



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Statement by the Donor Assistance Group

May 9, 2006

Ethiopia's Prime Minister, senior ministers and key advisors met on Monday May 8, with foreign Ambassadors and heads of development cooperation of all bilateral donor countries plus the European Commission to discuss governance issues. The purpose of this initial high level meeting was to launch a dialogue on governance between representatives of the Donor Assistance Group (DAG) and the government. Senior government officials

presented their views on three pillars of Ethiopia's democratic governance process; namely the Ethiopian Constitution, state and non-state institutions of democratic governance, and the fostering of a culture of democracy in Ethiopia. The Prime Minister and donor representatives agreed that there are no fundamental differences in the conceptualization of democratic governance between Ethiopia and donor countries. The Prime

Minister and development partners agreed to begin soonest dialogue on specific governance issues in the context of the country's poverty reduction and sustainable development strategy, while continuing dialogue on the fundamentals. All agreed on the importance of meeting regularly, deepen in dialogue, building trust and mutual confidence.

All agreed that the Constitution and democratic

(Continued on page 3)

Taking Control of the Future



Tenaye Mekonnen is a now confident owner of a successful small-scale business.

A typical day for Tenaye Mekonnen used to be spent working at a glass factory, where she carried heavy loads of glass and earned no more than 50 cents a day. She would return home late in the evening, pick up her daughters from her neighbor's house and start preparing dinner for her husband. When Tenaye's husband was injured in an accident at work, she knew she needed to find a better alternative. She decided to take out loans from local merchants to commercially prepare and sell Ethiopian bread known as injera, but

(Continued on page 9)

African issues

World Mobilization Urged for Darfur Accord, Action (P 2)

U.S. Helps Africans Counter Rising Urban Growth with Housing Aid (P 3)

Small Projects Making Big Changes in Ethiopia (P 4)

Plan To Help Tea Farmers in Kenya Wins Global Prize (P 6)

American News

Bush Picks National Security Agency's Michael Hayden To Head CIA (P 7)

Foreign Aid Must Foster Democratic Progress (P 8)

Moussaoui Received Fair Trial, Bush Says (P 10)

Reading Program Raises Foreign Authors' Profiles in U.S. (P 11)

Cinco de Mayo Shows the Americanization of a Mexican Holiday (P 12)

Counterterrorism

Annan Outlines Counterterrorism Strategy, Focus on Victims (P 13)

Terrorists Use Cyberspace as Important Communications Tool (P 14)

International issues

U.S. Prohibits All Torture; 103 Troops Court-Martialed for Abuse (P 15)

High Oil Prices Due to Limited Production Capacity, Say Analysts (P 16)

Private, Nonprofit Groups Lead Fight Against Human Trafficking (P 17)

Child Labor Declining Most Quickly in Latin America, Caribbean (P 18)

Health issues

U.S. Health Agency Awards \$1 Billion to Prepare for Pandemic (P 19)

U.S. Researchers Aid Egypt in Identifying Human Bird Flu Cases (P 20)

World Mobilization Urged for Darfur Accord, Action

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations
Correspondent

United Nations -- At the request of the United States, foreign ministers of the world's major powers met in the U.N. Security Council May 9 to discuss the future of Darfur.

The foreign ministers of the United Kingdom, Russia, China, France, Congo, Tanzania, Greece and Austria and senior government officials of Denmark, Argentina, Japan and the Netherlands joined U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at a public Security Council meeting to help chart a way out of the devastation and humanitarian crisis now that the Sudanese government in Khartoum and the main rebel group have signed a peace agreement.

The agreement was signed in Abuja, Nigeria, May 5. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2006/May/06-121988.html>).

Calling on nations to "seize this momentous opportunity to restore hope to the people of Darfur," Rice said that it is extremely important that the international community mobilize now to ensure the recently signed peace agreement goes into force "so that the people of Darfur can be safe and secure and ultimately return to their homes."

The council meeting is "an impor-

tant signal from the international community that we support the peace agreement," she said. "But everybody now recognizes this needs to be implemented."

Darfur is a test for the international community and the United Nations, Rice said. "The plight of the people of Darfur stirs the conscience of all human beings. But conscience alone will not feed



Secretary Rice and U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. John Bolton arrive for a Security Council meeting on Darfur at the U.N. in New York May 9, 2006. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton

starving people, and save innocent lives, and bring peace to troubled lands."

The humanitarian crisis in Darfur "is not a challenge for Africa alone, or for America alone. It is a challenge for the entire community of nations, and it is one that should not be taken lightly," the secretary said.

The secretary of state called on nations to contribute urgently needed food supplies to the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) and

asked the Security Council quickly to approve a U.S.-sponsored resolution that would accelerate arrangements for a more robust peacekeeping force under U.N. command in Darfur. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2006/May/08-770945.html>).

"We recognize that the African Union [AU] force has done an excellent job but that their work now has expanded. The African Union requested a new mission. This resolution would make certain that we are ready to honor that request," Rice said.

The foreign ministers praised the efforts of the African Union and others in negotiating the peace agreement, especially Congo President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, the AU president; AU Chairman Alpha Oumar Konare; Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo; AU chief negotiator Salim Salim; and U.S.

Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick. They also praised the United States and the United Kingdom for their generous aid contributions.

For more information on the Sudan peace process, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://>

U.S. Helps Africans Counter Rising Urban Growth with Housing Aid

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Innovative housing programs funded by international donors such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) increasingly are helping to counter skyrocketing urban growth rates in Africa, says James Smith, USAID's deputy assistant administrator for the Bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade.

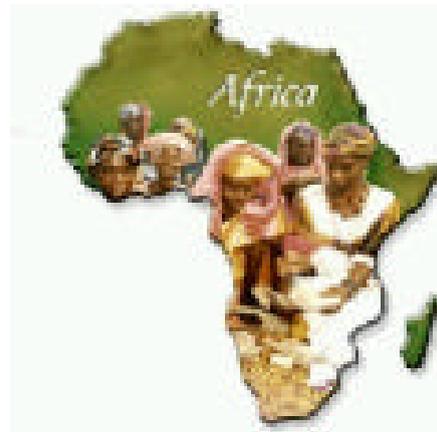
Smith addressed the need for affordable housing on the continent as he told a May 4 hearing of the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs that "Africa has the highest rate of urban growth in the world" at 5 percent a year.

The U.S. official warned that "by the year 2025, more than half of the continent's population will be living in urban areas, and if current trends persist, the majority of Africa's poor will be living in cities, primarily in slums."

Smith added that 30 million families "lack adequate housing," and with 300 million Africans having left rural areas looking for jobs in town and cities, "tremendous demand already exists for adequate

and affordable shelter, upgrading of squatter settlements and access to finance."

The official said USAID's experience in housing is "extensive," going back to 1961. Between then and 2002, USAID issued close to 200 housing project guarantees in



39 countries through its \$2.8 billion housing finance guarantee program.

Today, Smith told the panel, his agency continues to finance new and refurbished shelter through its Development Credit Authority. In partnership with the private sector, he said, USAID "has mobilized \$48.5 million in local capital financing for housing purchase, con-

struction and upgrades as well as for related infrastructure services."

In Zambia, USAID is helping thousands find affordable housing through its U.S.-Africa Mortgage Market Initiative, which began after President Bush mentioned the issue in a speech he gave in Abuja, Nigeria, during his Africa trip in 2003, Smith told the lawmakers. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2003&m=July&x=20030712165111silles0.4034998&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>.)

The innovative scheme funds technical assistance to the Ministry of Lands in order to develop and expand the mortgage market for families of low to medium income.

Among other things, the mortgage initiative "will facilitate transparent issuance of land title certificates for the 5,000 houses to be built on the Lilayi estate in Lusaka," the official explained.

In South Africa, USAID supported an innovative plan that provides a five-year, \$20 million guarantee to

(Continued on page 10)

Statement by the Donor Assistance Group . . .

(Continued from page 1)

institutions are relatively young in Ethiopia, and all stakeholders and partners must be committed to moving forward on building democratic governance institutions, actions, and culture. All noted that in a fledgling democracy such as Ethiopia, what is important is to

continue to be making progress, despite any difficulties. All agreed that good governance, including its political, economic, social and corporate aspects, is vital to sustainable development and poverty reduction. The development partners agreed that donor support should be in the context of the govern-

ment's new five year development strategy called PASDEP (Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty) which includes governance as part of its overall agenda for sustainable development. ♦

Small Projects Making Big Changes in Ethiopia

Story By: Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

GODE, Ethiopia, April 22, 2006 – It is the rainy season here in this southern Ethiopian town, but there is no rain. At the site of a water project outside of the drought-stricken Eastern town of Gode, farmers are working side by side with U.S. Servicemen. The region's vegetation remains brown and withered. News reports say the area has received very little rain in the last three years. Cattle and goats -- the measure of survival in this region -- waste away, and dust devils form in the afternoon as temperatures routinely go into the 100s.

But as long as the Shebelle River flows, there is hope, because the river has water in it even during drought years. Originating in Ethiopia's highlands, the Shebelle runs through the eastern region all the way to the sea in neighboring Somalia.

The U.N. operates food distribution sites in and around Gode. UNICEF and the International Red Cross also function in the region. Now Gode also has a U.S. Army civil affairs team from Fort Bragg, N. C., working to feed people for the moment, and also helping them to sustain their own livelihoods over the long term. This team is part of the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa effort in the region.

There are few trees in Gode, and most vegetation is near the river. But an irrigation project,

conceived and executed by villagers and facilitated by the soldiers, has turned barren fields green and allowed 400 families to remain on

here, but they were at the point where they had no crops and their cattle were dying. It was just a desert area."



Ethiopians meet U.S. servicemembers April 21 at a water project outside the drought-stricken town Gode. Photo by Jim Garamone



Water lifted by a pump brings life to fields near drought-stricken Gode, Ethiopia. Civil affairs personnel from Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa provided the money to install the pump that is changing the lives of 400 families. Photo by Jim Garamone

the land.

"It's a \$1,000 pump," said civil affairs team Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Starbuck. "It's small, but it has a very large impact. The villagers were in dire need of assistance and approached the civil affairs team," Starbuck said. "They did not want to move away from

The team worked with the villagers to come up with a plan for using the pump and then supplied one they bought in downtown Gode.

"The villagers dug irrigation ditches, sowed their crops and at this point four months later, they are on their second crop rotation," he said. "They are purchasing their own fuel, and maintaining the pump."

The farmers grow food on 20 hectares of land. Their cash crop is "long fodder" for cattle -- green corn stalks harvested before ears of corn develop. But in addition, each family cultivates a 20- by 30-meter area for their own crops. Families raise onions, tomatoes, grains and other crops. This not only gives them food, but they can sell some of their produce and use the cash to save for future projects, such as cleaning out more irrigation ditches and buying fuel and oil for their pump."

"This is completely self-sustaining and that's why we targeted it," the sergeant said. "We want to give them small pieces of the pie so they can bake their own big cake -- so to say."

Team member Staff Sgt. Terangelo Davis said the people of the region want to work and aren't

(Continued on page 5)

Small Projects Making Big Changes in Ethiopia . . .

(Continued from page 4)

afraid to work hard. "They don't want handouts, they want to be in charge of themselves," he said. "They want what every other person in the world wants -- a better future for their children."

Davis said the civil affairs team lives with the people of the area. Relationships with the local people, he said, are important, and the basis for all decisions.

"Living with the people helps build trust," he said. "I was a combat engineer with the 4th (Infantry Division in Iraq) before, and I never got a chance to meet the people. We were too busy looking for bad guys. Here you can see a difference for the people with every mission," he said.

Horn of Africa Task Force to Bring Medical Care to Villagers

Team medic Sgt. Ty Blain and his team work with local doctors and Ethiopian military medical personnel to set up medical civil affairs projects. Gode will have a MED-CAP -- a community medical care outreach project -- in May and joint

task force medics will travel to the region to provide medicines, give inoculations and treat small injuries and simple illnesses or injuries.

The team has a number of other projects in the works. One is to obtain a similar irrigation pump for a group of Ethiopian women so they can better provide for their families. Another is facilitating the building of "burkas" -- water catchment basins -- for towns so villagers don't have to walk two or three kilometers every day for water.

Gode city officials are worried about sanitation, and the team is now working on a sanitation project with them in which they will adapt donkey carts for trash pick up and deliver to a dump the city has started, Starbuck said. The team also works with local and international aid partners to leverage the resources dedicated to the area.

The four-man team covers an area the size of Connecticut. There are no paved roads in the region and travel is by four-wheel-drive vehicle only. When it

does rain, the roads flood out and make travel impossible. "I don't know how long it would take to drive from one end of the area to the other," Davis said. "Days, probably."

But the difficulties are worth it, said Starbuck. "It brings a smile to your face when you are able to provide a water source or they have a new clinic or you give a village a new way of life, where in hard times they were ready to move out," he said. "You couldn't ask more than that."

This article originally appeared the week of 24 April 2006 in the U.S. Central Command/Coalition Newsletter. There are no publication restrictions.

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Plan To Help Tea Farmers in Kenya Wins Global Prize

By Susan Ellis
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Since it began more than a decade ago, the Highland Tea Company has been recognized internationally. It recently won third prize in the Global Social Venture Competition, a rigorous, worldwide MBA student business plan competition for social ventures -- organizations that not only create profits, but also produce a social or environmental return on investment.

Kenyan Wanja Michuki started the company with her mother, who planted the first tea seedlings on her acreage in Kenya in 1991. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?pr=washfile-english&y=2006&m=May&x=20060508170105ssille0.1207086&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).

Although Michuki had graduated from business school, she was able to enter the competition by teaming with a current Columbia Business School student, Ron Mincy, who serves as Highland Tea's chief executive officer.

Part of the plan that won them the prize is educational. "This is kind of a pet project for me," she said, "because, when I was studying economics and politics at Bryn Mawr, my focus was on development; and education was the thing that just grabbed me because it's long-term development planning when you have an educated work force."

One element of the plan is an adult education program for the tea farmers. "They can't read, so they can't take advantage of methods to improve their productivity," Michuki said. "So I came across a company called WorldSpace [WorldSpace International Satellite Radio Service] that has a global satellite, and their African satellite, called Afristar, has been partnering



Wanja Michuki

up with meteorological departments of various countries and distributing solar-powered radios to households, to farmers, and giving them content that helps them with their agriculture.

"Things like information on climate, on weather. If El Nino's coming in six months, how do you prepare for that?" The radios will give farmers information that will help them keep from losing their crops.

"In this Fair Trade program, the part that we would play would be distributing the radios," she said. Their factory has been Fair

Trade certified, she added, "and then we have to set up the fund that collects the monies for Fair Trade, and all of this is tied to selling our teas. We're at our tipping point -- it's all gelling now."

The information for the farmers will be broadcast by a local radio station, in the local language, "which then takes away the problem of how to provide adult education to illiterate people," Michuki said.

Another element of the plan will provide primary school education. "We want to go to schools and upgrade them, not build new schools. Also to put qualified teachers into the schools," she said.

"When the new Kenyan government of President Mwai Kibaki declared universal primary education, you had all these kids showing up for school and ... there weren't enough resources to cater to these kids, not enough classrooms to accommodate that influx."

Additional information (<http://www.worldspace.com/>) about WorldSpace is available on the company's Web site.

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

Bush Picks National Security Agency's Michael Hayden To Head CIA

Washington -- President Bush nominated General Michael Hayden, the current director of the National Security Agency (NSA), as the next director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

If confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Hayden would replace Porter Goss, who resigned May 5.

In remarks at the White House May 8, Bush said General Hayden is "supremely qualified" and is "the right man" to head the CIA "at this critical moment in our nation's history." He said Hayden has more than 20 years of experience in the intelligence field, including six years as the NSA director.

"Mike knows our intelligence community from the ground up. He has been both a provider and a consumer of intelligence. He's overseen the development of both human and technological intelligence. He has demonstrated an ability to adapt our intelligence services to the new challenges of the war on terror," Bush said.

Paying tribute to outgoing CIA director Porter Goss, the president said Goss "took on a critical job at a critical moment in our nation's history," overseeing a "vital agency at a time of transition and transformation."

"Throughout his public life, Porter Goss has been a man of accomplishment and integrity, and America appreciates his service," the president said.

General Hayden thanked President Bush for the nomination and said there is "probably no post more important in preserving our security and our values as a people

than the head of the Central Intelligence Agency."

He also said he will have discussions with members of the U.S. Congress as part of his confirmation process on how to improve the U.S. intelligence commu-

Negroponete said Hayden's expertise is well-rounded, "at the forefront of integrating all aspects of intelligence: technical collection, human intelligence operations and analysis."

He also described Hayden as "a



General Michael Hayden speaks after President Bush announced his nomination to head the CIA at the White House in Washington May 8, 2006. (Kevin Lamarque/Reuters)

nity. "This is simply too important not to get absolutely right," Hayden said.

The transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060508.html>) of President Bush and General Hayden's remarks can be found at the White House Web site.

HAYDEN "BEST PERSON ... TO LEAD CIA," NEGROPONTE SAYS

Director of National Intelligence John Negroponete, who oversees the CIA, NSA and other U.S. intelligence agencies, said Hayden is "the best person, civilian or military, to lead the CIA during this critical period."

In a briefing at the White House,

reformer who understands the imperative that we create a truly integrated intelligence community."

The CIA is the "premier human intelligence agency" for the United States and the "most important repository" for intelligence analysis on almost every topic, including current U.S. national security priorities such as Iran, North Korea, and weapons of mass destruction, Negroponete said.

"Mike will help grow the CIA's human intelligence capabilities, ensure that those capabilities are well integrated with other intelligence operations, and provide crucial leadership for all of the intelligence community's human operations," he said. ♦

Foreign Aid Must Foster Democratic Progress, U.S. Official Says

By Ralph Dannheisser
Washington File Special Correspondent

Washington -- An effective foreign assistance program must go beyond charity and help equip the people and leaders of recipient countries to achieve a democratic transformation, the new head of U.S. foreign assistance programs says.

Although the United States "can and must play a vital and catalytic role" in promoting democracy, Randall Tobias said May 5, "the ultimate responsibility for achieving this transformation rests with the leadership and citizens of developing nations themselves."

Tobias was sworn in March 31 as the nation's first director of foreign assistance, serving concurrently as administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the principal government agency administering economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide.

He outlined his views on the goals of U.S. assistance programs in a keynote speech at the annual conference of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID), a Washington-based non-profit organization.

Tobias said his charge in his new post involves "strategically linking how we deliver foreign assistance to what we seek to accomplish in foreign policy."

He said, "The overarching objectives for U.S. foreign assistance will focus our resources on our intent to achieve peace and security; improve governance and democ-

cratic participation; promote investments in people; and engender economic growth."

Tobias said that meeting these goals is "nowhere ... more important than in the Muslim world today -- where the United States can play a vital role in helping people in nascent democracies build a free and prosperous future for themselves."



Randall Tobias
Director of Foreign Assistance

He stressed that in the Muslim world, as elsewhere, "all of our assistance must be delivered in ways that make clear to those we seek to assist that our efforts are rooted in partnership, and not in paternalism."

The aid official said that promoting freedom, democracy and development is a key part of the United States' national security strategy because it addresses the root causes of terrorism.

"Governments that rule justly, encourage economic freedom and opportunity, and invest in their people -- the hallmarks of democ-

racies -- do not produce or tolerate terrorists," Tobias said. "People who see a hopeful future for themselves and their families are not willing to bind bombs to their bodies," he added.

Tobias said, "When hate mongers like Osama bin Laden tell Muslims to reject assistance from the West, we know that it is in part because he understands that foreign assistance promotes partnership and understanding."

Tobias said USAID has missions in 27 of the world's 49 predominantly Muslim countries, and the majority of USAID funding for two of the past three years -- even excluding assistance to Iraq -- went to those countries.

Underlining the importance he places on the Muslim world, Tobias said that his first official trip in his new capacity would be to three Muslim countries -- Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq.

"I will see firsthand how we can work better in partnership and how we can better leverage resources on the ground to support both the citizens of the Muslim world and the committed Americans working with them in their valiant efforts," he said.

Tobias said that all people, regardless of ethnicity, religion or geography, share the same basic desire to live in peace and provide for themselves and their families.

"With a renewed focus on sustainability and supporting Muslim countries in their own vision of democracy -- a vision that builds on a proud history stretching back thou-

(Continued on page 9)

Foreign Aid Must Foster Democratic Progress, U.S. Official Says . . .

(Continued from page 8)

sands of years -- our foreign assistance can and will strengthen democracy and improve understanding with the Muslim world," he said.

DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB WORLD

In opening the conference, CSID President Radwan Masmoudi cited what he called encouraging signs that "democracy is coming to the Arab and Muslim world." Existing repressive regimes "are too weak, too discredited, and too corrupt to last much longer," he said.

"The only question," Masmoudi said, "is whether we as Americans and as free people of the world will support the aspirations for freedom, democracy and dignity ... or will go back to supporting Arab

dictators and doing business as usual with corrupt and unpopular regimes," as too often has been the case in the past.

"Let us be clear that promoting democracy is not easy, and certainly has risks associated with it," but the inevitable outcome of not doing so is "more oppression, more poverty, more despair, more anger and frustration, and a rising anti-American and even extremist tide that will be very dangerous for the region and for the world," Masmoudi said.

Another conference speaker, Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy, introduced a note of concern about what he termed "a general pushback that is taking place against democracy promotion in the Middle East and elsewhere."

He urged democracy advocates worldwide to provide "political support and solidarity" for dissidents who are being jailed and harassed in an apparent effort to discourage others from joining their calls for democratic reforms.

CSID honored Saadeddine El Othmani, secretary-general of Morocco's Party of Justice and Democracy (PJD), with its "Muslim Democrat of the Year" award. Described by CSID as the leading moderate Islamic party in Morocco, PJD is the first opposition party in that nation's parliament. CSID said Othmani, trained as a psychiatrist, has published articles and essays on democracy and Islam, political participation, principles of dialogue, and empowerment of women. ♦

Taking Control of the Future . . .

(Continued from page 1)

prospects for her business to grow were slim.

Then Tenaye was selected to participate in a small-scale business training and support program funded in part by USAID. After attending training on business management, which also included a reproductive health and family planning awareness and skills workshop, she received a \$231 loan to begin her business again. Now the business is thriving. "My niece used to work as a maid in people's houses, but now she stays with us and I pay her \$6

every month."

With increased income, Tenaye purchased 30 chickens for her husband, Minyichil, and advises him on how to run a solid poultry business. "I would like to tell all husbands that they need to openly communicate with their spouses and involve them in making all decisions," says Minyichil.

Tenaye's life has improved dramatically. The chicken coop is full, and she has added an extra kitchen for baking the bread, a telephone line, and water pipe to her home. She also finds free time

to visit her neighbors and share the life skills she learned through her training about family planning and good reproductive health practices. She explains to them how important limiting family size is to attaining a better living standard both for women and their families. Tenaye wants to teach her daughters all that she has learned so that they too can live better lives.

"I may be uneducated but I think I have a lot to contribute," says Tenaye... "Both of my children can do very well with their education and with encouragement from us." ♦

Moussaoui Received Fair Trial, Bush Says

By Alexandra Abboud
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington — A federal jury in Virginia has spared the life of Zacarias Moussaoui, who was convicted of conspiring in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States.

After six weeks of deliberation over the fate of Moussaoui, who pled guilty to six charges of conspiracy in 2005, the jury found, in a decision announced May 3, that Moussaoui should not be sentenced to death but will face life imprisonment.

President Bush on May 3 said that Moussaoui had received a fair trial. "The jury convicted him to life in prison, where he will spend the rest of his life," Bush said on May 3. "In so doing, they spared his life, which is something that he evidently wasn't willing to do for innocent American citizens."

Moussaoui was tried in a U.S. federal court, where administration of the death penalty requires a unanimous vote by jurors. The judge in the case is bound by the jury's verdict; Moussaoui formally was sentenced on May 4. (See re-

lated article (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/u.s._legal_system/criminal_trials.html).



Zacarias Moussaoui

While deliberating Moussaoui's fate, the 12 jurors considered "mitigating factors," a term in U.S. criminal law referring to conditions that do not excuse criminal conduct but may be considered out of fairness or mercy when a penalty is being decided after a conviction.

In Nigeria, which has the largest population in Africa, USAID has partnered with the Federal Mortgage Bank "to produce legislation that improves the enabling environment for the Nigerian mortgage market," Smith said.

In addition, he said, discussions are under way between USAID, the Nigerian government and local

The jurors in the Moussaoui case considered 20 mitigating circumstances. Nine of the 12 jurors, for example, cited Moussaoui's unstable childhood and abusive father as mitigating factors in their verdict.

Moussaoui, a 37-year-old Frenchman of Moroccan descent, is the only person to be convicted by a U.S. court in connection with the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

President Bush said the decision marks the end of the Moussaoui case but not an end to the U.S. fight against terrorism. "The enemy that struck our shores on September 11th is still active and remains determined to kill Americans," Bush said. "We have had many victories, yet there is much left to do, and I will not relent in this struggle for the freedom and security of the American people."

The full text (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060503-11.html>) of President Bush's statement on the Moussaoui trial is available on the White House Web site. ♦

U.S. Helps Africans Counter Rising Urban Growth with Housing Aid. . .

(Continued from page 3)

fund the Infrastructure Finance Corporation. The idea, Smith explained, was "to partially cover Investec Bank in purchasing existing municipal debt from local governments experiencing repayment problems. Investec then repackaged the debt, reselling it to investors in the capital market."

lenders "to establish the Mortgage Finance Program to support the purchase of homes by low- and middle-income households in four regions: Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt and Kano."

Jonathan Reckford, chief executive officer of Habitat for Humanity International, told the Senate panel

(Continued on page 21)

Reading Program Raises Foreign Authors' Profiles in United States

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- For the second consecutive year, U.S. booksellers and publishers are joining to offer Reading the World, a program that brings international voices to the attention of American readers.

The effort during the month of May is "an important means of breaking down barriers to see a wider, and more accurate, view of other cultures, ideas, and peoples," says a program originator, Karl Pohrt of Shaman Drum Bookshop in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"With books by novelists, poets, and nonfiction writers from the Middle East, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa, the Reading the World Program seeks to give readers a comprehensive vision of international literature," Pohrt said.

"It's getting to be one big world now," Lansing Sexton of Washington's Olsson's Books & Music told the Washington File.

The 10 publishers participating in Reading the World 2006 each recommend four titles and supply booksellers with posters, fliers, tote bags and other promotional materials. The bookstores -- more than 250 this year -- feature these international titles on special tables, recommend them to customers and seek generally to raise the profile of world literature.

The economics of publishing translated works can be challenging. Chad Post, associate director of Dalkey Archive Press, a small

publisher specializing in international literature, has described the "hidden costs," which include the necessity of editing both the original and the translated version.

Even so, American publishers have shown renewed interest in world literature in the years following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, says Edwin Frank, editorial director of NYRB Classics. Definitive works of quality, Frank told the Washington File, "will make it here and find a readership."

Among the books that promise to find an American readership are:



Karl Pohrt

Europeana, by Patrik Ourednik and translated from the Czech, described by The New York Times as "a frenetic tour through the absurdities and horrors of the past century."

Gates of the Sun, by Elias Khoury and translated from the Arabic. A Los Angeles Times reviewer suggested that "This great, sprawling novel provides, as little else can, a window into the thinking of Palestinians, and a touching, powerful glimpse of their unique place in world history."

Voices from Chernobyl, by Svetlana Alexievich and translated from the Russian, presents personal accounts of the world's worst nuclear reactor accident.

A number of foreign titles break through to command a large national audience. Irène Némirovsky's Suite Française, a fictional study of Nazi-occupied France, was composed before the author's 1942 internment in the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Discovered more than six decades after her murder, the English translation remains prominent on U.S. bestseller lists.

NYRB Classics, which specializes in republishing and in some cases retranslating lost classics, expects brisk sales for its new edition of Vasily Grossman's Life and Fate, a novel that Soviet authorities considered so dangerous that they confiscated both the manuscript and the typewriter ribbons on which it had been typed.

Olsson's Books' Sexton suggests that translations and foreign works are significant for booksellers who specialize in books of literary merit rather than commercial blockbusters. In his store, by far the most popular novel over the past year has been The Kite Runner, written in English by the Afghan-American Khaled Hosseini. The works of Orhan Pamuk, translated from the Turkish, are also selling well.

The experiences of other independent booksellers bear out Sexton's point. By Post's count for Words Without Borders online magazine, nearly one-quarter of the books shelved "face out" (with their full covers rather than only the spine) at two prominent New York City independent bookstores were translated works.

Interviewed by the same publication, Pohrt called Reading the World "the best thing we [booksellers] can do in this difficult time -- to try and increase the market of Americans reading about other cultures." He describes Orhan Pamuk's Snow as "a window into a world that I hadn't even considered. It gives a reader more information about what's going on than 99 percent of the news." ♦

Cinco de Mayo Shows the Americanization of a Mexican Holiday

By Lauren Monsen
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- When the Cinco de Mayo ("fifth of May") holiday is observed in the United States, the annual festivity honors the Mexican heritage of a growing number of U.S. citizens, with a focus on Mexico's distinctive cuisine, folk dances, colorful costumes and mariachi music.

What many celebrants might not realize is that the holiday has evolved significantly over the years, often bearing little trace of its origins. Cinco de Mayo is not, as some believe, Mexico's Independence Day, which is actually September 16. The holiday commemorates the victory of outnumbered and largely indigenous Mexican forces over the French army at the Battle of Puebla in 1862, following a tumultuous period in Mexico's history.

A MEXICAN-AMERICAN INTERPRETATION

According to historians, Cinco de Mayo not only recalls an underdog victory for Mexico, but also represents the triumph of indigenous people over foreign conquistadors. As such, the date might have more complex significance for Mexicans than for their Mexican-American counterparts, whose absorption into their new homeland has become part of the immigrant narrative of the United States. But if the meaning of Cinco de Mayo has evolved for Mexican-Americans, it is no less an expression of pride in the traditions of their Mexican forebears.

As U.S. demographic shifts begin to reflect a growing Latino pres-

ence -- with greater political and economic clout than ever before -- Americans have become increasingly familiar with many Latin cultural imports, particularly Latin music and food. These imports have been embraced by the U.S. mainstream to such a degree that some remarkably successful hybrids --

Cleveland and Atlanta. The holiday, now virtually ignored in Mexico, has become a vibrant annual event in many U.S. cities, with a strong focus on Mexican food and music, and traditional costumes in red, white and green, the colors of the Mexican flag. Typical Mexican fare -- salsa, guacamole, empana-



**President Bush greets dancers before their performance during Cinco De Mayo festivities at the White House Friday, May 4.
WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY ERIC DRAPER**

such as Tex-Mex cuisine -- have emerged. The popularity of Latin traditions in general, and Mexican ones in particular, have helped to transform Cinco de Mayo festivities in the United States into a celebration of all things Mexican.

Today, communities across the United States observe Cinco de Mayo, from small border towns in Texas and Arizona to metropolitan hubs like New York, Los Angeles,

das, enchiladas, tamales, burritos, fajitas -- tops the menu at these festivities.

To many celebrants, Cinco de Mayo is also a warm expression of friendship between the neighboring countries of Mexico and the United States. In Los Angeles, for instance, Mexican dignitaries are invariably guests of honor, and the mayor of Los Angeles addresses the crowd in Spanish. ♦

Annan Outlines Counterterrorism Strategy, Focus on Victims

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations
Correspondent

United Nations -- Responding to the call by world leaders at the 2005 U.N. summit to help nations combat terrorism, Secretary-General Kofi Annan unveiled a global counterterrorism strategy for the General Assembly to consider.

In presenting his 32-page report, *Uniting Against Terrorism*, May 2, Annan said that the recommendations it contains stem from "a fundamental conviction which we all share: that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, is unacceptable and can never be justified."

All nations are vulnerable to terrorism, stand to benefit from a strategy to counter it, and have a role to play in shaping such a strategy, he said in a speech to the General Assembly. "By rising to that challenge, you will demonstrate the resolve of the international community and lay the foundations of a truly global response to this vicious global scourge."

At the 60th anniversary summit in September 2005, leaders of the 191 U.N. member states, including U.S. President Bush, condemned terrorism in all its forms in a declaration that was seen as a major step toward universal recognition of the unacceptable consequences of terrorism. The summit welcomed Annan's outline of a counterterrorism strategy and asked him to move the process forward by submitting proposals to the assembly. (See related article (<http://>

usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Sep/16-395942.html.)

The General Assembly will debate the report's recommendations beginning May 11. General Assembly President Jan Eliasson of Sweden has appointed Ambassador Juan Yanez-Barnuevo of Spain and Ambassador Vanu Menon of Singapore to co-chair negotiations to finalize the U.N. counterterrorism strategy before the 60th assembly session ends in September.

The secretary-general said his strategy is built on the "five D's" he first outlined in a 2005 speech in Madrid at an international conference on the causes of terrorism: dissuading people from resorting to terrorism or supporting it, denying terrorists the means to carry out an attack, deterring states from supporting terrorism, developing state capacity to defeat terrorism, and defending human rights.

Calling for a broad based and sustained campaign by governments, the private sector, and civil society denouncing terrorism and countering the terrorists' message of hate, Annan said that one of the most powerful ways to do that is to focus attention on terrorism's

victims.

VICTIMS ARE THE TRUE FACE OF TERRORISM

For the first time, a counterterrorism strategy is placing the victims front and center by emphasizing attacks on civilians and the violation of human rights, according to a senior U.N. official who discussed the report on the condition of anonymity.

"Of course we need to focus on technocratic terms and state capacity building, but if you really want to win the battle, you do need a human face on this problem," the U.N. official said.

According to the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, 14,500 non-combatants were killed in 2005 in 11,100 terror incidents. Fatalities included 1,000 children, 171 clerics or religious leaders and 100 journalists. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Apr/28-625771.html>.)

Defending human rights, the secretary-general said, "runs like a scarlet thread" through the report linking the strategy's different components. Not only the rights of those suspected of terrorism, but also of the victims of terrorism and those affected by the consequences of terrorism must be part of the strategy.

Emphasis is on the victims "because their fundamental rights



Kofi Annan addresses the General Assembly of the U.N. about his recommendations for combating global terrorism, in New York, May 2, 2006.

(Continued on page 21)

Terrorists Use Cyberspace as Important Communications Tool

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington — Hostile adversaries in the global war against terrorism are using cyberspace as an effective communications tool, a senior civilian Defense Department official says.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Peter Rodman told members of Congress May 4 that as many as 5,000 Web sites around the world are being used for propaganda purposes to create speeches, graphics, sermons, posters, training manuals, slides, blogs, web casts and video games as well as compact and digital video discs. The Internet also is being used by terrorists to carry out tactical command-and-control functions and to raise money and recruit foot soldiers.

Rodman made his observation during an unclassified House Intelligence Committee hearing on how terrorists use the Internet to disseminate strategic messages including spreading false rumors that rapidly gain currency as they bounce from one medium to another.

Terrorists have no problem finding outlets for their video messages in mainstream media, Rodman said, adding that messages are crafted carefully and translated rapidly into targeted languages including Russian, Arabic and Turkish.

There are even messages designed to appeal to those seem-

ingly removed from the battleground, Rodman said, pointing to a program pitched to domestic households. The message says: "You can support the jihad from your kitchen" by raising children that support the cause." The message further conveys: "You don't necessarily have to directly support us, just don't interfere. ... Remain neutral. Don't turn us in."



Peter Rodman

Rodman said terrorists also are using the Internet effectively to spread a message of intimidation aimed at journalists (through beheadings captured on video), in some instances, and local civilian audiences in places like Iraq and Afghanistan where they have sought to justify violence in the name of an Islam under siege.

Terrorists' Internet messages have become increasingly sophisticated with the hiring of a cadre of Internet specialists who serve the cause and operate computer servers worldwide. Ron Roughead, a contractor who accompanied Rodman to the hearing, said al-Qaida relies on its Global Islamic Media Unit for its outreach efforts.

Dan Devlin, a public diplomacy specialist in Rodman's office, showed the committee unedited, multimedia examples of terrorist disinformation on the Internet. "We're continuously amazed at how they're able to . . . snag multimedia products or images, repackage it to fit their own goals and objectives," he said, and distribute them rapidly on a global scale.

Devlin said the strategy of the terrorists is to propagate simple messages, quickly and to repeat them until they have saturated cyberspace. The messages are also loaded with an emotional appeal to their target audiences that are youth aged 7 to 25, he said.

The theme of victimization is exploited through false accusations that the United States and its allies are trying disgrace or humiliate Muslim society and culture, Devlin said.

The committee also heard testimony from terrorist expert Bruce Hoffman of the RAND Corporation. He said "the weapons of terrorism today are no longer only the gun and the bomb, but . . . the mini-cam and video tape, the editing suite and attendant production facilities."

He said "the most critical countermeasures for terrorists . . . have become laptop and desktop computers, CD burners, e-mail accounts and access to the Internet and the World Wide Web."

Terrorists are challenging "the monopoly over mass communications that both state-owned and commercial media have long exercised," Hoffman said.

Unfortunately, he said, the Internet has equipped terrorist groups "to engage in an endless repetition of the most base and coarsest conspiracy theories." With their ability to refresh Web sites several times daily, he said, terrorists are "competing with established, traditional news wire services like the Associated Press, UPI, Agence France-Presse" and others. ♦

U.S. Prohibits All Torture; 103 Troops Court-Martialed for Abuse

By Vince Crawley
Washington File Staff
Writer

Washington — U.S. law forbids torture under any circumstances anywhere and anyplace, senior Bush administration officials told the United Nations Committee Against Torture in Geneva on May 8.

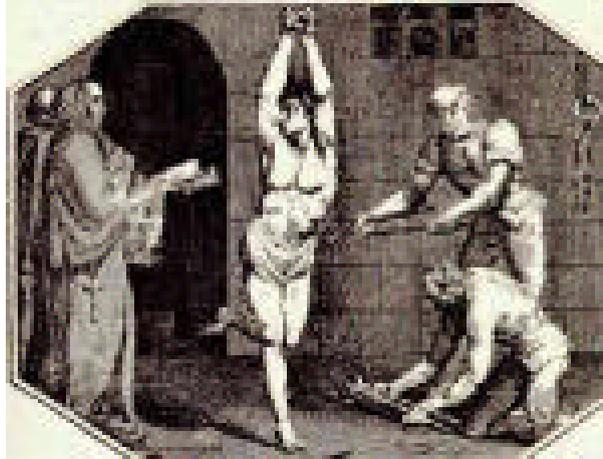
John B. Bellinger III, the State Department's senior legal adviser, said 103 American military personnel have faced court-martial trials for cases involving the mistreatment of detainees in U.S. custody. Of those trials, 89 resulted in federal convictions.

Charles Stimson, a Pentagon official, told the U.N. committee that the controversial procedure of interrogation known as "waterboarding" is now prohibited by Army regulations.

Stimson was part of the high-level U.S. delegation, led by Bellinger, that presented the United States' formal report on the Convention Against Torture May 5-8. The United States is among 141 nations that are party to the U.N. Convention Against Torture, which requires signatories to submit reports on their treaty compliance every four years.

Bellinger told reporters in Brussels, Belgium, in advance of the U.N. committee meeting that the United States was sending a large delegation -- more than two dozen U.S. government officials -- "to demonstrate that we take the process very seriously." (See related article.

He gave an oral presentation May 5 and also submitted 184 pages of



written responses to questions by the committee. Those responses have been made public by the U.S. government, as have follow-up questions Bellinger answered May 8.

"Let me be very clear about our position," Bellinger told the U.N. Committee May 8. "U.S. officials from all government agencies are prohibited from engaging in torture, at all times, and in all places."

Further, he said, "every U.S. official, wherever he or she may be, is also prohibited from engaging in cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as defined by our obligations under the Convention Against Torture. This is the case even in situations where the law of armed conflict applies."

Bellinger has argued that the United States believes the Convention Against Torture primarily applies to civil-law situations and that another body of international law covers armed conflict. In any event, he added, both bodies of law prohibit torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of those in custody.

Stimson, deputy assistant secretary of defense for detainee affairs,

addressed the U.N. committee to discuss actions taken against U.S. military personnel who have been accused of mistreating detainees in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

He said "waterboarding" -- a form of simulated drowning -- "is not listed in the current Army Field Manual and therefore is not permitted for detainees under DoD [Department of Defense] control." The revised Army Field Manual specifically prohibits waterboarding, Stimson added.

Recounting legal actions that have been taken against soldiers accused of mistreating detainees, Stimson said, "Of the hundreds of thousands of service members who are or have been deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq, there have been approximately 800 investigations into allegations of mistreatment, including approximately 600 criminal investigations." In many cases, no misconduct was found. Administrative, disciplinary and judicial measures have been used against more than 250 service members, and 170 investigations are still under way, he said.

"To date, there have been 103 courts-martial; 89 service members were convicted -- an 86 percent conviction rate," Stimson told the committee. "Moreover, 19 service members received sentences of one year or more. Furthermore, more than 100 service members have received nonjudicial punishment; more than 60 were reprimanded; and to date, 28 service members were involuntarily separated from military service. Accountability is ongoing." ♦

High Oil Prices Due to Limited Production Capacity, Say Analysts

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington — The global oil market is suffering from a “slow-motion supply shock” as productive capacity has failed to keep pace with the strong growth in demand in recent years, according to Cambridge Energy Research Associates Chairman Daniel Yergin.

“I think we can say the focus of the market, which was on demand, has really now shifted to supply, and that we are experiencing a slow-motion supply shock,” Yergin told members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce during a May 4 hearing on the current dynamics of the oil market.

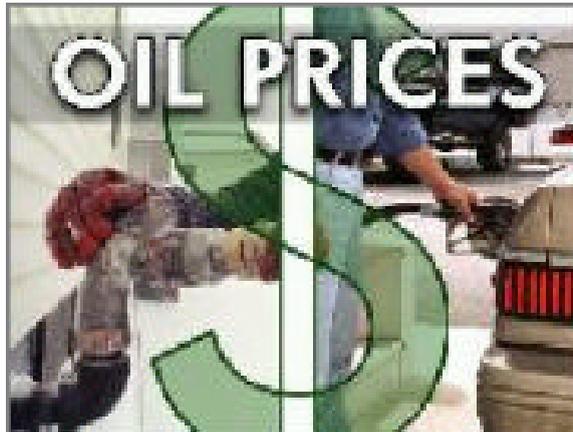
Both Yergin and Guy Caruso of the U.S. Energy Department’s Energy Information Administration told committee members that the margin of excess oil production capacity has become extremely narrow in recent years.

Caruso explained that excess production capacity serves as a cushion against unexpected shifts in demand and supply, but he said, “Today, the cushions just aren’t available to make an effect on this market, and as a result of that, the only pressure relief valve is price.”

Caruso said that oil producers built substantial new production capacity following the two oil price shocks of the 1970s, but after the price fell in the 1980s, they reduced production, leaving a large part of their new capacity as unused surplus. As demand grew through the 1990s, he said, producers raised their production without creating new capacity,

thereby narrowing the margin of surplus.

Caruso said the excess capacity margin was 3 million to 4 million barrels per day in the mid 1990s and as high as 11 million barrels per day in the mid-1980s but that it is currently only 1 million to 1.5 million barrels per day, meaning that the world is using about 98 percent of its total capacity. He said that if there is one key factor driving the sharp rise in oil prices, it is the lack of surplus production capacity.



He said the current strain in the market dates to 2003 and 2004, which saw dramatic rises in global demand. Even though the growth in demand slowed during 2005, Yergin explained, several geopolitical and natural events kept supplies tight.

FORCES DRIVING THE OIL MARKETS

He said the prime risks in the oil market “are not the resources underground but what is happening above ground -- politics, geopolitics, policies, and a rebirth in some parts of the world of what sure looks like a 1970s-style resource nationalism.”

Specifically, he mentioned recent

political unrest in Nigeria’s oil-rich Niger delta. Armed conflicts have removed 550,000 barrels per day from the market. In addition, the market has seen a 400,000 barrel-per-day drop in Venezuelan production, a 900,000 barrel-per-day drop in Iraqi production. Another 324,000 barrels per day are still off-line from the 2005 Gulf of Mexico hurricane season.

On top of this, he said, the rising tensions over Iran’s nuclear program raise fears in the market about the future of Iran’s 2.5 million barrel-per-day output. “In this market, the risk of escalation is enough to send oil prices up,” he said.

He said, “On the one hand, maybe we’re seeing a demand response which takes the pressure off, but on the other hand, where’s the next problem going to come from that might take out another couple hundred thousand barrels a day? And I think the other thing, of course, everyone is worried about is that hurricane season begins in a month.”

Both Caruso and Yergin also cited a potential supply bottleneck in refining capacity. Caruso noted that global excess refining capacity is shrinking, with refinery utilization currently running at 90 percent of capacity, up from 85 percent in 2002.

He also warned that as oil producers around the world seek to increase capacity, they are bidding for the same experts and equipment, making the cost of new projects sharply higher than five years ago. ♦

Private, Nonprofit Groups Lead Fight Against Human Trafficking

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations
Correspondent

New York -- Private, nonprofit organizations worldwide have been instrumental in bringing the issue of human trafficking to governments' attention and are key to providing essential services to victims, the top U.S. policymaker on global trafficking says.

Ambassador John Miller, senior adviser to the secretary of state for human trafficking, said May 3 that the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act would not have passed in 2000 without the support from the faith-based and women's groups that brought the issue to the attention of Congress.

"The NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] were well ahead of the governments in the world. There is no question about it," the ambassador said.

"Our policy is to reach out to local NGOs and especially get to the smaller NGOs that are on the ground doing the work," he said.

The United States is supporting 266 programs in 101 countries, Miller said.

Miller spoke at a program entitled "Human Trafficking -- A Day of Learning" organized by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the Global Fund for Women in an effort to expand and deepen the work to counter human trafficking. It was preceded by a two-day seminar on trafficking attended by more than 30 international organizations.

"There is broad consensus that

trafficking is a terrible thing and must be eliminated while there are strong disagreements on how one might go about doing that," said Isobel Coleman, director of CFR's foreign policy and women program.



Faces of human trafficking

HUMAN TRAFFICKING STARTS AS LABOR ISSUE

"In many instances we presume it has to be [trafficking] into the sex industry, by focusing on those we fail to pay attention to equally egregious human rights violations that are going on in other fields like forced labor, slavery, and indebted bondage labor," said Kavita Ramdas, president of the Global Fund for Women.

It is very important to see trafficking in persons as a labor issue, said Neha Misra, global coordinator for the American Center for International Labor Counter Trafficking Program.

"Whether someone is trafficked into the sex sector or as a domestic worker it really starts out as a

labor issue," Misra said. "We're talking about people who are searching for work. Because of the way they have to do that they become vulnerable to trafficking, to being taken advantage of.

"Whenever anyone leaves their home they have to figure out a way to get from one place to another, a way to get a job. This is difficult and it ends up putting workers at risk," she said.

MEN, BOYS ALSO SUBJECT TO TRAFFICKING

Jyoti Sanghera, adviser on trafficking in the U.N. Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, pointed out that not only women and girls, but also young boys and men are vulnerable to human trafficking.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) reported recently that 80 percent of trafficking in the Ukraine and Poland is of men, Sanghera said. "In Asia, Africa we see young boys ... being trafficked into the agricultural sectors, informal industries, and construction work."

Ann Jordan, director of the Initiative Against Trafficking in Persons, called traffickers "equal opportunity exploiters."

PROTECTING VICTIMS AS IMPORTANT AS PUNISHING TRAFFICKERS

Jordan, an attorney specializing in protecting the rights of trafficked persons and a founder of Freedom Network (USA), the nationwide anti-trafficking network, said that safety and protection for

(Continued on page 21)

Child Labor Declining Most Quickly in Latin America, Caribbean

By Eric Green
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Latin America and the Caribbean have experienced the greatest decline in child labor over the last four years of any region in the world, according to a new U.N. report.

In a May 4 statement, the U.N. International Labor Organization (ILO) said the decline is part of an overall global decrease in child labor.

"The end of child labor is within our reach," ILO Director-General Juan Somavia said on the release of the report. "Though the fight against child labor remains a daunting challenge, we are on the right track. We can end its worst forms in a decade, while not losing sight of the ultimate goal of ending all child labor."

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the number of children at work has fallen by two-thirds from 2000 to 2004, with just 5 percent of children now engaged in work, according to the ILO report.

The report presents Brazil as an example of how countries can move forward in eliminating child labor. Brazilian children working in the 5 to 9 age group fell by 61 percent from 1992 to 2004, while among a larger 10 to 17 age group the rate fell by 36 percent during the same period.

Another country with a significant decline in child labor is Mexico, according to the report, *The End of Child Labor: Within Reach*.

Because half of the children in Latin America live in either Mexico or Brazil, "these reductions are

very important and testify to the fact that the overall decline is a real trend," the report said.

The ILO said child labor, especially in its worst forms, is in decline for the first time worldwide. If the current pace of the decline was maintained and the



**Burmese girls haul bricks at construction site, 1996.
(AP Photo/Richard Vogel)**

global momentum to stop child labor continued, the ILO said it believes child labor "could feasibly be eliminated, in most of its worst forms, in 10 years."

Somavia said that in 21st century, "no child should be brutalized by exploitation or be placed in hazardous work. No child should be denied access to education. No child should have to slave for his or her survival."

The new report says the actual number of child laborers worldwide fell by 11 percent between 2000 and 2004, from 246 million to 218 million.

The number of children and

youth aged 5 to 17 trapped in hazardous work decreased by 26 percent between 2000 and 2004, to reach 126 million in 2004 as opposed to 171 million in a previous estimate. Among younger child laborers aged 5 to 14, this drop was even more pronounced at 33 percent.

The report attributed the reduction in child labor to increased awareness of the problem, and the political will to take concrete action to stop the abuse. Such action includes working for poverty reduction and providing for mass education that has led to a "worldwide movement against child labor."

Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of children engaged in economic activities of any region in the world. According to the report, the sub-Saharan's convergence of high population growth, grinding poverty and the epidemic of HIV/AIDS has hindered progress in the fight against child labor. (See *AIDS in Africa* (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids/aids_in_africa.html).

The U.S. State Department said in a July 2005 fact sheet that most international organizations and national laws indicate that children legally may engage in light work, but the worst forms of child labor are being targeted for eradication by nations across the globe. The sale and trafficking of children and their entrapment in bonded and forced labor are particularly hazardous types of child labor.

The full text (<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc95/pdf/rep-i-b.pdf>) (PDF, 100 pages) of the U.N. report is available on the ILO Web site. ♦

U.S. Health Agency Awards \$1 Billion to Prepare for Pandemic

By Cheryl Pellerin
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington — As part of the president's plan to prepare for a pandemic, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt announced the award of more than \$1 billion to five pharmaceutical companies to accelerate development and production of new technologies for influenza vaccines in the United States.

During a May 4 press briefing, Leavitt said the goal is to have the ability in the United States, within three to five years, to manufacture 300 million courses of pandemic flu vaccine within six months of the declaration of a pandemic.

"The hard truth is that at this moment," Leavitt said, "the capacity simply does not exist within the United States to produce vaccines with sufficient speed and quantity to reach every American, and that's true in countries all over the world. But that's about to begin to change."

In November 2005, President Bush proposed \$7.1 billion for a multiyear effort to prepare the nation for a pandemic, and Congress provided the first \$3.8 billion in funding to implement the plan. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/01-163590.html>.)

"We're using those funds to pursue a broad strategy of preparedness," Leavitt said, "including investing, in vaccines, investing in rapid diagnostics, investing in dose-stretching technology. We also are increasing our domestic and international surveillance and

planning."

The Bush administration unveiled a far-reaching plan May 3, the National Strategy for Pandemic Flu Preparedness Implementation Plan, that directs federal government agencies to take more than 300 actions to prepare for an outbreak of pandemic influenza. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/May/03-209150.html>.)

DEVELOPING NEW FLU TECHNOLOGIES

The five companies are GlaxoSmithKline (\$274.75 million), MedImmune (\$169.46 million), Novartis Vaccines & Diagnostics (\$220.51 million), DynPort Vaccine with Baxter Healthcare (\$40.97 million), and Solvay Pharmaceuticals (\$298.59 million).

The companies, Leavitt said, also are "making substantial commitments of their own in terms of people, capital and resources."

The contracts support the advanced development of cell-based production technologies for influenza vaccines and will help modernize and strengthen the nation's influenza vaccine production by creating an alternative to producing influenza vaccines in eggs. (

Standard egg-based vaccine production methods, developed more than 50 years ago, involve identifying which virus strains should go into a vaccine, then growing those strains in millions of fertilized chicken eggs before harvesting, purifying and killing the viruses and using them in vaccines.

The process is time consuming and uses about 100 million eggs each flu season in the United States alone. The egg-based method is especially problematic for a potential H5N1 vaccine because the virus kills chicken embryos before much of the virus can grow.

Cell-based vaccine manufacturing — a technology used in many other modern vaccines — is a more reliable, more flexible and more scalable method of producing flu vaccines.

The cell-culture method involves growing animal or human cells in the laboratory in a nutrient solution. The virus is injected into the cells, and cells and viruses multiply. Then the cells' outer walls are removed and the virus is harvested, purified and inactivated.

Cell-culture-based flu vaccines could help meet surges in capacity needs in the event of a shortage or pandemic because cells can be frozen in advance and large volumes grown quickly.

"We have the opportunity to be the first generation that prepares for pandemic," Leavitt said. "Our current capacity of egg-based influenza vaccine production is not sufficient to meet increased demands during an emergency. Accelerating the development of this vaccine technology and creating domestic capacity are critical to our preparedness efforts."

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

U.S. Researchers Aid Egypt in Identifying Human Bird Flu Cases

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington — Egyptian health officials report another laboratory-confirmed case of avian influenza in a human, the nation's 13th case of the disease that originated in birds.

The World Health Organization (WHO) confirms the case in a May 4 statement, saying the patient is hospitalized and in stable condition after being treated for pneumonia brought on by the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza virus that has caused 113 deaths worldwide.

Egypt's first human case occurred in March after the first appearance of the disease in poultry in February.

As the disease has spread through about two-thirds of the country's governorates, the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit Number 3 (NAMRU-3) has worked with Egyptian health officials to confirm and validate the identification of the flu virus that could become the trigger for an global influenza pandemic with the potential to take millions of lives.

CONFIRMING DIAGNOSIS

As a collaborating center with WHO in the Eastern Mediterranean region, NAMRU has verified all the work of Egyptian laboratories since the arrival of bird flu.

"The laboratory wanted to be extra sure," of its finding of H5N1, said Major Samuel L. Yingst, a veterinarian and the deputy head of the virology and zoonotic disease program at the NAMRU labs in

Cairo, Egypt.

NAMRU also has been the confirming laboratory in animal cases that have occurred in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Jordan and Ukraine.

Virtually all cases of this animal disease that have occurred in humans have been a result of direct contact with birds. Opportunities for that to happen are greatest in cultures where animals and people live in close proximity, and chickens and ducks share the yard with their human owners.

Egypt is one of those cultures. So when animal cases were confirmed, it seemed apparent that human cases soon would follow.

"The Ministry of Health anticipated that there could be a problem [the disease] in humans," said Dr. Kenneth Earhart, a commander in the Medical Corps of the U.S. Navy and the executive officer at NAMRU.

"When clinical cases presented, they were prepared to begin evaluating and making that diagnosis," he said in a recent telephone interview with the Washington File from his Cairo office.

In each case, NAMRU labs affirmed the initial findings of the Egyptian medical professionals, and the cases then were counted in the official situation reports maintained by WHO.

IMPROVING DIAGNOSTICS; DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

The United States is working with the international community to prevent the emergence of a

global influenza pandemic by helping improve health care infrastructure in vulnerable countries.

To achieve that end, U.S. policy is supporting other nations in developing diagnostics and laboratory capacity and supporting the work of international health organizations in their programs to detect and contain the disease.

NAMRU-3, a key entity in pursuit of those goals, was established in Cairo 60 years ago with a mission to conduct infectious disease research and disease surveillance to enhance the health of U.S. Defense Department personnel who could be deployed in the region.

"We'll partner with the ministry of a respective country," said Earhart. "Together we'll study [a targeted disease or diseases] in that country, and we'll help them to [develop] the capacity to diagnose the diseases themselves."

The goal is to develop local capability to diagnose and identify viruses, Earhart said, so countries in the Eastern Mediterranean region will contribute to the global influenza surveillance network, which strives to identify the prevalent flu strains each year to direct development of effective vaccines.

Achieving that goal requires training, and Earhart said NAMRU-3 specialists are traveling to national labs in the region to provide coaching in laboratory techniques, and other governments are sending their specialists to the Cairo facility. ♦

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Annan Outlines Counterterrorism Strategy. . .

(Continued from page 13)

are violated," the senior U.N. official said. "The ripple effects of terrorism are quite broad and deep and tend to affect the most vulnerable in society. We need to talk about that."

BIOTERRORISM AND THE DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

Another element of the secretary general's proposals is the need to work together to prevent the use of biological weapons.

Bioterrorism presents a threat that nations cannot address individually. It requires a comprehensive program developed by all stakeholders -- governments, industry, science, public health, security -- to ensure biotechnology's advances are used for the public good and kept from terrorists, the U.N. official said.

The member states have been negotiating a comprehensive convention on terrorism. That text is ready for adoption except for agreement

on the definition of terrorism. The senior U.N. official said that, in his address, Annan called for consensus on the convention but said that ongoing debates on that document should not delay agreement on and implementation of a global counterterrorism strategy.

"The convention and the strategy are complementary but not contingent," the official said, explaining that the convention sets legal precedent and norms while the strategy is an operational plan to fight terrorism.

"We can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. We need to make progress on the things that we know we can do," he said.

The full text (<http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=2010>) of Annan's May 2 statement to the General Assembly is available on the U.N. Web Site. ♦

U.S. Helps Africans Counter Rising Urban Growth . . .

(Continued from page 10)

his nongovernmental organization (NGO) has been working to build affordable housing in Africa for 30 years. "In fact, the first Habitat for Humanity House was built in Zaire -- now the Democratic Republic of Congo -- in 1976," he said.

Reckford said that, as of January 2006, the NGO had built more than 35,000 affordable houses in 21 African countries.

Most important, the housing projects involved "a community-based approach, mutual help, [and] sweat equity through labor provided by volunteers and homeowners," Reckford said.

The NGO official recommended several actions to spur such homegrown activity, in-

cluding having the U.S. government focus more on "microfinancing for the poor" and economic development on the local level in African nations.

Africans, Reckford said, can mitigate the housing crisis with a number of measures:

Systematizing and documenting land tenure and property rights for the poor so they can use property as collateral for loans to build housing or improve existing shelter;

Acquiring land so that NGOs "like ours can build communities of low-income housing that allow people to become healthy, contributing members of society." ♦

Private, Nonprofit Groups Lead Fight Against . . .

(Continued from page 17)

the victims is as important as punishing the traffickers.

"Victims need to feel safe, get control over their lives, and, especially, feel safe after testifying" against the traffickers. "Too often," she said, "law enforcement treats victims as disposable witnesses."

The panelists said that Europe and Asia have been most active in tackling human trafficking. Africa, Latin America and Central America lag far behind in basic awareness of the problem as well as in programs and resources. They agreed that it is important to communicate more with new organizations in those areas so that NGOs from other regions can share lessons on what works to help the new ones from making the same old mistakes. ♦