



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Ambassador Vicki Huddleston addresses 20 Prison Commissioners and Justice Bureau Heads

Ambassador Vicki Huddleston addressed twenty prison commissioners and Justice Bureau heads at a meeting on July 24, sponsored by the NGO, Prison Fellowship - Justice For All, and the U.S. Embassy. She encouraged them to adopt a national day of pardon for prisoners as the representatives conferred among themselves, and shared their experiences in setting up regional pardon boards. ♦



Ambassador Huddleston (center) and Minister of Justice, Ato Assefa Kassito (second from right) with Pastor Daniel, President of Prison Fellowship - Justice for All (far right) and Ambassador Kassa Gebrehewit, Head of Ethiopia's Human Rights Commission (second from left).

Diversity Visa Process Selects 82,000 Applicants

Washington – Approximately 82,000 people in 175 nations have received letters from the U.S. State Department informing them that they are eligible to apply for a permanent resident visa to the United States.

Only 50,000 such visas are issued each year in what is known as the Diversity Visa Lottery. More than 5.5 million people submitted entries in the registration process held during the last quarter of 2005.

A media note issued by the State Department July 18 says 82,000 applicants were selected at random in the lottery and encouraged to apply. It is likely that many people involved in this initial stage will not follow

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American and African Partners Are Building a New Africa

By Charles W. Corey
Washington File Staff Writer

Abuja, Nigeria -- Africans and Americans increasingly are working together in partnership to build a new Africa that influences the world economy.

Sam Nwosu, an American executive, is a prime example of that new trend, which is helping to fuel Africa's long-term economic growth and development. An account manager for Motorola Nigeria Limited, he attended the Leon H. Sullivan Summit VII in Abuja.

Nwosu was born in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, educated in the United States and worked 26 years there for some of America's largest corporations. He was an oil and gas analyst for the large stockbroker firm A.G. Edwards and worked almost two decades for AT&T, which for years was America's largest telecommunications company. He recently returned to Nigeria to work.

He said he saw his return to Nigeria as an opportunity to explore his homeland and work in another business environment. Additionally, he said, "I wanted to be able to somehow, somewhere contribute toward the development of this country, and I have done that."

In an interview with the Washington File, Nwosu said he recently developed a cell phone network pricing benchmark that will be used by Motorola in Nigeria. That benchmark, which helps set cell phone prices, will save Nigerians millions of dollars on cell phone bills, he said.

Nwosu also returned home for sales experience. To advance in corporate America, he said, you need sales experience, and coming to Nigeria with Motorola was a chance for him to gain that experience.

In addition, he said, coming back to a "rugged" business environment has taught him some new skills and made him a "little bit rugged" and thus better able to function in the constantly changing world economy.

Recalling how quickly Nigeria is changing with the world economy, Nwosu said that in 1999, there were only about 500,000 corporate telephone lines in Nigeria. Today, with the advent of cell phones, there are more than 20 million cell phone subscriptions, with most Nigerians carrying at least two cell phones.

Nwosu said that with a democratic government now in place in Nigeria, "there are opportunities here for Nigerians to really contribute towards the development of this country." Democracy, he said, was a critical component for Africa's future growth. "Quite frankly, that is a platform that is required" for development, he said.

"One thing history has shown us is no country has ever thrived without foreign investment, and no one wants to invest in a country where you are not sure about recouping your investment. So having a robust, long-lasting and consistent government helps" serve as a good foundation for a thriving business environment, he said.

Africa also needs basic infrastructure, particularly reliable electric

power, he said. "That, to me, is the catalyst for growth," he added, noting that sporadic electric power in much of Africa still is hampering business development and long-term economic growth.

When he returned to Nigeria, Nwosu said, he came back with an "outside-in perspective," and he admitted that he did have to overcome a bit of culture shock. He explained "outside-in" perspective as taking what you have learned outside your homeland and applying it inside your homeland to operate a business successfully. That "outside-in" perspective, he said, places a high priority on corporate business ethics, as embodied in the Global Sullivan Principles.

The Global Sullivan Principles are a code of social responsibility guidelines that support individual human rights, equal opportunity, respect for employees, fair compensation and respect for intellectual property rights.

Most American companies, he said, operate with high ethical standards that sometimes are not followed as closely by their international competitors. He added that his company's commitment to high ethics in business, along with the ethical practices of other American companies, slowly is having an impact and helping to change the business environment in Africa for the better.

The July 17-20 Leon H. Sullivan Summit VII had as its overall theme "Africa: A Continent of Opportunities -- Building Partnerships for Success."♦

Sudanese Leader Confers with Bush, Rice on Peace Agreement

By Rachel J. King
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush met July 20 with a leader of Sudan's new national unity government to discuss how the United States can help Sudan build on the political progress and extend the benefits of peace throughout the war-torn country.

"The United States is committed to helping the Sudanese people; we're committed to making sure

"The United Nations should be invited in," the president said. "We talked about how best to get that done in order to save lives. Obviously, there is still a lot of work to be done."

Kiir said the United States had helped negotiate the peace agreement in Sudan and that although the process "has taken a toll" on the Sudanese people, "this dream has been achieved, and we are now together in the implementation."



President Bush greets President of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir, Thursday, July 20, at their meeting in the Oval Office. (©AP/WWP)

that the peace agreement that we helped you negotiate is implemented," Bush said during a joint press availability at the White House with Salva Kiir, first vice president of the Government of National Unity of Sudan and president of Southern Sudan.

The president also noted that the United States is committed to aiding the people in Sudan's western region of Darfur and said the two leaders strategized about what should be done in the area.

He urged a continued focus on "so many other crises in Sudan" that need international attention as well.

"We are sure that we are going to solve the problem so that we don't hear about rapes and killings in Darfur," he said. "And all other parts of our country, like Eastern Sudan -- we are now also negotiating in that province so that peace is also achieved all over the Sudan."

COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT

Meeting with the Sudanese leader later in the day, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice underlined the U.S. commitment to a "free and prosperous and democratic Sudan."

"We were pleased to play a role in the conclusion of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement for the people of Sudan that ended a very long civil war between North and South, and we are now committed to end-

ing the violence in Darfur so that Sudan can be whole and at peace," Rice said.

Kiir expressed his appreciation for having been invited to Washington to have discussions with the president, which he said included "the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement bringing peace to Darfur, to eastern Sudan, and making and transforming the country into a democratic, multi-party nation, which of course has been our goal for a very, very long time and we are committed to this."

U.S. HELP FOR DARFUR

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer announced a U.S. commitment of \$116 million to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) at the Sudan donors' conference in Brussels on July 18, reaffirming that a successful resolution to the situation in Darfur is one of the Bush administration's highest priorities.

That commitment of \$116 million in assistance to AMIS through the end of September 2006 was the largest new pledge of support made at the Brussels donors conference and was in addition to \$247 million in U.S. contributions to AMIS since 2004.

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

Angola Elections on Track Despite Impediments, U.S. Officials Say

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Angola is making significant progress toward long-anticipated elections despite severe "impediments" caused by a 27-year civil war that displaced millions of people and left the country's infrastructure destroyed and its territory strewn with countless land mines, U.S. officials told a Congressional subcommittee July 20.

"The people of Angola have bled enough and are ready to move forward" on their road to democracy and economic prosperity, Dan Mozena, director of the State Department's Office of Southern African Affairs, told the House International Relations Africa Subcommittee, which was looking into "Angola's Long-Delayed Elections."

Mozena said there were "serious impediments to conducting elections in Angola," such as the ongoing resettlement of 4 million citizens displaced by the civil war and clearing of land mines that restrict movement and agriculture.

But these impediments "can be and are being overcome. Progress is being made, and I think these elections can move forward," he told lawmakers.

After Angola achieved independence from Portugal in 1975, a bloody civil war erupted between the central Angolan government and a rebel movement led by

Jonas Savimbi. After a cease-fire in 1992, the only election the country experienced was negated that year when loser Savimbi fled to the bush and resumed military action. Peace finally came only after Savimbi was killed in 2002, but the country still suffers the effects of a devastated infrastructure caused by the conflict.

Despite that history, Africa Subcommittee Chairman Chris Smith said, "There are some positive signs that this election may succeed." And he added that Congress is "united in our interest in helping Angola enjoy the lasting benefits of peace and achieving the kind of economic development ... it deserves after so many decades of war and suffering."

Responding to Representative Barbara Lee's comment that she was "puzzled that the election continues to be postponed," Mozena said the Angolans have "set very high standards" for the balloting -- "maybe too high."

Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos set a deadline of December 31, 2007, for the nation's parliamentary and presidential elections, and "it appears unlikely that elections will be held in 2006," Mozena told the House panel.

However, "while there remains uncertainty regarding the date of elections, the government of Angola continues to take important steps to prepare for the process," Mozena emphasized.

Those steps include passing electoral laws in 2005, establishing an 11-member National Election Commission and passing a press law in 2006 that "provides the initial framework for the licensing of independent radio stations throughout the country," necessary for "the energetic discussion of political issues," Mozena said.

In addition, millions of people have been resettled and land-mine clearance is running apace, with the goal of making Angola "land-mine-risk free" by 2011, he said.

Angolan Ambassador Josefina Diakite told the subcommittee that 360,000 of the 450,000 refugees who fled the country during the civil war have been repatriated and resettled. At the same time, she said, "the issue of land mines has been the government's top priority in the post-conflict era, since they hinder the movement of people across the country. As proof of this commitment, an executive commission for [land mine removal] was established."

Mozena added that there are also "signs of progress on anti-corruption and transparency efforts" -- important, considering that Angola is one of the world's largest diamond and oil producers, exporting more than 350,000 barrels of oil a day to the United States. "We will continue to assist Angola to reach its potential," he said, "and look forward to working with the Angolan government in building a more democ-

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Angola Elections on Track . . .

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matic, transparent and prosperous society."

Paul Bonicelli, deputy assistant administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, told the House panel, "Decades of civil war have also left Angola in the position of being a relative latecomer to democratic electoral processes."

Yet, "over the past 18 months, the Angolan government has taken concrete steps in preparation for elections," in which civil society played an important role, he said.

Bonicelli said the Bush administration is supporting the electoral process with a \$3 million grant, in addition to the close to \$8 million already devoted to supporting democracy programs in the southern African nation since 2001.

In Angola, he explained, USAID works through American nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), IFES (formerly the International Foundation for Election Systems) and Search for Common Ground, which partner with local NGOs to train election workers.

They have provided technical and project management training, as well as voter education materials,



to six civil-society electoral networks in the provinces of Luanda, Benguela, Huambo, Bie, Uige and Lund-Sul, emphasizing voter registration, democratic principles and citizen rights and "promoting political dialogue." They also are providing training to Angolan political parties on codes of conduct and dispute resolution techniques, Bonicelli said.

The aid official said U.S. government support for the elections has been limited, "given the Angolan government's substantial ability to directly fund" the elections from its substantial revenues as the second-largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa.

But he pledged: "USAID intends to maintain robust support for the Angolan electoral process through

election day and will support inclusive political competition and promote good governance at all levels of the Angolan government through the foreseeable future."

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State's Frazer Leads Team to Observe "Historic" DRC Elections

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Archive/2006/May/11-787066.html.)

and that MONUC's mission is essential for that to occur.

Washington -- Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer is leading a team of U.S. officials to observe national elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) July 30.

Since an accord was signed in Sun City, South Africa, in 2002 ending eight years of civil conflict, "the Congo has made impressive progress on the road from war to democracy," Frazer told journalists at a Washington briefing July 25. The official, a former National Security Council (NSC) Africa adviser and U.S. ambassador to South Africa, added that, she will lead the U.S. observation team "to underscore support for this historic transition."

The elections promise to be the first free and open political contest the DRC has had since dictator Mobutu Sese Seko came to power more than 40 years ago and misruled the resource-rich nation.

"Free and fair national elections mean a great deal for Congo," said Frazer, especially after "the nation suffered the loss of almost 4 million people through conflict in the last decade."

Now, 33 candidates are vying for the DRC presidency while another 9,000 politicians -- representing more than 200 registered parties -- are running for seats in parliament; all in a country the size of Western Europe with few roads or a communications network. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/>

The U.N. peacekeeping force called MONUC, consisting of 17,000 troops from several African nations as well as from Europe and China, is providing security for the balloting that will take place at more than 50,000 voting stations while fighting rebel groups that continue to operate in eastern Congo.

MONUC also is providing voter education and basic logistics for the election. Since 2003, its air fleet of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft have ferried hundreds of thousands of peacekeepers, election officials and workers throughout the nation. Its 85 aircraft now comprise the largest airline in Africa. The peacekeeping force is now the largest such effort the U.N. ever has mounted.

Frazer was asked if the U.S. government, which contributes 27 percent of MONUC's budget, would consider extending its mandate beyond September 30 -- a goal expressed by former U.S. Ambassador Bill Swing who heads up the peacekeeping force.

She said, "I'm sure we will look at the situation at the time but it would be a false hope to expect MONUC to be able to leave at the end of its mandate. So it could very likely be extended -- that's what we might expect." Frazer added that the United States "will do whatever is necessary to make sure there is a stable, consolidation of democracy in the Congo"

African involvement also has been "extremely important" for the Congolese elections, the U.S. official said. "Africans have been in the lead in bringing an end to the war in the Congo as well as supporting the electoral process." As an example, she said South Africa printed the ballots, "which weighed over 1,800 tons and required 75 round-trips between South Africa and the Congo to deliver.

DRC Ambassador Faïda Mifitu paid a surprise visit to the news conference and thanked Frazer for her commitment to democratization in the Congo. Asked by a journalist if President Joseph Kabila was really a Congolese -- referring to a persistent rumor that the current president actually was born and raised outside the country and thus ineligible to run for office as he is doing -- Mifitu responded: "Yes, the president is 100 percent Congolese. We know his father and his mother."

The ambassador said political opponents or "demagogues" with no real "political program" are instead attacking Kabila personally by spreading the rumor to weaken him politically.

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

New U.S. Voting Guidelines Improving States' Elections Processes

By Michelle Austein
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Recent changes to voting guidelines in the United States are helping ensure that every citizen's vote is counted, but more improvements still are needed, said experts and officials who testified before a joint hearing of the House Science and House Administration committees July 19.

The committees heard from election officials and voting technology experts on the impact of new voting standards and guidelines as established by the 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and the 2005 Voluntary Voting Systems Guidelines.

Congress passed HAVA to address voting problems encountered in the 2000 presidential election. The act encourages state and local governments to eliminate punch card and lever voting machines. Under HAVA, states have received \$2.9 billion since 2003 to improve their elections processes.

HAVA includes requirements that voting machines and systems used in federal elections should meet. Under the new rules, voting machines should permit voters to verify and change their selections before casting their ballot, notify voters if they have voted for too many candidates and provide accessibility to voters with disabilities.

HAVA also created the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), a new agency to carry out these improvements. One of the EAC's mandates is the testing and certification of voting system hardware

and software, said Donetta Davidson, commissioner of the Election Assistance Commission.

The EAC approved the voluntary voting guidelines in December 2005, but the new standards will not be effective officially until December 2007. It is up to states to determine what aspects, if any, of the guidelines they enact.

dard," Jeffrey said.

The EAC has worked with state and local election officials to improve election management when developing new guidelines, Davidson said. The guidelines cover a variety of procedures including how to store voting equipment and how to train poll workers.



President George Bush surrounded by staff, signing the Help American Vote Act on Oct. 29, 2002

While the guidelines are voluntary, many of those who testified said they expect most states will follow them, as the majority of states already require compliance with federal voting guidelines. Companies that make voting equipment will risk losing clients if their machines do not meet the guidelines, said William Jeffrey, director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST.) "The marketplace, in this case the states and the public, provides the impetus for software developers to implement and conform to the stan-

In 2006, one third of voters will cast their ballots on new machines, said Davidson, and for the first time every polling place will be equipped with machines to allow people with disabilities to vote privately and independently.

Security of new voting machines was a chief concern to both the committee leaders and those who testified. Paperless voting machines have the greatest security risk, said David Wagner, a professor at the University of California-

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Diversity Visa Process Selects 82,000 . . .

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through with their applications, so the selection of more than 80,000 should insure that all visas allowed under this program will be issued, the media note said.

The diversity visa lottery, designed to bring greater racial and ethnic diversity to the United States, offers permanent residency visas to citizens of nations that traditionally have a low level of immigration to the United States.

Anyone who applied but has not received notification to move to the next step in visa application has no further eligibility in this year's process and should prepare

to apply at the end of this year when the next lottery opens.

The dates for the next lottery entry period will be announced in August. In Africa, citizens from 50 nations will have the opportunity to apply for a diversity visa. The most lottery winners from any one African country – more than 9,800 – are in Nigeria, the continent's most populous country. Egypt was next, with more than 7,200 visa applicants selected, followed by Ethiopia with nearly 6,900.

Bangladesh has the highest number of potential applicants among Asian nations at 5,900. More than 1,500 Nepalese are being informed of their eligibility to pursue a permanent resident visa,

along with more than 1,300 Iranians.

Citizens who once lived under the influence of the Soviet Union also are receiving invitations to pursue an opportunity to immigrate to the United States. More than 7,200 Ukrainians were selected in the lottery, along with almost 2,000 Albanians and 1,700 Bulgarians.

Additional information on the Diversity Visa Immigrant Program (http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1322.html) is available on the State Department Web site.

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Berkeley and an expert in electronic voting security. "A single person with insider access and some technical knowledge could switch votes, perhaps undetected, and potentially swing an election," he testified.

The most effective security measure is to adopt a voter-verified paper record and mandatory audits of these records, Wagner said. Currently, there is no effective way independently to check whether voting results are accurate or if electronic fraud has been committed, he said. Machines with wireless technology are particularly at risk and should not be used, said many of those who testified.

Voting machines should be tested to see how well they protect against human error. "Many, if not most, of the problems that are experienced in the U.S. electoral process today are not directly technological, but involve humans and their interactions with technology," said John Groh, senior vice president of the Election Systems & Software company.

The guidelines will take time to implement said those who testified. "It is important to consider the Voluntary Voting Systems Guidelines as a long-term strategy to improve voting systems in the United States," said Linda Lamone, Maryland's administrator of elections. "These guidelines cannot be viewed as a panacea with an im-

mediate and dramatic impact on elections; their impact will be gradual and will not be known for several election cycles."

Transcripts (<http://www.house.gov/science/hearings/full06/July19/index.htm>) of the testimonies are available on the House Science Committee's Web site.

The full text (http://www.eac.gov/law_ext.asp) of the Help America Vote Act is available on the Election Assistance Commission'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>)

U.S. Visa Process Should be Streamlined, Official Says

By Kate Ericsson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. visa policies can and should be improved, concluded a group of experts -- including an official in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) -- during a recent discussion at the Heritage Foundation in Washington.

During the July 24 panel titled "Rethinking Visa Policy for the 21st Century," Stewart A. Baker, assistant secretary for policy at DHS, acknowledged that it could be difficult to obtain a U.S. visa. The visa process needs to be more efficient, streamlined and "a lot less hassle for people," said Baker. "These are ideas that we're currently struggling with."

Another panelist, James Jay Carafano, a senior research fellow on defense and homeland security at the Heritage Foundation, emphasized how important it is for the United States to have a visa policy that promotes economic growth, builds strong alliances and contributes to the safety and security of the nation. He also stressed how important and personal the visa application process is for people who want to visit the United States.

Currently, 27 countries participate in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which allows people traveling to the United States for tourism or business to stay for up to 90 days without a visa. In addition to the 27 -- mostly from Western Europe but including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, Brunei and Slovenia -- there are more than a dozen so-called VWP Roadmap

Countries that have expressed interest. According to Baker, the VWP Roadmap Countries are Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and South Korea.

Countries have to meet certain immigration criteria to participate in the VWP, and they must issue machine-readable passports.

"The last countries to join the VWP joined in 1999," said Baker. "Since September 11 [2001, when the United States was attacked by terrorists], no one has been added to the program, in part because of concerns about the security implications of adding to the VWP." He said the United States is examining whether changes to the program should be made and whether it should be expanded, but he did not elaborate.

Carafano and another panelist, Dan Griswold, director of the Center for Trade and Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, said the Visa Waiver Program should be expanded. They said an expansion would enhance U.S. relations with other countries.

"I think the VWP has been a great success," said Griswold. He said the U.S. government should "be exploring prudent ways" to expand the program. The Roadmap Countries do not present an additional security risk to the United States, he said.

"It's hard to see a dividing line between those countries and the 27 countries already in the program, other than the matter of timing," Griswold said.

Carafano suggested that expanding the Visa Waiver Program "to countries in Eastern Europe and Asia, where the United States has growing economic, cultural, and security ties could both strengthen America's bonds to these nations and enhance security."

Security would be enhanced, he claimed, because VWP countries "must maintain the same security standards as the United States." Furthermore, "increased participation in VWP allows the Department of State and DHS to focus their assets on travelers from nations of greater concern," Carafano added.

"Unfortunately, I am cautiously pessimistic that Congress will do anything," said Griswold. "The House seems to be in the mood to build walls rather than take them down."

"We will have to wait for a more opportune moment to expand the Visa Waiver Program," he predicted.

The Heritage Foundation is a conservative policy research institution.

Additional information (http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html) on the Visa Waiver Program is available on the State Department 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>)

Founder Outlines Creation, Mission of First Muslim Sorority in U.S.

By Kate Ericsson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Althia Collins became president and executive director of the first sorority based on Islamic principles, Gamma Gamma Chi, when it was formed a little more than a year ago. She recently fielded questions about the



Althia F. Collins
Co-founder, President, and Executive Director of Gamma Gamma Chi Sorority Inc.

creation and mission of Gamma Gamma Chi in a State Department-hosted webchat.

For many American university students, fraternities and sororities are important social or service-based communities. When Collins' daughter Imani Abdul-Haqq could not find a sorority that was compatible with her Islamic faith, she asked her mother for help in creating a group that would give her the sorority experience while allowing her to follow Islamic traditions.

"She appreciated the sisterhood, opportunities for philanthropy, and leadership development that sorori-

ties offer," Collins said of her daughter during the July 18 webchat, "and she understood that on many college and university campuses sororities have the greatest visibility, so she imagined a sorority for herself and other Muslimahs that would honor Islamic beliefs."

Gamma Gamma Chi aims higher than just providing an Islam-friendly sorority experience, Collins said in the webchat. "Our mission is to promote a positive image of Muslim women and Islam in general. We have found that there are no other organizations that are addressing this need."

Collins made it clear that Gamma Gamma Chi is not exclusively Muslim. "Membership is open to non-Muslims who support our mission," she said. "We simply are offering another alternative for those who want to be involved in sorority life."

When asked about how this sorority fits in with the others on campus, especially considering the reputation that many fraternities and sororities have for partying, Collins said, "If there are organizations engaging in activities that we consider to be inappropriate, we will look for other groups to work with."

She outlined the process by which Gamma Gamma Chi Sorority Inc. was formed. She said that even though only one woman attended the first meeting, Collins and her daughter were "undaunted" by the low participation. They continued to plan the formation of the soror-

ity, and soon many inquiries were received.

"It was clear that the idea was one whose time had come," said Collins.

Imani asked her mother, an educational consultant, to serve as president, and the sorority was incorporated in Virginia in July 2005. The sorority has chapters in Virginia and Georgia, where it serves many local colleges and universities.

But they are not stopping at two chapters. "We are also currently working to establish our third chapter in the Washington D.C. metro area," said Collins. "We have interest [from students] also in the Philadelphia metro area as well as at the University of Kentucky, Rutgers [in New Jersey], and University of Maryland system schools."

According to Collins, "The main obstacle in the formation of this sorority has been financial."

She emphasized the importance of word-of-mouth advertising for Gamma Gamma Chi, saying, "It is important for people who have interacted with us to tell of their positive experiences. This public relations activity is absolutely critical."

Collins is optimistic about the future of Gamma Gamma Chi. The sorority has received inquiries from 23 U.S. states as well as the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Australia, she said.

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U.S.-Russian Effort Seeks To Prevent Terrorist Nuclear Attacks

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The United States and Russia will hold the first organizational meeting of initial partners of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in the next several months.

Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Robert Joseph answered questions from individuals in India, Israel and the United States about the threat of nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands during a July 19 web chat at the State Department.

The initiative aims “to reduce the risk that terrorists could ever obtain a nuclear weapon or carry out a nuclear attack,” he said. It is designed to take “a comprehensive approach to dealing with all elements of nuclear terrorism risk,” Joseph said.

The two countries unveiled their plans during a bilateral meeting at the July G8 Summit in St. Petersburg. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060718173746idybeekcm6.928653e-02>).)

Joseph said this is the first time that the United States and Russia “have come together to form a growing network of partner nations that are committed to taking effective and focused measures to build a layered defense” against nuclear terrorism. (See related article ([http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060718173746idybeekcm6.928653e-02)

[lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060720180116sjhtrop6.449527e-02](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060720180116sjhtrop6.449527e-02)).)

“This layered defense-in-depth requires that partner nations not only improve their interdiction cooperation, but that they also enhance the security of nuclear material, develop capabilities to detect its movement, and improve national emergency response.”

The under secretary said the two countries will invite partner nations to the upcoming meeting “to elaborate and endorse a statement of principles” for the initiative. He said one of those partners will serve as the host for the initial meeting.

“The Global Initiative will build our collective and individual capacity to combat nuclear terrorism on a determined and systematic basis,” the under secretary said, because such activities “require extensive cooperation and interoperability with partner nations across the full range of capabilities, to include prevention, protection and response.”

The initiative will build on Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s vision of transformational diplomacy, according to Joseph, “by building consensus among partner nations regarding our most serious international security threat, and galvaniz[ing] them to take concrete and sustained steps to defeat it.”

Asked about the cost of the initiative, he said the amount of money spent “is only one measure of success,” suggesting that how well the money is spent is another measure. Joseph said each partner nation “should be measuring

what percent of cargo leaving their ports and arriving ... in the ports of other partner nations is scanned for nuclear or radiological material.”

In addition, he said partners “should be measuring how fast we share operational and technical information ... regarding potential nuclear terrorist threats as they emerge, and seeking new ways to accelerate that information flow.”

Lastly, the under secretary said, each nation should be looking at how fast their emergency response teams can deploy and gain control over dangerous material and how quickly they can respond to calls for assistance from other nations.

Through this initiative, he said the United States and Russia hope to galvanize their respective partners “to spend more resources on this threat, work with the private sector to ensure they allocate more resources to their own risk mitigation activities, and develop concrete performance measures to ensure that the money we all spend actually makes a difference.”

A transcript (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/ask/69001.htm>) of the Joseph web chat is available on the State Department’s web site.

For more information about U.S. policy, see Arms Control and Non-proliferation (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html).

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Iraqis Marshalling Resources To Secure Baghdad

By David McKeeby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Any armed group contributing to the violence in Iraq's capital, regardless of motivation, will be brought to justice, says a top spokesman of Multi-National Force – Iraq.

"It makes absolutely no difference what their religious sect is, or what organizations they may claim to belong to," U.S. Army Major General William Caldwell told journalists at a July 24 briefing in Baghdad, Iraq. "Our intent is to specifically target those who are operating outside the law."

Caldwell said that Iraqi and coalition forces have encountered a variety of groups participating in the recent surge of attacks in Baghdad, including insurgents and foreign fighters, local militant groups participating in sectarian violence and armed gangs engaged in kidnapping and other criminal activities. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060713160409ndyblehs0.7379114>).)

Iraqi security forces continue to demonstrate their effectiveness, said Caldwell, as well as their commitment "to make their capital safer, to set the stage for their capital to emerge as a center not of violence and strife, but, some day, for business and learning, for commerce and for culture." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state>.

[gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060720175832idybeekcm0.8658563](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060720175832idybeekcm0.8658563)).)

CALDWELL HIGHLIGHTS IRAQI ARMY, POLICE EFFECTIVENESS

Iraqi army and police units, supported by coalition advisers, recently conducted 19 operations around the capital region aimed at



Iraqi soldiers inspect a vehicle at the start of a vehicle curfew, Friday, July 21, 2006, in central Baghdad, Iraq. (©AP/WWP)

stopping these disruptive forces, which Caldwell said, "seek to uproot democracy and derail the legitimate governance process." In all, they detained eight cell leaders and 87 members of various militant groups, he said.

Iraqi citizens, said Caldwell, continue to show support for government stabilization efforts by reporting suspicious neighborhood activities. On July 18, Caldwell said, a tip from a resident led Iraqi security forces to detain six militants and seize a large cache of weap-

ons, including heavy weapons and bomb-making materials. The next day, an Iraqi response force was dispatched to protect a family being pressured by an armed group to leave their home. The Iraqi patrol subsequently arrested those who had issued the threats.

In a July 21 briefing, Caldwell said that Iraqi forces currently are conducting 700 patrols and operating 600 security checkpoints across the city. At one checkpoint on July 20, Iraqi troops detained a militant who used a woman and three small children to pose as a family to try to sneak through with mortars and other weapons hidden in the car.

Elsewhere in Baghdad that day, Iraqi troops responding to a car bombing discovered a second vehicle nearby rigged to detonate as soon as bystanders and medical personnel arrived, but Caldwell told reporters that Iraqi police safely disarmed the explosives.

Caldwell said that Iraqi army units also are showing their effectiveness in both joint and independent operations against armed groups. The capture of an individual planting a roadside bomb led to the seizure of three more caches around the city where additional bombs were hidden.

He also showed reporters video of Iraqi troops conducting two night raids on July 23 in eastern Baghdad. Supported by coalition advis-

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Bush, Iraq's Al-Maliki Agree to Boost Baghdad Security

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – President Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki announced plans to enhance security forces in Baghdad in an effort to stem the growing violence in the Iraqi capital.

“Our strategy is to remain on the offense,” Bush said during a White House press conference after his July 25 meeting with the Iraqi prime minister. “Under the prime minister’s leadership, coalition and Iraqi leaders are modifying their operational concept to bring greater security to the Iraqi capital.”

Al-Maliki’s plan calls for a redeployment of coalition forces from other locations in Iraq to Baghdad where they will join an enhanced Iraqi police contingent to patrol neighborhoods and ensure an effective Iraqi security presence.

“This plan will involve embedding more U.S. military police with Iraqi police units to make them more effective,” Bush said. He said that this deployment would “better reflect the current conditions on the ground in Iraq.”

The new security plan also calls for coalition forces to provide greater firepower and protection equipment to the Iraqi forces.

“We have agreed that building the security and military institutions in Iraq in terms of numbers, equipment, firearms and as quickly as possible represents the fundamental base in order to stabilize the country and to have security and defeat terrorism,” al-Maliki said.

The new plan comes just six weeks after the Iraqi prime minister launched Operation Together Forward, which sought to pacify the capital by increasing the number of checkpoints and security patrols and by imposing nighttime curfews. To date, however, those measures have failed to rein in the violence.

Bush explained that the new plan shows flexibility on the part of the



President Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, left, participate in a joint press conference, Tuesday, July 25, 2006, in the East Room of the White House in Washington. (Pablo Martinez Monsivais - AP)

Iraqi government and coalition forces in confronting a fluid situation on the ground.

“Conditions change inside a country ... and the question is, are we going to be facile enough to change with them -- will we be nimble enough? ... And the answer is yes, we will,” he said.

Bush said the increased number of forces in the capital would make it possible to hold kidnappers and murderers to account. According to press reports, Baghdad has seen a sharp rise in abductions and murders in recent months.

Al-Maliki said that curbing religious violence is the most important element of his security plan. He said Iraqi religious and political leaders have joined him in condemning those who are trying to foment a civil war.

“The government responsibility is to protect all Iraqis regardless of their ethnic or religious background,” he said.

The prime minister also briefed the president on his national reconciliation plan aimed at drawing opposition forces into the political process.

Bush said there has been important progress elsewhere in Iraq that has been overshadowed by the violence in Baghdad. He pointed to the recent handover of Muthanna province to Iraqi civilian control as an example of that progress.

Bush said he and the prime minister had agreed to establish a joint committee to oversee the transfer of security responsibilities to the Iraqi government in other provinces as well.

Al-Maliki said that his government would develop an international compact for economic reform during the coming months and hold a conference to seek support from the international community in Iraq’s reform efforts. Bush said the United States would support the compact and encourage other countries to do likewise.

The two leaders also exchanged views on the current crisis in Lebanon during their meeting. The Iraqi

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Bush, Iraq's Al-Maliki Agree to Boost Baghdad . . .

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prime minister called for an immediate cease-fire and international support for the Lebanese government in rebuilding the country.

Bush said, "America is concerned about the women and children who suffer in that country, concerned about the loss of innocent life." He added that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is currently in the region "working to establish corridors to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid and essential relief supplies" to the victims of the hostilities. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/>

display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060724125825ndyblehs0.6758692).)

Al-Maliki's visit to Washington is the first meeting between the two leaders since President Bush's June 13 visit to Baghdad. That visit came shortly after the prime minister had completed the formation of his cabinet. At the time, Bush expressed confidence in al-Maliki's commitment to addressing Iraq's security challenges.

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/07/20060725>.

html) of the press conference is available on the White House Web site.

For additional information, see Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).

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Iraqis Marshalling Resources To Secure . . .

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ers the forces engaged in an intense gun battle that ended with the capture of 10 militants and the freeing of two hostages they had kidnapped for ransom.

"This Iraqi-led operation saved lives and once again demonstrates the growing capability of the Iraqi security forces here in Iraq," Caldwell said.

Caldwell declined to comment on unconfirmed reports that coalition forces are planning to increase troop levels in Baghdad to support security operations. "We obviously don't discuss operational

troop movements until they've occurred, but as General Casey has stated after his conversations with the prime minister, we will do whatever it takes to bring security to Baghdad," he said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060723152956uhyggep0.9232752>).)

The transcript of and a video link (http://www.mnf-iraq.com/images/stories/Press_briefings/2006/Jul/060724.wmv) to Caldwell's briefing are available from the Multi-National Force – Iraq Web site.

For more information, see Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).

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Iran Faces Increased World Isolation, U.S. Official Says

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Iran faces greater international isolation if it does not suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities and enter into international negotiations as proposed by a group of six countries, says a senior State Department official.

If Iran does not give a "positive, concrete response" to a proposal advanced in June by six partner countries known as P5+1 to voluntarily suspend such activities, the countries will have "no other choice" than to ask the U.N. Security Council to adopt a resolution making a suspension mandatory, said Paul Simons, deputy assistant secretary for economic and business affairs. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060712135504ndyblehs0.556286>).)

The P5+1 group comprises the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council -- the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China -- plus Germany.

Simons testified July 25 before the Joint Economic Committee of Congress.

The P5+1 proposal includes an offer to cooperate with Iran in the development of a civilian nuclear program, Simons said. But, he added, the proposal states that Iran's nuclear energy program

should conform with the country's obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Iran's "long history of deception and noncompliance" with the NPT and with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) obligations has created "a loss in confidence in Iran's [stated] intentions" that it seeks to develop nuclear energy only for domestic purposes, Simons said.

He said that, with the world's second largest holdings of natural gas reserves and second or third largest reserve of oil, Iran is not energy deficient.

The country instead suffers from "problematic policies," including its pursuit of nuclear weapons that discourage foreign investment needed to develop refining capacity. One result of its "opaque" government policies is that Iran has spent an estimated \$4 billion on gasoline imports in the past year, Simons said.

He said Iran's claims that it is seeking an "indigenous nuclear fuel cycle" for domestic energy purposes only and that its nuclear activities would give the country "energy security and independence" are unfounded.

In fact, Iran has limited uranium reserves that would not secure its energy independence, and the costs to Iran of manufacturing fuel on its own would "far exceed the price at which fuel could be purchased on the international market," he said.

That view has been supported by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress. In its March report titled "Iran's Oil and Gas Wealth," the committee says that Iran's support for terrorism and its economic mismanagement have "damaged" its oil and gas development.

"Iran does not need nuclear energy; it needs to reconnect with the world, realign its disjointed priorities, and develop its vast oil and natural gas resources," according to the committee.

Simons' prepared testimony (http://www.house.gov/jec/hearings/testimony/109/07-25-06_iran_Simons.pdf) and the Joint Economic Committee's report (<http://www.house.gov/jec/publications/109/rr109-31.pdf>) is on the committee's Web site.

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EU Falsely Lays Blame for Trade Talks Collapse, U.S. Says

By Bruce Odessey
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. trade negotiators have rebuked their European Union (EU) counterparts for what they view as false and misleading statements about the collapse of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations.

An Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) statement released July 25 by the U.S. mission in Geneva rebuts an EU charge blaming the United States for the collapse a day earlier.

Reluctant to point the finger of blame as others rushed to do, U.S. negotiators nevertheless could not let stand the EU accusation that the United States was unwilling to show flexibility, the statement says.

The United States made clear it was ready to show more flexibility in cutting trade-distorting domestic support spending on its farmers even further than the 60 percent cuts it proposed in October 2005 but only if the EU and rapidly expanding developing countries would open their markets further to agricultural imports, the statement says.

The EU maintains average agricultural tariffs of 23 percent, nearly twice the 12 percent U.S. average, and domestic support spending of \$33 billion, nearly three times higher than the U.S. level, according to USTR.

"Unable to endorse the U.S. proposal, given substantial opposition from France and a few other mem-

ber states with strong farm interests, the EU attempted, alternately, to criticize the U.S. proposal as too ambitious or too weak," the statement says.

"Most recently, the EU attacked the United States for failing to propose even more dramatic cuts to domestic support while at the same time insisting on the right to lavish more than twice as much trade-distorting subsidies on its farmers," it says.

USTR asserts that the EU proposal would allow little or no additional agricultural market access because of the number of products it would exclude. The EU proposal would require zero change in current EU domestic support programs, USTR says.

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy suspended the long-stalled negotiations, formally called the Doha Development Agenda, July 24 after a meeting with ministers from the United States, EU, Australia, Brazil, India and Japan revealed wide differences persisting over the politically sensitive agricultural issues. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060724145101ebyessedo3.396243e-02>).)

Ministers from the EU and India quickly issued statements blaming the United States. C. Fred Bergsten, director of the Institute for International Economics in Washington, said in an interview that all the major countries share some of the blame.

"But I think the United States has, on the whole, been more forthright than the others in making proposals that would lead to success in the talks," Bergsten said. "It's Europe and India, in large part on agricultural policy, that have been naysayers that have caused the breakdown.

"At the end of the day, everybody's going to have to come back with better proposals to get a package on the table that will enable the negotiations to get going again," he said.

The USTR statement (<http://www.usmission.ch/Press2006/0725USTR.html>) is available on the Web site of the U.S. mission in Geneva. A related fact sheet (http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document_Library/Fact_Sheets/2006/asset_upload_file677_9662.pdf) (PDF, 2 pages) is available on the USTR Web site.

For additional information, see USA and the WTO (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/WTO.html).

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OSCE Nations Urged to Crack Down on Child Pornography

By Kate Ericsson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- In an effort to combat child pornography, parliamentarians from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has adopted a U.S.-sponsored resolution that condemns the sexual exploitation of children and urges member states to enact comprehensive laws that will lead to the prosecution of those involved in the multibillion dollar child pornography industry.

Seven U.S. lawmakers, including several members of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, urged the 200-member OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Brussels, Belgium, to adopt the 27-point resolution, titled "Combating Trafficking and the Exploitation of Children in Pornography."

The resolution was adopted unanimously and included in the Brussels Declaration passed by the Parliamentary Assembly at the end of the July 3-7 meeting. The 43-page declaration includes recommendations related to security, economics and environmental and humanitarian issues.

The resolution calls on OSCE participating states to ensure that the production or dissemination of child pornography, whether committed domestically or transnationally, is covered fully under their national criminal or penal laws and carries an appropriate penalty. It emphasizes the need for increased law enforcement cooperation, efforts to reduce consumer demand, and annual reports by every state on their anti-trafficking and anti-pornography activities.

Representative Joseph R. Pitts, a Republican congressman from Pennsylvania and head of the U.S. delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, pointed out that "child pornography is a plague that affects every OSCE participating state. Currently, those who produce or disseminate child pornography can evade criminal liability by operating in countries with weak laws against child abuse and child pornography."

A Helsinki Commission press release cites a new study of child pornography released by the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) surveying laws in 184 Interpol member countries. The study "produced alarming results: more than half of these countries (95) have no laws addressing child pornography and in many other countries, the existing laws are inadequate," the press release said. Of the OSCE member states, six lack any laws criminalizing any aspect of child pornography.

The resolution stresses the importance of full participation by every member state in the campaign against child pornography, and it also emphasizes the need for cooperation with other international organizations.

The resolution recognizes that child pornography is a multibillion-dollar enterprise that is directly related to human trafficking and to child abuse and molestation. It also acknowledges the role of the Internet and home computers in making it easier for child molesters to produce child pornography.

While acknowledging the technological advancements that are

helping pornographers, the resolution also encourages OSCE participating States to use technology -- information sharing, joint databases, specialized training programs, and telephone or Internet hotlines where pornography can be anonymously reported -- to combat the sexual exploitation of children.

"As the parliamentary resolution recognizes, the lives of children exploited through child pornography are forever altered," said Pitts. "First, they are victimized by sexual abuse involved in producing the pornography. Then, they are re-victimized as the images are ir-retrievable and potentially viewed forever."

The United States has cooperated with various OSCE member states as well as with other nations in Operation Predator, an enforcement initiative launched in 2003 by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to investigate and prosecute pedophiles, Internet predators, human traffickers, international sex tourists and other predatory criminals.

More than 8,200 sexual predators have been arrested to date, according to the Operation Predator Web site. The initiative also has led to the arrests of over 1,000 suspects overseas after U.S. officials shared information with foreign authorities about their investigations.

In January ICE announced that its cooperation with Moldovan and Romanian law enforcement authorities resulted in the arrest and indictment of an American and a Moldovan who allegedly served as his translator. The American was

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Rice Visits Beirut, Works To Open Flow of Humanitarian Aid

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made a surprise visit to Beirut, Lebanon, July 24 to express U.S. support for the government of Prime Minister Fuad Siniora and to discuss the humanitarian needs of the Lebanese people as hostilities continue between the Israeli Defense Forces and Hizballah militants in the south of Lebanon.

Rice told reporters en route to the region that a major goal of her trip is to “help establish some efforts on the humanitarian side.”

The secretary said most of her recent conversations with Israeli officials have been focused on the humanitarian situation and ways of getting assistance to populations displaced by the conflict.

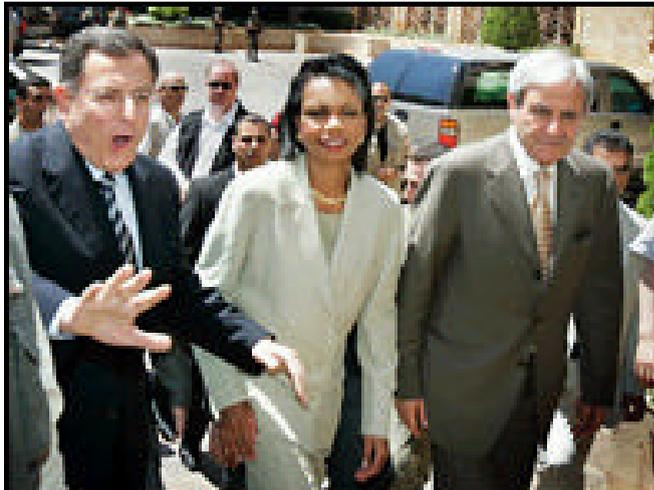
The United States is “trying to establish corridors in and out of Lebanon, as well as corridors within Lebanon that might make it possible to get humanitarian assistance to the Lebanese people,” she said.

During her trip to the region, the secretary also will meet with regional leaders and representatives from other interested countries at a gathering of the Lebanon Core Group in Rome to seek a lasting, stable cessation of hostilities.

“We believe that a cease-fire is urgent,” she said. “It is, however,

important to have conditions that will make it also sustainable.”

The secretary pointed to the 1989 Taif Accords, which brought an end to Lebanon’s 15-year civil war, and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559 as appropriate bases for ending hostilities. Both the Saudi-sponsored Taif Accords and Resolution 1559 call for the disbanding of all militias in Lebanon and the extension of Lebanese government control over the entire territory of Lebanon.



Lebanon's Prime Minister Fuad Siniora, left, clears the way for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as she arrives at Government House in downtown Beirut. AP

Hizballah continues to maintain an armed presence in the country, particularly in southern Lebanon, the southern suburbs of Beirut and the Bekaa Valley, in spite of these resolutions. A series of Hizballah rocket attacks on northern Israel and a cross-border operation to kidnap two Israeli soldiers July 12

sparked the current round of violence.

Rice said the framework for a resolution to the crisis clearly would provide for “the Lebanese government’s ability to exercise sovereignty over all of its territory, not to have extremist groups, unauthorized armed groups that are able to use the territory of Lebanon to launch illegal activities and then plunge Lebanon and the region into war.”

She said, “If we end the fighting only to have it restart in three weeks or three months, ... then all of the carnage that Hizballah launched by its illegal activities, abducting the soldiers and then launching rocket attacks, we will have gotten nothing from that, we will have learned nothing from it.”

The United States has called on neighboring Syria to withdraw its support for Hizballah,

but Rice said she would not be meeting with Syrian officials during her trip to the region because past meetings between American and Syrian officials had proven entirely unproductive. “The problem isn’t that [we] haven’t talked to the Syrians; it’s that the Syrians haven’t acted,” she said.

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Rice Turns Diplomatic Focus to Gaza Crisis

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice shifted the focus of her diplomatic efforts from the crisis in Lebanon to the ongoing Israeli operations in Gaza July 25 as she met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah.

“[E]ven as the Lebanon situation resolves we must remain focused on what is happening here in the Palestinian Territories, on our desires to get back on a course that will lead ultimately to ... President Bush's vision, but indeed the vision of President Abbas, of two states living side by side in peace,” Rice said at a press availability following her meeting with the Palestinian leader.

Israel has been carrying out military operations in Gaza since militants linked to the Palestinian Authority's ruling Hamas party tunneled into Israel June 25, attacked an Israeli military post near the Gaza border and abducted an Israeli soldier. Israel has called for the immediate release of Corporal Gilad Shalit while the soldier's captors have demanded the release of 1,000 Palestinian prisoners as well as all Palestinian women and children in Israeli jails first.

“It is important that we end the Gaza crisis and I know that [President Abbas] is working hard to do that and to create the conditions on which that can end,” Rice said.

Abbas said, “We are also endeavoring with all of the means available to us to ensure release of the Israeli soldiers.”

The secretary expressed concern for the difficult circumstances in which the Palestinians find themselves and pledged continued U.S. humanitarian assistance to the Pal-



U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, left, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at a joint press conference in the West Bank town of Ramallah, Tuesday, July 25, 2006 AP Photo)

estinian people, but she said the ultimate solution is “to get to a sustainable peace for this region.”

“[W]e need to be able to make progress because the Palestinian people have lived too long in violence and in a sense of the daily humiliations that go along with the circumstances here,” she said.

Rice said she had spoken with Israeli officials about fully implementing the November 2005 agreement on movement and access within the Palestinian Territories to facilitate Palestinian economic activity. (See related article ([http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=November&x=20051115122205cpata-](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=November&x=20051115122205cpata-ruk0.2838709&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html)

[ruk0.2838709&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/xarchitem.html)).)

The November 2005 agreement gave the Palestinian Authority control over the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt and also called for the start of bus and truck convoys between Gaza and the West Bank, the reduction of obstacles to movement within the West Bank, the export of Palestinian agricultural products, authorization to begin construction of a Palestinian seaport and acknowledgement by the parties of the importance of a Palestinian airport.

Earlier on July 25, Rice met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to discuss Israeli operations in Lebanon and Gaza. She travels to Rome July 26 to meet with representatives of countries seeking an end to the hostilities between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hizballah.

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Syria Blocks U.N. Efforts To End Lebanon Crisis, U.S. Envoy Says

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations
Correspondent

United Nations -- Syria is becoming a serious stumbling block in international diplomatic efforts to end the fighting in Lebanon, U.S. officials say.

In the U.N. Security Council July 20, Secretary-General Kofi Annan outlined his plan for a wide-ranging settlement and reported on the efforts of the three-person mission, led by Vijay Nambiar, that he sent to the region July 13 as the fighting intensified. However, Syria's refusal to receive one of the secretary-general's envoys -- experienced diplomat Terje Roed-Larsen -- cast a shadow over the meeting. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060720173112ndyblehs0.5831415>).

Roed-Larsen is the secretary-general's special representative on Resolution 1559, passed by the council in September 2004 calling for "the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias."

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton said Syria's rejection of the U.N. mission "in effect applies to all of our collective efforts to get an international solution" to the crisis in Lebanon.

"We know the root cause of the present conflict is Hizballah's terrorists acts supported by Iran and Syria, but now, I think, we see more clearly the role Syria has and has been playing in frustrating ef-

forts to bring this to a resolution," Bolton said.

During a closed-door meeting with the 15-nation Security Council, Annan emphasized that he would assert his right to select whomever he felt was qualified for such missions. However, the United Nations did not press the point with Syria because the team was needed back in New York to brief the council, he said. Other U.N. officials point out that the United Nations has other means of approaching Syria, as well as Iran, another backer of Hizballah.

It was reasonable to have the Nambiar mission at U.N. headquarters for the Security Council meeting, Bolton said, "but I don't see how the council can be fully informed or the U.N. can play a full role if a major party to the conflict -- Syria -- just isn't even interested in talking."

The action raises "a more profound question of how one gets Syrian involvement and commitment . . . to a solution if they don't talk to the representatives of the secretary-general," he said.

Bolton said that in the absence of a meeting between the Nambiar team and the Syrian government, it is difficult to get a complete picture of to what Syria would agree, including how Damascus is going to terminate its support for Hizballah terrorist activities.

"I don't think there's any question but that Syria, along with Iran is a principle supporter of Hizballah. It has rejected many critical elements of Resolution 1559 and now we find that it has not indicated even a willingness to even speak with

the secretary-general's mission," Bolton continued.

The Nambiar mission "has to have access to all governments involved or the secretary-general's role will be severely limited," he said.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that Syria, as well as Iran, stood apart from the rest of the region by not condemning the Hizballah attacks that started the crisis.

"States in the region condemned this attack, Syria and Iran didn't. So they are outside that consensus in the region," McCormack said. They have isolated themselves



"through their actions, through their support for Hizballah, through support for Hamas."

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

Science Is Solid on Climate Change, Experts Tell Congress

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – U.S. government scientists testified before a U.S. congressional committee July 20, trying to dispel any remaining doubts that climate change -- and the human role in it -- is a real phenomenon documented by abundant scientific research.

House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis, a Republican from Virginia, urged the issue be discussed in a nonpartisan way.

"For too long, the political dialogue on climate change has been dominated by black-and-white grandstanding, either finger-wagging or head-in-the-sand denial and denunciation," he said. "There has been no reasonable discourse."

Committee members wanted to start with the basics: Is climate change real and how significant is the influence of human activity?

"Some greenhouse gases are increasing in the atmosphere because of human activities and increasingly trapping more heat," said Thomas Karl, director of the National Climatic Data Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

James Connaughton, the chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, presented the panel with details on the \$29 billion investment in climate-change programs the Bush administration has advocated since 2001.

"There's a lot of agreement ... on warming," said Connaughton. Lot of agreement on human contribu-

tion to the problem. We begin to get into issues [of disagreement] about the extent to which humans are a problem."

The extent of the human contribution and the means to ameliorate human impact are matters of further disagreement among policymakers in the United States and elsewhere. How fast the planet might undergo drastic change, endangering low-lying lands and disrupting agriculture, is another matter of debate.

Scientists use climate models to project what the different outcomes might result from fluctuations of the many variables in the climate system. Climate models are computer programs that use mathematical equations to simulate the interactions of the atmosphere, oceans, land surface and ice. "Climate models have become the primary means to predict climate," said Karl.

Scientists have to use some approximations in their data about climate conditions in constructing the models. Critics of climate-change science argue those models are inaccurate and provide insufficient basis upon which to make major changes in the use of fossil fuels, which create the greenhouse gases believed to contribute to global warming.

Questioned about such criticism, Karl stood by the models. "They're reliable enough to be a very useful guide into the future," the scientist told the lawmakers.

During the Bush presidency, the United States has invested heavily in programs to address climate change, and to research, construct

and promote alternate energy sources that will not emit greenhouse gases, said Connaughton. The U.S. government is currently sponsoring 60 programs that promote energy research and innovation.

On the international stage, Connaughton said the United States has been a global leader in addressing climate change and promoting energy efficiency through multilateral partnerships such as the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate and Methane to Markets. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Jun/13-828121.html>).)

He said the United States also is moving apace with other major nations in its efforts to slow the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. "We're pulling in the same direction at the same rate."

For additional information, see Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&lr=&defl=en&q=define:Climate+Model&sa=X&oi=glossary_definition&ct=title) and Environment (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/environment.html).

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

NASA Marks 30th Anniversary of Mars Viking Mission

Washington -- Thirty years after the first landing on Mars by NASA's Viking spacecraft, the ambitious mission continues to spark enthusiasm for future space exploration.

NASA's Viking 1 and Viking 2 missions to Mars, each consisting of an orbiter and a lander, became the first space probes to obtain high resolution images of the Martian surface, characterize the structure and composition of the atmosphere and surface, and conduct on-the-spot biological tests for life on another planet.

Viking 1 launched August 20, 1975, and arrived at Mars June 19, 1976, according to a July 14 NASA press release.

On July 20, 1976, the Viking 1 lander separated from the orbiter and touched down in a Martian plain called Chryse Planitia. Viking 2 launched September 9, 1975, and entered Mars orbit August 7, 1976. The Viking 2 lander touched down in Utopia Planitia September 3, 1976.

"The Viking team didn't know the Martian atmosphere very well; we had almost no idea about the terrain or the rocks, and yet we had the temerity to try to soft land on the surface," recalled Gentry Lee, solar system exploration chief engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

"We were both terrified and exhilarated," he added. "All of us ex-

ploded with joy and pride when we saw that we had indeed landed safely."

Originally designed to function for 90 days, the Viking spacecraft continued collecting data for more than six years. The landers accumulated 4,500 close-up images of the Martian surface.

The accompanying orbiters provided more than 50,000 images, mapping 97 percent of the planet. NASA scientists still are analyzing and interpreting the orbiters' and landers' measurements of the Mars atmosphere and surface. The data provided by Viking suggested that early Mars was very different from the present-day planet.

Viking performed the first successful Mars entry, descent and landing. Derivations of a Viking-style thermal protection system and parachute have been used on every U.S. Mars lander mission, including Mars Pathfinder (1996-1998) -- an engineering demonstration of key technologies and concepts for future Mars missions -- and the Mars rovers (2004-present), Spirit and Opportunity.

Additional information (<http://www.nasa.gov/viking>) and a press release (http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2006/jul/HQ_06279_Viking_anniversary.html) on the 30th anniversary on the Viking mission are available at the NASA Web site.

For ongoing coverage of the U.S. space program, see Science and

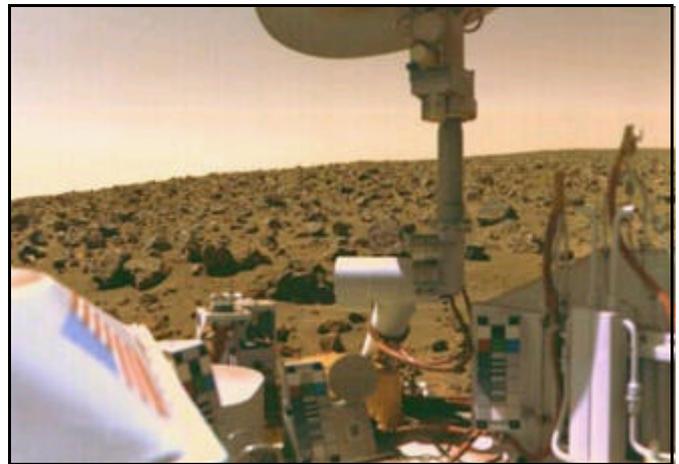


Image above: Viking 2 on Mars. Photo Credit: NASA

Technology (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/scitech.html).

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National Air and Space Museum Celebrates 30th Anniversary

**By Elisa Walton and Rachel J. King
Washington File Staff Writers**

Washington – U.S. space and aeronautics fans had two anniversaries to celebrate July 21, and hundreds did so in soaring style at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum on the National Mall in Washington.

The summer of 1976 was a jubilant season. The nation was sending up a star-spangled salute to its



Visitors make birthday cards marking the 30th anniversary of the opening of the National Air and Space Museum. (State Dept. photo - Ken White)

200th anniversary, and the July 4th Independence Day holiday was the centerpiece in that yearlong festival of patriotism.

The opening of the Air and Space Museum, currently the most visited museum in the world, was one more event on a crowded summer holiday program in 1976. At the same time, the Viking 1 and Viking 2 missions were on the way to Mars, landing on the Red Planet at the end of July 1976. (See re-

lated article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060721085737lcnirellep0.1040155>).)

Tom Crouch, a curator and historian at Air and Space, remembers that July 30 years ago. At the museum's celebratory events July 20, he recalled the opening ceremony, held on July 1, 1976, as Viking 1, still on its way to Mars,

sent a signal to a mechanical arm back here on Earth, which cut the ribbon, opening the doors on a temple to the nation's achievements in flight.

President Ford, who officiated the 1976 event, called the museum "a perfect birthday present" to the nation.

Recalled Crouch, "None of us who built it had any notion that people would come in the numbers they did."

According to Crouch, one explanation for the continuing success of the museum, which receives ap-

proximately 9 million visitors per year, is that "there's something about flight ... that has an intrinsic appeal to people."

One of the main attractions is the Milestones of Flight Gallery, the first thing visitors see upon entering the museum. Here, historic aircraft from all decades hang from the ceiling. They range from the Spirit of St. Louis, flown by Charles Lindbergh on the first non-stop solo transatlantic flight, to the

most recent addition, Space Ship One. In 2004, Space Ship One won the Ansari X-prize for the first privately made, piloted aircraft to successfully complete two flights into space. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=October&x=20041005123029lcnirellep7.898211e-04&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).)

The Wright brothers' plane, normally on display in the Milestones of Flight Gallery, currently is housed in another exhibit in the museum.

"It kind of takes your breath away," said Crouch, to find all of these objects in the same room. "[It's] stunning because they're all real."

After the original opening, the museum's greatest accomplishment is the completion of a second, much larger museum near Dulles Airport, the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, said Crouch. The Udvar-Hazy Center opened in December 2003, two days before the 100th anniversary of powered flight.

AMERICA IN AIR

The museum welcomed crowds of visitors to a variety of events for the anniversary celebration. Curators were also on hand to speak to guests about exhibits they had worked on as well as the history of the museum.

One exhibit currently under reconstruction and expansion is America in the Air, which focuses on the commercial airline industry.

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National Air and Space Museum Celebrates 30th . . .

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The gallery, which closed in early 2006 and is expected to reopen in the final quarter of 2007, will be adding many new facets to the exhibit, including features on the history of airmail and jet aircrafts. The highlight will be a recently retired Northwest Airlines 747 aircraft.

F. Robert van der Linden, curator of air transportation and special purpose aircraft who has spent nearly a decade working in the exhibit, said that the first 10 meters of the Northwest plane will be on display, allowing visitors get a sense of the immense size of the aircraft as well as walk inside it.

Other features of the exhibition will be the Curtiss JN4 "Jenny," the first airplane used by the U.S. Postal Service, built in 1918.

One of the more interactive exhibits will be an airmail pilot simulator. The simulator will make the would-be pilot believe he is flying over mountain ranges in Pennsylvania with an objective of getting the mail to its destination on time while surviving. Although the "pilot" would not be able to physically control the simulator, he or she will be able to make decisions throughout the mission.

Van der Linden noted that some decisions could prove to be fatal in the simulator, and even when the pilot did everything right, some-

thing still could go wrong, reflecting the early history of flight.

"You just didn't know in the 1920s," the curator said. "Instruments could still be inaccurate."

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OSCE Nations Urged to Crack Down on Child . . .

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accused of going to Cuba and Eastern Europe with the aim of sexually abusing children.

In 2005 ICE provided information to Austrian authorities, who then executed search warrants at 120 locations associated with 96 child pornography suspects throughout Austria. Austrian authorities also seized numerous computers and computer media as part of an ongoing investigation.

The Helsinki Commission press release said that only Belgium, France and the United States have enacted comprehensive laws that address all aspects of child pornography, including production,

possession and distribution via the Internet, and require that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) report suspected child pornography to law enforcement.

The Helsinki Commission, formally known as the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, is a U.S. Government agency that monitors progress in the implementation of the 1975 Helsinki Accords.

More information on Operation Predator (<http://www.ice.gov/pi/predator/index.htm>) is available on the ICE Web site.

The texts of the Helsinki Commission press release (http://www.csce.gov/index.cfm?Fuseaction=ContentRecords.ViewDetail&ContentRecord_id=515&ContentRecordType=P&ContentType=P&CFID=22151236&CFTOKEN=83056344) and OSCE resolution on child pornography (http://www.csce.gov/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Files.Download&FileStore_id=645) are available on the Helsinki Commission Web site. The Brussels Declaration (http://osce.org/documents/pa/2006/07/19815_en.pdf) is available on the OSCE Web site,

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Cassini Mission Reveals Saturn's Moon has Earthly Features

Washington – A region on the surface of Saturn's moon, Titan, appears to look much like Earth, with rivers, lakes and plains, according to radar images transmitted by NASA's Cassini spacecraft.

"Surprisingly, this cold, faraway region has geological features remarkably like Earth," said Jonathan Lunine, the mission's interdisciplinary scientist at the University of Arizona-Tucson.

The mission, managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in California, is a cooperative project among NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA) and Agenzia Spaziale Italiana, the Italian space agency. JPL manages the Cassini-Huygens mission for NASA's Science Mission Directorate.

The unmanned, scientific mission launched in 1997, and reached the ringed planet in 2004 on a four-year mission to study Saturn and its 31 moons. Cassini sent the ESA's Huygens probe drifting down to the surface of Titan in 2005.

The region of current interest is known as Xanadu, first discovered by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope in 1994, according to a July 19 JPL news release. Infrared imaging reveals it as a striking bright spot with a surface modified by winds, rain and the flow of liquids, probably methane or ethane.

Located in the outer reaches of the solar system, Titan is much colder than Earth, with an estimated average surface temperature of 191 below zero Celsius, NASA says.

"Although Titan gets far less sunlight and is much smaller and

colder than Earth, Xanadu is no longer just a mere bright spot, but a land where rivers flow down to a sunless sea," Lunine said.

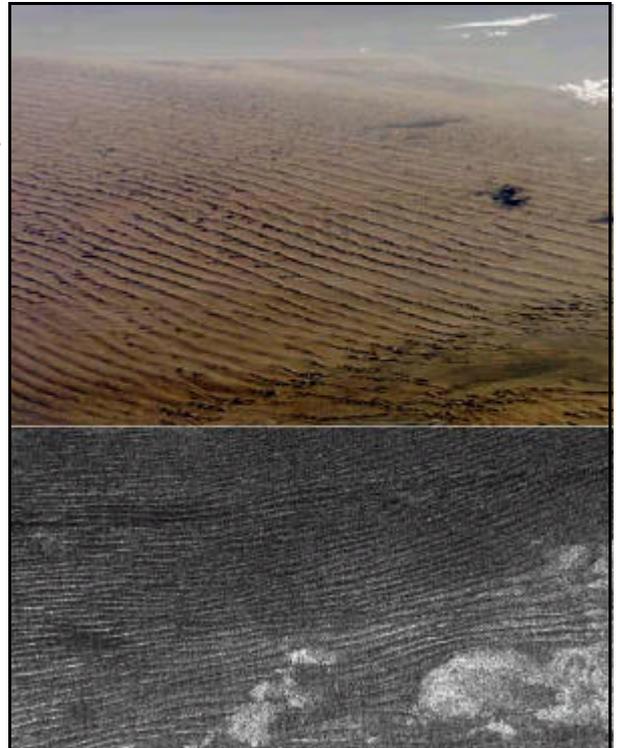
Observations by the Huygens probe and by NASA's Voyager strongly hint that both methane rain and dark orange hydrocarbon solids fall like soot from the moon's dark skies.

On Xanadu, liquid methane might fall as rain or trickle from springs. Rivers of methane might carve the channels and carry off grains of material to accumulate as sand dunes elsewhere on Titan.

"This land is heavily tortured, convoluted and filled with hills and mountains," said Steve Wall, the Cassini radar team's deputy leader at JPL.

"There appear to be faults, deeply cut channels and valleys," he added. "Also, it appears to be the only vast area not covered by organic dirt. Xanadu has been washed clean. What is left underneath looks like very porous water ice, maybe filled with caverns."

Over the next two years, Cassini will fly by Titan 29 times, providing future opportunities for scientists to study what Wall likens to "a newly discovered continent."



An aerial view of Africa's Namib Desert (top) shows linear sand dunes as they appear from 176 miles (283 kilometers) above the Earth's surface. An image of a sand sea on Saturn's moon Titan (bottom) taken from 146 miles (235 kilometers) above the surface shows similar-looking dunes.

Top image courtesy Earth Sciences and Image Analysis Laboratory, NASA Johnson Space Center; bottom image © Science

The text (<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.cfm?release=2006-093>) of the press release is available on the JPL Web site.

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Founder Outlines Creation, Mission . . .

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She hopes to establish chapters in every region of the United States by 2015 as well as in several other countries.

For more information, see "Muslim Sorority Opens New Doors to American University Women (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=June&x=20060620145307ndyblehs0.3043329&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>)."

For information on student life in the United States, see Study in the U.S. (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/education/study_in_the_us.html) and Muslim Life in America (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/muslimlife/>).

A transcript (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Jul/18-196345.html>) of the webchat is available on Webchat Station (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>).

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Rice Visits Beirut, Works To Open Flow of . . .

(Continued from page 18)

She said Syria knows what its obligations are under the Taif Accords and Resolution 1559, and she hopes that the broad international condemnation of Hizballah's actions will make Syria think twice about supporting such activities.

Following her visit to Beirut, the secretary travels to Israel to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. She will also meet with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah to discuss the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza. Israel has been involved in military

operations in Gaza since Hamas militants tunneled into Israel June 25 and abducted Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit from a post near the Gaza border.

After her meetings in Israel and the Palestinian territories, Rice plans to travel to Rome to meet with representatives of an international contact group focused on the crisis in Lebanon.

The transcript (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/69359.htm>) of Rice's remarks en route to the Middle East is available on the State Department'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>)♦