



# Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

## INSIDE

## America Must Continue to Stand for Freedom, Bush Says

By David I. McKeeby  
Staff Writer

Washington -- America must continue to stand with those who seek freedom not only from tyranny, but also from the scourges of poverty, disease and hunger, says President Bush.

"The challenge for future presidents and future Congresses is to ensure that America always stands with those seeking freedom -- and never hesitates to shine

*(Continued on page 6)*



*President Bush speaks about the USAID Freedom Agenda, Thursday, July 24, 2008, in the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)*

## African Development Bank Must Be Strong and Active

By Charles W. Corey  
Staff Writer

Washington -- A "strong and active" African Development Bank (AfDB) is what Africa needs to help its "long-held promise" become a reality, the U.S. executive director-designate to the bank told the U.S. Senate July 17.

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mimi Ale-



*Mimi Alemayehou, U.S. Executive director-designate to the African Development Bank*

mayehou said that to achieve such promise, Africa must also meet higher expectations -- including high standards of governance, full financial transparency in the public and private sectors, greater regional integration and better-developed skills among African workers.

She said the African private sector cannot thrive

*(Continued on page 5)*

### AFRICAN ISSUES

Eritrea "Has Become One Big Jail," Activist Says (P 2)

U.S. Sanctions Tightened Against Zimbabwe Regime (P 3)

Tweaking the Framework for Credible Elections (P 4)

### US ELECTION

Congressional Candidate Fights on Two Fronts in Oregon 1<sup>st</sup> (P 7)

Surrogates' Off-Message Remarks Can Hurt Presidential Candidates (P 8)

Obama's National Ads in Olympics Seen as Smart Strategy (P 9)

### AMERICAN NEWS

Sister Cities, U.S. Agency to Help Communities Form Partnerships (P 10)

### INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Colombia's FARC Terrorist Group Faces Devastating Reversals (P 11)

United States Supports India's Civil Nuclear Pact (P 13)

United States Imposes Sanctions on 10 Burmese Firms (P 15)

### ECONOMIC & TRADE

Record Number of Overseas Visitors Coming to the U.S. (P 16)

Survey Ranks Japanese World's Best Tourists, Americans 11<sup>th</sup> (P 18)

### GLOBAL HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

International Struggle to Develop HIV/AIDS Vaccine Continues (P 19)

Heart Disease a Leading Cause of Death Worldwide (P 20)

Clean Energy Fuels Buzz on Capitol Hill (P 22)

---

## Eritrea “Has Become One Big Jail,” Activist Says

By Jane Morse  
Staff Writer

Washington -- Eritrea “has become one big jail,” says an activist whose sister and brother-in-law have been imprisoned for speaking out against the current regime.

Senait Yohannes is the sister of Aster Yohannes, who is married to Petros Solomon. Aster and her husband have been imprisoned for years for their role in seeking political reform and implementation of the Eritrean constitution. Neither has been heard from since they were taken into custody, and the four children they left behind are being raised by their grandparents, according to Senait.

Senait was in New York City July 24 to help bring to world attention the plight of prisoners of conscience, both in her country and the world over. At a panel discussion hosted by the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, she was one of six panelists -- the others being from Belarus, Burma, Cuba, Syria and Uzbekistan -- to speak out on behalf of those who are not allowed to speak for themselves.

In remarks to an audience of more than 120 diplomats, representatives of nongovernmental organizations and journalists, Senait said many of the people who fought so hard in the decades-long battle for Eritrea’s independence from Ethiopia now find themselves in jail with no recourse and no contact with the outside world.

“My sister’s story is one of many thousands in Eritrea,” Senait said. “The regime is extremely hostile to any democratic notion or rule of

law.” All private news media have been closed down, and many journalists arrested, she said.

Senait’s brother-in-law, who was a Cabinet minister, and 14 other col-



*Eritrean activist Senait Yohannes*

leagues (known as the Group of 15 or G-15) wrote an open letter to President Isaias Afwerki and the Eritrean people regarding the need for political reform. The 11 who were in Eritrea at the time were rounded up and have been held incommunicado since 2001.

On December 11, 2003, Senait’s sister Aster returned home to Eritrea to be with her four children after studying for three years in Phoenix, Arizona. She was taken by security personnel from the airport to an undisclosed location and has not been seen or heard from since. In the years since her disappearance, the government of Eritrea has neither charged her nor given any reason for detaining her.

Senait, who was born and raised in Asmara, Eritrea, left her country just as the 30-year war with Ethiopia ended in 1991. She traveled to Ethiopia and Europe before settling in Canada in 1994, where she is now a citizen.

She has been seeking the release of her sister through [www.FriendsofAster.org](http://www.FriendsofAster.org) and publicly speaking about her family’s suffering and the plight of Eritrean people and refugees. She currently is working to get humanitarian assistance to Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia and Sudan.

Senait is also a board member of St. Andrew’s Refugee Association, an organization that provides resettlement assistance and helps sponsor refugees upon their arrival in Canada.

At the U.N. event, Senait demanded that Eritrea allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit detainees, and she called for increased international pressure on governments keeping prisoners of conscience.

Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on December 10, 1948, declares that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion, there are still governments that detain thousands of people because of their beliefs or political views.

In June 2008, the United States and 63 other U.N. member states sponsored the U.N. Declaration of Prisoners of Conscience. That declaration calls on nations to work for the freedom of prisoners of conscience and to make the release of these prisoners an international priority.

*(Continued on page 17)*

---

## U.S. Sanctions Tightened Against Zimbabwe Regime

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington -- Citing continued politically motivated violence and the failure to lift a ban on humanitarian assistance, the Bush administration expanded its economic sanctions against Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and other individuals and entities with close ties to his regime.

In a July 25 statement, President Bush said his decision is a direct result of the Mugabe regime's actions, including the continuation of political violence directed against political opponents that ultimately forced the withdrawal of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai from the June 27 runoff vote.

The expanded sanctions come after Mugabe's government disregarded calls from the Southern African Development Community, the African Union and the United Nations to halt the attacks, and it continued to prevent nongovernmental organizations from providing humanitarian assistance, the statement said.

"No regime should ignore the will of its own people and calls from the international community without consequences," Bush said.

The president acknowledged ongoing discussions between Zimbabwe's ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the MDC in South Africa. If the talks result in "a new government that reflects the will of the Zimbabwean people," he said, "the United States stands ready to provide a substantial assistance package, development aid and nor-

malization with international financial institutions."

Welcoming the European Union's July 22 announcement that it had expanded its own sanctions against the Mugabe regime, State Department acting spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos said July 23 that "expanded sanctions at this critical juncture will keep the pressure on the ZANU-PF to show good faith in these talks."

According to a July 25 statement from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, 17 entities, including several companies that are fully or partly owned by the Zimbabwean government, and one individual with close ties to the Mugabe regime have been targeted in the latest round of sanctions.

They include mining companies, such as the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company, and financial institutions, including the Agricultural Development Bank of Zimbabwe and ZB Financial Holdings Limited.

Omani citizen Thamer Bin Saeed Ahmed Al-Shanfari and his company, Oryx Natural Resources, were also designated for enabling Mugabe and his senior officials to benefit from mining ventures in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Treasury statement said all of its targets have been illegally used to "siphon revenue and foreign exchange from the Zimbabwean people." The designation means that all of their assets in the United States are frozen and Americans are prohibited from conducting financial or commercial transactions with

them.

Office of Foreign Assets Control Director Adam Szubin said the Mugabe regime continues to be intransigent in the face of calls to end the political violence.

"These actions send a clear warning to those who would protect Mugabe and his assets at the expense of the Zimbabwean people," Szubin said.

### UP TO \$2.5 MILLION AUTHORIZED TO ASSIST REFUGEES

In his July 25 statement, President Bush also reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to help Zimbabwe's refugees and asylum seekers who have been displaced by the political violence. He authorized up to \$2.5 million from the U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund to help them. Many of the refugees have fled to neighboring South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia.

"We will also continue our efforts to provide food and health assistance as part of our commitment to help the people of Zimbabwe in their time of greatest need," Bush said.

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

---

## Tweaking the Framework for Credible Elections

*The following article was produced and originally published by IFES (formerly the International Foundation for Election Systems) on July 10. Additional information on elections around the world is available on <http://www.ifes.org/home.html>.*

*By Almami Cyllah and Skye Christensen*

In a move to become more financially independent from the government and build trust with stakeholders, the National Elections Com-

mission of Liberia and IFES held an Electoral Democracy Training Conference with key stakeholders using the Bridge Curriculum.

that emerge to bring together various stakeholders to undertake long term programs address mistrust and suspicions existing between and amongst the people.

Liberia, after almost 14 years of war held elections in October 2005 and a run-off presidential election in November of the same year. This election has been praised around the world as one of the most free and fair elections ever held on the African continent. The National

This is evident in the NEC and IFES' collaboration in taking advantage of the inter-election period to undertake various capacity building programs, reforms and planning. For example, the NEC enthusiastically undertook electoral management training for staff throughout the organization. Bridge trainings have become regular events, and since June 2007, the NEC conducted five courses to include approximately 50 percent of the Commission's permanent staff.



*Two women stand near an election poster provided by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), in Sorlamba, Liberia. (UN Photo by E. Kanalstein).*

mission of Liberia and IFES held an Electoral Democracy Training Conference with key stakeholders using the Bridge Curriculum.

One principal challenge facing any war torn country in building peace, addressing reconciliation and developing democracy and democratic principles is to understand they cannot be achieved on quick impact projects. Instead, it lies in the commitment and capacity of the leaders

Elections Commission of Liberia (NEC) emerged as one of the most trusted institutions in the country with the commitment to develop and implement participatory democracy in the elections process. The NEC is determined to bridge the gap not only in communication from top to bottom and vice versa but also in giving the population the opportunity to make their voices heard and fully participate and exercise their democratic rights.

The NEC now uses the same tools to advocate for new reforms while promoting its independence. The NEC is a structurally independent Electoral Management Body (EMB) with a permanent technical and professional staff. However, its funding has traditionally been disbursed monthly by the Ministry of Finance. It has been a concern within the Commission that this allocation process causes inefficiencies in its ongoing activities due to funding delays and leaves the door open for influence by the Executive on the electoral administration.

To secure stakeholder support for this and other reforms, the NEC invited key electoral stakeholders to a conference in June in the port city of Buchanan. Participants came from major political parties, media, civil society, youth groups, government, and the legislature. The three-day agenda focused on the issue of electoral financing. The event also served as a venue for discussion of poignant electoral issues in the current context of Liberia, including the ongoing boundary harmonization process, upcoming local elections, public political financing, electoral system and constitutional reform. The Commission

*(Continued on page 6)*

---

## African Development Bank Must Be Strong . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

“without a significant upgrade of the continent’s infrastructure and financial systems,” and that is where the African Development Bank comes into play.

To meet high expectations, she said, Africa needs reliable partners such as the United States and strong institutions such as the AfDB.

Alemayehou said she shares President Bush’s vision of a “partnership of equals” between the United States and Africa.

“It is through such a respectful and engaged partnership that Africans can play a driving role in Africa’s development and African leaders can be accountable for their actions,” she said

“America’s style of government and its liberalized economic model put us in an exceptional position to help steer the bank towards the right policies and usher an unprecedented era of sustainable economic growth in Africa,” she told the lawmakers, who along with the full Senate must approve her nomination.

“The implementation of U.S. policy towards Africa, as well as our role on the board of the African Development Bank, together constitute key tools to help Africa achieve this growth,” she said.

The AfDB Group was established in 1964 by Africans representing 25 nations on the continent to promote economic and social development in Africa. It is a multilateral development bank that is a combination of the AfDB, the African Development

Fund and the Nigeria Trust Fund, which, once joined, became known as the AfDB Group.

The AfDB Group has its headquarters in Abidjan, Nigeria, but has been temporarily relocated to Tunis, Tunisia, because of political instability in Côte d’Ivoire. The bank has financed more than 2,885 development projects, totaling more than \$47.5 billion.

The bank has 53 African-country regional members and 24 members from the Americas, Asia and Europe. The United States is the bank’s second-largest nonregional shareholder. If confirmed as the next U.S. executive director, Alemayehou will represent the United States on the bank’s board of directors. The U.S. treasury secretary represents the United States on the bank’s board of governors.

Alemayehou said she is humbled by the nomination and excited about the prospects and challenges facing the African continent. “I do hope to have the opportunity to play a role in getting the United States and the African Development Bank to work more closely together in order to help improve the lives and dignity of all 940 million Africans,” she said. Alemayehou told the committee that the AfDB is one of the most important regional development banks because it serves the world’s least-developed continent. “The bank’s activities have a very high impact on the region and therefore command the focused attention of Africa’s leadership,” she said.

Alemayehou told the committee that throughout most of her life, she made “personal and professional choices which prepared me for a focused and challenging role --

to serve as a bridge, an enabler, between our country of opportunity and the continent of Africa, with its tremendous yet far from realized potential.”

Most recently, Alemayehou served as managing partner of Trade Links, a company that manages a U.S. Agency for International Development-funded project to help African Growth and Opportunity Act-eligible countries in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa to increase their exports to the United States.

She is also a former director of international regulatory affairs at WorldSpace Corporation, a satellite telecommunications company providing radio services to the developing world. Previously, she worked as a foreign affairs adviser in the U.S. Congress and was employed by the Corporate Council on Africa and the World Health Organization. She holds a master’s degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, with a major in international business, international law and development.

“While I enjoyed working with the African governments and U.S. officials,” she said, “I took the most pleasure from working with African entrepreneurs who had great skills and products but were in desperate need of basic tools. They were in need of training or adequate equipment so that they can produce consistently high-quality goods on a meaningful scale and in a tight time frame.”

Today’s Africa, she said, “is a far cry from my early years in Ethiopia under a communist regime that left an indelible mark on me.”

“Entrepreneurship and democracy are now the order of the day.” ♦

---

## America Must Continue to Stand for Freedom, . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

the light of conscience on abuses of human rights across the world," Bush said in a July 24 speech at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Honoring a group of democracy activists from Belarus, Burma, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Syria and Zimbabwe, Bush urged the release of all prisoners of conscience worldwide, including Ayman Nour of Egypt, Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, Oscar Biscet of Cuba and Riad Seif of Syria, and urged activists to continue the struggle for democracy.

"America hears you," he said. "Millions of our citizens stand with you. And hope still lives, even in bleak places and in dark moments."

Elsewhere, Bush said, the cause of freedom requires renewed effort to promote democracy and good governance as a remedy for the hope-

lessness caused by poverty and corruption.

Mechanisms such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation are giving poor nations new tools to invest in their citizens' future, he said, while a commitment to free trade and open markets is creating new economic opportunities worldwide.

America must also continue efforts to help nations struggling with debilitating public health challenges from HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, Bush said, highlighting his administration's efforts to train health workers and deliver treatment to more than 1.7 million people through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

The challenge for the future "will be to continue this commitment, so that we can lift the shadow of malaria and HIV/AIDS and other diseases once and for all," he said.

As the world's single largest provider of food aid, the United States is also leading the way in the struggle against global hunger, Bush said, another key component of building stable, free societies.

Bush called on Congress to consider a new proposal to purchase up to 25 percent of future food aid from farmers in the developing world, cutting shipping costs and creating new opportunities.

"This would help build up local agriculture; it will help break the cycle of famine. And I ask the United States Congress to approve this measure as soon as possible," he said.

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

## Tweaking the Framework for Credible Elections . . .

*(Continued from page 4)*

and IFES decided to use the content and methodology of the Bridge curriculum for the electoral stakeholders' conference. This would ensure they would benefit from the technical nature of the curriculum and from the interactive methodology the Commission expects from Bridge. Knowing some parties might be antagonistic, an interactive methodology was incorporated to break down tensions between groups. Indeed, groups that were antagonistic at the onset became understanding towards the end.

Feed back was overwhelmingly positive.

The event also linked to a media campaign that allowed representatives of the parties, media, and civil society to communicate their feelings about the conference and what they gained from the three day event on various radio programs. Anecdotal evidence suggests the campaign was a success: "IFES?," said one attendant when we stopped for petrol before departure from Buchanan, "yes, this NEC, we want it independent fearlessly."

Almami Cyllah is Country Director for IFES in Liberia; Skye Christensen is Program Coordinator and Electoral Cycle Specialist for IFES' Africa Programs.

IFES' Programs in Liberia are made possible with the generous support of USAID.

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

---

## Congressional Candidate Fights on Two Fronts in Oregon 1st

By Steve Holgate  
Special Correspondent

Portland, Oregon -- Election Day in Oregon's 1st Congressional District is still more than three months way, but one key political voice already has said Republican challenger Joel Haugen will not win.

That blunt prediction comes not from a newspapers or a well-known commentator or even from the campaign of his opponent, incumbent Congressman David Wu, but from Joel Haugen himself.

His bleak analysis was seconded by his campaign manager, Sarah Tiedemann.

Yet both offered this judgment with a smile, and seemed happy to discuss what they admit is probably a losing campaign. Why?

The candidate responded succinctly: "We're having a lot of fun."



*Congressman David Wu*



*Republican challenger Joel Haugen*

Haugen, a tall, bespectacled 58-year-old who owns a technology-based business, had to know from the beginning he had little chance of unseating a well-known and well-funded opponent like Wu. But there is a long American tradition of political novices such as Haugen challenging an established favorite. A few do it for the attention; some do it to start a political career, but many, like Haugen, do it to highlight certain issues in the hope their campaigns will open a healthy public discussion.

National service -- encouraging young Americans to serve in the Peace Corps, the military or in a domestic service similar to the 1930s-era Civilian Conservation Corps -- is such an issue for Haugen. "That's what got me going on this campaign from the beginning," he told America.gov.

In addition to instilling a sense of service among young people, Haugen said, such a program could provide the "socio-economic mixing [that] is absolutely needed for a vi-

brant society." He said he wants to make the program incentive-based, rather than mandatory, but added he hopes young people will see service as the norm, rather than the exception.

Beyond his service program, Haugen is advocating the sort of moderate-to-progressive positions on tax reform, energy policy and global warming that some analysts have said Republican candidates need to embrace if they hope to regain the 1st District congressional

seat.

REPUBLICAN PARTY OFFICIALS NOT BACKING REPUBLICAN NOMINEE

His policies seem to have found favor with the district's Republicans, who gave him nearly 70 percent of the vote in the May primary.

Nonetheless, Haugen is getting opposition from a seemingly unlikely source -- Republican Party officials. They have told Haugen that his positions are inconsistent with the party platform and they are particularly upset Haugen has endorsed the presumed Democratic nominee for president.

Haugen countered that his positions are in line with history's legendary Oregon Republicans and that he endorses the philosophy outlined on the state party's Web site.

Relative to party systems elsewhere in the world, U.S. political party structures are weak. In most states, party officials

have little say about who receives their party's nomination, but they can withhold financial and other campaign support. In Haugen's case, the state party also rescinded his invitation to the Republican district convention.

Haugen and his team do not seem discouraged about taking on a well-financed opponent while also battling their own party leadership. Sitting around a picnic table at the Columbia County Fair, they ap-

*(Continued on page 14)*

---

## Surrogates' Off-Message Remarks Can Hurt Presidential Candidates

By Eric Green  
Staff Writer

Washington – Ill-chosen comments by surrogates for 2008 presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama have rocked both campaigns, political experts tell America.gov.

Remarks that conflict with or distract from the message candidates are trying to send voters are a recurring feature of the 2008 presidential race.

Especially hurtful to presidential hopefuls is the so-called "Kinsley gaffe," a term coined by journalist Michael Kinsley to describe situations in which the surrogates utter (sometimes inadvertently) what they privately believe to be true, and that quote becomes politically explosive.

One such Kinsley gaffe occurred when Charlie Black, a top strategist for presumed Republican nominee McCain, said June 23 that a terrorist attack on the United States would be a "big advantage" for his candidate. Political analysts agree that even though Black's statement might be accurate, he should not have said it because no responsible citizen should predict such a horrible event, let alone predict politically capitalizing on it. McCain condemned his surrogate's comments as untrue.

James Campbell, a political science professor from the University at Buffalo in New York, said the most egregious misspeak so far in the 2008 campaign was uttered by Obama's wife, Michelle.

Campbell said Michelle Obama's comment on February 18 that "for

the first time in my adult life I am proud of my country because it feels like hope is finally making a comeback" was an "early, but very memorable and egregious gaffe."



*Former Senator Phil Gramm was criticized for saying America was in a "mental recession."*

The comment gave some listeners the impression that she never had felt pride in America until her husband, now the presumed Democratic nominee, ran for president. (See "Presidential Spouses Play Important Role in American Politics (<http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/July/20080710170543xkknorb0.3995935.html?CP.rss=true> ).")

Tony Collings, a former CNN correspondent who now teaches communication studies at the University of Michigan, said one of the worst gaffes committed in the 2008 campaign was a statement by former Obama foreign policy adviser Samantha Power in March that Obama's opponent in the Democratic primaries, New York Senator

Hillary Clinton, was a "monster."

The remark cost Power her job as Obama's adviser, "reflected badly on the Obama campaign and gained sympathy for Hillary," Collings said.

### "NATION OF WHINERS"?

Campbell said McCain also was hurt by a statement from his economic adviser, former U.S. Senator Phil Gramm, who in a July interview with the Washington Times referred to America's economic slowdown as a "mental recession" and that the United States was a "nation of whiners." McCain disavowed the comments.

"There is probably a grain of truth in the public being whiners," said Campbell, "but they have plenty to complain about as well -- especially about fuel prices and their burden on the economy."

Collings said Gramm's remarks did not qualify as a Kinsley gaffe "because what he said was not true. It was inaccurate." Collings said he believes the U.S. economy is in a "real recession, not a mental one."

Even more important, said Collings, was that "what Gramm said was politically unwise because it created the impression that he, as McCain's 'economy guru,' was out of touch with the pain that average Americans are feeling."

Alan Abramowitz, a political science professor at Emory University in Atlanta, said Gramm's comment about the economy reflected the former senator's thinking that U.S. economic conditions are not as bad as "they're being made out to be.

*(Continued on page 14)*

## Obama's National Ads in Olympics Seen as Smart Strategy

By Eric Green  
Staff Writer

Washington -- Presumed Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama's reported plan to run national television advertisements during the August 8-24 Olympic Games might help his campaign but the strategy also carries risks, several sports business consultants tell [America.gov](http://America.gov).

Marc Ganis, who heads Chicago-based SportsCorp Ltd., said he thinks commercials on NBC's Olympic broadcasts could be successful because they will be seen by a "broad cross-section" of Americans.

News about Obama's advertising on NBC was first reported by Advertising Age magazine. According to information contained in NBC's public file, the ad buy involved the purchase by the Obama campaign of air time during the network's Olympic coverage.

Ganis said Obama has "a lot of money" to afford the ads -- Advertising Age said they will cost \$5 million. One advantage, said Ganis, is that Obama is getting a "significant amount of mileage [publicity] just on the fact he's making the ad buy."

But the commercials themselves might not be as effective as the articles reporting the purchase of the advertising, Ganis said.

He said the ads could help Obama with the female vote because the Olympics generate a "disproportionate percentage of women watching the Games versus men." When the Olympic gymnastics competition is shown, female



Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama

viewing "escalates significantly," said Ganis, whose firm consults on financing stadiums and arenas, and team acquisitions and relocations.

Ganis said presidential candidates rarely advertise nationally "because of the state-by-state nature of a presidential election." Candidates consider national commercials a waste of money in states considered already secure or hopelessly out of reach, he said.

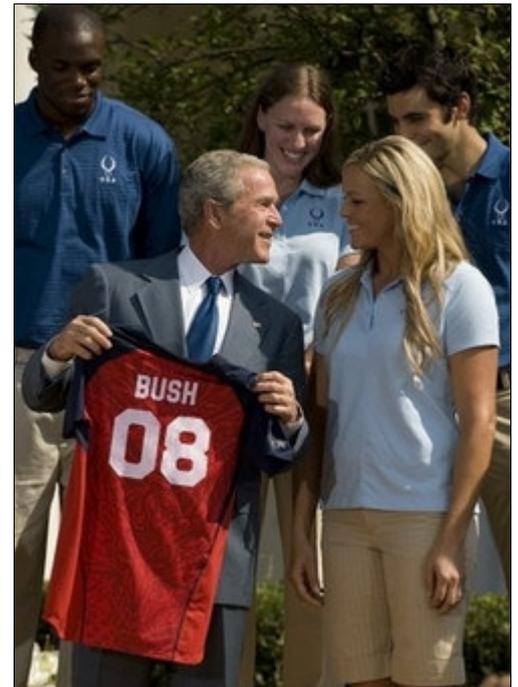
This means, Ganis said, Obama will spend a large sum to advertise even in states where he is heavily favored to beat presumed Republican presidential nominee John McCain -- such as in New York and Obama's home state of Illinois. Obama ran campaign ads in many U.S. states during February's Super Bowl, America's professional football championship.

Ganis said he does not expect McCain to advertise nationally during the Olympics because he has much less money in his campaign budget than Obama. Rather, McCain might choose the cheaper and "more traditional" targeted advertising in individual states with major television markets that "he

feels are most important" to winning the election, Ganis said.

Because Obama is less well known than McCain, "it makes sense" for Obama to buy expensive Olympic advertising because he has "a half billion dollars to spend ... [on] introducing himself to the country," Ganis said.

Given McCain's more constrained finances, "it makes no economic sense" for him to buy national advertising, in part because most American voters already are familiar with the long-time Arizona senator.



President Bush greets members of the 2008 U.S. Olympic team at the White House.

### POLITICIANS AND ATHLETES

Don Hinchey, vice president of communications for the Denver-based Bonham Group, said, "The Olympic platform works well for

*(Continued on page 24)*

---

## Sister Cities, U.S. Agency to Help Communities Form Partnerships

By Kathryn McConnell  
Staff Writer

Washington -- The foremost non-profit group linking communities around the world to promote global cooperation and cultural understanding has joined with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to make it easier for more communities to form partnerships.

The Sister Cities-USAID Community Connector program was launched July 18 at the Sister Cities International (SCI) annual conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Community Connector uses the Internet to pair American communities, charities, faith-based groups and businesses interested in delivering development assistance with communities in other countries in need of that assistance. The new program, funded by USAID, will allow organizations to exchange knowledge and facilitate public-private partnerships, said USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore at the program's launch.

Sister Cities International will coordinate the matching of communities. It will be an extension of SCI's already well-known, global, citizen network.

After registering at an online database, American groups can search by community location, type of need, amount of funding needed and other variables to determine which group or program abroad will best match their available resources and skills.

Sister Cities wants to enhance its comprehensive outreach to involve more communities, Executive Director Patrick Madden told America.gov.

"Community Connector exemplifies the great work that can be achieved when government partners with the private sector," Fore said. "This type of collaboration is essential to sustainable development.

exchange, farmers in Amesbury, Massachusetts, shared with farmers in Esabulu, Kenya, a vegetable-gardening technique that increases soil fertility. After the Kenyan farmers visited Massachusetts, they returned home to teach other farmers, Fore said.

Fore talked of other possibilities: An American synagogue could share

helpful seed-growing information with a church or mosque in Benin. An American church could distribute refurbished cell phones to a Guatemalan charity to help people in microfinance programs. Or an American charity could be paired with an orphanage in another country to provide needed child-care resources.

Brownback said that in Topeka, Kansas, students participating in a Sister Cities educational exchange with Cancun, Mexico,

have used communication technology to continue to interact with their new friends after their exchange semester ended.

"America has much to offer our sister cities, but [there is] much we can learn from them as well," Brownback said.

Sister Cities originated in 1956 when U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower, originally from Kansas, proposed a citizen-to-citizen diplomacy program. ♦



*Students from Topeka, Kansas, have maintained friendship with their exchange community of Cancun, Mexico.*

"Coordinated partnerships will define our greatest successes in international development," she said July 15 at a meeting of the Center for Global Engagement.

The Connector "will allow individuals to be involved in relief efforts in a very real and direct way," Kansas Senator Sam Brownback said at the program's launch. He said American partners will be able to use specific skills to address specific needs in their sister communities.

For instance, through a Sister Cities

---

## Colombia's FARC Terrorist Group Faces Devastating Reversals

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington -- The Colombian terrorist group known as the FARC is suffering mounting losses at the hands of aggressive Colombian military and law enforcement authorities while simultaneously watching its influence and relevance weaken.

Terrorism experts believe that for any terrorist organization to survive it must maintain some degree of popular influence and be relevant in

egy to rein in the group has won widespread popular support and successes. Uribe has indicated that if there are to be negotiations with the FARC leadership, they should expect little or no concessions.

### THE LOSSES HAVE MOUNTED

In March, three of seven key FARC Secretariat commanders died or were killed: its second-in-command, Raul Reyes; the leader of the FARC's Central Bloc, Ivan Rios; and FARC co-founder Manuel Marulanda

inside and outside of Colombia. A further blow to the organization began last year and has spread into this year with the defection of more than 3,000 FARC insurgents. A decade ago, the FARC claimed a membership of 18,000, but that number has dwindled to approximately 9,000 insurgents due to excessive losses and defections.

In March, FARC Commander Nelly Avila Moreno deserted the organization, telling authorities she had not spoken directly to the group's high command in more than two years, which terrorism experts believe is a strong indication of a breakdown in the group's ability to command and communicate with outlying units and leaders.

And in a stunning July 2 raid, Colombian army commandos literally took 15 hostages, who included French-Colombian politician Ingrid Betancourt and three Americans, from the hands of FARC terrorists without firing a shot. In the process, several terrorist-captors suddenly found themselves the captives.

On July 20, Colombians celebrated their independence day by marching in the millions in Colombian cities and in dozens of other major cities including New York, Washington and Paris to protest FARC kidnappings and the harsh treatment shown captives. The Free Country Foundation in Colombian capital Bogota, a public policy analysis group, estimates that almost 700 hostages still are held by the FARC in the far reaches of the South American country, according to the Washington Post.

At the White House July 22, Presi-

*(Continued on page 12)*



*Protesters carry a Colombian flag during a march in Bogota July 20, 2008. Colombians took to the streets in large numbers on Sunday to protest kidnappings that have plagued the country during its 44-year-old guerrilla war. Declaring that this year's Independence Day should be renamed "Freedom Day" for 2,800 people held captive in remote jungle and mountain camps, thousands were expected to march in cities throughout the country. REUTERS/Jose Miguel Gomez (COLOMBIA)*

the minds of the public. Take that veneer away and the group begins to disintegrate.

Every effort by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to win relevance and influence in the past year has failed, while President Alvaro Uribe's hardline strat-

Velez. Until this year, Colombia's armed forces had not killed a single member of the group's secretariat. In May, FARC computers were seized by Colombian authorities in raids that revealed some of the group's strategic information and connections to Venezuela's Hugo Chavez and other political leaders

---

## Colombia's FARC Terrorist Group Faces Devastating . . .

*(Continued from page 11)*

dent Bush said the success of the July 2 rescue mission underscores the progress the Colombian government has made in battling terrorism and the illegal drug trade. "This progress is also evident in the hearts and minds of the Colombian people. On Sunday [July 20], more than a million Colombians marched in their nation's streets and called on the FARC to release its remaining hostages and to stop practicing terror."

Bush also said that since Uribe took office six years ago, the Colombian government reports, homicides have dropped by 40 percent, kidnappings have dropped by more than 80 percent and terrorist attacks have dropped by more than 70 percent. Reforms to Colombia's criminal justice system have dramatically increased conviction rates.

"It symbolizes the huge gains made under Uribe in partnership with the U.S.-funded Plan Colombia program and is a major black eye for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and their rogue insurgency," said Ray Walser, a senior policy analyst for Latin America at the Washington-based Heritage Foundation. "The liberation of these 15 hostages could not have been timelier. Not a shot was fired; not a single life was lost."

Walser said in a recent Heritage Foundation report that the FARC had hoped to use Betancourt and the three American hostages, who were U.S. defense contractors, as pawns in a game of international blackmail against the United States and to raise its image internationally. "The organization sought to apply pressure on the U.S. govern-

ment and Congress to release two FARC leaders -- Ricardo Palmira and Anayibe Rojas Valderama -- both of whom are serving sentences in U.S. prisons for drug trafficking," Walser said.

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Colombian Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos, writing in the New York Times July 23, said that eight years ago illegal armed groups in Colombia's cocaine and heroin drug trade controlled more of the countryside than the government. "Today the most dangerous and vicious of the groups -- the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia -- has seen a sharp drop in its strength and status. Once 18,000 strong, the group has lost half its forces along with whatever credibility and following it had elsewhere in Latin America. The other major militias, the National Liberation Army and the United Self-Defense Forces, no longer pose a serious threat," Gates and Santos said.

"It's reaching the point where most of the leaders of the FARC are going to say, 'We're not going to win, we don't have a chance,'" according to Peter DeShazo, director of the Americas Program at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, in news reports. "And when they reach that point, then political negotiation becomes more possible."

### **FARC IS OLDEST LATIN AMERICAN GROUP**

Founded in 1964, the FARC is Latin America's oldest, largest, most capable and best-equipped terrorist organization, according to the U.S. State Department's annual Country Reports on Terrorism. The FARC

has been designated by the secretary of state as one of three foreign terrorist organizations operating in Colombia.

The other two are the National Liberation Army and the rightist paramilitary United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, which is in the process of demobilizing. The Country Reports indicates these three terrorist groups have been weakened by aggressive military and police actions, but that they also continue to murder, kidnap and terrorize Colombians.

Walser says the FARC still has a force of some 9,000 insurgents, so its ability to conduct terrorist operations and threaten Colombian security is still viable, though weakened.

"The rescue is a powerful indicator that U.S. assistance and support for Colombia's military through Plan Colombia continues to yield results in the campaign against the narco-terrorists of the FARC, stripping away their leaders and military cohesion, and now their ability to manipulate the headlines through exploitation of the plight of captives," Walser said.

Lidaine Zumpolle, who now heads a group of former FARC terrorists critical of the group, told the Washington Post that the FARC is "completely irrelevant. I think today the FARC has totally lost moral support."

While the United States has played a critical role in helping Colombia deal with terrorism, DeShazo told the New York Times that "in the end it's the Colombian political will ... that has made this happen."

◆

---

## United States Supports India's Civil Nuclear Pact

By Merle D. Kellerhals, Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington -- India is facing increasing demand for new energy sources to bolster its expanding economy and meet the needs of a population that exceeds 1.1 billion people.

A proposed U.S.-India civil nuclear accord could make ample energy resources a more likely possibility

with India for its civilian nuclear energy development program. Approval of the safeguards agreement as well as approval of a separate agreement with the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which controls the trade of nuclear materials, is necessary before the U.S. Congress will give final approval to the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative, Schulte said July 24 at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

process is necessary because India has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"Helping India generate electricity for growth and development, while acknowledging its commitments on safeguards and nonproliferation, is part of transforming global relations with this large and vibrant democracy," Schulte said. "The United States, the European Union and other like-minded countries aim to develop an entirely new relationship with India, a relationship founded on cooperation rather than denial."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice says this is a landmark deal that is good for the United States and India, and for global efforts to reduce the spread of nuclear technology and greenhouse gas emissions that threaten the global environment.

"It's certainly our hope that we can get through all the processes and get this done in the Congress, and we are going to work very expeditiously toward that goal," Rice said July 24 while en route to Australia from an Asian security conference in Singapore.

"India ... has a tremendously growing demand for energy. It is a country that, if it tries to meet that demand through carbon-based sources for energy, is going to contribute dramatically to the continued growth of greenhouse gas emissions," Rice said. "So it's important for India to find alternative sources."

India imports 75 percent of its oil. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who recently survived a confidence vote in parliament, has argued that India needs a stronger

*(Continued on page 23)*



*Secretary Rice with Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith, M.P. State Department photo by Michael Gross (File photo)*

with final approval by early fall this year. The nuclear accord would bring India into the nuclear nonproliferation mainstream, help India meet its growing energy needs while protecting the environment, and deepen the strategic partnership between many nations and India, says Ambassador Gregory Schulte, the U.S. permanent representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The IAEA Board of Governors will meet August 1 in Vienna to consider a draft safeguards agreement

The U.S.-India nuclear initiative, known as a 123 Agreement, can be acted on by the Congress only after India secures separate agreements with the IAEA and the NSG. The United States and India completed negotiations on the agreement in 2007.

The nuclear accord would require India to open its civilian reactors to international inspections by the IAEA and give India access to the world market for nuclear fuel and technology, which it has been blocked from for more than 30 years. The three-step approval

---

## Surrogates' Off-Message Remarks Can Hurt . . .

(Continued from page 8)

Clearly, it was not a message the McCain campaign wanted to associate itself with."

### THE ROLE OF SURROGATES

Campbell said surrogates -- individuals who speak on behalf of candidates to the public and the news media -- are useful because political candidates cannot be everywhere at once.

Surrogates tend to operate, he said, where they are "themselves politically popular and in nonbattleground states" where the vote for president is not expected to be close. They "can carry on the campaign and allow the candidate to focus" on more tightly contested states.

Collings said candidates use surrogates "partly because they want as many people out there as possible to repeat the candidate's basic messages, and the more people being interviewed, the more exposure of those views."



*Samantha Power resigned from the Barack Obama campaign for her description of Hillary Clinton.*

Candidates also can use surrogates to "talk about sensitive issues that the candidate himself does not want to be pinned down on, or as a trial balloon [experiment] to see if a view will gain public support," said Collings. He said that "if a view is found to be unpopular, the candidate can always distance himself from the surrogate and deny that what the surrogate said represents

his views."

Abramowitz, whose new book *The Engaged Public: Polarization and American Democracy*, will be released in 2009, said he does not think U.S. voters "are paying that much attention" to what surrogates say, unless surrogates persist in making ill-advised statements.

He said that when gaffes occur, the presidential candidates should "immediately disassociate" themselves from what the surrogate said to "stop the bleeding as quickly as possible."

See also "Presidential Candidates' Foreign Policy Advisers a Diverse Group" (<http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/July/20080717145549dmslahrellek0.6560327.html?CP.rss=true>).

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

## Congressional Candidate Fights on Two Fronts . . .

(Continued from page 7)

peared cheerful but admitted things have been tough. Campaign manager Tiedemann, short on funds, said she hopes to spread Haugen's name and policies by asking friends and contacts to pass along e-mails boosting his candidacy. The campaign also plans to make a video for posting on YouTube, and is encouraging supporters to print, post and travel with a cartoon drawing of the candidate dubbed "Flat Joel."

When asked if she is paid for her campaign work, Tiedemann laughed and, playing on the name of one of President Bush's signature programs, responded, "Joel calls me his faith-based employee. I work on the faith that someday he will pay me." She has kept her regular job as a classical musician.

Haugen said his long-shot status has freed him from the normal constraints of political caution. "I can

say and do anything I feel is important. That, to me, is the value of what I'm doing -- to generate and expand the discussion." He laughed and added, "And of course my friends think I'm nuts."

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

---

## United States Imposes Sanctions on 10 Burmese Firms

Washington -- The United States is imposing further economic sanctions on Burma in an effort to punish the ruling military junta for systematically oppressing the Burmese people.

The U.S. Treasury Department announced financial sanctions against 10 companies suspected of being owned or controlled by the military-run government of Burma. At the same time, President Bush signed into law legislation and a joint resolution that will continue some sanctions, add new ones and extend import restrictions.

"We are tightening financial sanctions against Burma's repressive junta and the companies that finance it," said Adam Szubin, director of the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control. "The regime's refusal to protect and allow relief to reach the Burmese people as Cyclone Nargis devastated their country is but another example of the regime's heartless neglect of its people."

The sanctions will affect two major conglomerates -- the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. (UMEH) and the Myanmar Economic Corp. -- that have extensive interests in a variety of sectors critical



*Burma Gem sale (File photo)- The U.S. Congress passed legislation to ban the import of jade or other gems from Burma.*

to the Burmese government, including the gem, banking and construction industries, Szubin said July 29. And four of UMEH's subsidiaries -- Myanmar Ruby Enterprise, Myanmar Imperial Jade Company Ltd., Myawaddy Trading Ltd. and Myawaddy Bank Ltd. -- have been added to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons list, the Treasury Department said.

In addition, Szubin said, any bank accounts or other financial assets found in the United States that belong to those named by Treasury officials must be frozen. No Americans or American companies may do business with these companies, the Treasury Department said.

"The designations also make available to the global community information about companies that provide vital support to the Burmese military and to a regime that is systematically oppressing the Burmese people," the Treasury Department said.

Bush signed into law the renewal of import restrictions on Burma and the 2008 Tom Lantos Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act, which is aimed at extending sanctions against leaders of the Burmese military regime, those providing them with economic and political support, their immediate families and the Burmese gem industry.

*(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>)*

## Record Number of Overseas Visitors Coming to United States

By Victoria Colette Reynolds  
Special Correspondent

Washington -- Despite increasing airfares due to rising fuel prices, record numbers of international travelers are coming to America.

It's a bargain for people outside the United States to come here. Hotel room rates in New York, for example, are up 11 percent in dollar terms, but only a mere 1.5 percent increase when calculated in euros, according to Bobby Bowers of Smith Travel Research in Hendersonville, Tennessee.

"Once you're here, in terms of staying in a hotel, it's cheap," Bowers said. "Alternatively, for those traveling from the U.K. to Paris, [they] won't find the value [they would] get by going to places like Orlando [Florida] or [Washington] D.C."

"Hotels, attractions, timeshares and visitor bureaus we touch in our day-to-day client-service work would tell you that business growth from overseas travelers has been 'euphoric' over the last five years," said Scott Berman, a hospitality expert at professional services company PricewaterhouseCoopers. "This international inbound has been an absolute economic engine, and without our international inbound tourist, there would be negative growth [in the tourism industry]."

In 2007, the United States welcomed nearly 56 million foreign visitors, 10 percent more than the year before, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. Anecdotal evidence says summer 2008 is witnessing an even larger influx of foreign tourists than summer 2007, the strongest summer on record.

Popular destinations include New York; Los Angeles; Miami; San Francisco; Orlando, Florida; Las Vegas; Honolulu; Washington; Chicago; and Boston.

In Los Angeles' Hollywood district, visitors aren't just skipping along



Malin Karlsson, of Sweden, shops at Steve & Barry's clothing store in June in New York.

the Walk of Fame. They're scrambling to Universal Studios' new iFLY and Simpsons rides, according to Bill Karz, spokesman for LA Inc., the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau.

In Miami, where Spanish is spoken as much as English, there are tourist activities for any size wallet, Berman said.

Visitors are coming in greater numbers from Latin America, Russia and Eastern Europe, especially to Florida. "You're seeing not only Aeroflot, the Russian airline, flying to North America, but also structured tours that move Russian tourists by charter," Berman said. Disney

World, near Orlando, is a big draw, along with beach resorts from Palm Beach to Miami.

Typically, tourists from almost every country in Europe flock to New York and Florida, and the Asian market flies to Hawaii and California on the West Coast. But

recently, Los Angeles saw an increase in visitors from the United Kingdom and peaks in visitors from Germany and France.

More than ever, the United States attracts international travelers due to the weakened American dollar. Manhattan, Hollywood, Disney World and Universal Studios are places that Europeans have read about, looked at on the Internet, and now, can afford more easily.

### TOURS FROM CHINA

Under a June 17 memorandum of understanding between the U.S. Commerce Department and the

(Continued on page 17)

## Record Number of Overseas Visitors Coming to . . .

*(Continued from page 16)*

China National Tourism Administration, Chinese leisure travelers are now able to visit America in group tours. The Commerce Department projects that these groups will bring about 300,000 Chinese travelers annually, a number expected to double by 2011. China has approved the National Tour Association, based in Lexington, Kentucky, to certify American tour operators to work with the Chinese coming to America.

"We've certified 160 companies to date," said Bob Hoelscher, the organization's chairman and chief executive.

Chinese citizens spend more during their stay than do travelers from other countries. In 2006, average spending by Chinese visitors was more than \$6,000 per person, per trip.

### ECONOMIC BOON FOR U.S. CITIES

Overall, international tourists spent \$122 billion on travel to and within the United States in 2007, a 13 percent increase from the year before.

International visitors spend, on average, nearly \$2,200 during a visit.

## Eritrea "Has Become One Big Jail," Activist Says . . .

*(Continued from page 2)*

According to Ambassador T. Vance McMahan, U.S. representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, who moderated the July 24 panel discussion called "Courageous Voices," prisoners of conscience are "courageous men

American stores are a big draw. The Commerce Department reports that nearly 90 percent of international travelers make shopping their first priority. "They come here not just to see things, but also to fill their suitcases and take things home. And they're coming over in droves because, basically, every-

more than half of the city's \$28 billion tourism industry. The international visitor stays longer and spends more money than American visitors, according to Christopher Heywood, a spokesman for NYC and Company, the city's tourism organization.

"The economic impact of this tour-



*A Universal Studios representative presents Hollywood Walk of Fame stars to officials in the first group tour from China.*

thing here is half price," Hoelscher said.

New York is America's No. 1 port of entry for foreign travelers, and visitors from abroad account for

ism ... is very important to our economy," Berman said. "This applies to the entire seaboard of the U.S., both Atlantic and Pacific."

But he and other analysts look anx-

and women who have or continue to suffer from government repression for peacefully advocating change."

McMahan called for all U.N. member states and nongovernmental organizations "to redouble current efforts to assist prisoners of con-

science and their families and to put an end to all forms of persecution."

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

---

## Survey Ranks Japanese World's Best Tourists, Americans 11th

By Kelly Bronk  
Staff Writer

Washington -- Japanese travelers claim the title of "World's Best Tourists" in Expedia.com's first global tourist survey, while the British and the Germans tie for the runner-up position. Americans rank 11th.

The 2008 rankings, published by online travel company Expedia Inc., which plans to do the survey annually, are based on surveys of more than 4,000 hoteliers to determine the best overall tourists by nationality. Hoteliers were asked to rank international travelers in a variety of categories including manners, willingness to learn the language and try local cuisine, generosity and fashion savvy. Countries were scored on a 100-point scale.

"Hoteliers are the experts when it comes to interacting with tourists, so as the busy summer travel season approaches and vacationers prepare for their own travel experiences, we thought it would be fun to present some of [the hoteliers'] common perceptions regarding tourists from all around the world," said Expedia.com travel specialist Karyn Thale.

In addition to claiming the overall Best Tourists title, Japanese travelers are also named the best behaved, most polite, most quiet and least complaining tourists.

"They know what they want, and they come prepared with attractions marked in their Japanese tour books," said Polina Roze, a concierge at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Times Square in New York City. "They're very easy to accommodate, and they're very polite. They

often say 'thank you' four or five times."

Hoteliers rank Americans as the international tourists most likely to try to speak in the local language



*Fantasy meets royalty: Mickey Mouse greets Japan's Princess Aiko, who visited Tokyo's Disneyland with her parents Crown Prince Naruhito and Princess Masako. Picture:*

and sample native cuisine. But while Americans earn points for those efforts to experience another culture fully and win the title of most generous tourists, they are also labeled the noisiest and least fashionable visitors.

Along with the Americans, the British and the French are described as culinary adventurers. And this sense of adventure extends beyond just a willingness to try local cuisine, according to Christopher Heywood, a vice president for NYC & Company, the official marketing, tourism and partnership organization for New York, which is the No. 1 destination for international visi-

tors to the United States.

"German and British tourists seem to be a little bit more adventurous," Heywood said, citing their interest in visiting other New York boroughs

in addition to Manhattan. Heywood attributes this desire to see all five of New York's boroughs -- Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Staten Island and Queens -- to the fact that many European tourists have visited New York City multiple times. "They've seen many of the tourist attractions and they want a real authentic experience," Heywood said.

Other notable winners in the Expedia survey include the chic French and the Italians, who claim the most fashionable prize. Roze says many international visitors, including French and Italian tourists, are

*(Continued on page 21)*

## International Struggle to Develop HIV/AIDS Vaccine Continues

By Cheryl Pellerin  
Staff Writer

Washington – The 20-year effort to develop a vaccine that protects against the AIDS-causing human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) meets more challenges as clinical trials are discontinued and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) rethinks its approach to HIV vaccine design and development.

NIAID, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), announced in September 2007 that it would discontinue two HIV vaccine clinical trials. On July 17, it announced it will not move forward with a vaccine clinical trial called PAVE 100 that would have enrolled 8,500 volunteers in the United States, South America, the Caribbean and eastern and southern Africa.

"If there is one area of the science of HIV that is still quite problematic, that has to do with vaccines," NIAID Director Anthony Fauci said during a July 15 briefing. "Why? We have a lot of money, we have a lot of brilliant people thinking about it, why is it so difficult? The reason is that HIV is different – namely, the natural [human] immune response to HIV is inadequate."

By the end of 2007, according to the World Health Organization, an estimated 33.2 million people around the globe were living with HIV and 2.1 million of these were

children. An estimated 2.5 million people were newly infected in 2007 and 2.1 million died from AIDS. About two-thirds of all people with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa.

### FAILED TRIALS

One of the discontinued studies was a large, international HIV vaccine clinical trial called the STEP study. Beginning in 2004 it enrolled 3,000 noninfected volunteers in

"If you inject a nonhuman primate with a vaccine that induces a T-cell response," Fauci said, "you don't protect them against infection but you blunt the original viral burst and make the set point [the relatively steady viral load during the asymptomatic period of HIV infection] low so two things are possible. One, the animal will go a longer period of time without requiring therapy. Two, the animal will be very unlikely to be infective [to others]

because its viral load is low."

With that as a principle, he added, the STEP study was developed.

In 2007, an independent data and safety monitoring board concluded the STEP study vaccine did not prevent HIV infection or affect the course of the disease in those who became infected with HIV. Some of the volunteers, in a

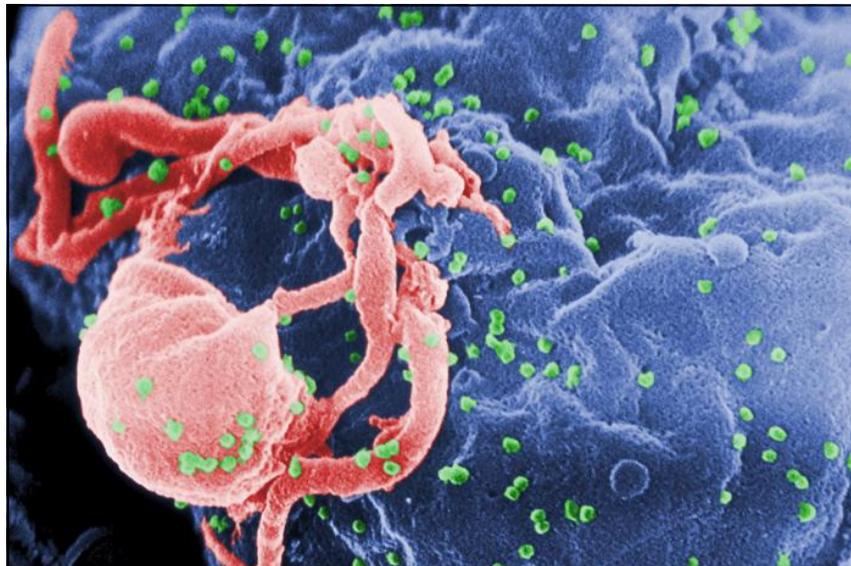
still-unexplained paradoxical effect, Fauci said, "actually had a greater risk of getting HIV infected if they were naturally exposed to HIV."

The PAVE 100 trial was to begin U.S. recruitment in October 2007 but was postponed following the decision to halt immunizations in the STEP study.

### NEW APPROACH

To accelerate the translation of basic discoveries about HIV into advances in vaccine design and

*(Continued on page 24)*



*Scanning electron micrograph shows HIV budding from cultured lymphocyte.*

Australia, Brazil, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Peru, Puerto Rico and the United States.

The study was co-sponsored by NIAID and the pharmaceutical company Merck & Co., Inc., which developed and supplied a candidate vaccine designed to stimulate production of immune system T-cells that can kill HIV-infected cells. The goal was to determine if the vaccine could prevent HIV infection or reduce the amount of HIV in the blood, or both.

## Heart Disease a Leading Cause of Death Worldwide

By Erika Gebel  
Special Correspondent

Washington -- Despite dramatic medical advances over the past 50 years, heart disease remains a leading cause of death globally and the Number 1 cause of death in the United States.

Heart disease, or cardiovascular disease, accounts for 30 percent of deaths worldwide, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). In the United States, almost 700,000 people die from heart disease each year. In 2006, the American Heart Association estimated heart disease would cost Americans more than \$258 billion.

Heart disease encompasses several specific heart ailments. One of the most common is coronary heart disease, which accounted for 71 percent of U.S. heart disease fatalities in 2002 according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Other common cardiovascular diseases are congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure, pulmonary heart disease and rheumatic heart disease.

Coronary heart disease is caused by a narrowing of the blood vessels that lead to the heart. This occurs when fatty deposits, called atherosclerosis, form along the vessel walls. If these fatty deposits become thick enough to stop blood flow, a heart attack or myocardial infarction results, which can lead to disability or death.

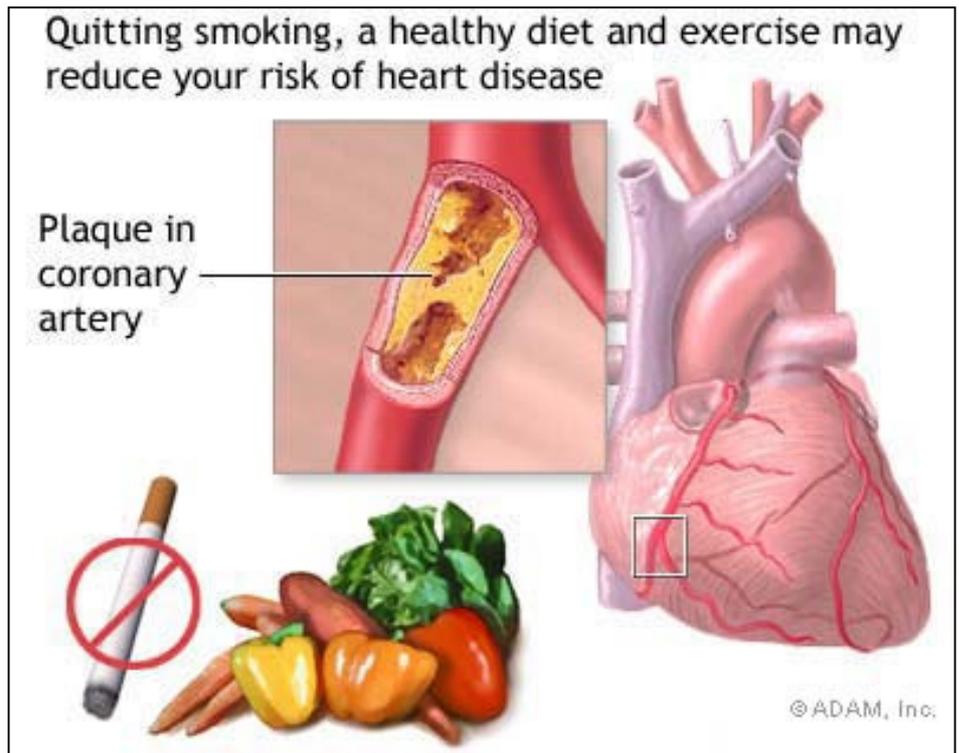
The risk of heart disease can be reduced through lifestyle changes -- a healthy diet, physical activity and elimination of tobacco use. Risk indicators like cholesterol levels and

blood pressure can be monitored to assess the effectiveness of drug treatments and lifestyle changes in reducing the chances of heart disease. Diabetes and obesity are also heart disease risks.

### INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON RESEARCH

seeks to identify traditional and emerging heart attack risk factors, and to use that information to help develop more effective health policies.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), a division of the



*Healthy diet, regular exercise, and quitting smoking (if you smoke) may prevent heart disease. Follow your health care provider's recommendations for treatment and prevention of heart disease.*

WHO and the Global Forum for Health Research began a cardiovascular disease research initiative in November 1998. The initiative has six research projects, including community-based interventions and clinical management programs. Researchers from Switzerland, Australia, Finland and the United States are cooperating in this effort.

WHO also sponsors a project called INTER-HEART, a global study that

National Institutes of Health, is conducting clinical and basic research programs. Basic research is exploratory and involves experiments and studies in a laboratory setting. Clinical trials involve volunteers on whom experimental drugs and devices are tested to ascertain their efficacy and safety.

One research project involves improving the use of magnetic resonance imaging to observe the heart.

*(Continued on page 21)*

---

## Heart Disease a Leading Cause of Death . . .

(Continued from page 20)

NHLBI researcher Elliott McVeigh is developing strategies to overcome the two major obstacles to obtaining a good image. One problem is that the heart moves; the other is that the need for imaging often coincides with a health emergency, McVeigh told America.gov.

Imaging helps heart disease patients because it allows doctors to “to better determine which treatment is the best for each patient,” McVeigh said. “Sometimes, the treatment itself can be delivered more precisely and more effectively under direct image guidance.”

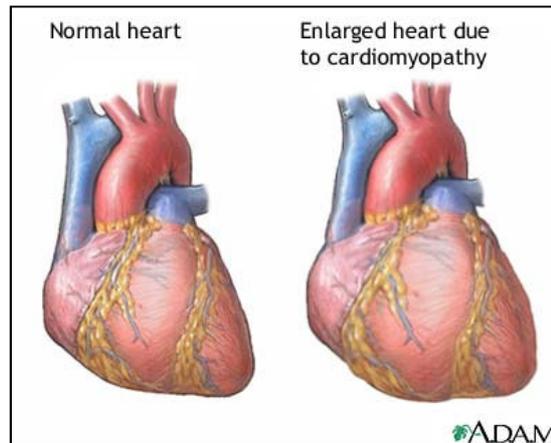
One of McVeigh’s research projects involves trying to see the shape of the scar, or “myocardial infarct,” that develops after a person has a heart attack. “The relationship of the shape of that scar to the propensity for a fatal arrhythmia at a later time is unknown. We would like to discover that relationship so that we can determine which patients need defibrillators.”

An arrhythmia, or erratic heart beat, can be treated with a defibrillator, a device that uses electrical signals to help the heart regain a healthy rhythm.

### PREVENTING HEART DISEASE

Treatment and management can help address the heart disease problem, but another effective strategy for curbing this chronic illness is prevention.

In the United States, the CDC oper-



ates programs to prevent heart disease in 33 states. The programs promote heart health by educating the public, monitoring risk factors and identifying promising strategies for promoting heart-healthy interventions.

“Our research is about heart disease and stroke prevention. It begins with prevention of the risk factors themselves,” Dr. Darwin Labarthe, director of the CDC Division for

Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, told America.gov. “We are working with the World Health Organization in efforts to reduce the intake of salt to prevent high blood pressure or reduce high blood pressure.”

Prevention strategies and treatment options for heart disease are having positive effects. In the United States, the overall death rate from heart disease has decreased since the 1960s but the gains have not been consistent across demographic groups.

For instance, “[t]he gap between blacks and whites has widened in the United States,” Labarthe said. According to the CDC, in 2002, the death rate for heart disease was 30 percent higher among blacks than among whites in the United States.

“The challenges that we face today,” he said, “are to eliminate all preventable heart attacks and strokes beginning with the risk factors themselves and achieving that for all members of the population.”

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

## Survey Ranks Japanese World’s Best Tourists, Americans 11th . . .

(Continued from page 18)

eager to visit New York’s designer stores. “I’ve noticed that a lot of visitors from Spain, Mexico, Italy and France are usually dressed very sharp, and they ask about going to stores like Juicy Couture and Century 21, a store known for discounted designer clothing.”

Although international visitors to the United States have many different characteristics, some desirable and some less so, their positive effect on the United States is undeniable. “International guests are keeping us on our toes and bringing a boost to the economy,” Roze

said. “They’re here to enjoy the city and experience New York to the fullest. They’re such a positive influence on the city.”

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

---

## Clean Energy Fuels Buzz on Capitol Hill

By Lea Terhune  
Staff Writer

Washington -- T. Boone Pickens, an octogenarian Texas oil billionaire, recently paid to air television ads promoting his plan to reduce U.S. dependency on foreign oil through developing alternative energy sources.

"We don't need anymore talk. We need a plan. And it's got to be a top priority of the next president and the next Congress," Pickens said in the ad. An estimate of U.S. annual foreign oil expenditures -- \$ 700 billion a year -- appeared on the screen.

Pickens has a plan, which he presented to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee July 22. He underscored the gravity of the issue and appealed to legislators to pave the way for long-term investment in renewable energy resources.

"Private enterprise will invest money, and will develop domestic resources and build new transmission infrastructure cheaply and efficiently, if Congress adopts clear, predictable policies," he told legislators.

Some interested potential investors have held back because of the temporary and often inadequate legislation supporting renewable energy. Earlier in 2008, Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty told America.gov that business is only "waiting for the right signals coming from policy-makers and policy leaders so that they can plan their future." (See "Governors Set Sights on Clean En-

ergy ( <http://www.america.gov/st/env-english/2008/March/20080303184543mlenuhret0.666958.html> ).")

The Pickens Energy Plan, outlined on his Web site, would harness a combination of resources, primarily wind energy, drawn from the wind wealth in the U.S. central corridor.



*Legendary Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens presented his plan to reduce oil dependence to Congress July 22.*

This huge, windy swath of territory extends from the Southwestern United States to the Canadian border, and its location makes distribution to the East and West coasts of the United States relatively easy if a transmission grid is created to distribute the power generated.

Pickens is developing what he says will be the largest wind energy farm in the world near Sweetwater, Texas. The facility now produces 2,000 megawatts and ultimately will generate 4,000 megawatts of electricity. The cost: \$10 billion.

Natural gas is the other key component of Pickens' plan. America has abundant natural gas reserves, and he wants natural gas to replace petroleum-based vehicle fuels.

"If we take the natural gas we would be using for electrical generation to meet new demand and replacement of existing plants and move it to transportation, we can replace 38 percent of our foreign oil imports," he said. Pickens owns a natural gas-powered Honda Civic GX.

Pickens estimates North America has an 80-year supply of natural gas, and there is "the ongoing development of biogas," derived from sustainable sources. The change, he says, would buy the United States time during which new, sustainable technologies can be refined, brought to market and made affordable.

### ALTERNATIVE ENERGY DRAWS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

A longtime conservative Republican and a major contributor to George W. Bush's presidential campaigns, Pickens appears to be attracting Democrats and Republicans to his plan.

"His proposal is so common sense," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said during a conference call he hosted July 23 to discuss the upcoming National Clean Energy Summit in Las Vegas. The conference, sponsored by the Center for American Progress, is nonpartisan. Reid said. Influential Republicans, including Pickens, will be among those in politics and industry bringing ideas to the table.

*(Continued on page 23)*

---

## United States Supports India's Civil Nuclear . . .

*(Continued from page 13)*

investment in nuclear energy generation.

Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith, who was traveling with Rice, said his government would give the India initiative every consideration. Australia, which holds 40 percent of the world's known uranium reserves, is a key member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

"We will give very careful consideration to the strategic importance of the agreement, both to India and to the United States. And we're also looking at the arrangement with a positive and constructive frame of mind," Smith said. "We, of course, want to look very carefully at the detail and consider that

very carefully in the NSG."

### IAEA SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT

Schulte says the safeguards agreement has been carefully negotiated by the IAEA Secretariat, which has recommended it for approval. "It deserves the [IAEA] board's full endorsement," he said.

India has four operating nuclear power reactors under IAEA safeguards today, Schulte said. Under the U.S.-India accord, India has committed to separate its military and civilian activities and submit its entire civil program to international inspection.

"Under this plan, India will place under voluntary safeguards a majority of its existing and planned nu-

clear power reactors (14 of 22) and all its future civil reactors," he said. "Within a generation, it is estimated that nearly 90 percent of India's reactors will be under IAEA safeguards."

If the IAEA board approves this safeguards agreement, Schulte said, the United States will work with the Nuclear Suppliers Group to reach consensus on an India-specific exception that would allow members to engage in civil nuclear cooperation with India. Normally, the NSG will not work with a country that has not signed the nonproliferation treaty.

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

## Clean Energy Fuels Buzz on . . .

*(Continued from page 22)*

In his July 19 radio message, President Bush, while asking that more U.S. land be opened for oil exploration and drilling, also said, "In the short term, America's economy will continue to depend on oil, but in the long term our economic future depends on promoting alternative energy technologies."

The president said his administration has supported this effort. "We're investing in new advanced batteries, plug-in hybrids, and hydrogen fuel cells. We're working to expand the use of clean, safe nuclear power, solar and wind power, and clean coal technology. With these steps, we're enhancing America's energy security."

In the past week, former U.S. Vice President and 2007 Nobel Prize winner Al Gore asked America to shift to 100 percent renewable energy use in the next 10 years. "I think it's achievable," Gore said on NBC's Meet the Press. "The people of this country are ready for bolder, more dramatic answers."

One obstacle to greater use of alternative energy sources is a lack of infrastructure. Constructing the necessary high-capacity transmission grid from the generation source to service areas will cost money. Pickens said this step and the resulting expansion in energy business will generate jobs and revitalize economies in America's heartland. But Congress must provide

the necessary instruments to facilitate development by the public and private sectors.

Pickens, who has been in the oil business all his life, told senators he believes world oil production has peaked.

"We cannot limit ourselves to any single solution, whether it is nuclear power, drilling for more domestic oil and gas or renewable energy. It is clear that renewable energy sources are an essential national security strategy," he said.

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

**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



**Web site  
[http://  
ethiopia.use  
mbassy.gov](http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov)**

See also

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

Telling America's story

## **Obama's National Ads in Olympics Seen as Smart . . .**

*(Continued from page 9)*

presidential candidates, especially Obama," because the Olympics reach a huge audience, and the Olympic association enables Obama "to bask in the prestige and credibility of the Games. Plus, by extension, he can be a part of the feel-good stories with a patriotic spin."

Hinchey said advertising during sports events helps "mainstream" a candidate by telling viewers "'I'm one of you. I share your passions and interests. You can be comfortable with me.'" As such, sports ads are powerful vehicles for creating and conveying a candidate's image."

"The only novel thing, perhaps," is that politicians are "starting to pay for this association" with sports figures through advertisements, said Hinchey, whose company works in sports and entertainment marketing.

### **RISKS IN OLYMPIC ADVERTISING**

Kenneth Shropshire, director of the

Wharton Sports Business Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania, said political candidates always seek "unique advertising deliveries" to voters. Shropshire, a professor of sports business, said running political commercials during the Olympics initially could have a "powerful" effect, if they are sufficiently dramatic to capture the audience's attention. But overdoing the commercials could alienate the audience by interrupting their favorite competitions.

Shropshire said political advertising during sports events is "certainly not something that's been analyzed a lot" and "there's no standard pattern" on how it should be presented.

The ads offer a chance to capture and present the campaign's theme effectively, Shropshire said, provided the candidates "calibrate how many times" the commercials should run. ♦

## **International Struggle to Develop HIV/AIDS Vaccine Continues . . .**

*(Continued from page 19)*

evaluation, NIAID in June formed the Vaccine Discovery Branch in the Division of AIDS Vaccine Research.

"There is broad scientific consensus that designing a safe and effective vaccine to prevent HIV infection will require enormous advances beyond present-day knowledge," Fauci said in a statement.

The new branch will monitor scientific developments in multiple fields related to HIV vaccine discovery, building more bridges between basic researchers and HIV vaccine designers, identifying gaps in knowledge about developing a preventive HIV vaccine and promoting research to fill the gaps.

The Vaccine Discovery Branch will have oversight of the Center for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Immunology, a consortium of universities and academic medical centers that NIAID established to solve major problems in HIV vaccine development and design.

"A vaccine for HIV is not going to be like a vaccine for any other infection," Fauci said. The fundamental principle of vaccine development, he added, is to mimic what the natural infection does in the body.

"If you look at all the big killers – smallpox, measles, polio – although a certain percentage of people get sick and a smaller percentage die, at the end of the day most people recover spontaneously from these terrible diseases,"

Fauci said. "They do so because their body generates an immune response that ultimately clears the virus or microbe from the body and then it protects you against any subsequent challenge. Once you've had smallpox, that's it. If you've survived it, you're never going to get smallpox again." That will not be the case with HIV, he said.

"It is extremely unlikely that we will have a completely detective vaccine against HIV. What we're going to have to do is use HIV vaccine as a very important tool in the toolkit of HIV prevention. You won't be able to say, 'Now I'm vaccinated so I have no risk.' But hopefully it will be a powerful enough tool that it will turn the tide on the rate of infection." ♦