



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

National HIV Counseling and Testing Day

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) September 10, 2006 -- On Sunday, September 10, 2006, the Second National Voluntary Counseling and Testing Day was observed at the Piazza in Addis Ababa. The focus of this significant event in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia is counseling and testing of couples under the theme 'New Year, New Life.'

The ceremony included the unveiling of a billboard of a couple living with AIDS and an Annual Testing Day walk to Meskel Square. Janet Wilgus, Charge d' Affaires of the U.S. Embassy, Ato Berhanu Deressa, Mayor

of Addis Ababa, Ato Negatu Mereke, Director of the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO), spoke at the event.

Charge d' Affaires Janet Wilgus noted that counseling and testing are "highly cost-effective in reducing HIV transmission, particularly when offered to couples." She added that it is "proper to designate such a day to

focus on encouraging the public to be tested and take a critical step in individual control and responsibility for one's health



Janet Wilgus
U.S. Embassy Charge d' Affaires

and the health of one's partners and families." The Charge reiterated the U.S. Govern-

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War on Terror a Struggle for Civilization, Bush Says

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff
Writer

Washington -- In a nationally televised address commemorating the fifth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, President Bush depicted the resulting conflict as "a war that will set the course for

this new century" and a struggle "to maintain the way of life enjoyed by free nations."

The Oval Office address concluded a day in which the president and senior officials participated in ceremonies at each of the three sites attacked by the 9/11 terrorists. (See related article

(<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenlish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060911141954bcrekla w0.9791071>).

In New York City, the president and first lady Laura Bush attended a memorial ceremony held at the site of the former

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Some pictures of National HIV Counseling and Testing Day



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World Trade Center. Along with members of the New York City police and fire departments and thousands of others in attendance, Bush observed moments of silence at 8:46 a.m. and 9:03 a.m., the times when terrorist-piloted airliners struck each of the twin towers. While in New York, the president and first lady also attended an interfaith religious service and visited with firefighters.

The president and first lady then flew to Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where they observed a wreath-laying ceremony at the crash site of the hijacked United Airlines Flight 93.

The president later attended ceremonies at the Pentagon, also struck five years earlier by a hijacked passenger plane. Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld were among the speakers there.

Americans marked the 9/11 anniversary at ceremonies held throughout the nation. (See related story (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060910200654attoc-nich0.3192255>)).

A STRUGGLE TO PRESERVE CIVILIZATION

In his address to the nation, the president depicted a decisive ideological struggle against a "global

network of extremists driven by a perverted vision of Islam." These extremists, he said, have murdered people of all colors, creeds and nationalities to advance their cause: "a radical Islamic empire where

The president said that the United States and partner nations have taken the offensive and that the nation "now is safer, but we are not yet safe." Bush numbered



President George W. Bush addresses the nation from the Oval Office Monday evening, Sept. 11, 2006, marking the fifth anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. White House photo by Eric Draper

women are prisoners in their homes, men are beaten for missing prayer meetings, and terrorists have a safe haven to plan and launch attacks on America and other civilized nations."

Bush expressed confidence that free peoples and those who yearn to be free would prevail in this "struggle for civilization," and called the power of freedom one of the strongest weapons available to the United States and its allies. "The terrorists fear freedom as much as they do our firepower," he said.

among the successes the defeat of Afghanistan's Taliban regime and the death or capture of most of those who planned the 9/11 attacks, including the believed mas- termind, Khalid Sheik Mohammed.

Even so, Bush said, "We face an enemy determined to bring death and suffering into our homes.... And we know that if they were able to get their hands on weapons of mass destruction, they would use them against us."

Bush described Iraq as another

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Horn of Africa Countries Bolster Drive To Eradicate Polio

By Cheryl Pellerin
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya simultaneously will vaccinate millions of children under age 5 during September 9-12 in the largest synchronized vaccination campaign in the Horn of Africa.

The effort is part of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, spearheaded by national governments, the World Health Organization (WHO), Rotary International, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and UNICEF, according to a September 8 WHO press release.

In Ethiopia, the polio vaccination campaign will administer oral polio vaccine to 956,886 children from the Somali and Afar regions that border Somalia and parts of Kenya.

On the Somali side of the border, vaccinators aim to reach 1.7 million children in a nationwide campaign, concentrating on regions bordering Ethiopia and Kenya. In northern Kenya, 240,000 children will be targeted in five districts bordering Somalia and Ethiopia.

The Horn of Africa Technical Advisory Group, which convened in Ethiopia in August, stressed that the polio eradication drive is at a critical stage.

Most countries are working together to deploy people effectively and mobilize authorities, local communities, households and the international donor community to ensure high-quality surveillance and supplemental immunization activities.

Polio-free for nearly three years, Somalia became re-infected in 2005 with a polio virus imported from Yemen. Since then, there have been 215 confirmed cases, and 14 of Somalia's 19 regions are infected.

Since its re-infection in December 2004, Ethiopia has reported 37 polio cases, with four out of 11 regions infected. The high-risk areas remain the cross-border region of Somali, Ethiopia and north/central areas of Somalia. Kenya has been

The complex and unstable environments, exacerbated by recurring drought and floods in Somalia and heavy rains in Ethiopia, continue to hamper high-quality polio immunization campaigns. International and national staff have problems accessing conflict zones to supervise staff members working at the district level.

Depending on the availability of funds, three synchronized campaigns are planned in 2006 -- in September, November and Decem-



Polio vaccination

polio-free for the last 22 years.

For the synchronized campaign, vaccinators and social mobilizers are positioned strategically throughout the countries. Teams on the ground will ensure that every child is vaccinated by moving from house to house in cities, towns and villages, and in hard-to-reach areas.

ber -- in the Horn of Africa.

Globally, according to WHO, there is a funding gap of \$50 million for 2006 that must be filled by October to ensure the implementation of planned activities through the end of 2006.

The polio eradication coalition includes governments of countries

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War on Terror a Struggle for Civilization. . .

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crucial front in the ongoing contest. The president acknowledged that captured Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was not responsible for the events of September 11, 2001 but said that Iraq at that time posed a clear threat, and a risk that after 9/11 the world could no longer afford to take.

The effort to help the Iraqi people build a democracy remains crucial, Bush said. "Whatever mistakes have been made in Iraq, the worst mistake would be to think that if we pulled out, the terrorists would leave us alone. They will not leave us alone. They will follow us. The safety of America depends on the outcome of the battle in the streets of Baghdad."

The president lauded the ordinary Americans who responded to the 9/11 attacks, among them the New York firefighters who rushed into the burning towers of the World Trade Center, the passengers who charged the Flight 93 cockpit and seized control of the plane from the hijackers, and Pentagon staff. "The spirit of the American people is the source of America's strength," he said.

In addition to the 19 hijackers, 2,973 people from 90 countries were confirmed dead as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060911-3.html>) of the president's remarks is available on the White House Web site.

For additional information, see September 11th Attacks (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism/sept_11.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>)♦

National HIV Counseling and . . .

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ment's commitment to assist Ethiopia to improve the health of its citizens and stem the tide of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Ethiopia benefits from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program, which has contributed about 2 Billion Ethiopian Birr for Ethiopia's HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment efforts. The U.S. Gov-

ernment supports over 550 counseling and testing centers and 93 anti-retroviral treatment (ART) centers in every region across the country. Around 45,000 people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) have benefited from free ART.♦



Progress in the War on Terror

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
September 7, 2006

FACT SHEET

PROGRESS IN THE WAR ON TERROR

In the War on Terror, the State Department is working with our bilateral, regional, and multilateral partners to:

Leverage existing capabilities and resources;

Build the will of our foreign partners to engage and sustain the struggle against our common enemy; and

Help build the capacity of our foreign partners.

The Regional Strategic Initiative (RSI) is building trusted networks that undermine, marginalize, and isolate terrorists, discredit their ideology of hate and violence, and empower legitimate alternatives to extremism. The State Department works with our Ambassadors and interagency representatives in key terrorist theaters of operation to assess the threat and devise collaborative strategies. The RSI promotes cooperation between our partners in the War on Terror -- such as Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, as they deal with terrorist transit across the Sulawesi Sea, or between the countries of the Trans-Sahara to counter terrorists operating across national borders.

The Antiterrorism Assistance Program (ATA): Over the past 20 years, ATA has trained more than 52,300 law enforcement officials

from 146 countries, and provided programs tailored to the needs of each partner nation and to local conditions. Courses have included crisis management and response, travel document fraud, cyber terrorism, dignitary protection, bomb detection, airport security, border control, kidnap intervention and hostage negotiation and rescue, response to incidents involving weapons of mass destruction, countering terrorist finance, and interdiction of terrorist organizations. All courses emphasize law enforcement under the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Rewards for Justice: The Secretary of State offers rewards of up to \$25 million for information that prevents or resolves acts of international terrorism against U.S. citizens or property worldwide. Rewards of up to \$25 million have been authorized for information leading to the capture of Usama bin Ladin and other key al-Qaida leaders. Rewards are also paid for information leading to the arrest or conviction of terrorists attempting, committing, conspiring to commit, or aiding and abetting in the commission of acts of international terrorism. Since the program's inception in 1984, the United States has paid over \$62 million to more than 40 people who provided credible information that put terrorists behind bars or prevented acts of international terrorism worldwide.

Terror Finance: Since 9/11, the State Department has led efforts that block funding of terrorists and their supporters. Terrorist designations effectively curtail support for terrorist activities and pressure

groups to get out of the terrorism business. U.S. financial institutions are required to freeze the funds of designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, and it is unlawful for U.S. citizens or any persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction to provide funds or material support to such organizations. In response to the development of new international standards against the growing threat of illicit cash couriers and bulk cash smuggling, the State Department, with its interagency partners, developed operational training for foreign customs officers, investigators, and other officials on the detection, interdiction, analysis, investigation, and seizure of illicit cross-border cash used to facilitate terrorism and criminal activities.

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) was launched in May 2003, to promote international cooperation to interdict Weapons of Mass Destruction-related shipments. More than 60 countries are engaged in PSI activities, including dozens participating in operational exercises that strengthen states' capacity to work together on interdictions. Since its inception in 2002, the Container Security Initiative (CSI) ensures that maritime containers posing a risk for terrorism are identified and examined at foreign ports before shipment to the U.S. Early on, CSI focused on 20 foreign ports that ship approximately two-thirds of the volume of containers to the United States. As CSI has evolved, it has expanded to additional ports based on volume, location, and strategic concerns.

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U.S., Allies Cooperating To Enhance Security, U.S. Official Says

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Washington File Security Affairs
Writer

Washington – The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, persuaded the United States and allied nations not to be complacent in the face of terrorism, says Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff.

Speaking only days before the fifth anniversary of the tragic attacks in New York and Washington, Chertoff said the destruction at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon was a "clear warning of what lies ahead if we do not continue to build our safety and security here in the United States and all over the world."

Chertoff told students at Georgetown University September 8 that the United States is working with its international partners to disrupt terrorist plots before they reach a "point of no return." He said part of his job is to evaluate and prioritize high-consequence threats such as a terrorist attack using chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological weapons.

He also pointed to the importance of building "a new level of confidence and trust" within the American Muslim community, because it is a key partner in protecting against future attacks. This community's input is important to help track not only the high-visibility international threats, Chertoff said, but also "the low-visibility home-grown threats that could take root in any community."

The secretary also talked about the many layers of security that have

been created in the past five years, such as screening travelers at U.S. borders, information sharing, cargo screening and enhanced emergency preparedness and response measures. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Jan/17-544944.html>).

The disrupted August 2006 plot against airliners bound from London to the United States demon-



Michael Chertoff
U.S. Homeland Security Secretary

strated the importance of determining "as early as possible who is trying to come into this country from overseas, and who is trying to get on an airplane that might do us harm," Chertoff said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=Agust&x=20060812101719esna mfuak0.3155634>).

Right now passenger identity information for international flights reaches U.S. officials 50 minutes after takeoff. "That's simply too late," he said.

Over the next two years, a new system will be implemented to transmit that information well in advance of a flight's departure, according to Chertoff. "This will give us the time to check passenger names against databases and to coordinate with airlines and foreign authorities to prevent a suspicious person from getting on an airplane." Such a pre-notification is already operational between the United Kingdom and the United States, he said.

The necessary information exists now, but Chertoff said the Europeans need to lift some of their restrictions so the data can be fully analyzed and a potential terrorist can be prevented from entering the country. He said his plea to the Europeans is to work together now to ease restrictions before another attack like those of 9/11 occurs.

Over the next year, Chertoff said he looks forward to working with his European colleagues to collect needed information and ensure it is fully analyzed while respecting "the privacy of those who travel internationally."

He also talked about a variety of initiatives under way, including the creation of a secure biometric credential for those traveling in the Western Hemisphere, a secure driver's license, and plans to take prints of all 10 fingers of those making their first visit to the United States.

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U.S. Treasury Officials Report on Blocking Terrorists' Money

Washington -- A "revolution" has taken place in recent years as the U.S. Treasury Department has become integral in matters of international security, according to U.S. officials.

Several Treasury Department officials spoke September 12 before the U.S. Senate Banking Committee about work the department has done to disrupt the finances of terrorists.

Daniel Glaser, a Treasury deputy assistant secretary, said the United States has proven that security no longer is simply the province of law enforcement, intelligence agencies, and defense departments. In his testimony, Glaser said Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence is "the first office of its type in the world." He urged other countries' finance ministries to "become integral components of national security communities."

Glaser said that Treasury has pushed international standards for designating individuals or entities as money-launderers, terrorist supporters or weapons proliferators through a Financial Action Task Force and through the United Nations.

He said the United States itself has submitted to an evaluation as to how its financial sector adheres to such standards and that it also has participated in assessments of other countries that are "strategically important ... in the campaign against terrorist financing" -- Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, Switzerland and Turkey.

Recent strengthening of the international standards, according to Glaser, includes steps to combat illicit use of cash couriers and to improve information on the originators of cross-border wire transfers.

Glaser said that the U.S. Treasury is able to designate a foreign jurisdiction, institution, or type of account or transaction as a money-laundering concern, thereby allowing punitive measures ranging from record-keeping requirements to termination of financial accounts with the designated target. Due to cooperation with other countries, such targets can be reported to the U.N. Security Council, which can designate them for financial isolation by 191 member states. In 2005, some 18 nations submitted names for the U.N. Security Council's consideration, according to Glaser.

Earlier in 2006, Treasury held a dialogue with bankers and regulators from the Middle East/North Africa region on international standards and plans a similar discussion in Latin America in early 2007.

To date, the Treasury Department has designated 375 individuals or entities as involved in terrorism. According to Adam Szubin, the director of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, who also



Daniel Glaser
Treasury Deputy
U.S. Assistant
Secretary

spoke to the Senate panel, more than two-thirds of those targets are associated with either al Qaida or the Taliban.

Earlier in September, Treasury designated Bayt al-Mal and Yousser Company, which are financial institutions that functioned as Hezbollah's unofficial treasury in Lebanon. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenlish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060910195559uhyggep0.7742273>)).

For more information on U.S. policy, see Terrorist Financing (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/terrorist_financing.html) and Money Laundering (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/terrorist_financing/money_laundering.html).

Glaser's testimony (<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp93.htm>) and Szubin's testimony (<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp92.htm>) are available on the Treasury Department's Web site.

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

U.S. Releases Fifth Annual Report on Child Labor

U.S. Department of Labor

September 6, 2006
News Release

ILAB News Release

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Release Number: 06-1547-NAT

U.S. Labor Department Issues Fifth Annual Report on Child Labor In Trade Beneficiary Countries

Report Required Under the Trade and Development Act

WASHINGTON - The Labor Department today released its fifth annual report on the worst forms of child labor in 137 countries and territories that receive U.S. trade benefits.

"The United States believes that all people can benefit from the opportunities created by free trade and globalization," said James Carter, deputy undersecretary for international labor affairs for the U.S. Department of Labor. "Yet a free market can only operate efficiently when it is supported by protections for workers, including protections from the worst forms of child labor."

The department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs prepared The Department of Labor's 2005 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor under the child labor reporting requirement of the Trade and Development Act of 2000. The act requires trade-beneficiary countries

and territories to implement their international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

As defined by International Labor Organization Convention 182, the worst forms of child labor include



James Carter
Deputy Undersecretary for International Labor Affairs for the U.S. Department of Labor

any form of slavery, such as forced or indentured child labor; the trafficking of children and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; child prostitution and pornography; the use of children for illicit activities in particular the trafficking of drugs; and work that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

The report presents information on the nature and extent of the problem in each of these 137 countries and territories and the efforts being made by their governments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

The bureau's International Child Labor Program collected data from a wide variety of sources, including U.S. embassies and consulates, foreign governments, nongovernmental organizations, and international agencies. In addition, bureau staff conducted field visits to certain countries covered in the report.

The report is available at U.S. Department of Labor (<http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/media/reports/iclp/main.htm>). Beginning November 2006, printed copies of the report will be available from the International Child Labor Program, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor, Room S-5307, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. Telephone: (202) 693-4843; Fax (202) 693-4830; E-mail: GlobalKids@dol.gov.

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

Rice Cites Importance of U.S.-Canada Trade Agenda, Relations

By Lauren Monsen
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The strong and durable partnership between Canada and the United States "is, first and foremost, rooted in values," says U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Briefing reporters September 12 in Ottawa with Canadian Foreign Minister Peter MacKay, and interviewed that same day by Canadian Press reporter Michael Tutton, Rice stressed that the two North American allies have deep bonds that help them work through occasional disagreements, to the benefit of both nations.

She pointed to the recent resolution of a long-standing U.S.-Canada softwood lumber trade dispute as one example of cooperation based on mutual goodwill. That cooperation is more vital than ever, she suggested, in view of the fact that Canada and the United States are each other's leading trade partners.

With a vigorous trade agenda to maintain, the two countries are fully aware of the need to facilitate cross-border commerce and travel, and also to defend their respective territories against terrorism, said Rice. She added that "great progress" has been achieved in "keeping our borders both secure and open" since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against New York and Washington, despite initial fears that stepped-up security measures might inhibit the day-to-day conduct of legitimate business.

Asked about the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Ini-

tiative, which is scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2008, she explained that Canadian travelers to the United States would not be required to carry passports at that time. Instead, officials will introduce "a document that can authenticate identity but ... that is relatively cheap and easy to acquire," in order to place the least possible burden on travelers, Rice said. The new travel document will "help to keep the border secure," she said. Rice also promised that new rules about documentation for entering the United States would be issued "very soon."

As she has done on several past occasions, Rice thanked Canadians for generously assisting stranded U.S. travelers on September 11, 2001, when air traffic temporarily was suspended across the United States. She recalled that Canadian citizens came to the rescue by taking Americans into their homes until travel restrictions were lifted.

In much the same fashion, she said, Canadians rose to the occasion by sending troops to fight alongside U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, where the September 11 attacks were conceived. The mission in Afghanistan remains critical, she argued, especially since Taliban forces are trying to mount a comeback.

If "we are to try and prevent the 9/11s of the future, we have to

fight the terrorists where they are," said Rice. "We can't allow them to re-group and re-gather, and the work that Canada is doing is essential to that fight." She praised Canada's role in helping to stabilize Afghanistan, and affirmed that "we honor the sacrifice and mourn the losses of Canadians" who have died on the battlefield.



Canadian Foreign Minister Peter MacKay and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice . State Department photo Sept. 12, 2006

"I just want to note that this is a noble cause and one that we're going to win," Rice said.

Transcripts of Rice's interview with Tutton (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/72074.htm>) and remarks with MacKay (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/72072.htm>) are 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>)

Torture of Detainees "Absolutely Banned" Says State Official

By Michelle Austein
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The use of torture and the use of evidence derived from torture is "absolutely banned" in the Bush administration's proposed procedures for military commissions trying detainees at the Guantanamo Bay base in Cuba, John Bellinger, the State Department's legal adviser said September 7.

At a briefing in Washington, Bellinger said that under the proposed legislation, information derived from torture as defined by both international and domestic law cannot be used in trials. "It would be up to the judge to determine based on an argument by the accused whether he believed that something were torture and needed to be prohibited," Bellinger said.

On September 6, President Bush announced that he sent legislation to Congress that specifically would authorize U.S. military commissions to try captured terrorist suspects and would clarify the rules governing how U.S. interrogators may question detainees to gather intelligence against terrorist organizations and prevent potential terrorist activities.

The president also announced that 14 high-level al-Qaida members were transferred from CIA facilities to the Department of Defense's detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they will await trial by U.S. military commissions. Those 14 high-level al-Qaida members transferred to Guantanamo will have access to lawyers, Bellinger said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?>

p= washfileenglish&y= 2006&m= September&x= 20060906171819eaifas7.320583e-03).

The legislation, if passed by Congress, would address all the con-



John Bellinger
State Department's Legal
Adviser

cerns raised by the Supreme Court in its June 29 decision ruling that Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions applies to the U.S. war with the al-Qaida group, Bellinger said. "We need Congress to pass that legislation so that we can move forward and begin to bring people to justice," he said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p= washfileenglish&y= 2006&m= June&x= 20060630121139hmnietua0.1040918>).

After September 11, 2001, Bellinger said, "there were numerous rules on the books that were available to treat past wars and people in past wars ... but that there are not clearly existing rules either do-

mestically or internationally" that apply to individuals detained as part of the War on Terror.

"A system needs to be designed in which those who had been conspiring to commit attacks on the United States or elsewhere around the world can be tried in a fair system for their crimes," he said.

The Bush administration draft legislation calls for trials to be open except in certain limited circumstances that allow the accused to be excluded if presenting the evidence to him or her would compromise national security. In such a situation, a member of the president's Cabinet would have to certify that this exception is essential to national security. Then, the judge presiding over the case would determine whether there is a way in which the evidence can be presented that would not compromise national security. The judge also would have to determine if exclusion of the defendant from trial during presentation of that evidence would interfere with the accused person's right to a full and fair trial.

Also on September 6, the Defense Department released a new field manual that specifies treatment and interrogation procedures for all detainees under the department's custody worldwide. For additional information, see Detainee Issues (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/detainees.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>)♦

Streamlined Program Makes Getting a U.S. Visa More Efficient

By Jane Morse
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. efforts to improve its visa process are paying off: Nearly 97 percent of visa applications are processed within just two or three days of the interview, and worldwide almost 80 percent of visa applications are approved. In 2006, the United States expects to process some 7.5 million visa applications.

Tony Edson, deputy assistant secretary of state for visa services, brought this good news to an international audience during a September 6 webchat.

Students in particular are welcome, as they always have been, Edson said.

"The United States and our consular officers everywhere around the world value highly the exchange of international visitors and ideas," he said. "We do our best to ensure America remains a welcoming destination for international travelers while administering U.S. law and safeguarding our borders."

GETTING A STUDENT VISA

"There is a widespread perception in some countries that it has become more difficult to qualify for a student visa to the United States," Edson said. "In fact, although we have made significant changes to the application process by incorporating additional security checks, fingerprinting and greatly expanded interview requirements, the basic requirements for a student visa have not changed."

Students now are required to go to the U.S. embassy or consulate to be fingerprinted and interviewed, but if they are bona fide students and are able to fund the education they plan in the United States, they are likely to qualify for visas, Edson said.



Tony Edson
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
for Visa Services.
(Department of State Photo)

Edson did emphasize, however, that the major mandate under U.S. law is that student visa applicants must prove that they intend to return to their home country after a temporary stay in the United States.

"We recognize," Edson said, "that the very best advertisement for America is America and look forward to each and every international student who arrives at our shores. We have added some additional security measures to the visa process since 9/11, but even as we strive to make our country safer, we have never stopped trying to make those security measures as efficient and effective as possible."

He urged students to apply for

their visas as early as possible and noted that students are given priority in scheduling visa interviews.

U.S. VISA LAWS TREAT ALL EQUALLY

"The United States government," Edson emphasized, "does not discriminate based on religion or any other factor in processing visas."

"U.S. visas are processed everywhere around the world using the same standards and requirements, most of them stipulated in U.S. law," he said.

He acknowledged that in some countries a higher percentage of applicants might fail to qualify than in other countries. "This is not because of their nationality, but because of their inability, as individual applicants, to meet the requirements of U.S. law, Edson said.

One important law governing the visa process, he said, is Section 214(b) of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act. The presumption under that law, Edson explained, is that every visitor visa applicant is intending to immigrate to the United States.

Therefore, applicants for visitor visas, he said, must overcome this presumption by demonstrating that they have ties abroad that would compel them to leave the United States at the end of their temporary stay. Among the ties that bind a person to his or her country of residence are possessions, employment and social and family relationships. U.S. consular officers make the determination, but the burden of proof is on the

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Rice Cautious About Iranian Nuclear Proposal

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice remains cautious about a reported proposal from Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities for two months in an effort to return to negotiations with the international community over its nuclear program, but said that if Iran is prepared to suspend its activities, the international community is prepared to engage in discussions.

"I don't think there is an offer ... at this point," Rice told reporters en route to Halifax, Nova Scotia, September 11. "And the point is there would have to be a suspension. If there is a suspension, then we can have discussions, but there has to be a suspension. And as far as I know, the Iranians have not yet said that they would suspend prior to negotiations, which is what the issue has been."

The International Atomic Energy Agency and the U.N. Security Council repeatedly have called on Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities immediately and return to negotiations on its nuclear program.

Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, reportedly floated the idea of a temporary suspension to European Union negotiator Javier Solana during September 9-10 meetings in Vienna, Austria. The two are meeting to discuss Iran's response to a package of incentives from China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States designed to persuade Iran to abandon its nuclear program. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/>

display.html? p= washfileenglish&y= 2006&m= Agust&x= 20060830114955btrue vecer0.6479914).

The package of incentives includes technological and economic assistance in exchange for Iran's cooperation, but promises an escalating set of sanctions if Iran refuses to comply with the central demand that it suspend its nuclear program.

Rice said she had spoken with Solana following his meetings with Larijani but had not heard any concrete Iranian offer on suspension. "The question is: Are they prepared to suspend verifiably so that negotiations can begin? That's the issue," she said.

In the absence of an Iranian suspension, Rice said, the U.N. Security Council would move ahead with a series of sanctions "that are commensurate with Iranian behavior."

"The international community can bring a lot of isolation on Iran, both formally and informally, both through the Security Council and through like-minded states taking action even if the Security Council does not," she said. "The time is coming very soon when we're going to have to vote on a Security Council resolution."

Rice told reporters at a September 12 press conference in St. John's, Canada, that the foreign ministers from the six countries that offered Iran the package of incentives would meet in New York on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in the coming days "to examine where we are and how we move forward." She said the five

permanent members of the Security Council already have put much work into developing a resolution that would impose sanctions on Iran for its continued defiance but that more work must be done.

"I continue to hope that the Iranians are going to take the opportunity put before them, which is to suspend and to begin negotiations," she said. "It's only in that way that we can explore whether there really is an answer to this problem through negotiation."

Iran repeatedly has claimed that its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful civil energy purposes, but many in the international community are concerned that Iran is developing technology that easily could be diverted to producing nuclear weapons. The package of incentives offered to Iran includes international assistance in developing a peaceful civil nuclear program free of any proliferation risk.

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

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U.S., China United in Seeking Diplomatic Solution on North Korea

By Jane Morse
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States and China remain united in seeking a diplomatic solution to North Korea's nuclear weapons programs, says Ambassador Christopher Hill, the top U.S. negotiator for the Six-Party Talks, which are aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula.

Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Hill is in Beijing for bilateral talks with his Chinese government counterparts. Speaking with reporters September 6, Hill said: "China remains very focused on how to get the diplomacy working again."

September 19 will mark one year since North Korea agreed to take steps to end its nuclear weapons programs after a series of arduous talks hosted by China in Beijing. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2005/Sep/19-210095.html>).)

But North Korea since has refused to live up to its agreement and refuses to return to the Six-Party negotiating table with South Korea, China, Russia, Japan and the United States.

"One of the real benefits of the Six-Party process," Hill said, "is how it has brought the U.S. and China more closely together. We've really appreciated the work China has done, especially the work in organizing the process and getting everyone to the table."

Hill was in Tokyo September 4-6 for bilateral talks, where he dis-

cussed the Proliferation Security Initiative as a way to deal with Pyongyang's recalcitrance.

In both Tokyo and Beijing, Hill said, he discussed U.N. Security Council Resolution 1695. The U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted the resolution – its first



Ambassador Christopher Hill

on North Korea since 1993 -- just 11 days after North Korea test-fired on July 5 several missiles capable of reaching Japan and, possibly, Alaska in the United States. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060720172308bpuh3.425235e-02>).

The resolution demands North Korea suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program, requires U.N. member states to refrain from trading with North Korea on missile-related goods and technology, and urges North Korea to return immediately and without preconditions to the Six-Party Talks with South Korea, Russia,

Japan, China and the United States. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060715174904atiayduj0.3738367>).

While in Tokyo, Hill emphasized that "it's very important it [Resolution 1695] be followed up by concrete action that it calls all its member states to take."

While in China, Hill plans to visit Chengdu, Guangzhou and Shanghai. The assistant secretary also is scheduled to visit Seoul, South Korea, before returning to Washington.

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun will be traveling to the United States to meet with President Bush at the White House September 14. The Six-Party Talks are among the many topics they are expected to discuss. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=August&x=20060816153748ajesrom0.4141962>).

See also "Bush, Roh Emphasize Unified Stance on North Korea" (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2005&m=November&x=20051117122049ajesrom0.7810785&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>)."

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U.S. Hopes To Raise U.N. Reform, Human Rights at U.N. Meeting

By Stephen Kaufman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration is placing management reform and human rights at the top of its agenda for the upcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly and hopes to gain assurances from the organization as to its use of member resources, as well as direct its attention to critical human rights situations around the world.

In a September 12 interview with the Washington File, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Kristen Silverberg said management reform at



Kristen Silverberg
Assistant Secretary of State for
International Organization Affairs

the United Nations remains a "key priority," and echoed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's view that reform will be a main factor in the decision of whose candidacy the United States will support for the position of the next U.N. secretary-general. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's five-year term expires December 31.

"The United States spends throughout the U.N. system over \$5 billion a year, which is a significant part of our budget to work on development and humanitarian assistance," Silverberg said. "We want some assurance that that investment is a wise one for the U.S. taxpayer, and that it actually is resulting in some improvements on the ground in developing countries, for people who are suffering from human rights abuses, [and] for people who are at risk of communicable disease."

The next U.N. secretary-general should be someone "who has a commitment and the skills necessary to drive the reform agenda in the future," Silverberg said.

She said the Bush administration wants to ensure that the U.N. is "holding itself to the highest ethical standards" and is "focused on the oversight of member state resources." The organization also needs to complete its review of ongoing programs to evaluate their utility and effectiveness.

In 2005, the United States asked Secretary-General Kofi Annan to identify and catalogue all existing programs that the U.N. secretariat has been mandated to implement by the Security Council.

"They came up with some 9,000 mandates, many of which date essentially from the founding of the U.N.," Silverberg said. The General Assembly should look at the performance of those mandates and programs to see "whether they are still serving an important purpose, whether they're being administered effectively, [and] whether they take the right approach in solving problems."

The assistant secretary welcomed the establishment of a U.N. ethics office and changes in financial disclosure rules, as well as the strengthening of its oversight office over the past year. However, she said the mandate review process remains "incomplete."

"It's still possible for the General Assembly to take positive action on this, but they really need to show some progress in the near future," she said.

NEW HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL A DISAPPOINTMENT THUS FAR

Silverberg also said the United States thinks it is important that the General Assembly and the newly created Human Rights Council pay attention to critical human rights situations in countries such as Burma, North Korea and Cuba, rather than what she described as the council's "unconstructive focus on Israel."

"We've been pretty disappointed by the performance to date of the new Human Rights Council in Geneva. But there is a real opportunity to work in the General Assembly ... to call attention to some of the key critical human rights crises in the world, and so we're going to do that at as an important priority in the [General Assembly]."

She added that when member states act decisively, "the General Assembly can call attention to human rights issues, and it can be a very powerful message to an oppressive regime to hear that a universal body like the General Assembly has condemned its actions."

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New Human Rights Council Sessions Disappointing, Says State

By **Carolee Walker**
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Many of the new U. N. Human Rights Council’s collective decisions have been troubling, even if the records of its individual members represent a slight improvement over those of the now defunct Commission on Human Rights, said Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mark Lagon at a congressional hearing on September 6.

“The United States is committed to improving this United Nations body, although unfortunately the new council’s sessions so far have been disappointing,” Lagon said.

“We believe that the cause of freedom, democracy and human rights defenders around the globe requires our best effort,” he added.

The new Human Rights Council met for the first time in June in Geneva.

Erica Barks-Ruggles, deputy assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, testified that the record of the Human Rights Council (HRC) is mixed with regard to membership, a factor that continues to pose the greatest concern for the United States. Serious human rights violators such as Sudan, Iran and Zimbabwe are not members, she said, but Cuba has retained its seat and “enjoys a disproportionately influential role in the U.N.’s chief human rights body.” Barks-Ruggles also said she is concerned about the change in allocation of seats by region.

“Over half of the HRC seats are occupied by African, Asian and Eastern European members, re-

gions with mixed records on human rights,” she reported.

“This is significant because many African and Asian countries tend to favor economic, social and cultural rights over civil and political rights,” Lagon said. “These regional groups have historically sought to eliminate country-specific resolutions, which the U. S. has always considered a crucial human rights tool.”



Mark Lagon
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Although countries campaigning for HRC membership are required to make public pledges about how they would enforce human rights obligations and standards, both at home and abroad, Barks-Ruggles said, making pledges is not enough.

“We acknowledge the significance of this step, but the follow-up on these pledges – both in terms of what is delivered and how those governments that do not measure up will be judged by their fellow members – will determine whether this is more than lip service,” she said. “We will be watching closely.”

Forty-seven countries are members of the council. The United States elected not to join, citing concerns about criteria for membership not being strong enough to keep human rights abusers off the HRC.

Barks-Ruggles said she was encouraged that the new universal periodic review, which subjects council members to review before other countries, kept some countries, especially Egypt, Eritrea, Guinea and Zimbabwe, off the HRC. Barks-Ruggles was disappointed, however, that China was elected to the council.

One of the HRC’s essential tools is the ability to offer technical assistance and to call special sessions to discuss emerging human rights situations, Barks-Ruggles said.

“After all, it is better to address human rights problems as they are beginning to emerge rather than when there is a full-blown crisis,” she said.

Transcripts (http://wwwa.house.gov/international_relations/afhear.htm) of testimony by Lagon and Barks-Ruggles at the congressional hearing entitled “U.N. Human Rights Council: Reform or Regression” will be available on the Web site of the House International Relations Committee’s Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Organizations.

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However, the council has "gotten off to a very bad start," she said, and the United States remains undecided about joining due to disappointment over the council's "lack of attention to some of the really pressing human rights problems we see in the world."

Regarding the situation in Burma, Silverberg said the United States formally has requested that the Security Council include the issue on its agenda for the coming month, saying the long-standing human rights problems there now have resulted in regional consequences. Citing a report by former Czech President Vaclav Havel and South African Nobel Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu, she said the flow of refugees from Burma is causing instability, drug trafficking, human trafficking and the spread of communicable diseases.

"We are going to be discussing this actively in New York during the General Assembly and then we think the council will need to take action later this fall," she said.

LITERACY, MIGRATION EVENTS TO PRECEDE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Silverberg said first lady Laura Bush is hosting a literacy conference in conjunction with the General Assembly to which she has invited other leaders' spouses, ministers of education and educational experts. The U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which runs many international literacy programs, also will be participating.

Silverberg said the event will highlight U.S. efforts to promote literacy and help encourage other countries on the issue. The promotion of global literacy "underlies a lot of things on our international agenda," she said, because literate populations are more likely to develop to be economically successful, and literacy is key to developing a thriving democracy. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060906185213berehell3.367251e-02>).

"Democracy depends on an informed population that can hold its elected officials accountable, and you can't do that without a population that can read," she said.

It is also essential to focus on women's literacy, she added. "There's no better predictor of a child's chances of becoming literate than whether his or her mother is literate."

The United Nations also will hold an event on migration ahead of the General Assembly, and Silverberg said it would be an opportunity to emphasize that the United States continues to strongly support immigration and international visitors.

"There's a lot of misunderstanding about the U.S. record on visa issues. There's an impression that the country is hostile to immigrants," she said. "We really need to get the message out that most Americans continue to strongly support immigration and to want the U.S. to be a place where people visit and where legal immigrants choose to live long term."

REDUCING REGULATORY BARRIERS WILL FACILITATE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE GOALS

The Bush administration continues to "strongly support" the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals for developing countries, and Silverberg said the goals "have to be met with concerted action." But she tied the issue to the need for management reform, citing "overlap and duplication" within the U.N. system that reduce its effectiveness. The organization also needs to partner with host developing countries and focus on policy conditions on the ground, she said.

"It's not sufficient for the international community, for donor countries, to continue to contribute foreign aid without paying attention to whether there's a policy environment in the country that can help make that foreign aid effective. Namely, are there policies that invite foreign investment, that invite trade? Are there policies that can help encourage the growth of small business?" she asked.

A priority for the United States in the coming General Assembly will be to get U.N. programs to address regulatory barriers that are hindering business creation and development.

"So many businesses in the developing world operate in the informal economy, so they operate outside of the tax system or outside of the credit system or without property registration," she said. The United Nations needs to "work with countries to create the conditions on

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Women Are Agents of Change Around the World, State's Hughes Says

By Carolee Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – When women have access to education, capital and health care, they not only improve the well-being of their own families but the stability of their communities, said Karen Hughes, under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, at the International Women's Leadership Conference in Honolulu on August 29.



Karen Hughes
Under secretary of State for Public
Diplomacy and Public Affairs

"When you educate a woman, she teaches her family. Give a woman a micro-grant so she can start a small business in her home and she will buy shoes, milk and books for her children with the profits," Hughes said.

In the Middle East, according to Hughes, where two-thirds of the estimated 70 million illiterate people are female, U.S.-sponsored education programs for women

teach both literacy and practical skills such as better nutrition for children.

"I'll never forget meeting with women at a literacy program in Morocco – as they told me of their pride in being able to go to the market and post office, read for themselves, and for the first time, be able to help their children with homework."

In Morocco, Hughes said, a new family code promotes equality between men and women and has raised the legal age for marriage for girls from 15 to 18.

One of the major goals of President Bush's Africa Education Initiative, a U.S.-led partnership designed to increase access to quality basic education and to increase the number of teachers in Africa, is to enroll more girls in school, Hughes said. Through the Ambassadors Girls' Scholarship Program, the United States will provide 550,000 scholarships to girls at the primary and secondary levels. To date, 180,000 scholarships for tuition, fees, books, uniforms and other essential supplies have been awarded to girls in 40 countries in Africa. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenlish&y=2005&m=September&x=20050913170409WCyeroC0.3264429>).

Hughes said enrollment in Iraqi schools has risen every year since Saddam Hussein was removed from power; by 2004 about 35 percent of school-age girls attended school. Hughes said Iraqi women have told her they want a unified Iraq to succeed and emerge peaceful and free. "Women are

working at great personal risk to help make it so."

Every extra year a girl attends school reduces the mortality rate of her children by 8 percent, according to Hughes, who said educated women are three times more likely to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS.

"As I have traveled around the world, I have seen that women are increasingly agents of change, arbiters of peace and reconciliation, and advocates of education and health," Hughes said.

A new generation of women leaders is being voted into office and bringing new backgrounds to government service, Hughes said, allowing women to have a greater impact in their communities outside their homes.

For example, Angela Merkel, Germany's first woman chancellor, is a former physicist. Prior to running for office in Liberia, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was an economist and banker. Today, children are back in school in Liberia, which Hughes said was once known as among the "worst places to be a woman on earth" and where an estimated one in 10 children was recruited into militias.

Michelle Bachelet, president of Chile, the daughter of a Chilean general who was tortured and died in prison, was a victim of hate, Hughes said, who dedicated her life to turning hate into understanding and tolerance.

"One women's ability to overcome hate and violence with hope and love is exactly what the world

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Streamlined Program Makes Getting a U.S. Visa . . .

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applicant, he said.

"In cases of students or younger applicants who may not have had an opportunity to form many ties, consular officers may look at the applicant's specific intentions, family situations, and long-range plans and prospects within his or her country of residence," Edson said. "Each case is examined individually and is accorded every consideration under the law."

"Denial under Section 214(b) of the law is not permanent," Edson said, "and a consular officer will reconsider a case if an applicant can show further convincing evidence of ties outside the United States. Unfortunately, some applicants will not qualify for a nonimmigrant visa, regardless of how many times they reapply, until their personal, professional, and financial circumstances change considerably. "

Under the Visa Waiver Program, Edson noted, travelers from countries that have met criteria specified in U.S. law can travel for tour-

ism and business to the United States without applying for a visa. Visa Waiver Program travelers can stay in the United States for no longer than 90 days.

THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

Visa Waiver Program (VWP) travelers must have secure passports, and all passports must be machine-readable.

Many passports are now equipped with security features, such as digital photographs and contactless chips that can be read without being touched to a sensor.

VWP travelers who obtained machine-readable passports (MRPs) before October 26, 2005, are not required to have the digital photograph or contactless chip, Edson said. The traveler who obtained, renewed or extended an MRP before October 26, 2005, will not be required to get another passport for travel until his or her MRP expires.

Passports issued, renewed or ex-

tended on or after October 26, 2006, must be machine-readable and include the integrated chip.

For more information, see the online journal "See You in the USA (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0905/ijpe/ijpe0905.htm>)," the IIP web site Immigration Reform (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.html) and the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs (<http://travel.state.gov/>) Web site.

A transcript (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Sep/06-626205.html>) of Edson's remarks is available at IIP's Webchat Station. (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>)

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the ground that really help small businesses grow and flourish."

The United Nations is "doing some good work" in the area of development, but she said there is "a lot we can do to make U.N. development programs more effective and

better contributors towards reaching the Millennium Development goals."

For more information, see U.S. and U.N. Reform (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html).

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formation Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

Religion in Modern Pluralistic Society

Washington – Freedom of religion and belief and relations between church and state in modern, pluralistic democracies are the topic of an upcoming USINFO webchat.

Join Stephen V. Monsma September 12 at 9.00 a.m. EDT (1300 GMT) for a discussion on the meaning and scope of the right to believe and worship without government interference.

Monsma is a research fellow at the Henry Institute for Study of Religion and Politics at Calvin College, a nonresident fellow at the Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Center for Public Justice, and professor

emeritus of political science at Pepperdine University. He also served in the Michigan House of Representatives and Senate.

If you would like to participate in this webchat, please sign up on the USINFO Webchat registration page (<http://12.44.14.73/iipchat/register/register.cfm>). Please tell us your preferred screen name; use of full names is not required.

If you have participated in one of our previous webchats, use the same user name and password. You may submit questions in advance to usinfowebchat@state.gov (mailto:usinfowebchat@state.gov) or directly during the webchat.

We accept questions and comments in advance of and at any time during the program. You may also e-mail (mailto:usinfowebchat@state.gov) questions without registering.

The transcript of this webchat will be available on USINFO's Webchat Station (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>), where information about upcoming webchats also is available.

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needs more of right now as terrorists seek to exploit political differences and grievances sometimes centuries old to their violent purposes, to the detriment of all of us who want a more peaceful and hopeful future for our children," Hughes said.

Today in Rwanda, 39 percent of the members of parliament and 40 percent of the Cabinet are women. "After the horrific genocide of the 1990s, when more than 800,000 people were killed," Hughes said, women "are promoting reconciliation and healing in Rwanda and actively supporting

improved literacy and financial credit for women."

Hughes said mothers, sisters, wives and daughters are vital to advancing freedom, opportunity, education and health care and isolating violent extremists and undermining their ideology of hate and terror.

"We have much progress to celebrate as women around the world advance opportunities for themselves, their families, their communities and their countries," she said.

For more information, see a fact sheet (<http://usinfo.state.gov/>

[xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2003&m=December&x=20031208164857rellufj0.4574854](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2003&m=December&x=20031208164857rellufj0.4574854)) on the Africa Education Initiative and Women in the

Global Community (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/women.html).

A transcript (<http://www.state.gov/r/us/71946.htm>) of Hughes' remarks is available on the State Department Web site.

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U.N. Reports Urges Increased Effort on Clean Water, Sanitation

Washington – Significant increases in work and investment must be made if the world is going to meet its goals for supplying drinking water and sanitation to the 3.7 billion people who lack these services, according to a U.N. analysis released September 5.

Rapid population growth in urban areas of the developing world is creating even greater pressures to provide these services than existed in 2000, when the world community adopted the Millennium Development Goals, pledging to reduce by half the numbers of people lacking clean water and sanitation. Achieving that target is viewed as critical to meeting related goals for improving health.

“Only by tackling the root causes of diseases such as water and sanitation can we reduce the 24 percent global burden of global disease caused by the environment,” said Dr. Anders Nordstrom, acting director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), which co-authored the report with UNICEF.

More than 1.1 billion people in urban and rural areas lack access to drinking water from an improved source, and 2.6 billion people do not have access to even basic sanitation, according to the report – Meeting the MDG Drinking-Water and Sanitation Target.

An estimated 80 percent of those living without supplies of clean drinking water are in sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Asia and South Asia, with sub-Saharan Africa the area of greatest concern. Due to population growth there, the proportion of people living with unhealthful water supplies increased by 23 percent from 1990 to 2004. On average worldwide, 59 percent of people have access to basic sanitation, compared to just 37 percent in sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2005, President Bush signed a law intended to boost U.S. efforts to improve water quality and sanitation in the developing world. The Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act 2005 is being implemented by the State Department, working closely with the U.S. Agency for Interna-

tional Development and other U.S. technical agencies, and consulting with other governments, civil society and the private sector.

In keeping with that law, the U.S. State Department released a report June 1 that details a strategy for providing affordable and equitable access to safe water and sanitation in developing countries.

The full text (http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp2006/en/index.html) of the U.N. report is available on the WHO Web site.

Additional information (<http://www.state.gov/g/oes/water/>) on the Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act is available on the State Department Web site.

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Horn of Africa Countries Bolster Drive To . . .

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affected by polio, private-sector foundations, development banks, donor governments, the European Commission, humanitarian and nongovernmental organizations and corporate partners.

Volunteers in developing countries also play a key role; 20 million

have participated in mass immunization campaigns.

Additional information (<http://www.polioeradication.org/>) about the Global Polio Eradication Initiative is available online.

The full text (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2006/pr49/en/index.html>) of the press

release is available on the WHO Web site.

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Progress in the War on Terror

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Blocking terrorist travel: The State Department continues to play a crucial role by screening visa applicants and incorporating biometrics, fingerprint matching, and facial recognition software into passport and visa systems. Since the Biometric Visa Program commenced in 2004, fingerprints of more than 24,000 visa applicants were matched against the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) fingerprint watch list. Collecting fingerprints at the time of visa issuance and sending the fingerprints to

DHS for identity verification when the person presents the visa at the U.S. port of entry has essentially eliminated the problem of imposters entering the United States with visas issued to other persons.

Visa and Passport Security Program: Under the Intelligence Reform and Terrorist Prevention Act of 2005, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security was mandated to establish a program to prevent terrorist travel by identifying, targeting and disrupting travel document vendors and facilitators. In late 2005, a Criminal Intelligence and Research Branch was es-

established that provides fraud trends and analysis, as well as strategic and tactical support to criminal investigations. To date, 473 persons were arrested and 1,684 criminal investigations have begun.

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Chertoff emphasized the deterrent effect of creating such a biometric security net, especially when devices to read fingerprints are deployed at U.S. visa-issuing posts overseas as well as at U.S. ports of entry.

He also mentioned plans to deploy radiation portal monitors at all U.S. land and sea entry points by the end of 2007. "We're also going to move overseas and continue to push to do as much of the screening as we can in foreign ports, working with our foreign partners," Chertoff added.

By the end of 2008, the first phase of a program called "Securing the Cities" will be completed, the secretary predicted. Starting with New York, he said, the plan is to "conduct nuclear and radiological scanning of the principal pathways into the cities, whether they be over land, in the water, or underground."

Because terrorists are constantly adapting their methods and tactics, "we have to keep pace and get ahead," Chertoff said.

More information about other points Chertoff discussed is available in a fact sheet (<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?>

[content=5821](http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=5821)) on the Department of Homeland Security's Web site.

For more information on U.S. policy, see Response to Terrorism (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism.html).

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