



# Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

## INSIDE

## President Bush Announces Ethiopia as New Focus Country for President's Malaria Initiative

December 14, 2006 -- At the White House Summit on Malaria on Thursday, President Bush announced Ethiopia as a new focus country for the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI)—an historic \$1.2 billion, five-year initiative to control malaria in 15 of the highest-burden countries in Africa.

"One million last year alone died on the African continent because of malaria. And in the overwhelming majority of cases, the victims are less than 5 years old, their lives suddenly ended by nothing more than a mosquito bite. The toll of malaria is even more



tragic because the disease itself is highly treatable and preventable... *we know that large-scale action can defeat this disease in whole regions. The world must take action,*" President George W. Bush said.

Malaria is a major health problem in Ethiopia, where an estimated 48 million, or 68 percent of the population, live in areas at risk of the disease. The country

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## USAID Program Strengthens Hides, Skins and Leather Industry in Ethiopia

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) took another step in boosting Ethiopian exports on Thursday December 7 by bringing together key players in the hides, skins and leather (HSL) industry. Over 50 leaders from business and government gathered in

an historic meeting to identify critical issues and challenges impeding the growth and development of the sector, and to discuss ways to move forward.

This meeting was organized by USAID's Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Program, which was offi-

cially launched in September 2006. The overall goal of the program, implemented with technical support by Fintrac Inc., is to increase rural incomes and employment in horticulture, coffee, oil seeds, and leather. One of its specific aims is to increase exports of hides,

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## President Bush Announces Ethiopia as New Focus Country for PMI . . .

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was chosen by a U.S. government inter-agency group based on the burden of malaria, sound malaria control practices and interest on the part of the host country, and other factors. Assessment missions to identify possible program elements are already underway.

The new initiative will significantly increase resources to the focus countries, providing the most advanced and effective prevention and treatment methods available.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to work with existing national programs scale up proven interventions to reduce the burden of malaria in Ethiopia," said Chargé d'Affaires Janet Wilgus. "Preventing this deadly disease will improve life, reduce costs related to illness, boost productivity and, most importantly, save countless lives."

The President and Mrs. Bush hosted the Summit in Washington, D.C., to discuss and highlight measures for controlling malaria and jump-start an ambitious public-private effort to control malaria with leading international experts, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based and service organizations, multilateral institutions, corporations, foundations, and industry leaders.

This new program is an interagency initiative led by the U.S. Agency for

International Development (USAID), with the Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a key partner. The goal is to cut ma-



*Young malaria patient near Alem Ketema North East of Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, Africa. Photo credit: WHO/P. Viot*

laria-attributed deaths by 50 percent in the 15 focus countries in Africa by supporting a comprehensive malaria control effort led by national programs.

This goal will be achieved by reaching 85 percent of the most vulnerable groups -- children under 5 years of age and pregnant women -- with proven and effective prevention and treatment measures.

This includes indoor residual spraying of households with insecticides; the distribution of long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets to families; intermittent, preventive treatment of pregnant women with antimalarials; and the roll-out of new, lifesaving, artemisinin-combination therapy to treat patients with malaria.

By the end of November 2006, PMI was supporting activities to benefit approximately 6 million Africans in the initial three countries of Tanzania, Angola, and Uganda. A series of highly effective programs are scheduled for launch over the next several months that will benefit millions more. Ethiopia joins Liberia, Kenya, Zambia, Mali, Madagascar, Benin, and Ghana as new focus countries. Tanzania, Uganda, Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Senegal are current PMI focus countries.

"Malaria is preventable and treatable, yet it is a major killer throughout Africa," said Rear Admiral R. Timothy Ziemer (U.S. Navy, retired), U.S. Malaria Coordinator. "The President and Mrs. Bush are committed to saving millions of lives in Africa and challenge the private sector to join the U.S. government in combating malaria." ♦



## Reducing Malaria in Africa Focus of U.S. Summit

By Kathryn McConnell  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Experts from the United States and Africa will meet December 14 in Washington to develop a blueprint for controlling malaria, a disease that kills a child in Africa every 30 seconds.

The "Challenge of Malaria in Africa" summit, hosted by President Bush and first lady Laura Bush, will include experts and representatives of the United States government, multilateral institutions, the private sector, several African countries and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Margaret Chan, new director-general of the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO), is among those scheduled to attend.

The summit seeks to spur more public-private partnerships for the control of malaria and to send a message about the need for governments, businesses, and private citizens to join together to control this preventable and treatable disease. At least 1 million infants and children under age 5 in sub-Saharan Africa die each year from the mosquito-borne blood infection disease, according to U.S. government estimates.

In June 2005, President Bush announced a five-year \$1.2 billion effort that joins the United States with the private sector to reduce by half the incidence of malaria in 15 of the most-affected countries. These countries account for up to 90 percent of all malaria deaths worldwide, with 3,000 children dying each day, according to the White House.

As part of that effort, known as the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), the United States already has developed programs in Tanzania, Angola and Uganda. In June, the United States partnered with Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda and Senegal to provide long-lasting mosquito nets, anti-malarial drugs and mosquito-spraying programs. Additional countries to receive PMI funding will be announced at the summit, organizers say.

"Thanks to the new malaria initiative, many thousands of families will be spared the tragedy of losing a loved one," said Karen Hughes, under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs.

"This is a positive way for the United States to partner with NGOs and other countries to send the message that Americans care deeply about the well-being of people in other lands," Hughes said.

In Zanzibar, Tanzania, where malaria is the leading cause of death, more than 230,000 people have been given insecticide-treated bed nets in recent years. As a result, malaria cases dropped 87 percent in five major hospitals on Zanzibar Island. The number of malaria cases on Pemba Island during the first nine months of 2006 dropped from 12,531 to 1,570 over the same period in 2005. The cost of one bed net is \$10.

A few generations ago, malaria was widely present in the southern part of the United States but, after a sustained public effort, the United States was declared malaria-free, summit organizers said.

Malaria has enormous economic impact, experts say. Malaria weakens workers and puts demands on hospitals. When people are unable to work, economies suffer and countries' become less secure.

The summit also will highlight many of the organizations already at work at the multilateral and community levels to coordinate efforts to fight malaria.

One of those is Malaria No More, a group including the American Red Cross, UNICEF, and the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Malaria No More is mobilizing corporations, foundations, faith-based groups, community groups and individuals to support a comprehensive approach to fighting malaria, and to help coordinate those efforts with governments, and multilateral and international organizations. In addition to the White House, the summit partners are the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the State Department.

The full text ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/malaria/> ) of a press release announcing the summit is available on the White House Web site. Additional information ( <http://www.malarianomore.org/about.php> ) about Malaria No More is available on that organization's Web site. ♦

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## Anti-Malaria Campaign Reduces Number of Infections in Zanzibar

For more than 25 years, Jamila Hassan, 44, has worked for the Zanzibar Health Ministry. As an educator, health advocate and mother of three she has dedicated her life to the welfare of her family and community. She has had malaria 15 times and her 19-year-old son, Saadiq, has also been infected.

In Tanzania, an estimated 80,000 children under 5 die from the disease each year. The President's Malaria Initiative, launched in 2005, aims to reduce malaria-related deaths by at least 50 percent over five years.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is aiding this initiative by helping Tanzania's Zanzibar islands gain access to long-lasting insecticidal nets, use indoor residual spraying, get fast and effective treatment with new drugs and provide preventive treatment to pregnant women.

As part of the indoor residual spraying component, more than 400 people were hired and trained to spray and supervise spraying of homes with insecticide in June 2006. Jamila is the only female supervisor in the Zanzibar urban district, and she has made it her goal to continue educating women about how to protect themselves and their families from malaria and other diseases.

Mariam Juma, a 25-year-old HIV/AIDS advocate in the Zanzibar Urban district, was one of the women inspired by Jamila. She was eager to help control and prevent malaria deaths in her community. Over two months, Mariam and other workers planned to canvass the islands of Unguja and Pemba and spray more than 200,000 homes, chanting: "Udhibiti wa mbu kataa malaria!" or "I reject malaria, control mosquitoes!"

*(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State.*

*Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*



*Trained sprayers preparing to spray house-to-house in Zanzibar.  
Source: Kimberly Wylie, USAID/Tanzania.*

## USAID Program Strengthens Hides, Skins and Leather Industry in Ethiopia . . .

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skins and leather from Ethiopia by 74% over the next three years.

The Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Program works in close cooperation with the government, private sector and other donors in Ethiopia. His Excellency Ato Tadesse Haile, State Minister of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, delivered opening remarks at yesterday's meeting and expressed his support for the initiative.

"Ethiopia has the largest domestic animal population in Africa. Our Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Program envisions the development of this important sector, and wants to see Ethiopia unlock the tremendous potential of the hides, skins and leather industry," Dr. Kevin A. Rushing, Acting Mission Director, USAID Ethiopia, said. "Collaboration and a shared vision between the public and private sectors in Ethiopia can make this happen."

During the meeting, the working group committed to implementing at least eight new initiatives each year to improve export performance through the creation of 'competitive clusters' in the HSL sector. Clusters are geographic concentrations of competing and collaborating businesses in a shared market, who work together to achieve specific results beneficial to the cluster.

The concept of economic clusters is being used increasingly in developed and developing countries alike to boost export performance. Examples in the United States include California's Silicon Valley, a concentra-



*A leather factory in Ethiopia (USAID photo)*

tion of hundreds of high technology firms. In Europe, Italy's leather district clusters have brought together firms that were once fierce competitors, and now collaborate in marketing, production and resource-sharing. The cluster competitiveness activity under USAID's Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Program is facilitated by the world-renowned Economic Competitiveness Group.

For more information:

<http://www.ecgroup.com/home.htm>

<http://www.fintrac.com/ethiopia.asp>

<http://www.ethiopiaag.org/about.asp>

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## Americans Working To Improve Human Rights in Darfur

By Michelle Austein  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- "Our nation is appalled by the genocide in Darfur," President Bush said in a statement issued on Human Rights Day, December 10. "The United States is committed to achieving stability, lasting peace and the restoration of basic human rights for the people of Darfur."

Human Rights Day commemorates the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. Established in 1950, Human Rights Day also offers the international community an opportunity to celebrate human rights and human rights defenders and to reflect on the principles set forth in the declaration.

"It is only fitting that we take the time today to remember the value of every human life and the right of every person in the world to live in peace with dignity and respect," the president said.

"As we commemorate the 58th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights... we must remember that with the crisis in Darfur, now is no time to celebrate," Nancy Pelosi, the incoming speaker of the House of Representatives, said in a December 8 statement posted on the Save Darfur Coalition Web site. The Save Darfur Coalition is an alliance of more than 175 faith-based, advocacy and humanitarian organizations working to help the people of Darfur. "It is time to champion the rights of the declaration not by words, but through our actions," Pelosi said. "We are compelled by the conscience of the world to put an end to this humani-



tarian disaster and restore dignity and hope to the Darfuri."

The situation in the Darfur region of Sudan was the primary focus for many lectures, rallies, films, prayer groups and other Human Rights Day 2006 events. In an internationally organized effort to get the Sudanese government's attention, activists peacefully protested outside the Sudanese Embassy in Washington. Similar demonstrations occurred near many of Sudan's other embassies throughout the world. Members of Amnesty International USA participated in the "Write in White" campaign, which called on supporters to wear white -- a color of mourning in many countries -- to show solidarity with those in Darfur and write letters to leaders and media outlets asking them to do more to help stop the violence in the region.

### AMERICAN STUDENTS AT THE FOREFRONT OF DARFUR CAMPAIGNS

Over the past few years, American students have been involved in

campaigns to draw attention to and suggest solutions for ending human rights abuses in Darfur.

On college campuses and in secondary schools, students have held fundraisers and rallies, circulated petitions and published opinion articles in their school newspapers. These actions have had some effect: Students at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, for example, successfully convinced their school's governing board to divest from companies whose business activities support the Sudanese government.

The Brown University students' work might have had an impact off campus as well. Following the university's February divestment, Providence became the first U.S. city to divest its assets from Sudan. The Rhode Island Legislature also is expected to vote on measures for divestment. To date, more than 30 U.S. schools have divested their assets from companies doing business in Sudan.

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## Bush, South African President Discuss Darfur at White House

By Jim Fisher-Thompson  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush and visiting South African President Thabo Mbeki, meeting at the White House December 8, discussed a number of issues of mutual concern to their nations, including the need speedily to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan.

At a press conference following the meeting, Bush said he had a "great discussion" with Mbeki over "a wide range of subjects."

Describing U.S.-South African relations as "strong and good," Bush said the two talked about South Africa's "commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS and our willingness to provide over \$600 million to the folks in South Africa to help deal with this terrible pandemic."

On the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Bush said: "I expressed my concerns about the situation with the president. He shares my concerns that the situation is dire. And now is the time for action."

Bush said the two leaders discussed "the need for South Africa and the United States and other nations to work with the Sudanese government to enable a peacekeeping force into that country to facilitate aid and save lives."

The two also discussed Iran and the Middle East, Bush added.

On the economic front, Bush said

Mbeki was "concerned about whether or not the World Trade Organization [Doha] round will go forward."

The Doha Round is a set of negotiations under the World Trade Organization (WTO) process aimed at making trade rules fairer for developing countries. Roadblocks have been thrown up by some countries



*President Bush welcomes Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa, to the Oval Office, Dec. 8, 2006. (White House Photo)*

in the trade organization that are reluctant to open their agricultural markets to African products.

Bush said he and Mbeki "recognize that trade will lift more people out of poverty than any other mechanism. And I told the president I am committed to the [Doha] round. I believe in trade. And I believe in the necessity of trade. And so we'll work to see if we can't get that issue solved."

Mbeki said, "Of immediate importance to us is the support we get from the president and the U.S. government with regard to the resolution of ... African conflicts."

In that regard, he added, "We are, all of us, keenly interested that we must increase the troops deployed in Darfur."

Such a deployment is "very urgent, very necessary," said Mbeki. And he pledged, "We will absolutely do everything to make sure that, from the African side, we remove any obstacle there might be to such bigger deployment in Darfur."

The impact of the violence in Darfur on neighboring countries, "particularly Chad and the Central African Republic," also came up for discussion, the South African president told journalists.

Mbeki said Somalia was also a hot topic in his meeting with Bush, adding that the two leaders are "very keen that, indeed, something must move there."

Mbeki pointed out that Somalia is "a failed state" and "a base for terrorists" who

could spread out to the rest of the continent. "It's something that is of shared [U.S.-South African] concern," he said.

He added that it is "necessary to support the transitional government" on the road to reunifying the country.

On the Doha Round, the South African president said he was "very, very reassured" by Bush's expressed commitment to the success of the WTO negotiations. "It's a very important part, in terms of addressing the agenda of the poor of the world. We need these market access issues addressed," Mbeki said. ♦

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## United States Supports Research To Document Endangered Languages

By Louise Fenner  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Throughout the world, thousands of languages are at risk of disappearing, but researchers are documenting and recording these linguistic links to history.

Examples abound: Only one-fourth of the Northern Cheyenne tribe in Montana speak their native language. In Nigeria, Defaka is spoken by just 200 people. And there are fewer than a dozen native speakers of N/uu, one of several African languages that use distinctive clicks for some consonants.

A program sponsored jointly by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) -- Documenting Endangered Languages -- has awarded \$9.4 million over the past two years to researchers and native speakers seeking to document and create digital records of languages threatened with extinction.

About half of the grants support work on American Indian languages.

More than half of the world's 7,000 existing languages "are headed for oblivion in this century," according to an NEH/NSF press release. One reason is globalization: People increasingly find it necessary to do business in the most widely spoken languages, such as Chinese, English, Spanish, Russian and Hindi. The Internet and print and television media also speed the rate of language loss. Ten languages account for nearly 80 percent of Internet

users, with English and Chinese alone accounting for 42 percent, according to internetstats.com, a search engine that provides Inter-

ate a dictionary and grammar that will support research into the language and history of the people and help the N/uu teach their children to



*Linguist Verónica Grondona and Franco Bravo, a native speaker of Chorote, work in Misión La Paz, Argentina. Chorote, an endangered language, has only 2,000 speakers in Argentina and Paraguay. (Photo courtesy of Veronica Grondona)*

net, business, financial and advertising statistics.

By creating audio and video recordings, transcriptions, dictionaries and grammatical guides, linguists can work with speakers of a language to create a permanent digital archive. These materials can be put on the Internet "and suddenly it opens up the language to the entire world," said Doug Whalen, an NSF program director.

Linguists are working with the N/uu speakers, who live on the southern edge of the Kalahari Desert, to cre-

write the language. Linguist Amanda Miller of Cornell University uses a portable ultrasound machine to produce images of the way the tongue moves when a N/uu speaker makes clicks and other complicated sounds.

"When I go to southern Africa, I have people [from other ethnic groups] say, 'When will you come back and work on my language?'" said Bonny Sands of Northern Arizona University, one of three principal investigators for the project.

"People understand how important

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## United States Supports Research To Document Endangered Languages . . .

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language is.”

Africa has the highest concentration of disappearing languages, according to UNESCO. Akinbiyi Akinlabi of Rutgers University received a grant to document Defaka, which has only 200 speakers, and Nkoroo, a related language that has 5,000 speakers. “No language should be allowed to die out without being scientifically documented,” he said. “A language tells us about the culture of a people, their way of life, their history.”

In both Sands’ and Akinlabi’s projects, as well as most others funded under Documenting Endangered Languages (DEL), graduate students, native speakers and other investigators from the country that hosts a language play vital roles in the research.

“The quality of the data is much higher if native speakers are involved in decision-making and data collection,” said Arienne Dwyer of the University of Kansas, who employs two dozen people in China for a project to prepare a grammar of Monguor, an unwritten endangered Mongolic language of northern Tibet.

Dwyer stressed that the DEL projects focus on documentation. “It’s

not our business to decide whether a language survives or disappears,” she said. “We can only present ourselves as resource people.”

Helen Aguera, acting deputy director for preservation at NEH, said the program can “help create the resources that the community will be able to adapt and use for their own efforts at revitalization.” For example, a scholarly grammar book or dictionary can be simplified into a “learner’s dictionary” for use in teaching.

Veronica Grondona of Eastern Michigan University is documenting Wichi, a language that has about 25,000 speakers in northern Argentina and Bolivia but is considered endangered because children are not learning it in sufficient numbers and because of the population’s intense contact with Spanish speakers.

She said she was working in the community on two other indigenous languages “and the Wichi speakers came to us and said, ‘We want you to document our language and help us preserve our language.’”

Grondona always meets with the chiefs of the community to determine what they want, such as interviewing as many elders as possible or producing teaching materials.

“In many cases you end up doing work that may help in the maintenance of the language because the speakers ask you to do that,” she said.

NEH and NSF are evaluating applications for 2007 DEL grants, whose recipients will be announced next spring.

A special report on endangered languages ( [http://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/linguistics/endangered.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/linguistics/endangered.jsp) ) and lists of DEL grantees for 2005 ( [http://www.nsf.gov/news/news\\_summ.jsp?cntn\\_id=104138](http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=104138) ) and 2006 ( [http://www.nsf.gov/news/news\\_summ.jsp?cntn\\_id=107088&org=NSF](http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=107088&org=NSF) ) are available on the NSF Web site.

For more information on U.S. policies, see Population and Diversity ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history\\_geography\\_and\\_population/population\\_and\\_diversity.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population/population_and_diversity.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>)* ♦

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## Congress Approves Measure Extending Trade Preferences

By Andrzej Zwaniecki  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – As one of its final acts, the 109th U.S. Congress approved legislation that would normalize trade relations with Vietnam and would extend trade preferences for Andean and sub-Saharan countries as well as more than 100 other developing nations.

The Senate passed the bill December 9 by a 79-9 vote as part of a larger legislative package that also would expand oil and gas drilling rights in the Gulf of Mexico and would extend certain business tax cuts. Earlier, the House of Representatives passed separate pieces of legislation with identical provisions.

The bill must be signed by the president to become law.

President Bush commended lawmakers for granting Vietnam permanent normal trade relations (PNTR), otherwise known as most-favored nation status, which would provide the country the same customs and tariff treatment the United States gives to other PNTR countries.

The legislation would repeal a Cold-War era law that links PNTR to a communist country's treatment of immigration issues, thus making the U.S. position consistent with World Trade Organization rules.

"Vietnam is demonstrating its strong commitment to continuing economic reforms, which will support political reform and respect for human rights," the president said in a prepared statement.

U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab said in a prepared statement that the passage of PNTR

"begins a new era in our relationship with Vietnam" and "demonstrates to our trading partners in East Asia, the United States' commitment to strengthen and deepen our relationships in that region."

The legislation also would extend for two years the Generalized System of Preferences, a program that



*U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab*

allows 133 developing countries and territories to export duty-free specified goods to the U.S. market. In 2005, the value of those goods was \$27 billion. In addition, it would extend for six months trade preferences for four Andean nations -- Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador -- and for up to 12 months if those nations conclude free-trade agreements with the United States. These preferences first were granted 15 years ago to encourage the four countries' anti-drug efforts. Both programs were set to expire at the end of 2006.

In addition, the bill would extend to 2012 a key provision in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) that allows sub-Saharan African countries to use third-country fabrics in their duty-free apparel exports to the U.S. market. The provision was scheduled to expire in 2007.

Despite objection from some Republican lawmakers from textile-producing states, the legislation also would allow Haiti to use third-country fabrics in its duty-free apparel exports to the U.S. market.

Schwab said that the passage of the trade measure can "lay the groundwork for bipartisan action on trade issues in the next Congress," including passage of bills to implement free trade agreements with Peru and Colombia.

The full text ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/12/20061209-3.html> ) of Bush's statement can be viewed on the White House Web site. The full text ( [http://www.ustr.gov/Document\\_Library/Press\\_Releases/2006/December/US\\_Trade\\_Representative\\_Schwab\\_Wel-](http://www.ustr.gov/Document_Library/Press_Releases/2006/December/US_Trade_Representative_Schwab_Wel-)

[comes\\_Bipartisan\\_Senate\\_Vote\\_Approving\\_Key\\_Trade\\_Legislation.html](http://www.ustr.gov/Document_Library/Press_Releases/2006/December/US_Trade_Representative_Schwab_Wel-comes_Bipartisan_Senate_Vote_Approving_Key_Trade_Legislation.html) ) of a press release that includes Schwab's statement is available on the USTR Web site.

For more information on U.S. policies, see Trade and Economics ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/> ).

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

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## Peace Corps Adapting to 21st Century, New Director Says

By Jim Fisher-Thompson and John Cox  
USINFO Staff Writers

Washington -- Time goes by quickly, new Peace Corps Director Ron Tschetter acknowledged as he recently reflected on the 40 years between his volunteer service in India and being named by President Bush in September to head the 7,700-member volunteer agency.

During that time, the South Dakota native used many of the management tools and interpersonal skills he learned as a volunteer overseas to build a successful career in the financial-investment sector, ultimately becoming president of D.A. Davidson & Co., one of the nation's largest full-service investment firms.

Now his main challenge, Tschetter says, is to make the corps more "relevant to the 21st century."

The Peace Corps saying that "'you get more than you give as a volunteer' still remains true," Tschetter told USINFO reporters after returning in November from his first official visit, reviewing volunteer programs in Morocco and Jordan.

The goal of partnership with local peoples -- to build more prosperous, democratic societies -- that inspired more than 187,000 volunteers to serve after President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961 remains "exactly the same," he said.

Tschetter said he was passionate about the Peace Corps when he and his wife, Nancy, volunteered as health workers living and operating

out of Bori, a small town in southern India, from 1966 until 1968. "We helped battle smallpox among nomads in Maharashtra state along with Lillian Carter, whom we got to know quite well."



*Peace Corps Director Ronald Tschetter and a volunteer build a volcano at a Special Education Center in Jordan. (Peace Corps photo)*

Carter, a volunteer in her 70s, was the mother of President Jimmy Carter. "She had been trained as a nurse, and all the people just loved her for her simplicity and genuine caring attitude," Tschetter said.

The director said he is just as passionate today as he was in the 1960s, but his emphasis now is to help the Peace Corps fit into a changing world.

### TAPPING THE TALENTS OF OLDER AMERICANS

As a start, Tschetter wants to bring more "baby boomers" -- people born after 1945 -- into the corps to share their skills and life experiences. "This is a pool of 75 million mature people, many of whom have traveled and are familiar with other cultures. They are basically healthy and many have good retirement benefits. They represent a lot of

passion to serve and give back that is untapped."

With that in mind, he said: "We have a very successful program in Mexico composed of 40 volunteers, many of them engineers who work on environmental projects. Their average age is 47 -- with the oldest volunteer 78 -- compared to 27 for our other volunteers." As it stands now, "over 5 percent of our volunteers are over 50."

Tschetter said his next trip would be in mid-December to Mexico, where he will swear in the latest group of volunteers to serve as development partners with America's southern neighbor.

Asked how his business background might come into play in his new job, Tschetter said, "I think as a former executive, managing companies with shareholders and numerous employees, I'm aware of the need for the agency to be held accountable and show measurable results."

Tschetter said the Peace Corps has achieved that goal, especially in its HIV/AIDs programs, to which 2,880 volunteers are devoting their time and energy. "We've already established 85,000 training centers on AIDS that have "touched 1 million people" with quantifiable results, he said.

### REACHING OUT TO MUSLIM COUNTRIES

The new director said he will continue to focus on adding more volunteers in Muslim countries. "We are in 14 now -- countries with at least 40 percent Muslim populations

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## Bush Consults Iraq's Sunni Vice President on Policy Shifts

By David Shelby  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush met with Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi December 12 to discuss the security situation in Iraq and ways the United States can help the Iraqi government achieve stability.

After their meeting, Bush said: "He spoke eloquently about the suffering that innocent families have gone through. And my heart goes out to those, Mr. Vice President, who have suffered at the hands of the extremists and killers. Our objective is to help the Iraqi government deal with the extremists and killers and support the vast majority of Iraqis who are reasonable people who want peace."

Al-Hashemi, a Sunni Arab, has been personally affected by the violence in Iraq, which claimed the lives of his brother and his sister in separate attacks in April. Bush praised the Iraqi vice president, saying, "In spite of his grief and in spite of pain in his heart, he was willing to work for a united Iraq and a peaceful Iraq."

He added, "Mr. vice president, I respect your courage and I respect your advice."

Bush's meeting with al-Hashemi follows similar discussions with Shiite political leader Abdul Aziz al-Hakim and Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and comes at a time when the president is considering revisions to U.S. policy in Iraq. Al-



*President George W. Bush shakes the hand of Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi of Iraq as they near the end of their Oval Office visit Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2006.*

Hashemi welcomed Bush's decision to move their scheduled meeting forward, calling it "a really positive message to the Iraqi people that the American administration, while they are revising their strategy, they are looking for a balance and fair analysis from diverse leaders in Iraq."

The president has also sought input from the State Department and the Pentagon as he weighs options for policy changes in Iraq. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=December&x=20061211143430ndy-blehs0.2181513> ).)

Al-Hashemi said Iraq is facing difficult times but insisted there is a "real chance to get out of this present dilemma" with "strong determination."

"Whatever the sacrifices, my family and the country, at the end of the day, we have no other option but to maintain this momentum and to struggle until we meet that success, inshallah," al-Hashemi said.

A transcript ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/12/20061212-2.html> ) of the remarks by Bush and al-Hashemi is available on the White House 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>)* ♦

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## Gates Outlines U.S. Strategic Defense Priorities

By David McKeeby  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Questions about Iraq dominated Defense Secretary-designate Robert Gates' recent Senate confirmation hearing, but he also offered insight into his perspective on security issues related to Afghanistan, Iraq and North Korea.

The U.S. Senate on December 6 approved Gates to become the next secretary of defense. He will succeed Donald Rumsfeld, who has held the post since the beginning of the Bush administration in 2001. Gates will be sworn in at a Pentagon ceremony December 18.

"Transforming the department to better deal with 21st-century challenges, a major charge from the president, must continue," Gates said in recent testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee. "These challenges range from the threat posed by terrorist networks, to weapons of mass destruction in the hands of hostile regimes and terrorist networks, to states armed with advanced weaponry."

### AFGHANISTAN: SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT AID NEEDED

In response to the committee's questions, Gates said that Afghanistan, a country that figured prominently in his years as a senior official at the CIA in the 1980s, would join Iraq as one of the Pentagon's top priorities.

"The fight in Afghanistan requires defeating the Taliban resurgence, but also requires assisting the country in developing into a moderate, stable, representative democracy and a partner in the global war on terror," he said. (See *Rebuilding Afghanistan* ( [http://](http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/rebuilding_afghanistan.html)

[usinfo.state.gov/sa/rebuilding\\_afghanistan.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/rebuilding_afghanistan.html) ).)

Although Gates sees the growing role of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan as a positive development, the resurgence of Taliban forces in southern areas illustrates Kabul's continued need for help in building an army and a national po-



*Defense Secretary-designate Robert Gates*

lice force. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=November&x=20061129120544eai-fas0.3363459> ).)

Gates also agreed with NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and top alliance military commander Marine General James Jones, who maintains that Afghanistan cannot be saved by military force alone.

Gates said that the United States and its allies must help the Afghan

government "extend the rule of law to remote areas; provide economic development that will provide people alternatives to opium production and the Taliban; and address corruption to ensure a stable state that enjoys popular support."

### IRAN: DIPLOMACY PREFERABLE TO MILITARY FORCE

Diplomacy is preferable to potential military action against Iran, which should only be considered as "an absolute last resort" to halt Tehran's covert nuclear weapons program, Gates testified. (See *Arms Control and Non-Proliferation* ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international\\_security/arms\\_control.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html) ).)

Although diplomacy remains outside the new defense secretary's portfolio, he supports the State Department-led effort to engage with Iran in exchange for its abandonment of nuclear enrichment activities.

"Even in the worst days of the Cold War the U.S. maintained a dialogue with the Soviet Union and China, and I believe those channels of communication helped us manage many potentially difficult situations," Gates said.

He also said that while he serves as an adviser, it is the president who will ultimately determine any future changes to U.S. policy, which remains complicated by Tehran's pursuit of nuclear weapons as well as its support of terrorism in Lebanon, Iraq and beyond. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=December&x=20061207172007idy-beekcm0.9571497> ).

*(Continued on page 14)*

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## Peace Corps Adapting to 21st Century, New Director Says . . .

(Continued from page 11)

-- and expect to add more down the road. A number of very large Muslim countries have come to us and we are open to such opportunities."

Tschetter said Morocco, where he just visited, is an example of a very long and fruitful Peace Corps partnership. "We have been there for 43 years and our volunteers -- who work as teachers, small business development advisers and on environmental projects -- have built very important and lasting relationships with communities there."

Peace Corps has been in Jordan for 10 years and many of its current 53 volunteers there work on programs for children with special needs, Tschetter pointed out. On his recent visit, he said, he met with the king, queen and officials who said they would "appreciate an expansion of the Peace Corps in their country."

Tschetter added that the corps also would have volunteers in Cambodia -- by February 2007 -- and in Ethiopia, which had one of the largest Peace Corps contingents before civil war and security concerns saw them removed. Currently, the larg-

est group of Peace Corps volunteers -- 350 -- serves in Ukraine.

"This organization is just awesome. I'm so impressed with the dedication and passion of its people. It's a real honor and privilege to serve as its 17th director," Tschetter concluded.

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## Gates Outlines U.S. Strategic Defense Priorities . . .

(Continued from page 13)

### **NORTH KOREA: ALLIANCES KEY TO REGIONAL STABILITY**

Regarding North Korea, Gates expressed support for the ongoing Six-Party Talks process and pledged that he would continue working closely with allies to help maintain peace and stability in the region. The White House announced December 11 that talks between North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States will resume December 18 in Beijing. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=December&x=20061211163001esnam-fuak0.7492792> ).)

"The true linchpin to our deterrence is the strength and viability of our alliances," Gates said. These military partnerships are the foundation for continued transformation of the

U.S. military presence in Asia, which is shifting and consolidating military bases to take advantage of new technologies to cut costs and improve commanders' strategic flexibility.

Strong military-to-military relations in Asia, particularly with Japan and South Korea, Gates said, complement regional diplomacy with deterrence, sending a clear message to Pyongyang that the United States will stand with its regional allies against aggression or efforts to traffic in weapons of mass destruction. (See The U.S. and the Korean Peninsula ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east\\_asia\\_pacific/north\\_korea.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/north_korea.html) ).)

These alliances, Gates said, also are important to ongoing efforts to work with China to strengthen regional security. Although Gates expressed concern about Beijing's rapid military modernization, he also saw its recent improvements in dis-

couraging proliferation, increasing transparency and facilitating a diplomatic resolution on the North Korean nuclear standoff as positive indications that China shares its neighbors' hope for regional stability. (See The United States and China ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east\\_asia\\_pacific/china.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/china.html) ).)

The text ( [http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2006/December/Gates\\_12-05-06.pdf](http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2006/December/Gates_12-05-06.pdf) ) of the Gates questionnaire is available from the Senate Armed Services Committee 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>)* ♦

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## Bush and Britain's Blair Consider Course Ahead in Middle East

By David McKeeby  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair December 7 renewed their commitment to moderates and reformers who work for democracy across the broader Middle East.

At a joint press conference, Bush said that he and Blair "know the only way to secure peace for ourselves is to help millions of moms and dads across the Middle East build what our citizens already have -- societies based on liberty that will allow their children to grow up in peace and opportunity."

Across the region, Bush and Blair said, the forces of extremism are working against the Maliki government in Iraq by fomenting sectarian violence; fighting government forces to retake Afghanistan; attempting to unseat Lebanon's government; and working to derail efforts by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas toward a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians.

The radical militants working to undermine these new democracies in the region share a belief that, "the rise of free and democratic societies in the Middle East, where people can practice their faith, choose their leaders and live together in peace, would be a decisive blow to their cause," Bush said.

"Should they succeed," Bush said, "history will look back on our time with unforgiving clarity and demand to know, what happened? How come free nations did not act to preserve the peace?"

The two leaders met the day after the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan panel of former government officials, issued a report offering 79 recommendations to revise U.S.



*Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Bush hold a joint news conference after meeting at the White House, December 7, 2006. (Jim Bourg/Reuters)*

policy in Iraq and the wider region. Bush and Blair said that a change in course was needed in Iraq and welcomed the report as one of several ongoing policy reviews to help renew efforts to help Iraq build a unified democracy that can govern, sustain, and defend itself. Bush said that he expected to address the American people in a few weeks on these issues.

"I believe we need a new approach," Bush said. Blair agreed, adding that the Iraq Study Group's report offers "a strong way forward." (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=December&x=20061206112809eai-fas0.1521417> ).)

While not commenting extensively on the report, Bush discussed one of its most closely watched recommendations -- that of engaging Iran and Syria diplomatically to help stabilize Iraq, and to use their influence with extremists in other conflicts across the region. Bush said that both countries are well aware of the expectations of the international community.

"If people come to the table to discuss Iraq they need to come understanding their responsibilities to not fund terrorists, to help this young democracy survive, to help with the economics of the country," he said. "If Syria and

Iran [are] not committed to that concept, then they shouldn't bother to show up."

A transcript ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/12/20061207-1.html> ) of the remarks by Bush and Blair is available on the White House Web site.

For more information, see Middle East and North Africa ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/> ).

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## Conference To Review International Efforts To Fight Corruption

By Michelle Austein  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – "In order to fight corruption you have to deny safe haven for the corrupt," according to John Brandolino, director for anti-crime programs for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) provisions on asset recovery help do that, he said.

"No other convention deals with the asset recovery issue in such a comprehensive way," Brandolino said in an interview with USINFO December 4. The convention's provisions on asset recovery promote international cooperation in training and confiscating illicitly acquired funds and return them to their country of origin.

For the asset recovery efforts to be effective, there must be full participation of the international community, Brandolino said, so that corrupt entities cannot take their funds from one nation to another.

Brandolino made his remarks ahead of the first high-level conference since the convention came into force on December 14, 2005. Representatives of the countries that have ratified the U.N. Convention Against Corruption will meet in Dead Sea, Jordan, December 10 - 14, to work on turning the international anti-corruption convention's words into actions. The goal of the conference is to get parties together to develop a process for promoting implementation of the convention, Brandolino said.

The convention, the first international legally binding anti-corruption

agreement, outlines actions governments are required to take to reduce corruption. It has been signed by 140 nations and ratified by 80.

According to a November 29 U.N. press release, asset recovery is one of three key issues at the Jordan conference. The 800 delegates also will focus on monitoring nations' compliance with the convention and providing technical assistance to ensure that police, prosecutors and



judges are equipped with the tools needed to prevent and punish corruption.

International cooperation is a key element of the convention. It establishes guidelines for improving mutual law enforcement, investigations and extraditions.

### UNITED STATES ACTIVE IN FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

The United States became a party to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption on November 29. The U.S. ratification sends a strong message to the world that the United States views the convention as an important focal point for anti-corruption efforts, Brandolino said.

The United States goal at the Jordan conference, Brandolino said, is to work with the parties to make sure the convention is implemented effectively. The U.S. delegation to the conference includes representatives from the State Department, Justice Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The United States already has been working actively with the United Nations and independently to fight corruption worldwide. It has given money to help countries fight corruption as part of the U.N. Global Program Against Corruption. U.S. assistance also has helped other nations learn how to institute the proper laws, financial management systems and public procurement systems to prevent corruption.

The full text ( <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/>

[crime\\_convention\\_corruption.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime_convention_corruption.html) ) of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption is available on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Web site.

More information about the convention will be available in a December 12 webchat ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/uncac\\_12\\_dec\\_2006.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/uncac_12_dec_2006.html) ) at USINFO's Webchat Station.

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

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## Fighting Corruption a Collective Effort, U.S. Officials Say

By Michelle Austein  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- "No nation is immune from corruption," according to Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Crime Elizabeth Verville.

In a USINFO webchat December 12, Verville and other State Department experts discussed ways the U.N. Convention Against Corruption will prevent and reduce corruption worldwide. The convention is "a historic achievement of the international community and an important tool for improving the conditions for economic and social development worldwide," said Gerald Anderson, deputy assistant secretary of state for economic and social policy in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs.

Corruption limits opportunities and reduces competition, according to Andrew Haviland, deputy director of the State Department's Office of Monetary Affairs. Haviland said nations must work with the private sector to set standards of conduct. The convention is an important part of this collective effort, he said.

There is a relationship between corruption and poverty, Haviland said. "Corruption can hurt all segments of society, but tends to be most harmful to the poor," Haviland said. Corruption places high financial demands on countries with limited resources, he said.

The U.N. convention calls for governments to prevent corruption and to improve law enforcement cooperation. It requires countries to criminalize corrupt behaviors such as bribery, embezzlement and

money laundering. Nations are expected to prevent corruption by ensuring that financial management systems are transparent, developing anti-corruption strategies, instituting codes of conduct, establishing appropriate accounting standards and allowing public access to information.

"The convention commits parties to take action on a wide range of fronts," Verville said, "thus recognizing that the fight against corruption requires a comprehensive response."



The convention is based on the belief that good governance and reducing corruption can improve economic growth and development and reduce poverty, Anderson said.

The U.N. document has been signed by 140 nations and ratified by 80, including the United States. Representatives of these nations, including Verville, are currently meeting in Dead Sea, Jordan, to develop a process for promoting implementation of the convention. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=December&x=20061206122745hmnietsua0.6122705> ).)

The officials also discussed the roles individuals can play in the fight against corruption.

Although the convention may seem far removed from everyday life, Anderson said, it does provide insights on how individuals can fight corruption. The average person can help by refusing to take or give bribes and by encouraging others to behave the same way. "Progress takes time. But it does not happen unless individuals take action," Anderson said.

"Each person should adhere to the highest standards of personal integrity in his or her daily dealings," Verville said. "If everyone did that, we would not need treaties."

The transcript ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Dec/12-365559.html> ) of the webchat is available on USINFO. For more information on U.S. policy, see Bribery and Corruption ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic\\_issues/bribery\\_and\\_corruption.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/bribery_and_corruption.html) ) and the eJournal USA Transforming the Culture of Corruption ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/1206/ijde/ijde1206.htm> ).

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

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## State Department Marks International Human Rights Day

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesman  
December 8, 2006

Statement by Sean McCormack,  
Spokesman

International Human Rights Day

In the aftermath of the atrocities of World War II, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a historic document that enshrined the fundamental human rights and freedoms that are the birthright of all people. The United States joins with men and women around the globe in observing International Human Rights Day commemorating the adoption of this landmark document.

We stand with those individuals who work to promote human rights and democratic principles. In every part of the world courageous defenders of freedom are helping to build vibrant civil societies, pressing for free and fair elections, and es-

tablishing accountable, law-based democracies that respect the rights of all. They are taking on the challenges of protecting the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, defending workers' rights and promoting equal rights for women.

As we mark International Human Rights Day and celebrate the gains for human dignity and democracy around the globe, we are sobered by the fact that from Burma to Zimbabwe, China to Uzbekistan, Iran to North Korea, human rights defenders face continued harassment, intimidation, imprisonment and in some cases even death. The United States will continue to support them and all those who work to defend human dignity and overcome oppression and injustice.

(end text)



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## Number of Journalists Jailed Worldwide Continues To Rise

By Eric Green  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The number of journalists imprisoned worldwide for their work has increased for the second straight year, with about a third of the jailed journalists involved in Internet dissemination of information, according to the global press advocacy group the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

The New York-based CPJ said its annual worldwide census found that 134 journalists were imprisoned on December 1, an increase of nine from the 2005 survey. Of the total, some 49 Internet journalists were imprisoned in 2006, the highest number CPJ has tallied in its annual survey.

China, Cuba, Eritrea and Ethiopia were the top four jailers among the 24 nations that imprisoned journalists, said the CPJ in a December 7 statement.

"Anti-state" allegations such as subversion, divulging state secrets and acting against the interests of the state are the most common charges used to imprison journalists worldwide, said the CPJ, adding that 84 journalists are jailed under these charges, many by the Chinese, Cuban and Ethiopian governments.

But the CPJ also found an increasing number of journalists held without any charge or trial at all. Some 20 imprisoned journalists have been denied even the most basic elements of due process, the CPJ found. The press group said Eritrea, which accounts for more than half of the cases where no charges are made, keeps journalists in secret locations and withholds basic information about their well-being.

For the eighth consecutive year, China is the world's leading jailer of journalists, with 31 imprisoned. Nineteen cases involve Internet journalists.

Cuba ranked second on the list, with 24 reporters, writers and editors behind bars, most of them jailed in the country's massive March 2003 crackdown on dissi-

on its list of 15 countries that are "enemies" of the Internet. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2006/Feb/03-300372.html> ).)

Regarding Cuba, the U.S. State Department's Cuban affairs office said in a November 27 statement to US-INFO that Reporters Without Borders has called Cuba "one of the top worst countries for journalists,"



*Militants of French watchdog organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF) stand in fake jails to pay homage to the 23 journalists jailed in Cuba, Friday Dec. 1, 2006 in Paris, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the founding of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. (AP Photo/Jacques Brinon)*

dents and the independent press, said the CPJ. Nearly all of those on Cuba's list had filed news and commentary to overseas Web sites.

These journalists used phone lines and faxes, not computers, to transmit their reports. Once posted, their articles were seen across the world but almost never in Cuba, where the government heavily restricts Internet access.

Another press advocacy group, the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders, has put both China and Cuba

and that more than 330 prisoners of conscience continue to languish in Cuban jails.

The United States has been in the forefront in opposing governments around the world that seek to repress dissent on the Internet. A State Department initiative, the Global Internet Freedom Task Force, is considering the foreign policy aspects of Internet freedom, including the use of technology to track and repress dissidents and to restrict

*(Continued on page 21)*

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## Women's Lack of Property Rights Linked to Abuse, Experts Say

By Kathryn McConnell  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Women's lack of property rights in many developing countries is linked to domestic violence against women, says a group of women's rights experts.

Women barred by law or culture from owning a house or land also have higher HIV infection rates as a result of sexual abuse by partners who view women as powerless, they said.

"Property rights are an effective measurement of women's status in society because they impact women's economic, political and human rights ... [and] shape the allocation of resources and decision-making authority," said Andrea Bottner, head of the State Department's Office of International Women's Issues.

"The right to own property gives women financial independence that, in turn, strengthens their ability to bargain with husbands or other members of the household," Bottner said.

The International Women's Issues office works to coordinate U.S. efforts to advance women's causes around the world and ensure that women's rights are integrated into all foreign aid programs. It sponsored a December 5 meeting on women's property and inheritance rights in Asia and Africa and their links to violence against women and HIV/AIDS.

The office emphasizes the need for women to have more access to education, health care and economic opportunities.

"This is important in the fight against HIV/AIDS when women need to assert greater control over access to their bodies. Women who have their own sources of income are more empowered to leave a violent environment," Bottner said.

Just as in richer countries, women in developing countries stay in abusive relationships because they fear losing access to the food and shelter they need to survive, said Nata Duvvury of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), based in Washington.

Violence and AIDS are the two "pandemics facing women today," Duvvury, director of the ICRW's Gender, Violence and Rights Program, said.

Women are more fearful than men of being tested for HIV, of seeking treatment and of being ejected from a home they have no rights to own, she said.

The problem of women's lack of economic resources is further complicated by the fact that women are often the primary caregivers for other family members who have AIDS and for children whose parents have died from the disease, according to an ICRW publication on women's property and inheritance rights.

Yet, "where women's property rights are upheld, women acting as heads and/or primary caregivers of HIV/AIDS-affected households are better able to manage the impact of AIDS," ICRW said.

Research has shown that people who own land generate "much higher nonfarm earnings from self-employment" and can use the prop-

erty as collateral for investment in small businesses, according to the ICRW.

In addition to advocating for laws to uphold women's property rights, groups are also involved in efforts to strengthen the enforcement of property rights, since many local leaders and court officials continue to ignore national laws, said Janet Walsh of Human Rights Watch.

A State Department fact sheet on U.S. Support for Women Worldwide ( <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/scp/2005/43560.htm> ) is available on the department's Web site.

For additional information, see the State Department's Office of International Women's Issues ( <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/> ) Web site.

More information on ICRW ( <http://www.icrw.org/> ), which is supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is available on the organization's Web site.

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**Americans Working To Improve Human Rights . . .**

*(Continued from page 6)*

Students from different campuses across the country often work together. Members of the 600 university and secondary school chapters of the Student Anti-Genocide Campaign (STAND) cooperate to raise awareness of the crisis in Darfur and advocate political solutions. STAND members have united across many campuses as well. In October, more than 100 college chapters fasted or gave up a luxury for a day to raise more than \$100,000 for Darfur. STAND members have met with professional lobbyists, international policy officials and other leaders to discuss measures that can be taken to improve the situation in Darfur.

Scott Warren, a Brown University sophomore and STAND's communications coordinator, said the organization, which started in 2004 at Georgetown University in Washington, now has 600 chapters actively

fighting against the humanitarian crisis triggered by the conflict in Africa.

In an interview with USINFO December 7, Warren said students are being "spurred to action by realizing that genocide is the most heinous crime in humanity today." He said students today were appalled by the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, but were not old enough to do anything about it. "We failed to do anything in past genocides," Warren said, "It's time to start taking the words 'never again' to heart."

The full text ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/12/20061210.html> ) of Bush's statement is available on the White House Web site.

For more information on U.S. policy, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html> ). ♦

**Number of Journalists Jailed Worldwide Continues To Rise . . .**

*(Continued from page 19)*

access to political content. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=February&x=20060214161400bcrek-law3.503054e-02&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html> ).)

The CPJ survey found that Eritrea -- with 23 jailed journalists -- leads Africa in the number of journalists in prison. These journalists are being held incommunicado, and their well-being is a growing source of concern, said the CPJ.

CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon said that in Cuba and China, journalists often are jailed after summary trials and held in "miserable conditions far from their families. But the cruelty and injustice of imprisonment is compounded

where there is zero due process and journalists slip into oblivion. In Eritrea, the worst abuser in this regard, there is no check on authority and it is unclear whether some jailed journalists are even alive."

Ethiopia has imprisoned 18 journalists, most of whom are being tried for treason after being swept up by authorities in a November 2005 crackdown on dissent, although a CPJ investigation found no basis for the government's treason charges.

Regarding the high number of imprisoned Internet journalists, Simon said that now is a "crucial" time in the fight for press freedom "because authoritarian states have made the Internet a major front in their effort to control information. China is challenging the notion

that the Internet is impossible to control or censor, and if it succeeds there will be far-ranging implications, not only for the medium but for press freedom all over the world."

The CPJ said its survey is only a "snapshot" of those journalists incarcerated as of December 1 and does not include the many journalists imprisoned and released throughout 2006.

The survey ( <http://www.cpj.org/> ) is available on the CPJ Web site.

The repression against journalists worldwide is also documented in the State Department's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices ( <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrpt/2005/index.htm> )" for 2005. ♦