thus, Congressional elections are important to the nation, as Congress is powerful, and difficult to predict; and so are individual congressmen.

House and Senate Differences

The House and the Senate have nearly equal powers, but their means of election are quite different. The founders of the American Republic intended members of the House of Representatives to be close to the public, reflecting the public's wishes and ambitions.

Therefore, the Founders designed the House to be relatively large in order to accommodate many members from small legislative districts, and to have frequent (two-year) elections. Originally, a two-year term was considered by some to be too long. In the days when transportation was by horse, a two-year term in Washington could keep a congressman away from his constituents for two years. Today, the concern is that elections every two years force congressmen to fly back to their districts every weekend or so to shore up political support.

Each House seat represents a unique geographic constituency, and, as noted above, every member is elected as sole representative from that district by plurality rule. Each of the 50 states is assured of at least one seat in the House, with the rest allocated to the states according to population. Alaska, for example, has a very small population and therefore holds only one seat in the House. California is the mostly highly populated state and holds 53 seats. Following each decennial census, the number of seats assigned to a state is recalculated to account for changes in state populations during the past 10 years, and state legislatures redesign congressional district boundaries within states to reflect changes in the number of seats assigned to the state or population shifts within the state.

The Senate was designed for its members to represent larger constituencies — the entire state — and to provide equal representation to that body of each state, regardless of population. Thus small states possess as much influence (two senators) as large states in the Senate.

Senators were originally selected by the state legislatures. It was not until enactment of the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1913 that senators were directly elected by their state's voters. Every state has two senators elected for staggered six-year terms, with one-third of the Senate seats up for reelection every two years. A senator is chosen by plurality vote of the state electorate.

(Continued on page 10)

NATO Summit Concludes with Commitments for Future Work

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Staff Writer

Washington -- NATO conducted important business during its 59th summit in Romania that goes well beyond its extension of invitations to two new members -- Albania and Croatia.

Besides the formalities of enlarging the alliance, NATO completed the key task of affirming its shared, long-term commitment to Afghanistan by agreeing to a comprehensive political-military Strategic Plan endorsed not only by alliance members but by NATO partners contributing to the International Security Assistance Force. Various new offerings were made during the summit, including NATO's commitment to equip 80,000 Afghan army forces by 2012. France also promised a battalion for Afghanistan.

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (L) talks during a meeting with US President George W. Bush at a hotel in Bucharest. (AFP/Mandel Ngan)

While Georgia and Ukraine were not endorsed to begin Membership Action Plans, the final communiqué did single them out for future membership. President Bush said the Georgians and Ukrainians are inspirational and expressed his pleasure that NATO indicated both will join.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates said NATO's statement on Georgia and Ukraine took the dreams of the two nations for membership from "the realm of whether [they would join] and put ... [them] into the realm of when." The alliance will assess their progress as part of its open-door policy during a December meeting.

Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried said of the summit: "We didn't get everything we wanted, but we got a lot." That included a solid endorsement of the concept of missile defense to include participation by NATO, the United States and, possibly, Russia as well.

One development that Fried said did not receive much attention coming out of the summit is France's decision to reintegrate with NATO. Then-French President Charles de Gaulle decided to withdraw his country from the integrated allied command structure in 1966.

Fried told reporters at the Foreign Press Centers in Washington and New York April 7 that the Bucharest summit was "one of the most open, at some times, dramatic and productive summits" that he remembers. It was the least scripted summit in many years, he said, with "some of the issues ... wrapped up by leaders at the table in informal sessions" during 36 hours of intense discussions.

NATO members now will intensify engagement with Macedonia, the third Balkan nation that also was hoping for an invitation, but was blocked by Greece because of an ongoing dispute over the nation's proper formal name. Bush said the alliance looks forward to the day when Macedonia will join NATO.

Some of the ancillary issues addressed during the summit included a statement on NATO's commitment to keeping peace in Kosovo, an invitation to Serbia to begin a dialogue with the alliance, endorsement of an alliance role in energy security and a commitment to work on cybersecurity issues.

These activities represent "an alliance in action," according to Fried, "and what we are seeing is NATO becoming the trans-Atlantic community's security arm for the 21st century, with potential missions in far-flung places."

The three-day summit represented "a good couple of days for NATO

(Continued on page 10)

NATO Summit Concludes with Commitments for Future Work . . .

(Continued from page 9)

... [and] for the alliance," the assistant secretary said, "and a good day for the advance of NATO's mission, which is the security of its members and the advance of freedom."

U.S.-RUSSIAN STRATEGIC TALKS WILL EASE POLITICAL TRANSITION

Fried had just returned from accompanying Bush to Russia. He said significant progress was made in the U.S.-Russian strategic dialogue, particularly on the issue of missile defense. Developing common ground on this subject will be the focus of "intense work in the weeks and months ahead," according to the Fried.

While Russia has a difference opinion on the U.S. proposal to deploy 10 missile interceptors on Polish territory and the decision by Washington and officials in Prague to host U.S. radar in the Czech Republic, Fried said Moscow has "agreed to language that if U.S.-proposed transparency and confidence-building measures" regarding these sites are agreed to and implemented, "Russia's concerns would be assuaged."

Those measures included discussing the possibility of having a Russian presence at missile defense facilities in the United States. It also might be possible, following detailed negotiations with the Czech Republic and Poland, to have Russian military officers accredited by their embassies in Poland and the Czech Republic serve as liaison officers at U.S. sites in Europe.

The strategic framework agreement that was hammered out in talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin will help guide U.S.-Russian relations, he said, "through the leadership transitions in both countries." Putin leaves office in May and Bush in January 2009.

Fried said other issues of intense focus in the coming weeks will be Russia's desire to join the World Trade Organization -- that could come later in 2008 -- and the desire of both nations to negotiate a legally binding post-Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) agreement. START, which was signed by the United States and Russia in 1991 and has contributed to a dramatic cut in the size of the nuclear arsenals on both sides, expires in 2009. ♦

Book: Congressional Elections . . .

(Continued from page 8)

Loyalty to Party or Person

In the past, congressional elections tended to be "party centered," as many voters held long-term loyalties toward one political party or the other and tended to vote along party lines for Congress. The individual personalities and performances of office-holders may have only marginally added to or subtracted from voter support. In recent decades, the views and personalities of individual candidates have become more central to electoral politics and have somewhat diminished the importance of party loyalties.

Indeed, since the 1960s, national elections have become increasingly candidate-centered. The growth of the media and the Internet, the importance of aggressive campaign fundraising, constant opinion polls, and other aspects of modern campaigning have made the voter more aware of the candidate as an individual. As a result, voters tend to weigh individual candidate's strengths and weaknesses along with party loyalties in deciding whom to support. The establishment of broad-based public education in the early 20th century and of higher education after World War II has also made voters more confident of their own judgment; and less reliant on party cues with respect to ballot choices.

In this context of candidate-centered elections, incumbent members of Congress fare very well, with reelection rates well above 90 percent. This is partly due to often bland media coverage of Congress, and particularly coverage of individual members by local media in their states or congressional districts. With this generally favorable media exposure and daily involvement with public policy issues — and individuals and groups that seek to influence policy — incumbents also tend to raise far greater sums of money with which to campaign. For these reasons and more, incumbents who run for reelection are very likely to win, no matter which party they belong to. ♦

Bush, Putin Chart Course Ahead for U.S.-Russian Relations

By David I. McKeeby
Staff Writer

Russian President Vladimir Putin , right, and U.S. President George W. Bush look on during their news conference in the Black Sea resort city of Sochi, southern Russia, Sunday, April 6, 2008. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)

Washington -- President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin charted the course ahead for their successors in their final presidential meeting, including steps toward a future missile defense system jointly operated by Europe, Russia and the United States.

"We agree today that the United States and Russia want to create a system for responding to potential missile threats, in which Russia and the United States and Europe will participate as equal partners," Bush told reporters April 6 at Putin's presidential residence in the Black Sea coastal resort of Sochi, Russia. Bush called the development "a significant breakthrough."

The Sochi talks followed a 28-nation endorsement of ballistic missile defense at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, Romania, and the Czech Republic's announcement that it would host the system's tracking radar.

While Russia continues to disagree with the plan, it welcomed U.S. offers to monitor the project, which also involves installation of 10 interceptors in neighboring Poland. Bush and Putin further agreed to step up talks on building a jointly managed regional missile defense system, an idea Putin initially put forward during his 2007 visit to the Bush family estate in Kennebunkport, Maine.

"Our U.S. partners not only understand our concerns, but are sincerely trying to overcome our concerns," Putin said after the talks, expressing "cautious optimism," for the plan.

Expert-level negotiations on the missile defense plan will take time, said National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, but developments in Bucharest and Sochi represent a step forward in meeting 21st-century security challenges.

"You have both now the NATO alliance and the Russian Federation signed on to pursuing missile defense," Hadley told reporters as they returned from Sochi. "We have been trying to engage the alliance and Russia in missile defense now for about 15 years, and it has finally all come together today."

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK DETAILS COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP

Missile defense was one of several items covered in an 11-page "Strategic Framework Declaration," signed by Bush and Putin in Sochi to detail the full spectrum of U.S.-Russian relations as Putin's successor Dmitry Medvedev comes to office in May and the United States prepares for presidential elections later in the year.

"We worked very hard over the past years to find areas where we can work together, and find ways to be agreeable when we disagree," Bush said. "This strategic framework declaration really does show the breadth and the depth of our cooperation."

Both sides pledged to continue

(Continued on page 15)

Federal Reserve's Moves Calm Markets, Create Controversy

By Andrzej Zwaniecki
Staff Writer

This article is the second in a three-part series on the turmoil in the U.S. financial markets and efforts to address it.

Washington -- Unorthodox steps taken by the U.S. Federal Reserve have calmed the troubled capital markets but have brought on a debate about the central bank's future role, according to experts.

In mid-March, the central bank took the most dramatic action since the housing and related credit crises erupted in 2007. It facilitated a takeover of Bear, Stearns and Company Inc. -- a faltering Wall Street investment firm -- and at an emergency meeting cut the interest rate on direct loans to banks. Also, for the first time since the 1930s, the central bank provided access to short-term borrowing through its "discount window" to investment houses it does not regulate.
The plan, executed by the Federal Reserve in unison with the U.S. Treasury Department, has restored a measure of confidence to world financial markets.

President Bush called the plan "strong and decisive," and some congressional leaders and experts cautiously praised it.

However, by setting the stage for deeper involvement in lightly regulated areas, central bankers entered an uncharted territory where they face a greater risk, according to some experts.

Former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker and economist Joseph Mason are uncertain whether the benefits of stretching the bank's authority "to the limit," as Volcker put it, outweigh the risks.

Mason, a finance professor at Drexel University, believes that the central bank risks its most precious asset -- credibility.

Traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange March 18, 2008. (Brendan McDermid/Reuters)

The credibility is particularly important in challenging times, he told America.gov, because it is crucial to the bank's ability to control inflation and facilitate government borrowing at low rates. Mason and some other economists see a real threat of a surge in inflation.

Edwin Truman, a resident scholar at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, is not among them. The former Federal Reserve official told America.gov that any risk to the central bank's credibility is minimal, "as long as it is very clear that [it is] not rescuing any particular institutions or individuals but trying to stabilize the financial system."

The Federal Reserve has broader responsibilities than other central banks, which focus primarily on inflation, Truman said. These responsibilities include promoting economic growth and financial stability.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke defended the bank's action in April 2 testimony before the congressional Joint Economic Committee.

"Given the current exceptional pressures on the global economy and financial system, the damage caused by a default by Bear Stearns could have been severe and ex-

(Continued on page 13)

Federal Reserve's Moves Calm Markets, Create Controversy . . .

(Continued from page 12)

tremely difficult to contain," he said.

Truman said that the Federal Reserve's move was in no way a "bailout" of Bear Stearns, as some have called it. The firm lost its independence, and its equity was wiped out, leaving its shareholders, who include Bear Stearns employees and executives, no winners at all, he said.

As to the risky assets, Truman said, the scenario that the Bear Stearns securities would generate profits rather than losses for the Federal Reserve cannot be excluded.

Mason is unpersuaded. He said the Federal Reserve and the government should have let the market work through the Bear Stearns insolvency problem, which likely would have led to the firm's collapse. Having trusted market discipline in the past, the Federal Reserve and the government should do so in the future if another major financial institution finds itself near bankruptcy, he added.

But others point to Japan as an example of the failure of a hands-off approach. In the late 1980s, when Japanese banks accumulated large amounts of bad debt following the bursting of a real-estate bubble, financial authorities waited years for the market to clear the mess. This produced a decade-long economic malaise that ended only after the government began injecting huge amounts of public funds into the troubled banks.

The full texts of Paulson's prepared remarks (http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp887.htm) and Bernanke's prepared statement (http://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/testimony/bernanke20080402a.htm) are available respectively at the Treasury Department's Web site and the Federal Reserve Web site.

(USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: http://usinfo.state.gov) ♦

Banker Calls for New Global Food Policy, More Investment in Africa . . .

(Continued from page 4)

as drought. "We can offer access to technology and science to boost yields" as well, he added.

A New Deal for global food policy will contribute to inclusive and sustainable development, he stressed. "Poor, middle-income, and developed countries will benefit together. Income gains from agriculture have three times the power in overcoming poverty than increases in other sectors, and 75 percent of the world's poor are rural, with most involved in farming. Almost all rural women active in the economies of developing countries are engaged in agriculture. With support, women can seize the opportunities of globalized food demand."

Zoellick also called for a "1 percent solution" for sovereign wealth funds that could greatly fuel equity investment and development in Africa. "The rising economies of China, India, Brazil and others have strengthened and rebalanced the international economy, providing new poles of growth -- making them the new 'stakeholders' in globalization," he said.

He reminded his audience that sovereign wealth funds currently hold an estimated $3 trillion in assets. A sovereign wealth fund is an investment fund created or controlled by a government, usually of a country with trade surpluses and abundant foreign monetary reserves. "If the World Bank Group can create the equity investment platforms and benchmarks to attract these investors, the allocation of even 1 percent of their assets would draw $30 billion to African growth, development and opportunity.

"This 1 percent could be the start of something much bigger, across more types of funds and countries, because the investment of wealth into equity for development offers opportunity, not something to fear," he said.

An international food aid conference -- co-sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture -- will take place April 14-16 in Kansas City, Missouri, to discuss many of these issues.

(USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: http://usinfo.state.gov) ♦

Debate Begins over U.S. Government Role in Capital Markets

By Andrzej Zwaniecki
Staff Writer

This is the third and final article in a series on the turmoil in the U.S. financial markets and efforts to address it.

Washington -- A Bush administration proposal for sweeping financial institution regulatory reform is stirring debate about the role of government in capital markets.

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, who unveiled the reform "blueprint" March 31, said the ideas it contains require "thoughtful discussions," which he did not expect to be concluded in the near future.

Almost all experts, both inside and outside government, agree that the current system, a patchwork of poorly coordinated agencies with often overlapping authorities, is convoluted and inefficient. Some of the agencies date back to the Civil War of the 1860s, although most were established during the Great Depression in the 1930s. The experts say these agencies have not kept pace with globalization and evolution of the financial industries. Many believe that gaps in the regulatory system have allowed troubles in the capital markets to reach crisis proportions before regulators could notice them and react.

But views on how and when to fix the system vary.

The Treasury's long-term plan calls for making the Federal Reserve, the U.S. central bank, a "market stability regulator" with expanded oversight powers over all financial market participants. The recommendations also include creating two new

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson

regulatory bodies -- a "prudential financial regulator" for the nation's banks, thrifts and credit unions and a second entity that would oversee business conduct and consumer protection. The regulatory restructuring would involve abolishing some agencies and merging their functions, as well as shifting regulatory powers among them.

"We should and can have a structure that is designed for the world we live in, one that is more flexible, one that can better adapt to change,'' Paulson said.

Most of the proposed changes would have to be enacted by Congress, where reactions to the "blueprint" were mixed. Most Republicans welcomed it, but Democrats were divided.

Chairman of the House of Representatives' Financial Services Committee Barney Frank, a Democrat, praised the plan as a "very constructive step forward," although he disagreed with some specific recommendations. Frank's own proposal would subject all credit-creating financial institutions to the same type of prudential supervision that now applies only to banks.

Senate Banking Committee Chairman Christopher Dodd, a Democrat, charged that the Treasury's plan would do nothing to end the housing crisis and help millions of Americans affected by it.

Paulson suggested that the recommendations were not meant to solve the current crisis but rather to help the government deal more effectively with future market disruptions.

The housing and mortgage issues are likely to dominate the congressional agenda in 2008, leaving long-term regulatory reform for the next president and Congress to handle, according to congressional leaders and observers.

All three candidates in the presidential race offered cautious endorsement of at least some parts of the Treasury's plan. Democratic Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama said it falls short of what is needed to address the credit and foreclosure crisis. Republican Senator John McCain said the financial troubles indicate that more regulatory oversight is needed.

Most entities with a stake in the issue support the idea of one body that ultimately is responsible for the stability of the U.S. financial system, according to Hal Scott, a professor at Harvard Law School. But that is where the agreement ends.

"The question is what that body is

(Continued on page 15)

Debate Begins over U.S. Government Role in Capital Markets . . .

(Continued from page 14)

and how much authority it has," he told America.gov.

Scott directs the Committee on Capital Market Regulation, an independent and bipartisan group of financiers, lawyers and academics. He said the challenge is to make the regulatory structure not only more efficient but also more flexible so it helps the financial industry become more competitive.

The Treasury Department actually began working on the "blueprint" in the spring of 2007, with the aim of helping U.S. financial companies become more competitive. Wall Street companies had pressed for a more coordinated, but relaxed, regulatory regime, which they had viewed as a necessity for them to become more competitive with other global financial centers such as London and Hong Kong. When market developments brought the market stability issue into the spotlight, however, the work broadened.

Most financial companies, which prefer a principle-based regulatory system with a set of guidelines rather than a prescriptive, rule-based one, have applauded the Treasury's plan. Only a banking industry group has expressed dissatisfaction with it.

But consumer groups and some legislators have cried foul.

"It takes a certain chutzpah to say the appropriate response to a financial crisis is to loosen regulations," said Barbara Roper of the Consumer Federation of America.

Paulson supports the principle-based approach, to a degree. He said more rules are not "the answer" to the financial turmoil.

The full text of Paulson's remarks (http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp897.htm) is available on the Treasury Department Web site. The texts of Frank's statement (http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/financialsvcs_dem/press032908.shtml) and Dodd's statement (http://banking.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Articles.Detail&Article_id=e76066e6-050a-419f-bb6f-039bf7a77a44&Month=3&Year=2008) are available on the Web sites of the committee's they chair. ♦

Bush, Putin Chart Course Ahead for U.S.-Russian Relations . . .

(Continued from page 11)

working together to address pressing diplomatic challenges, including Middle East peace, the Six-Party Talks process for stabilizing the Korean Peninsula, a negotiated solution for Iran's controversial nuclear program and supporting conflict resolution in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. Washington and Moscow committed to further reductions of their nuclear weapons stockpiles by negotiating a new agreement to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which will expire in 2009. The two sides also will begin talks on threats posed by intermediate and short-range missiles.

The declaration also details progress of U.S.-Russian efforts to promote civilian nuclear power while preventing the spread of sensitive weapons-related technologies. These efforts include the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, building an international atomic fuel bank, the 81-nation Proliferation Security Initiative and the 67-nation Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which Bush called, "an important initiative in which the Russians and the United States have worked cooperatively."

The declaration also documents extensive counterterrorism cooperation between the United States and Russia to date and pledges to continue strengthening intelligence sharing and joint efforts to track and freeze terrorists' finances.

The White House reiterated its commitment to helping Russia join the World Trade Organization and pledged to work with Congress to scrap remaining Cold War-era restrictions to extend permanent normal trade relations status to Russia by the end of the year. The declaration also pledges efforts to promote investment, boost energy security and address climate change.

See the text of a fact sheet (http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2008/April/20080407174037eaifas0.8477442.html) on the declaration.

(USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: http://usinfo.state.gov) ♦

Newspaperman Ben Bradlee Says Good Reporters Dig for Truth

By Eric Green
Staff Writer

Washington -- Good journalists work hard to uncover the truth "or come as close" to the truth as possible, former Washington Post Executive Editor Ben Bradlee tells America.gov.

Now the Post's vice president at large, Bradlee said an "awful lot gets in the way" of a reporter seeking to dig for a good story that is based on verified facts. The reporter must deal with human nature in that sometimes "people [news sources] lie on purpose, or people lie because they don't know the truth and think they do. It's not the easiest thing in the world to tell when somebody is lying," said Bradlee, who was interviewed in his office at the Post in advance of World Press Freedom Day May 3.

Bradlee, the Washington Post's executive editor from 1968 to 1991 who directed his paper's uncovering of the Watergate scandal in the 1970s, said reporters do their best work in finding newsworthy articles when not restricted by a paper's owner or editors. The Watergate scandal led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in August 1974.

The term press freedom has become almost a "bromide," said Bradlee, meaning that it has become too commonplace an expression for discussing reporters' independence to pursue their stories.

On that score, he said the question of reporters "voluntarily surrendering" their independence to report news during wartime treads into "dangerous territory."

Ben Bradlee, Former Washington Post Executive Editor

Most reporters and editors, Bradlee said, are reluctant to hold a story unless overriding national security interests intervene. But Bradlee added that governments overdo claiming threats to natural security to try to suppress unfavorable articles.

In the United States, press freedom is protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and faces few restrictions except in matters that might threaten national security. In recent years, press freedom groups have criticized the Bush administration for what they see as too-frequent use of this exception.

Bradlee said he never would have worked at a newspaper that felt pressured to suppress news for fear of "insulting" a government official. Such insult laws, intended to insulate public officials from media criticism, have been instituted in numerous countries worldwide.

Holding back a story might be warranted, Bradlee said, in cases that involve, for example, publishing the departure time of a routine troop deployment overseas. But most people would not be interested in knowing such information anyway, Bradlee added.

One story that Bradlee did hold temporarily involved a U.S. intelligence underwater listening device codenamed Ivy Bells, which during the Cold War revealed the position and movement of submarines from the Soviet Union. U.S. authorities lowered a bell-shaped device onto Soviet communication cables that ran along the floor of the ocean. For years, the device yielded vital information to the U.S. government.

The information was uncovered by Post reporter Robert Woodward, who partnered with the paper's Carl Bernstein in breaking the Watergate scandal.

The Soviets had been so certain their submarines were not being detected that they neglected to keep their encryption safe from deciphering, said Bradlee.

Bradlee said he originally decided against running the story because to do otherwise "would have denied

(Continued on page 22)

Child Soldiers a National and Global Security Issue, Expert Says

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Author Peter Warren Singer (Courtesy of P.W. Singer)

Washington -- The use of children as solders is not only child abuse but also a threat to national and global security, says Peter Warren Singer, senior fellow and director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based policy research organization.

"You have to start to look at this issue as not merely one of human rights but also one that is critical to global and national security," Singer told America.gov recently.

"It isn't that human rights are not important," Singer explained, "it's that you've got to see them within a larger context."

Nations need to have a "hard interest" in stopping the use of child soldiers, he said, because doing so provides the mechanisms to shrink the pool of failed states and areas terrorists can exploit.

Singer condemns the tendency of policymakers to lump children's issues into a separate and independent category. "This issue of child soldiers is not just about children," Singer said. It is "an inherent part of this broader breakdown of global security that we're seeing."

Singer is the author of Children at War, winner of the 2006 Robert F. Kennedy Book Award. The book takes a comprehensive look at the plight of some 300,000 child soldiers fighting in conflicts around the world.

Child soldiers often are used in conflicts because they are cheap, readily available, malleable and expendable. According to Singer, the use of child soldiers makes conflicts easier to start, harder to end and peace agreements more difficult to maintain.

Often abducted, child soldiers are most often the poorest of the poor, with no one to protect or guide them and no immediate prospects for schooling or employment.

CHILD SOLDIERS VERSUS GANGS

When most Westerners think of soldiers and war fighting, they think of adults in organized, professional militaries. But that is not the case in much of the world, he said.

"Look at most conflicts and look at the 'actors' on the ground: They are not tightly organized, bureaucratic, professional [armies] in our sense of the term," Singer said. "If you look at the actors on the ground and the way they really operate, in many ways they look and act more like gangs than battalions or regiments," he said, adding that child combatants often are fighting for local or regional interests, rather than "big picture" politics.

Singer said there are parallels between child soldiers in some parts of the world and gangs seen in the United States. In both cases, he said, the youth are recruited from poor areas that lack good governance.

"You're also [recruiting] from youth who are looking for some kind of meaning," he said. "It's the idea of whoever has the gun in their hand is more powerful in that commu-

Child Soldiers a National and Global Security Issue, Expert Says . . .

(Continued from page 17)

nity, has protection."

An even more tragic parallel between gangs and child soldiers is the damage on the community. "It doesn't just harm the people within the gang, it causes a broader breakdown," Singer said.

The tools to prevent both gangs and child soldiers are similar as well, says Singer. In both cases, he said, there must be a plan to rehabilitate and re-integrate youth into society and to prevent further recruitments.

"A big parallel in both gangs and child soldier groups is that it is not just about getting 'foot soldiers.'" The real key is getting the organizers," Singer said.

Hezbollah child soldiers

FOCUS ON THE ORGANIZERS

On the battlefield, targeting the leaders of child soldiers is especially important, Singer said. Professional militaries are loath to kill children, he acknowledged, "but a bullet from a 14-year-old is just as lethal as a bullet from a 40-year-old."

In battle, Singer said, the goal is to disrupt and scatter child soldier units, not to slaughter the children. To this end, a variety of tactics are available, he said. The primary goal, he said, "to eliminate the adult leader in control." With that accomplished, the units of child soldiers "will often dissolve," Singer said.

In addition to addressing the causes that create pools of potential child soldiers, such as poverty and social dislocation, steps must be taken to creating more negatives than benefits for those who would exploit children, Singer said. That means targeting the warlords and other groups that recruit children as combatants.

He urged the international community to pressure not just the warlords but their financial sponsors and trading partners as well.

This is slowly starting to happen, Singer said. Some leaders of child soldiers have been arrested and charged with war crimes and child abuse. "But more needs to be done," he said, and the current political will is insufficient to the task.

(USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: http://usinfo.state.gov) ♦

World Health Day Targets Human Effects of Climate Change

By Cheryl Pellerin
Staff Writer

Washington -- As the Earth warms, snow and ice melts and sea levels rise, the effects of climate change threaten more than the physical environment.

Unless warming trends are controlled, people throughout the world will face more injury, disease and death related to an increase in natural disasters and heat waves. People will experience higher rates of illnesses transmitted by food, water or vectors (insects or animals). Some will contract, and perhaps die from, diseases related to rising concentrations of air pollution.

Populations will be displaced by rising sea levels and affected by drought and famine. As glaciers melt, the hydrological cycle -- the continuous movement of water above, on and below Earth's surface -- will shift and alter the productivity of farmable land.

This is not a science-fiction scenario. The World Health Organization (WHO), on a Web site dedicated to World Health Day (celebrated on April 7 each year) states, "We are beginning to be able to measure some of these effects on health even now."

WHO estimates, for example, that by 2000 the global burden of disease from climate change was more than 150,000 excess deaths annually. The theme of World Health Day 2008 is "Protecting Health from Climate Change."

CLIMATE AND HEALTH

Weather and climate have affected human health since the earliest people shivered with cold, baked in the sun or starved because vegetation was scarce.

Smoke from trash fires swirls around a boy near Phnom Penh, Cambodia. (© AP Images)

"Injuries, displacement and death result from floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and forest fires," Dr. Howard Frumkin and colleagues write in "Climate Change: The Public Health Response," published in March in the American Journal of Public Health.

Frumkin directs the National Center for Environmental Health, part of the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

"An entire category of diseases -- the tropical diseases -- is named for a particular climate; climate and weather affect the distribution and risk of many vector-borne diseases such as malaria, Rift Valley fever, plague and dengue fever," they write. "Weather also affects the risk of food-borne and water-borne diseases and of emerging infectious diseases such as hantavirus, Ebola hemorrhagic fever and West Nile virus."

Recent examples of climate-related health effects include abnormally high temperatures in Europe in summer 2003 that were associated with 35,000 more deaths than the same period in previous years; a global toll from diarrhea, malaria and malnutrition of more than 3.3 million deaths in 2002; and 55,000 cases of infection by the mosquito-borne dengue virus over the past four months in Brazil, with nearly 70 deaths in Rio de Janeiro.

"I view climate change as one of the most serious health challenges," Dr. Jonathan Patz, professor in the Department of Population Health Sciences at the Nelson Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, told America.gov, "because it cuts across so many pathways that affect our health."

Patz, a principal lead author for the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on

(Continued on page 20)

World Health Day Targets Human Effects of Climate Change . . .

(Continued from page 19)

Climate Change Assessment reports since 1995, said changing climate affects several infectious diseases, many of which are carried by insects.

"Just a tiny change in temperature can affect the transmission cycle and development time of parasites inside these cold-blooded insects," he said, "which is why one or two degrees of temperature rise, even half a degree, can have a tremendous influence in the transmission of malaria, for example. The parasite develops much faster inside the mosquito, temperature can change biting rates, and there are all sorts of amplifying factors when you deal with a biological system like a mosquito-borne disease."

PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

There is little doubt among experts that climate change is real and will affect lives around the world for years, perhaps centuries, to come.

"There is vast consensus in the scientific community that the planet is warming and that man has a demonstrable impact on that," Antonio Busalacchi, director of the Earth System Science Interdisciplinary Center at the University of Maryland-College Park, told America.gov.

The only uncertainty, he added, is in taking the global-scale metrics of climate change down to the regional scale, at the scale of small countries or counties or states.

"The uncertainties essentially deal with on what spatial scales are our projections of temperature and precipitation valid and, with respect to warming, how warm and how fast?" Busalacchi said. "The field is going to reduce those uncertainties so we have improved and enhanced confidence at these regional scales."

Health implications of climate change also will be local and regional in scale, Frumkin told America.gov, and each part of the world will have its own set of problems.

"Agricultural productivity is expected to be a problem in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia but not so much in North America," he said. "Heat waves are expected to be a problem in the northern tier of North America but not so much in the first two regions I mentioned. That means forecasting and predicting and preparedness all need to take place on a local-to-regional scale."

The public health approach begins with data collection on a range of variables -- climate, ecosystem, severe weather, mosquito infectivity and others. Disease surveillance, research into modeling and forecasting methods, preparedness planning, outbreak investigation and training are all public health functions that are important in addressing climate change.

"These are all existing tools in the public health toolbox," Frumkin added. "There's nothing radically innovative here but we do need to be undertaking this work on a different scale than we have before and with a wide range of problems perhaps broader than we ever have before.

(USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: http://usinfo.state.gov) ♦

Best Practices to Fight HIV/AIDS Is Focus of Uganda Meeting

By Cheryl Pellerin
Staff Writer

Washington -- Those who deliver HIV/AIDS programs to the growing number of people who need prevention, treatment and care in 15 nations hit hardest by the disease will gather in Kampala, Uganda, June 3-7 to share what they have learned and influence future AIDS programs.

The theme of this second annual HIV/AIDS Implementer's Meeting is "Scaling Up Through Partnerships: Overcoming Obstacles to Implementation." It will build on the successful implementers' meeting held in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2007.

"The implementers will take lessons learned back home and disseminate them to others," Dr. Thomas Kenyon, principal deputy coordinator and chief medical officer in the State Department's Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, told America.gov. "That is the important emphasis here. This is for people who are doing the work with their hands and feet and who often don't get a voice on the global stage."

At least 1,700 attendees are expected, representing governments, nongovernmental organizations -- including faith- and community-based groups -- multilateral organizations, the private sector and groups of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The meeting, hosted by the government of Uganda, is sponsored by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS; UNICEF; the World Bank; the World Health Organization; and the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS.

PEPFAR's 15 focus countries are Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.

LESSONS, BARRIERS

Through presentations, dialogue and networking, participants in Uganda will identify critical barriers and share information that directly will affect how HIV/AIDS programs are implemented in coming years.

"We're seeing progress," Kenyon said. "Botswana, for example, has now scaled up and is reaching more than 90 percent of the people in need of anti-retroviral treatment. They've begun to reverse the decline in life expectancy that they saw throughout the 1990s and most of this decade."

Obstacles to HIV/AIDS program implementation include a lack of health care workers in Africa, a need to integrate health services to benefit HIV co-infections like tuberculosis and malaria and country-led coordination among development partners.

"Africa accounts for more than 80 percent of global AIDS mortality and they have 3 percent of the global health work force, so they're overwhelmed," Kenyon said. "At the same time, there is great capacity, ingenuity and brilliance in Africa."

Programs in African nations must capitalize on existing human resources, especially lower-level

health workers and people in local communities, he added, who can be taught to perform needed services.

AIDS RELIEF

In 2003, President Bush launched the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), committing $15 billion over five years to fight global HIV/AIDS. It was the largest international health initiative ever to fight a single disease.

In 2007, Bush asked Congress to double the original funding commitment for the program to $30 billion over five years; the House of Representatives and the Senate must approve this request.

On April 2, the House of Representatives approved the U.S. Global Leadership against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act by a vote of 308 to 116. This vote is an important step toward PEPFAR's reauthorization. The Senate also is working on legislation.

Kenyon said the House vote was a positive sign "for the people who

(Continued on page 22)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION
AMERICAN EMBASSY

P.O.Box 1014
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Phone: 251-11-5174007
251-11-5174000
Fax: 251-11-1242454
Email: pasaddis@state.gov

Best Practices to Fight HIV/AIDS Is Focus . . .

(Continued from page 21)

are in need of continued services." PEPFAR already has helped bring life-saving treatments to more than 1.4 million people around the world. At of the end of fiscal year 2007 (September 30), PEPFAR was supporting life-saving anti-retroviral treatment for 1.36 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the 15 focus countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

PEPFAR is partnering with local communities and indigenous organizations, including faith- and community-based organizations, to support treatment, care and prevention activities.

The program has supported more than 33 million counseling and testing sessions for men, women and children; supported care for nearly 6.6 million people, including 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children; supported the prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission during more than 10 million pregnancies since October 2004; and supported the prevention of 157,000 infant infections.

"We still have 5,700 deaths a day from HIV around the world," Kenyon said. "The more people we reach with care and treatment services, the more impact we can make on that figure."

More information about PEPFAR (http://www.pepfar.gov/) is available on the program's Web site.

Additional information about the HIV/AIDS Implementer's Meeting (http://www.hivimplementers.org/default.asp) is available at the meeting's Web site.

(USINFO is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: http://usinfo.state.gov) ♦

Newspaperman Ben Bradlee Says Good Reporters Dig for Truth . . .

(Continued from page 16)

our country a huge and effective weapon against a common enemy."

Eventually, his paper published the story, but only after the Ivy Bells operation was compromised by a low-level worker from the U.S. National Security Agency and then reported by a major U.S. television network. Bradlee discusses Operation Ivy Bells in his 1995 best-selling autobiography, The Good Life: Newspapering and Other Adventures.

Though retired from his executive editor duties, Bradlee's heart still belongs to the only daily newspaper for which he ever worked. This is evident by the fact he still goes to his seventh floor office at the Post every day. Bradlee says he's "addicted" to the Post's fifth floor newsroom where he likes to see what stories are being worked on by the paper's reporters and editors. Bradlee considers himself at age 86 a "stop on the tour" for the newspaper's younger reporters, who might ask the famous newspaperman for journalistic advice.

However, Bradlee does not overstay his visits to the newsroom because he knows the reporters "have something to do. I'm very conscious of that." Bradlee got his start in newspapers following his service in World War II when he founded a weekly paper called the New Hampshire Sunday News, before taking reporting jobs with the Washington Post and later with Newsweek magazine.

Bradlee's advice to aspiring reporters is to get "out of town" for a newspaper job, away from "Mom and Dad and friends," where "you don't have your mind made up about" home-town events. Relocating to a new area, he said, gives journalists a fresh and non-jaundiced view about news occurring in that community.

What still excites him about journalism, Bradlee said, is that "high energy pays off" for getting a good story. He proudly points to the example of the Post's hard work over a period of 30 months in the 1970s when the paper published some 400 articles on the Watergate scandal.

See also "Celebrated Editor Ben Bradlee Says Newspapers Here to Stay (http://www.america.gov/st/democracy-english/2008/February/20080221131738 1xeneerg0.3389856.html)." ♦