



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Working Together to Fight Malaria

(U.S. Embassy) - For about half the world's population, malaria remains one of the greatest threats to public health. It is a disease that causes poverty, disrupts the livelihood of families, and far too often, steals the future of Africa's children. In tropical Africa, the disease kills nearly 3,000 people each day with young children and pregnant women at greatest risk.



Ambassador Donald Yamamoto

combat it. On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has taken extraordinary steps to curb the spread of this preventable and curable disease.

The President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), led and implemented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) with the assistance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), represents

World Malaria Day is observed April 25 to call

attention to the disease and to mobilize action to

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USAID Announces New Program to Strengthen Community HIV/AIDS Response

Addis Abeba, Ethiopia - The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recently awarded a U.S. \$35 million contract to PATH for a new program entitled USAID Strengthening Communities' Responses to HIV/AIDS.



This program will improve access to HIV/AIDS treat-

ment and services, strengthen the quality of community- and home-based services, and raise

awareness and demand for high-quality, comprehensive, and affordable services. It aims to reach more than 900,000 Ethiopians in 300 towns.

In Ethiopia more than 2 percent of adults 15 to 49 years old are estimated to be infected by HIV/AIDS, and as many as 10 percent of people are living with HIV

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a historic \$1.2 billion, five-year expansion of U.S. government resources to fight malaria in Africa.

The strategy is straightforward. First, prevention: PMI supports indoor residual spraying to keep deadly mosquitoes at bay, the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets to provide personal protection from malaria-carrying mosquitoes, and preventive malaria treatment to expectant mothers during pregnancy. Second, treatment: PMI distributes new and highly effective medicines and trains health workers on the proper use of those medicines. Working with national governments, international donors and other stakeholders, PMI has helped to rapidly scale up these malaria prevention and treatment measures across 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

During the third year of PMI implementation, the United States reached more than 32 million people with malaria prevention and treatment measures in Africa. In 2008, PMI procured more than 6.4 million long-lasting mosquito nets for free distribution to populations at risk of malaria and a total of 15.6 million anti-malarial drug treatments. Indoor residual spraying activities covered 6 million houses and protected nearly 25 million people at risk of malaria.

In Rwanda, Zambia, and Tanzania we are beginning to see signs of major reductions in the proportion of people infected with malaria. In Rwanda and Zambia, there has

been a striking reduction in deaths among children under the age of five. On the isles of Zanzibar in Tanzania, we have seen malaria infection rates drop to less than 1% throughout the population of 1 million. Malaria prevention and treatment measures are associated with and can contribute to these reductions. Regional and district-level impact has also been reported from Mozambique and Uganda.

Ethiopia was announced as a PMI focus country in December 2006 and started PMI program implementation last year, investing approximately \$71 million over three years to help Ethiopia reach its goal of eliminating malaria by 2020. PMI-supported activities, planned in close collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia's Federal Ministry of Health, are primarily focused on the Oromiya Region which bears the brunt of the country's malaria burden. With support from the American people, PMI has helped spray over 1.7 million houses with insecticide, protecting 5.9 million Ethiopians from getting malaria. USAID is currently in the process of distributing nearly 590,000 insecticide-treated bed nets. We have also distributed 600,000 anti-malarial drugs to health facilities in the Oromiya Region.

Sustainability of malaria control programs is a critical goal of U.S. efforts. We are focusing on building capacity within host countries by training people to manage, deliver, and support the delivery of health services, which will be critical for sustained successes against infectious diseases such as malaria.

As a result of the support and progress in these critical areas, national malaria control programs are becoming more effective and accountable.

Partnerships with host country governments, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank Booster Program for Malaria Control, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and others have made these successes possible. Successful partnerships with faith-based and community organizations are bringing tremendous value to malaria control efforts because of the credibility these groups have within their communities, their ability to reach the grassroots level, and their capacity to mobilize significant numbers of volunteers. PMI has supported more than 150 non-profit organizations, over 40 of which are faith based.

Across Africa, children and their families are sleeping under bed nets; local groups are teaching mothers to take anti-malarial drugs when they are pregnant and seek proper treatment for their sick children. In schools and villages, community centers and places of worship, clinics and hospitals, optimism is growing that we can and will succeed in controlling malaria. We share that optimism. On World Malaria Day, the United States will continue to galvanize action and spur grassroots and private sector efforts to control the disease. ♦

Clinton Praises Liberia's Sirleaf for Debt Reduction Actions

*By Charles Corey
Staff Writer*

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, after a meeting with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, praised the African nation for its recent debt-reduction program and pledged further U.S. development assistance.

Clinton and Sirleaf met with reporters following their April 21 talks at the State Department. Clinton congratulated Sirleaf and her government on its recent successful negotiations to eliminate approximately \$1.2 billion in outstanding private-sector debt. "The United States is proud to have contributed to this effort through the World Bank's Debt Reduction Facility," Clinton said.

"Since 2007," she continued, "the United States has given more than \$211 million to clear Liberia's arrears to the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank, and we have canceled more than \$390 million in bilateral debt claims."

Clinton pledged "to go beyond the terms" of debt relief arrangement negotiated by Liberia and "cancel 100 percent of Liberia's remaining debts to us by the time Liberia reaches its completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative."

"We are proud to have played a key role in the debt elimination, which as the [Liberian] president just told me, will enable the children of Liberia not to be carrying a debt on their backs they had absolutely nothing to do in creating. We continue to



Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, left, and Secretary Clinton at the State Department April 21.

offer strong support for the transformation of Liberia, and in the last three years, we've committed over \$1 billion in bilateral assistance to the country," Clinton said.

"Our comprehensive assistance program includes helping Liberians reinvigorate their economy, encouraging private sector growth, improving the delivery of basic services such as health and education, rebuilding vital infrastructure, enhancing governance, extending the rule of law, using natural resources in a sustainable manner, and ensuring peace and security," she said.

The U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Clinton said, is working with Liberia to develop a Threshold Program that eventually will lead to Liberia's eligibility for additional aid that is focused on poverty reduction, sustained economic growth and improved governance.

MCC's Threshold Program is designed to assist countries that are on the "threshold" of eligibility for much larger Millennium Challenge Account Compacts. Threshold program assistance is used to help countries address the specific policy weaknesses indicated by their scores on 17 policy indicators in three categories: ruling justly, investing in people and encouraging economic freedom.

Clinton called it "a great honor and personal privilege" to welcome Sirleaf to the State Department. "I'm grateful for both her leadership and her friendship, and I'm particularly grateful for how she has never lost sight of her primary mission — to enable the people of her country to live their lives in peace and security, to have a chance to develop to the best of their abilities and raise their children to have even brighter futures. She has also continued to care about women and girls, which

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USAID Announces New Program to Strengthen Community HIV/AIDS . . .

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in urban areas. The USAID Strengthening Communities' Responses to HIV/AIDS Program plans to build on regional and national efforts already underway by Ethiopia's Federal HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office to bring services to people affected by the disease.

"This program, with support from the American people, will help Ethiopians affected by HIV/AIDS lead a better life by giving them the tools and services they need and deserve," Nancy Estes, USAID Acting Mission Director, said.

The program will strengthen the capacity of local civil society organizations to deliver integrated community HIV/AIDS services, including basic and advanced palliative care,

HIV counseling and testing, adherence monitoring and defaulter tracing, social support and asset building/economic strengthening. In addition, it will further develop and strengthen coordination and referrals between civil society organizations, local government and health facilities; and strengthen pre-service training and fellowship programs for social work and nursing students at local public and private training institutions.

Funding for this program is provided by the American people through the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and will be implemented by PATH over five years. PEPFAR is the largest commitment ever by any nation to combat a single disease. Ethiopia is one of PEPFAR's 15 focus countries, which collectively represent ap-

proximately 50 percent of HIV infections worldwide. Ethiopia received more than \$350 million in 2008 and over 200 million is allocated for 2009.

PATH is a U.S. based international nonprofit organization that creates sustainable, culturally relevant solutions, enabling communities worldwide to break longstanding cycles of poor health. PATH's partners for the USAID Strengthening Communities' Responses to HIV/AIDS include Dawn of Hope Ethiopia Association, Hope for Children Organization, International HIV/AIDS Alliance, International Relief & Development, International Training & Education Center on HIV, Mekdim Ethiopia National Association, Organization for Social Services for AIDS, and Westat. ♦

Clinton Praises Liberia's Sirleaf for Debt Reduction Actions . . .

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means a great deal to me."

Sirleaf praised Clinton for fighting for the rights of women and the education of girls — two factors that play a key role in the African development process.

Sirleaf described current conditions in her country. "Liberia is recovering from 14 years of conflict, a period before that in which there was neglect and little effort made to use our country's resources for the development of the people. ... When we took over, we faced a collapsed economy, destroyed infrastructure, many young people who only knew war and want.

"But we're glad today that we have

the opportunity to rebuild," she told reporters. "We formulated our poverty-reduction strategy, attempting to get our security sector reformed and functioning once again, rebuilding our economy. We always say Liberia is not a poor country; it's just a country that's been poorly managed. And so with our natural resources, we can open the economy — mineral, forestry, fishery, agriculture. We can then put our people back to work."

Sirleaf said her government is working hard to fix its infrastructure problems.

She thanked the United States for its continued support. The bipartisan support for aid to Liberia, she said, has enabled Liberia "to say we're well on the road from being a

failed state, as characterized a couple of years ago, to what we hope will be a transformation into a post-conflict success story."

"We know that we have to have primary responsibility for our development, that we have to be accountable to our people in the proper use of our resources, that you have to get a return on the investment that you make in our peace, in our development, and that we have to get the results that we all seek," the Harvard-educated economist and former banker told her audience.

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

Experts Explore Impact of World Financial Crisis on Africa

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington — Although the full impact of the global economic crisis on African development is not yet known, a group of African development and finance experts have gathered in Washington to discuss the crisis and offer recommendations to policymakers at the spring meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

The town-hall-style meeting April 23 was composed of a broad array of expert panels, including one with Jeffrey Krilla, senior managing director at Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP, a law firm; Katrin Kuhlmann, president of the Trade, Aid and Security Coalition of the GlobalWorks Foundation, a non-governmental organization; and Eva Bakonyi, the head of partnerships and donor relations at the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Krilla, who has spent his career focused on Africa and has had wide business and agribusiness experience on the continent, said the "good news" for Africa is that it is the region "least integrated" into the world economy and because of that "Africa has been spared a lot of the primary effects of the initial financial crisis. The bad news is that, instead, Africa is being hit by the aftershocks and the resulting global recession."

Identifying the areas in which Africa is currently being hurt is the first step toward addressing the crisis, he said. He said inflation has fallen from a 22 percent average across the continent to single digits in recent years. That, he said, has been

the direct result of African governments embracing economic reforms. "Almost all African countries have moved steadily, if slowly, toward a more open and market-driven economy," he said.

Countries should continue on that reformist trend and not backtrack in the wake of these tough economic times, he said, warning that "countries that backtrack will find themselves left further behind when the global recovery returns."



A steel plant near South Africa's industrial port of Saldanha Bay.

To help Africa weather the crisis, Krilla offered a few recommendations. The major trading partners should keep their markets open and not resort to protectionism, he said, and ensure that adequate levels of trade credit are made available for African and other developing nations. "At the same time," he said, "African governments should resist temptations to return to a command economy or use the crisis as a cover to renationalize companies or interject the state into the market, which has proven so harmful in the past and so lucrative to an elite few."

He also recommended that African countries use the crisis to get rid of obstacles to business in order to

promote trade development and increase regional integration.

Kuhlmann agreed that increased regional economic integration, greater infrastructure and more trade capacity are important for African development. Additionally, she recommended that economic and trade policy be more focused on agriculture.

"When we talk about trade with Africa, particularly here in Washington, we talk a lot about the African Growth and Opportunity Act [AGO], but AGO falls short on covering agriculture. It has created opportunity in other areas, but has not really touched agriculture. Agriculture is really where the long-term growth potential is," she said.

While AGO has helped create several hundred thousand jobs in the apparel sector in five key African countries, she said, those jobs alone, while important, are not going to be the key to long-term growth. Farming, she said, represents up to 40 percent of Africa's gross domestic product, makes up a huge percentage of its trade and is an area in which 450 million Africans find employment.

Bakonyi said the International Finance Corporation (IFC) is working to help Africa deal with the current crisis. She said IFC's mission is to promote sustainable private sector investment in infrastructure, health care and education in Africa and developing countries worldwide by investing with private sector partners on a commercial basis. Additionally, the IFC often provides advice and technical assistance, which, she said, is very important

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Pulitzer Prize for Drama Honors Play About Women in Wartime Congo

By Michael Bandler
Staff Writer

Washington — The African-American women characters created by playwright Lynn Nottage populate a vast expanse in terms of social class, time and place: a teenage girl in 1950s Brooklyn, a pretentious businesswoman, a seamstress, an affluent traveler in search of her African roots, a group of women brutalized during the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As different as they are, Nottage's protagonists are inexorably bound together — a vibrant, indomitable sorority of sorts that sets a standard not just for African-American women, not just for women, but for humanity as a whole.

Now Nottage's play, *Ruined*, set in a Congolese brothel populated by women seeking shelter from the horrors of war, has been named winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Writing in the *Chicago Sun-Times* in 2008 after the play's premiere, critic Hedy Weiss hailed *Ruined* as "a brash, searing, heart-of-darkness story, periodically shot through with moments of fearsome comedy and the redemptive spirit that suggests the sheer persistence of the life force."

Nottage — a Yale University professor who received a MacArthur "genius" grant in 2007 — is the second African-American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama, after Suzan-Lori Parks in 2002. Nottage said she plans to donate part of her \$10,000 prize to the Panzi Hospital in the Congo, which does



Playwright Lynn Nottage

reconstructive surgery for women.

Joining Nottage as Pulitzer Prize honorees in arts and letters, announced April 20, were novelist Elizabeth Strout, composer Steve Reich, poet W.S. Merwin, historians Annette Gordon-Reed and Douglas A. Blackmon, and biographer Jon Meacham.

The Pulitzer board praised *Ruined* as "a searing drama" that "compels audiences to face the horror of wartime rape and brutality while still finding affirmation of life and hope amid hopelessness."

In a recent interview, Nottage spoke about the Congolese women she had consulted as part of her research for *Ruined*, citing their shared resilience in the face of unimaginable hardship. "Despite the horrific things that they'd been

through," all of the women "were still able to find humor and smile and were determined to survive," she said. "I thought I was going to find broken women, but I found women who had been brutalized but were determined to move on."

Gordon-Reed is the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for history. Her book, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*, explores three generations of a slave family in 19th-century America, with specific attention to the relationship between President Thomas Jefferson and his slave (and suspected mistress) Sally Hemings, who was probably the mother of several of his children.

The prize for general nonfiction was awarded to Blackmon for his sober depiction of the lives of African Americans from the Civil War through the late 1940s, in

Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II. The Pulitzer board called it "a precise and eloquent work that examines a deliberate system of racial suppression and that rescues a multitude of atrocities from virtual obscurity."

Meacham, editor of *Newsweek* magazine, won the biography award for *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*, his portrayal of the tempestuous, often contradictory man who was the seventh U.S. president. Meacham's focus is on the shift in presidential power that took place during Jackson's tenure from 1829 to 1837, underscored by the onetime Indian fighter's belief in what the author terms "the primacy of the will of the common people."

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Pulitzer Prize for Drama Honors Play About Women in Wartime Congo . . .

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Strout received the fiction award for *Olive Kitteridge*, a collection of interrelated short stories forming a novel. Set in Maine, its central character is a seventh-grade math teacher, and it combines depictions of three decades in the lives of Olive and her family with descriptions of the rugged landscape around them. In this setting, loneliness and loss are offset by humor and hope.

The avant-garde Reich, a much-honored musician frequently described as America's greatest living composer, is as much indebted to the textures, rhythms and structure of non-Western music as he is to traditional Western classical music. He received the Pulitzer Prize in mu-



Novelist Elizabeth Strout

of an advisory board composed of journalists, art and literary critics, cultural specialists and others. The prizes are funded through a bequest left by Joseph Pulitzer — an early 20th-century newspaper publisher — to the university trustees.

2009 PULITZER PRIZES — ARTS AND LETTERS:

Fiction: *Olive Kitteridge*, by Elizabeth Strout

Drama: *Ruined*, by Lynn Nottage

History: *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*, by Annette Gordon-Reed

Biography: *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*, by Jon Meacham

Poetry: *The Shadow of Sirius*, by W.S. Merwin

General Nonfiction: *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, by Douglas A. Blackmon

Music: *Double Sextet*, by Steve Reich

For more information, visit the Pulitzer Prize (<http://www.pulitzer.org/>) Web site.

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Composer Steve Reich

sic for *Double Sextet*, a three-movement work featuring two identical ensembles — flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and vibraphone — interlocking to produce an overall pattern.

For Merwin, 81, this year's Pulitzer Prize for poetry is his second. He was awarded the prize in 1971 for a collection of poems entitled *The*

Carrier of Ladders. The 2009 Pulitzer honors him for *The Shadow of Sirius*, a quiet, contemplative, highly personal collection that focuses on such fundamental aspects of life as childhood, mortality and memory.

The Pulitzer prizes are awarded in journalism as well as in

arts and letters. The 2009 honors for reportage covered such topics as wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan, last year's U.S. presidential campaign, political issues in several U.S. states, and devastation caused by hurricanes and wildfires.

The Pulitzers are awarded each April by the trustees of Columbia University, on the recommendations

Clinton Discusses Wide-Ranging U.S. Diplomatic Agenda

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is pursuing a wide-ranging diplomatic agenda that is based on strengthening alliances, cultivating partnerships with key regional powers and building constructive relationships with China and Russia, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says.

"In today's world, we face new challenges that have no respect for borders. Not one of them can be dealt with by the United States alone," Clinton said April 22 before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "None, however, can be solved without us leading."

Committee Chairman Howard Berman said Congress is eager to examine the foreign policy priorities of the Obama administration, which is approaching the end of its first 100 days in office. Future hearings, he said, will focus on the State Department's 2010 fiscal year budget and on foreign assistance programs and funding.

Clinton said the diplomatic agenda emerging in the past three months is premised on three actions:

Strengthening U.S. alliances with democratic partners in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Western Hemisphere.

Cultivating partnerships with key

regional powers.

Building constructive relationships with China and Russia.



Secretary Clinton testifies before Congress April 22.

At the same time, the United States is working with its partners Japan and South Korea to address not just Northeast Asian security concerns, but other global issues such as the current economic crisis and climate change, the secretary said. And she said the United States is working with India on an array of security concerns. These activities illustrate an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy: The United States is not just a trans-Atlantic power, but a trans-Pacific power as well.

"Asia will be an indispensable partner in years to come," Clinton said.

While working with NATO allies and friends in the European Union to resolve issues that require close working partnerships, Clinton said,

the United States is also working in the Western Hemisphere to pursue a new energy partnership, to fight illicit drug trafficking and to consolidate democratic gains. President

Obama attended the fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago April 17-19.

"We are building closer ties with regional anchors, including Brazil, Indonesia and Turkey. These are not only as partners, but they can be leaders on issues ranging from deforestation to democracy," Clinton said. "We will work with China and Russia wherever we can, and we'll be candid about our areas of disagreement."

She said the United States is committed to working with Russia on finding a successor agreement to the START pact on cutting nuclear arsenals, which expires in December. Both President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev have stated a desire to complete negotiations as soon as practical. Talks are scheduled to begin April 24 in Rome. START was originally signed between leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War era and focuses on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms.

In the Middle East, the United States has engaged to help bring the Israelis and Palestinians together to resume peace talks.

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Clinton Discusses Wide-Ranging U.S. Diplomatic Agenda . . .

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"We're maintaining our bedrock core commitment to Israel's security, providing economic support, security assistance, and we are also doing what we can to bolster the Palestinian Authority, and to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza," she said.

Clinton said the United States would not deal with or fund a Palestinian government that included Hamas, a designated terrorist group, unless it meets three international conditions. "We will not deal with nor in any way fund a Palestinian government that includes Hamas unless and until Hamas has renounced violence, recognized Israel and agrees to follow the previous obligations of the Palestinian Authority," she said.

On Iran's nuclear weapons development program, Clinton said the United States is pursuing a new

approach to prevent Iran from weapons development. This approach includes participating in negotiations as a full partner along with Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

"We actually believe that by following the diplomatic path we are on, we gain credibility and influence with a number of nations who would have to participate in order to make the sanctions regime as tight and as crippling as we would want it to be," Clinton testified. Iran has denied it is developing a weapons program, but it has continued to enrich uranium, which is an essential component of atom bomb development.

Clinton said diplomacy among governments is not the only means of engagement. Diplomacy by citizens, nongovernmental organizations, businesses, universities and others is also essential to advancing U.S. goals and objectives.

"And so finally, we will work to expand opportunity and protect human rights, strengthen civil society, live up to the ideals that define our nation, work to advance education and health care, the rule of law and good governance, fight against corruption, expand opportunities for women and girls and those on the margins of society," Clinton said.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog. (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>)

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

Experts Explore Impact of World Financial Crisis on Africa . . .

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because "money itself does not solve [development] problems in Africa."

IFC's investment in Africa, she said, has increased significantly from \$140 million in 2003 to more than \$1.4 billion in the last two years, but she cautioned that investment may not increase much more in the short term because of the financial crisis.

Focusing on the crisis itself, Bakonyi said African markets, like many others worldwide, have been

unable to escape the global economic downturn. "Because of the economic crisis, there is a serious unemployment issue, which leads to human crises," she said.

While the IFC "always thinks about cooperation and partnership" as it conducts its business, Bakonyi said during these times of crisis the IFC has ratcheted up cooperation to a new level. Cooperation and partnership among international banks, businesses and governments, she stressed, are key to getting through the crisis. To illustrate her point, she said the IFC is now working closely with its Japanese, German

and other development counterparts to help promote development progress in Africa.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog. (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>)

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Stability in Pakistan Is Central to U.S. Efforts in Afghanistan

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The stability and longevity of democracy in Pakistan is central to efforts by the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan, and it is also central to U.S.-Pakistani relations, Defense Secretary Robert Gates says.

“My hope is that there will be an increasing recognition on the part of the Pakistani government that the Taliban in Pakistan are in fact an existential threat to the democratic government of that country,” Gates said at an April 23 press conference while he was visiting U.S. Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The Marines are preparing to deploy to Afghanistan within days.

“I think that some of the leaders certainly understand that, but it is important that they not only recognize it but take the appropriate actions to deal with it.”

The concerns being expressed in Washington and elsewhere stem from aggressive efforts by the Taliban insurgency, which is using the federal tribal areas of northwest Pakistan as a base for launching operations into Afghanistan. A day after Gates’ remarks at Camp Lejeune, a Taliban commander said he was withdrawing his fighters from the Buner Valley, which is just 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the Pakistani capital of Islamabad. Gates said the United States wants to support the Pakistani government, “but it is important that they

recognize the real threats to their country.”

President Obama meets with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari in Washington May 6–7. He will hold three-way consultations with the two leaders.



Defense Secretary Robert Gates meets U.S. Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, April 23.

NEW STRATEGY

In late March, the president announced a new strategy that is intended to disrupt, dismantle and defeat the terrorist group al-Qaida and the remnants of the former Taliban regime that have been working aggressively to regain control of Afghanistan. Defense Under Secretary Michele Flournoy said in recent congressional testimony that to accomplish this mission the United States must eliminate these groups’ safe haven in the mountain range on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

“All of the elements of national power we employ — political, diplomatic, military and economic — must be oriented on achieving this

goal,” Flournoy said. Success will depend on a commitment of resources and funding coupled with time, she said.

Obama announced he was sending an additional 17,000 U.S. troops and Marines to Afghanistan in the coming months to join the 38,000 already there, and he is also ordering an additional 4,000 troops to act as trainers for the Afghan army.

Every American combat unit in Afghanistan will be partnered with an Afghan unit, and more trainers will be requested from NATO allies to ensure that every Afghan unit has a coalition partner. The goal is to build the Afghan army from about 80,000 troops to 134,000 and expand

the national police force from 78,000 to 82,000 officers.

Currently, the total number of U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan is 70,140 troops, according to the Pentagon and NATO.

Flournoy said the military will work to build the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency capabilities of both countries.

Gates said that one of the areas where the United States is seeking assistance from allies and partners is civilian capacity in Afghanistan, “people who are agronomists, veterinarians, who know how to put in water supplies, educators, accountants, lawyers and so on.” ♦

United States Supports Free, Independent, Sovereign Lebanon

*By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer*

Washington — The United States supports a free, independent and sovereign Lebanon and parliamentary elections there in June that are without intimidation and outside influence, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says.

“We believe strongly that the people of Lebanon must be able to choose their own representatives in open and fair elections without the specter of violence and intimidation, and certainly free of outside interference,” Clinton said after talks with Lebanese President Michel Sleiman during her three-hour visit to Beirut April 26.

“We will continue to support the voices of moderation in Lebanon and the responsible institutions of the Lebanese state that they are working to build,” Clinton said.

Clinton also said she was in Beirut, at the end of a brief trip to Iraq and Kuwait, to pledge U.S. support for the U.N. special tribunal investigating the murder of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri along with 21 others in a massive bombing in Beirut in 2005. She visited the memorial to the former prime minister, saying, “I will honor his memory and pay my respects to all those who have been killed while defending Lebanon’s sovereignty and independence.”

On the parliamentary elections, Clinton said the Lebanese people are taking them very seriously, but she did not want to predict any outcomes. In a press briefing, the secretary repeated that she hoped the elections would be free of intimidation and interference. While saying her trip was cut short by the need

to return quickly to Washington, Clinton said her visit was intended, in part, to send a very strong signal of U.S. concern and support for the Lebanese people. Clinton said U.S. support for the Lebanese armed forces remains a pillar of U.S. bilat-



Secretary Clinton, left, and Lebanese President Sleiman April 27.

eral cooperation. She said there is only one recognized, legitimate army in Lebanon and it is the Lebanese army, and not the large guerrilla force maintained by the terrorist group Hezbollah.

Clinton said the United States will not jeopardize the security of Lebanon while pursuing improved relations with Syria. In March, President Obama sent two envoys to Damascus, Syria’s capital, to reopen diplomatic channels.

IRAQ MISSION

While in Baghdad, Iraq’s capital, on April 25, the secretary said one purpose of her visit was to assure the

Iraqi people that even though the United States is preparing to withdraw the bulk of its combat forces over the next year, U.S. support will remain strong. Appearing with Clinton, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said recent suicide attacks that have killed approximately 150 people in two days would not “derail the government’s determination to pursue plans to stabilize the country.”

“The secretary’s message today to all of us was a very assuring message that the United States will continue to support the efforts of the Iraqi government and the enhancement of Iraqi security and stability and will work with all of us to add additional gains in the area of democracy,” Zebari said.

Clinton said she found the progress in Iraq encouraging, and that the United States is committed to seeing an Iraq that is sovereign, stable and self-reliant, and that is fully integrated into the region.

“We are working toward an orderly transition of responsibility from the American military to the Iraqi security forces, and we continue to help train and equip these forces so they will take the lead in safeguarding their country,” Clinton said.

The United States has pledged to withdraw the bulk of its combat forces by August 2010, and all of its forces by end of 2011. Clinton said that as the military forces are drawn down, the United States will deepen its civilian cooperation in accordance with an already approved strategic framework agreement. ♦

United States Will Push for Increased Trade Liberalization

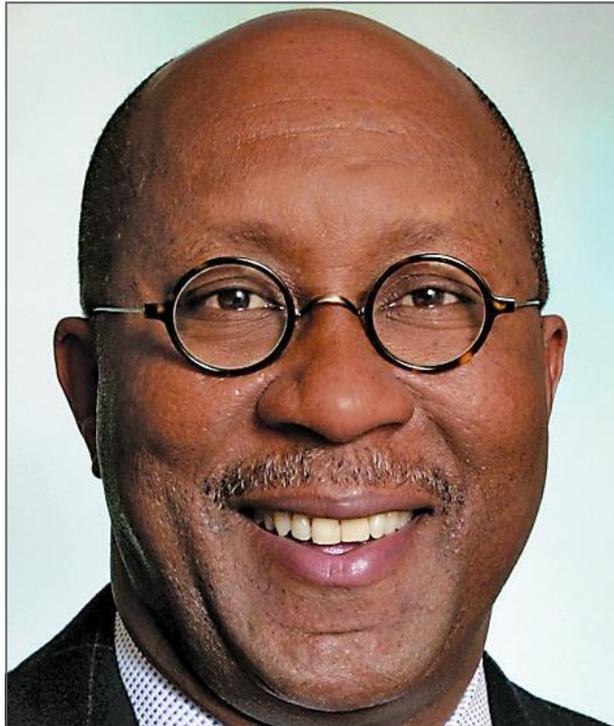
By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration will work for the successful completion of the long-running Doha round of world trade talks and for congressional passage of three free-trade agreements, says U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk.

“Now is the time to revive global trade and to lay the groundwork for an even more robust, more open trading system in future decades,” Kirk said in his first major policy speech April 23 at Georgetown University in Washington. “At this moment of economic uncertainty, we should make our best effort to create the strong global trading system of tomorrow.”

The Doha Development Round is the current trade-negotiation round of the World Trade Organization (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Trade_Organization) (WTO), which began in November 2001. Its objective is to lower trade barriers (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_barrier) around the world and increase trade (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade>) globally. As of 2008, talks had stalled over a divide on major issues, such as agriculture (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture>), industrial tariffs (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tariffs>) and nontariff barriers (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nontariff_barriers_to_trade), services and trade remedies, according to Ian Fergusson of the U.S. Congressional Research Service.

Kirk, who became chief U.S. trade negotiator in March, said one of his primary missions is to see the Doha trade round fulfilled as a major contribution to global growth. But he added that the United States will need a clearer view of what it can expect to receive from the trade



U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk.

talks, and what it is expected to give.

“For America, that means meaningful market access for our farmers, ranchers, manufacturers and service providers,” Kirk said.

While some may doubt the virtue of free trade, Kirk said that more rigorous U.S. trade enforcement will ensure that other nations honor their commitments. “We will use all the tools in USTR’s toolbox to go after those trade barriers,” he said. “Stepping up trade enforcement is about opening up markets, not clos-

ing them down.”

U.S. trade exports accounted for a record 13 percent of the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP), the broadest measure of total goods and services, in 2008. In the three years leading up to the current economic crisis, export expansion accounted for 47 percent of overall American GDP growth, Kirk said.

“In the context of this crisis, U.S. exports have fallen 16 percent, while U.S. unemployment has risen,” he said.

Kirk said the benefits from trade are lasting and widespread across the U.S. economy. For example:

One in six American manufacturing jobs is supported by trade.

Agricultural exports support nearly a million jobs.

Services account for eight out of every 10 jobs in the United States, and expanded trade would create more service

jobs.

Fully 97 percent of America’s exporters have fewer than 500 employees.

Jobs supported by exports of goods pay 13 percent to 18 percent more than the national average.

“A strong case can be made for trade as a creator not just of jobs, but of the better-paying jobs that Americans want and need today,” he said.

(Continued on page 13)

International Monetary Fund Sees Global Economic Decline in 2009

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — The global economy will contract by 1.3 percent in 2009 in the most severe recession since World War II, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported April 22 in its World Economic Outlook.

But with strong economic policies that instill confidence, especially in the banking sector, growth can return in the advanced countries in early 2010, and unemployment may start showing signs of diminishing at the end of 2010, according to the report.

"This is not the time for complacency, and the need for strong policies ... especially on the financial fronts, is as acute as ever," IMF chief economist Olivier Blanchard said. "But with such policies in place, there is light at the end of this long tunnel." The International Monetary Fund, founded in the 1940s to ensure the stability of the international monetary system, released its outlook a few days before IMF and World Bank spring meetings open in Washington.

The key to ending the recession is healing the financial sector, and that requires reporting the full extent of global financial losses, the report says. "Convincing progress on this front is crucial for an economic recovery to take hold and would significantly enhance the effectiveness of monetary and fiscal stimulus," it says. The outlook says that recovery from this recession likely will be slower than in previous ones.



IMF chief economist Olivier Blanchard

According to the IMF, the intensity of the economic contraction likely will start moderating from the second quarter of 2009 onward, and the concerted action taken by the Group of 20 advanced economies in April generated some encouraging signs.

The advanced economies will contract by 3.8 percent this year, with the U.S. economy shrinking by 2.8 percent, according to the IMF. The emerging and developing economies of the world will fare better, managing to grow by 1.6 percent in 2009 followed by a resurgence of growth at 4 percent in 2010.

The report indicates that if the advanced economies delay tackling the underlying problems of the global economy, the downturn may last longer and go deeper, costing taxpayers more. And it warns against protectionism in trade and finances, which could cause huge

damages to the world economy, such as occurred as a result of the policies adopted in the 1930s that worsened the Great Depression.

The report calls for greater international cooperation to avoid exacerbating cross-border strains and international spillovers from actions taken by individual nations. The World Economic Outlook says international actions taken by the IMF and others can play an effective role in easing the impact of recession on developing countries.

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

United States Will Push for Increased Trade . . .

(Continued from page 12)

Kirk said earlier in the week in a press conference that President Obama believes the North American Free Trade Agreement can be strengthened without renegotiating the trade arrangement with Canada and Mexico, which are the United States' largest trading partners. Obama had said during his presidential campaign that he wanted improved worker protections and environmental standards addressed in the trade agreement.

And the Obama administration wants Congress to pass bilateral free-trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea, Kirk said. ♦

Mobile and Satellite Phones Are Useful Election Monitoring Tools

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Staff Writer

Washington — Millions of people worldwide use mobile phones to communicate with friends, take photos, play music and check e-mail. Democracy advocates are harnessing the power of mobile phones to monitor elections by transmitting critical data in real time.

In many developing nations, information communications technology (ICT), which employs mobile phones (commonly referred to as cell phones in the United States) and computers, is increasingly the main source of communication, says Ian Schuler, ICT manager at the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Washington.

"In important elections like the December 2008 presidential contest and runoff in Ghana, it was only natural that ICT be used as a tool to help ensure a free and fair outcome," Schuler told America.gov.

NDI has provided technical support to nonpartisan election monitors in more than 70 countries. Over the past four years, it has used short message system (SMS) technology to report on elections in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Montenegro, Indonesia and the Palestinian Authority. SMS technology operates using mobile phones and computer software to transmit, collect and interpret timely information from volunteer observers at polling stations, said Schuler, who helped develop the training and ICT strategy for the Ghanaian election.

"Election observers use a series of carefully constructed codes to

phone in very short text messages limited to 160 characters that goes straight into a computer," Schuler explained.

In the Ghanaian election, Schuler said, "We had 1,070 people called rapid response observers reporting from 230 different constituencies who sent their text messages into a command center where specialized computer software processed the information."



A volunteer tracks reports on the Ghanaian election.

He said the monitors were required to submit five reports a day and could transmit complex information in very short messages "because they already had a questionnaire indicating what they were looking for and each of the questions and answers had a code. This would then tell the computer what they were observing."

The volunteers, who received a one-day training session on the questionnaires and codes, used their own mobile phones but were provided with prepaid phone cards. "Since the data they sent was in electronic format [rather than by voice], we had that information put together within minutes," Schuler

said.

The result, he said, is that "this rapid reporting of election conditions has proven very reliable, cost effective and helped to instill confidence in the democratic process."

In Ghana, NDI worked with a local organization called the Center for Democratic Development (CDD.) Jared Ford, a senior program officer at NDI, said, "I think Ghana is really going to be the model for how SMS works and how local monitoring groups like the CDD take ownership of the process."

By using SMS, "CDD had its election results hours, days before the [Ghanaian] electoral commission did and that played a key role because the contest was very close with two runoff elections," said Gemima Neves, NDI senior program manager for Central and West Africa.

CDD official Franklin Oduro said the organization was able to help the electoral commission by alerting it to supply shortages at polling sites.

Kojo Asante, who ran the CDD operations center, told America.gov, "I have never done anything like this before. In other elections, we used laptops to build a database of information sent in by monitors speaking over mobiles, but it was a pretty slow process."

The speed and accuracy of the SMS process, Asante said, "really affected our media releases, which we were getting out quicker because of the real-time information we received at midday, and allowed

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Democratic Policing Essential to Protect Individual Liberties

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — Police officials are often the first contact a person has with a country's legal system. The American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) helps train law enforcement officials around the world so that the first citizen-police encounter is a positive one.

ABA ROLI is a nonprofit program that implements legal reform programs in more than 40 countries. It has more than 400 professional staff working in the United States and abroad, including a cadre of short- and long-term expatriate volunteers who, since the program's inception in 2007, have contributed more than \$200 million in donated legal assistance.

ABA ROLI "fully recognizes the direct link between democratization efforts and the ability of states to protect [their] citizens and maintain order while protecting individual liberties and civil and political rights," said Mary Greer, senior adviser to ABA ROLI's Criminal Law Reform Program.

"We work with training academies, whether they're prosecutors, police academies, or, to some extent, judicial academies," Greer said. "Often our work with police is in the context of a changing criminal-procedure-code environment," she told America.gov.

Changing a country's criminal procedures to conform to international standards means a shift in roles and

responsibilities, Greer explained. In former Soviet Union countries, she said, police and prosecutors ruled supreme under the old system. Now, judges, not police, issue search warrants and approve arrest warrants.



Panamanian police cadets

ABA ROLI's goals when conducting training overseas are to insure that international standards of fairness and transparency are met. "Fair trial standards," Greer said, "start with investigations that are conducted by people with the expertise as well as the knowledge of human rights — whether [those] human rights are victim's rights or the accused or witnesses."

PROMOTING A RULE-OF-LAW CULTURE AMONG POLICE

One of ABA ROLI's most recent programs is a comprehensive review and reform of the Panamanian

police curriculum and training methods. Begun in February, the goal of the yearlong effort is to help Panamanian police trainers in promoting a rule-of-law culture among Panamanian police.

Michael McCullough, director of ABA's Latin America and the Caribbean ROLI program, told America.gov that a 2006 survey conducted by the Inter-American Development Bank concluded that 46 percent of Panamanians believed the criminal justice system fails to punish criminals.

"A lot of citizen confidence is going to be based on their perceptions of the police," McCullough said.

"Police in many cases are the first contact that a citizen has with the legal system — and sometimes the only direct contact," he said.

"So to a large extent, the impressions that citizens have of the legal system will result from their impressions of the police. We think it is very important for the police to be highly professional, ethical and competent in the performance of their duties."

Especially important is that the police understand how to conduct effective investigations, he said.

"If [police] don't effectively gather the proper evidence and follow the chain of custody and comply with the constitutional guarantees, the

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Half of Population at Risk for Curable, Preventable Malaria

By Cheryl Pellerin
Science Writer

Washington — Malaria infects more than 500 million people a year and kills more than 1 million — mostly infants, young children and pregnant women in Africa. Fighting the disease takes the determined work of many around the world, all of whom were recognized on April 25, World Malaria Day.

The annual commemoration — instituted by the World Health Organization's World Health Assembly in 2007 — is an opportunity for countries in affected regions to learn from each other's experiences. New donors were encouraged to join the global partnership against malaria, as researchers and academic institutions highlighted their successes in combating the disease.

"The United States stands with our global partners and people around the world to reaffirm our commitment to make the U.S. a leader in ending deaths from malaria by 2015," President Barack Obama said in an April 24 statement.

"This begins with ending malaria as a major public health threat in Africa," he added, "where it kills nearly 1 million people each year and overwhelms public health systems. It is time to redouble our efforts to rid the world of a disease that does not have to take lives."

The theme of this year's World Malaria Day was "Counting Malaria Out." The Roll Back Malaria Partnership, whose partners include the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative and the World Health Organization (WHO), is launching a campaign to engage partners in a comprehensive

effort to count and quantify the progress and impact of the fight against malaria.

"We know we can put an end to this cycle of disease and poverty," U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in an April 24 video state-

third year of implementation, the initiative's work reached more than 32 million people.

In 2008, the U.S. procured more than 6.4 million mosquito nets to be distributed free to pregnant women and young children, and 15.6 mil-



ment. "In the last few years we have witnessed a growing global effort to combat this curable and preventable disease."

U.S. CONTRIBUTION

In fiscal year 2009, the United States will commit \$527 million to fighting malaria. It has contributed more than \$3.3 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice told the audience at an April 24 World Malaria Day event in New York.

The President's Malaria Initiative, launched in 2005, represents a historic \$1.2 billion, five-year expansion of U.S. government resources to fight malaria in Africa. During its

lion doses of anti-malarial drug treatments. The U.S. government also sponsored indoor spraying that covered 6 million houses and protected nearly 25 million people.

But the work is not complete, Rice said. "We must do more to target programs within a handful of particularly hard-hit countries, including Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania, which together account for roughly half the global deaths from malaria. We must do more to deliver nets and drugs to civilians battered by conflict or housed in refugee camps. And we must do more to beat back the specter of drug-resistant strains of malaria and ultimately move toward a second-

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Half of Population at Risk for Curable, Preventable Malaria . . .

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generation vaccine.”

As part of the 2010 foreign assistance budget, Rice said, Obama plans to request robust investments in life-saving global health programs in such areas as maternal and child health, family planning and other core health programs.

THE MALARIA CHALLENGE

Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease caused by the one-celled *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite and three closely related species. Each parasite lives part of its life in people and part in mosquitoes. The parasites are transmitted to people in the bites of infected female *Anopheles* mosquitoes.

Half the world's population is at risk for malaria, especially those in less developed countries. The burden of malaria is heaviest in sub-Saharan Africa, but the disease also afflicts people in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and parts of Europe.

In 2008, the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) developed a strategic plan for malaria research and outlined a comprehensive research agenda for malaria pathogenesis, immunology and epidemiology to better understand the complex interactions among malaria parasites, mosquito vectors and human hosts.

“While we celebrate important advances in the fight against malaria, we also recognize the enormous challenges that lie ahead,” Dr. Lee Hall, chief of the Parasitology and International Programs Branch in the NIAID Division of Microbiology and

Infectious Diseases, and NIAID Director Dr. Anthony Fauci wrote in an April 25 statement.

“For example,” they wrote, “we need faster and more reliable methods for diagnosing malaria to identify different parasite species and drug-resistant strains that may emerge. We also need to develop systematic ways to translate the

involved in insecticide resistance that are now being evaluated for use in the field.

NIAID also has launched a new initiative, the International Centers of Excellence in Malaria Research, to support a novel, global, multidisciplinary approach to understanding malaria in the evolving context of control, elimination and eradication.



A

enormous wealth of basic information concerning the parasite and mosquito vectors into effective strategies for treating and controlling malaria.”

MALARIA RESEARCH

Researchers supported by NIAID are making progress in developing new countermeasures to fight malaria. NIAID-supported scientists are engaged in research and development that supports about a third of the worldwide malaria drug-research portfolio.

NIAID also supports research on 20 vaccine candidates, seven of which are in clinical trials. Studies on basic mosquito biology have led to the identification of genetic markers

video statement (<http://www.youtube.com/statevideo>) by Secretary of State Clinton on World Malaria Day is available online at the YouTube Web Site.

More information about World Malaria Day is available at the WHO malaria (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/annual/malaria/en/index.html>) Web site and the CDC malaria (<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/WorldMalariaDay/>) Web site.

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See also

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

Telling America's story

Democratic Policing Essential to Protect Individual Liberties . . .

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prosecutor's hands will be tied at trial," McCullough said.

The ABA ROLI program in Panama, which is funded in part by the U.S. government, is part of a larger agreement between the governments of Panama and the United States to reform Panama's justice sector, McCullough said.

INTERNATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS

A properly trained police force enhances the international community's efforts to control transnational crime, Greer said.

For example, an ABA ROLI training program for police officers in Ukraine has made extradition requests by the United States proceed more smoothly, she said. Likewise,

cases involving the trafficking of women from Moldova to Ukraine were facilitated by ABA ROLI training regarding legal issues between jurisdictions.

"So much more crime is global," Greer said. "Terrorism, money laundering, cybercrime are truly global crimes."

"You really have to work even harder ... at trying to devise a regional strategy within country-specific priorities," she said.

More information about ABA ROLI (<http://www.abanet.org/rol/>) is available on the ABA Web site.

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Mobile and Satellite Phones Are Useful Election Monitoring Tools . . .

(Continued from page 14)

us to give a more reliable account of how the election was going."

**SATELLITE PHONES HELP
ELECTION MONITORS**

New information technology makes it easier for outside election observers to do their jobs, Lisa Gates, press secretary for the International Republican Institute (IRI) in Washington, told america.gov. IRI has deployed dozens of teams to monitor foreign elections, many of which used satellite phones to gather information about polling station conditions.

Shawn Beighle, IRI's director of ICT, said that in elections in Nigeria, Georgia, Kenya, Ukraine and

Bangladesh, "we used satellite phones because in a lot of the countries we can't trust the cellular networks to be functional. Some countries even shut down cell phone networks during elections."

Beighle, who directed the ICT efforts for the IRI team deployed to the 2007 Nigerian presidential contest, said, "In that election we supplied more than 25 sat phones to observer teams. They were given a one-page cheat sheet of monitoring questions to which they would phone in quick answers to an integrated voice response [IVR] system operated by the command center in Abuja."

Because phone time is expensive, Beighle said, the IVR technology,

similar to an automated customer-service phone system, allows "teams to voice quick responses, usually yes or no, or choose a multiple-choice answer to the preset list of monitoring questions, without having a long conversation."

Like the SMS process, IVR enables a real-time picture of election conditions to be developed, Gates said. "We're able to have updates every hour on what our teams are seeing throughout the entire country using basic, easy-to-read data."

"Various political and civil society actors involved in the election depend on such quality and reliable information to give them a more holistic picture of what happened during the election," Gates said. ♦