



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

United States Peace Corps Returns to Ethiopia

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) - After nearly a decade's absence, the United States Peace Corps has returned to Ethiopia. On October 2, United States Ambassador to Ethiopia Donald Yamamoto and Ethiopia's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Tekeda Alemu signed a Peace Corps Country Agreement. The agreement reestablishes the United States Peace Corps presence in Ethiopia. "The return of Peace Corps to Ethiopia is an important part of the United States commitment to building a more prosperous Ethiopia," said Ambassador Yamamoto.



Ambassador Yamamoto (center) and Peace Corps Regional Director for Africa Henry McKoy finalize the Country Agreement with State Minister Tekeda Alemu

(Continued on page 2)

U.S. Embassy Announces 2009 Diversity Visa Lottery

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) - The U.S. Department of State will begin accepting applications for the 2009 Diversity Immigrant Visa Program on October 3, 2007 at 12 p.m. (U.S. Eastern Daylight Time). Applications will be accepted until December 2, 2007 at 12 p.m. (U.S. Eastern Standard Time).

Applications for the 2009 Diversity Immigration Visa Program (DV Program) must be submitted via the Internet. Paper entries

will not be accepted. The U.S. Department of State has established a dedicated website for the submission of electronic Diversity Visa entries, at www.dvlottery.state.gov. All entries must be made at this site. Applicants are encouraged to apply early in order to avoid any delays that may occur in the final days of the registration period. No entries will be accepted after 12 p.m. U.S. Eastern Standard Time on December 2, 2007.

The rules for the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program are very clear. Complete details can be found at www.dvlottery.state.gov. Applicants are advised to read all the rules carefully before entering. Errors made in the application automatically disqualify the individual from being issued a visa. Applicants should carefully review the qualifications for a Diversity Visa. Individuals who do not clearly qualify for a Diversity Visa based on their edu-

(Continued on page 2)

U.S. MISSION ACTIVITIES

Gospel Music, Manzuma and Chanting Provide Music for Conferring of a Degree on Rev. Butts (P 3)

Roundtable Forum Discusses History and Future of Ethiopian-American Relationships (P 4)

Address by Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts at Abyssinian Baptist Church Press Conference (P 4)

Rev. Calvin Butts Lays Cornerstone for the Arnold J. Ford Center for the African Diaspora (P 8)

Government of Ethiopia Takes Ownership of Sebeta Health Quarantine Facility (P 9)

Demera and Maskal Celebration at the U.S. Embassy (P 10)

AFRICAN ISSUES

President Bush's Remarks on Africa (P 11)

U.S. Africa Command Will Enhance Local Skills, Problem Solving (P 12)

Consultations with African Partners Key to U.N. Process (P 13)

AMERICAN NEWS

U.S. Muslims Observe Ramadan in Supportive Environment (P 14)

Hard Work, Supportive Friends Helped Woman Break into Politics (P 16)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Human Rights Declaration Is a Call to Support Burmese Freedom (P 17)

Burma's Monks Have History of Democratic Protest (P 18)

Small Arms Destruction Efforts Reverberate Around the World (P 19)

HIV/AIDS & ENVIRONMENT

HIV/AIDS Fight Targets Health, Related Development Issues (P 20)

U.S. Agency Funds Climate Change Projects in Nine Nations (P 23)

United States Peace Corps Returns to . . .

(Continued from page 1)

With support from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), 43 Peace Corps Volunteers will arrive in Ethiopia on October 7, 2007 to work with the people of Ethiopia in their fight against HIV/AIDS. The volunteers will spend two-year assignments working under the Ministry of Health/HAPCO in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, and with orphans and vulnerable children.

Ethiopia is strategically important to the United States and to the region in promoting peace and security, advancing economic development, and creating a better and more prosperous future for the people of Ethiopia and the region. Peace Corps Volunteers work with people who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

The U.S. Peace Corps was first established in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, when he challenged young people to serve their country in promoting world peace and friendship by living and working in other countries. Between 1961 and 2007, more than 187,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have been invited to serve in 139 countries.

Ethiopia was one of the first countries to invite the Peace Corps to establish its program of peace and friendship. In September 1962, 279 Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Ethiopia to serve as secondary school teachers. From 1962 to 1977, and then again between 1995 and 1999 when the program closed due to conflict in the region, Peace Corps/Ethiopia was one of the largest Peace Corps programs in the world, with Volunteers working in education, health, small business, rural development, law, and agricul-

ture. During this period, more than 3,500 Volunteers served in rural communities all over Ethiopia. In January 2007, Peace Corps was pleased to accept the Government of Ethiopia's request to resume activities.

Country Director for Peace Corps/Ethiopia Peter Parr said at today's signing ceremony, "It is a great honor for me to come home to Ethiopia where I lived for many years as a young person, and for me and the Peace Corps/Ethiopia family to be able to share in the realities of building more extensive relations between the people of Ethiopia and the people of the United States." ♦

U.S. Embassy Announces 2009 Diversity . . .

(Continued from page 1)

cation and/or work experience, or who will not be able to present clear evidence of such qualifications at their interview, should not apply. Applicants whose names are drawn will be required to pay an application fee when they appear for their visa interview. This application fee is not refundable. Applicants who are denied a visa at their interview because they do not possess the required education or work experience, or for any other reason, will not receive a refund of their application fee.

A Diversity Visa applicant may prepare and submit his or her own entry, or someone may assist the applicant to submit the entry. Each

applicant is allowed to enter only one time, regardless of whether the applicant directly submits the entry, or is assisted by an attorney, friend, relative, etc. Applicants who submit more than one entry for themselves will be automatically disqualified. It is essential that applicants ensure that all information on the entry form is complete and correct as required by 2009 DV Program guidelines. Any errors or omissions will result in disqualification. Each applicant who properly submits his/her DV Program application will receive a notification letter at the mailing address provided on the application.

Diversity Visa winners (those applicants whose names are drawn) will be notified by mail of their inter-

view dates. They should not contact the U.S. Embassy regarding their interviews. It is very important that DV winners arrive for their interview date and time as directed. DV winners who miss their appointments will have to reschedule. This will be possible only on a space-available basis.

Complete information about the 2009 Diversity Immigrant Visa Program is available at www.dvlottery.state.gov. ♦

Gospel Music, Manzuma and Chanting Provide Music for Conferring of a Degree on Rev. Butts

The Abyssinian Baptist Church Choir Ensemble, Mohammed Awol and Group and Chanters from the Ethiopian Orthodox tradition performed at the Engineering Conference Hall of the Faculty of Technology at Addis Ababa University on September 26, 2007. This musical celebration served in part to honor Rev. Calvin Butts, pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York on the occasion of the conferring of an honorary degree from Addis Ababa University (AAU). Over 400 Addis Ababa University faculty members, high school students and members of the Abyssinian Baptist Church attended the event.

Twenty-four chanters from the St. George's Orthodox Church presented vocal liturgical music,

known as 'chanting' in the Ethiopian Orthodox tradition, accompanied by drums, praying sticks and cestrum. The group presented three styles of Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EDC) chants, including Ge'ez in which most melodies are performed, arrarray, containing "cheerful melodies" (used only infrequently in services), and ezel used in periods of sorrow and fasting.

Mohammed Awol and his group performed music of the Ethiopian Islamic tradition. Known as "manzuma," it included zikir, remembrances of God; madh, praises of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him); praises of saints; advice on how to live one's life; and messages of peace and love.

The Abyssinian Church Choir Ensemble consisted of members of the church's music ministry, including the Sanctuary Choir, the Chancel Choir, The Forever-Amen Chorale Ensemble, and The Gospel Chorus. Director Jeff Bolding provided a narrative of gospel music genres, charting its historical developments as a means for once enslaved people to overcome the scourge of racism and social injustice.

Addis Ababa Mayor Berhane Deressa conferred the degree of Doctor of Letters honoris causa on Rev. Butts on behalf of Addis Ababa University (AAU), for his commitment to quality education, wide ranging humanitarian efforts, academic and professional accomplishments and his overarching belief. ♦



Mayor Berhane Deressa confers an honorary degree on Rev. Calvin O. Butts of the Abyssinian Baptist Church



Mrs. Yamamoto (left), President Andreas Eshete, Mrs. Patricia Butts and Rev. Butts during the music concert.



Abyssinian Baptist Church Choir Ensemble, Mohammed Awol and Group and Ethiopian Orthodox chanters on stage after the music workshop.

Roundtable Forum Discusses History and Future of Ethiopian-American Relationships

The Abyssinian Baptist Church with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy presented a roundtable forum on September 27, 2007 at UNECA on "The Historic Context of Ethiopian-American Relations and the Role of the Diaspora in Ethiopian Development." Over seventy members of the Abyssinian Baptist

Church delegation and members, government officials and members of non-governmental organizations attended the forum. The program opened with video clips of the photo exhibition documenting 100 years of Ethiopian-American relations. In the first half of the program, President Andreas Eshete spoke on the special relationship of Ethiopia to the African Diaspora. Professor Abiyi Ford ad-

ressed the historic dimensions of Ethiopian-American relations, including his family's role in the Back to Africa Movement of Marcus Garvey and its work in Ethiopia. Rev. Calvin Butts of the Abyssinian Church spoke on the vision of his church in the establishment of the Abyssinian Development

Corporation to meet the physical needs of the church members as well as its spiritual needs.

During the second half of the program, members of the Abyssinian Church and officials of related Ethiopian ministries discussed the church's model for addressing issues related to investment (economic development, education and health); and Ethiopian officials discussed the priorities of the Ethiopian government in the same fields. Karen Phillips discussed the role of the Abyssinian Development Corporation in investing in the communities to provide housing and improve

the quality of life. Ato Michael Asfeha, Special Advisor to the State Minister from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, talked about the government role in encouraging investment. Dr. Martia Goodson discussed the importance of the access of education to all segments of the society to prepare for better lives in the 21st century. Dr. Adhana Haile, State Minister for Education, noted the efforts of the Ethiopian government to make primary education available to all. He also discussed efforts to include girl children in education. Dr. Bert Petersen spoke of the efforts to make quality medical care available to all people, including people of his native Virgin Islands, people without access to health insurance and people of African descent.♦



(From left to right) Prof. Abiyi Ford, Rev. Calvin Butts, President Andreas Eshete and Michael McCellan at round table forum.



Participants listen to discussions at round table.

Address by Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts at Abyssinian Baptist Church Press Conference

Sheraton Addis Ababa
September 28, 2007

Beloved, I stand before you today as a collective of The Abyssinian Baptist Church in the City of New York in this great land of Ethiopia for the final time before we embark on our trip back to the United States, returning to our homes in the various parts of the country from which we've traveled. Since our arrival here on September 16, we have experienced life-altering



Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts III

events, challenged ourselves to reach new levels of spirituality (and physical fitness!) through a reconnection with our Holy Land, and have all been witness to the many great wonders of this indescribably beautiful country. But while our physical journey to Ethiopia is coming to a close, our journey with Ethiopia is just beginning.

When we first arrived, Dr. Ephraim Isaacs talked to us about

(Continued on page 5)

Address by Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts at Abyssinian Baptist Church . . .

(Continued from page 4)

“Ethiopianism” – the idea that the freedom of African-American people is connected to the ancient, spiritual, and ancestral homeland of Ethiopia. While many of us as African Americans have studied our cultural and historical connections to Africa, and specifically to Ethiopia, and have previously visited other parts of the continent, I think I can speak for most of us when I say that I don’t think any of us realized just how deep that connection – that Ethiopianism – runs until now.

As some of you know, this journey has been “a long time coming” for me. I first began planning a visit to Ethiopia more than seven years ago – to pay homage to the homeland of our founding fathers, the world’s oldest Christian nation and the only African nation to have never been colonized. We are honored to have had the opportunity to be here to help celebrate Ethiopia’s millennium, and we are even more honored and humbled by the warm, welcoming manner in which you have embraced each of us since our arrival almost two weeks ago. We knew before we arrived that we were returning to our roots, and you have welcomed us home with open arms. As Ethiopia celebrates 2000 years of history, culture, tradition, and spirituality – although we know this land is much older than that – and we at Abyssinian Baptist Church are here celebrating 200 years – our bicentennial, we stand in awe and appreciation of the foundation that you have laid for us.

For those of you here today who may not be as familiar with the role of the African-American church in America, I want to share a bit of

our history – so that we can all more fully understand how the history of Ethiopia – Abyssinia – and Abyssinian Baptist Church will forever be inextricably linked. Our church was founded in 1808 by a group of Ethiopian sea merchants and free African Americans who refused to worship in a segregated church and formed their own church, naming it Abyssinian Baptist Church, in honor of Abyssinia. From our roots, from our beginning, Abyssinian Baptist Church has been on a spiritual journey that has always kept us in the struggle for social justice at home and abroad.

Historically, the African-American church has been a galvanizing force in the active building of beloved communities in the United States. As we celebrate 200 years of our church as an empowering center of spiritual and community transformation, as the oldest Black Baptist church in New York State and one of the oldest African-American institutions in America, we have been a sustained leader of spiritual transformation in the context of real world issues – including housing, education, culture and the arts, family tradition and ownership of capital. We seek to further advance that cause as part of our global mission – beginning here in our native land, Ethiopia.

So, we began this trip with a few things in mind that we wanted to accomplish. First, we wanted to experience a spiritual pilgrimage that would allow us to find our way back to our homeland – to reconnect Abyssinian with the people and the country for which it is named and strengthen ecclesiastical ties with the nation that is our sacred land. Secondly, we wanted to strengthen our own faith by increasing our knowledge of Christian

Orthodox traditions in the earliest Christian communities. Third, we wanted to have the first-hand experiences necessary for us to obtain the valuable information that will assist in our consideration of a viable, long-term course of action supporting the people and progress of Ethiopia. I am happy to be here before you to report that we successfully accomplished all of these goals. But I am even happier to tell you that we also accomplished so much more.

Perhaps one of the most important accomplishments we’ve made during this journey is our active building of relationships that will help ensure that this pilgrimage, while our first, will certainly not be our last. Our visits to the cities on the Holy Route – Gondar, Bahir Dar, Lalibela, Axum and Mekelle – provided us with incredible views of the great achievements and rich culture of Ethiopia...from the Imperial Castle, Gondar Medical School & Hospital, Blue Nile Falls, Lake Tana, Ura Kidane Mihret, the Rock Hewn Churches, Oblisques, Queen of Sheba’s Palace and Tomb, Adowa where the Ethiopian army defeated Italian invaders, and many more. Through these experiences, we were able to witness the natural beauty and historic innovation upon which this country was built.

However, we have also witnessed and been inspired by something just as, and perhaps more, beautiful – the kind, generous, faithful people of this nation. Our brothers and sisters here in Ethiopia have cared for us as only family can. We have been met by Ministers of the Ethiopian Government, Heads of Regions and States, mayors, leading clergy, other officials and dignitaries, and scores of local residents at each of

(Continued on page 6)

Address by Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts at Abyssinian Baptist Church . . .

(Continued from page 5)

our stops along the way, and we have been culturally inspired by the traditional ceremonies, dances, and foods that have been so warmly and graciously provided for us.

And while our gratitude for what we have experienced and the kindness that we have received during this pilgrimage surpasses anything our words could ever express, this journey was not about what Ethiopia could give us. Over the course of the past two weeks, we have worked hard to ensure that we have had a phenomenal cultural exchange as well – one in which we each shared of our resources for the enlightenment of the other.

To that end, I and other members of our delegation, including lawyers, educators, doctors, journalists, authors, artists, bankers and businesspersons, have had the distinct honor of meeting with leaders including President His Excellency Girma Wolde-Giorgis (who opened his home to our entire group for a magnificent dinner upon returning to Addis from the Holy Route), His Holiness Abune Paulos (who welcomed us at Holy Trinity Church last Sunday for an inspiring worship service and afterwards allowed us to be his first guests in the newly constructed hall on the church compound for a fellowship breakfast, and invited us back for an evening of fellowship last night for the grand Meskel celebration), Prime Minister His Excellency Meles Zenawi (who took time on Monday before flying to New York to address our group and conduct an informative question-and-answer session with us about the state of Ethiopia), and U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Donald Yamamoto (who welcomed us into his home ...and

whose 11-year-old daughter Laura so graciously baby-sat my 20-month-old grandson Calvin).

Earlier this week, we also had the opportunity to meet with the Ethiopian Minister of Education to discuss the state and importance of education in Ethiopia and continued development and progress in the building of schools, recruitment and retention of teachers, and more opportunities for all children in Ethiopia to be able to receive a solid education – an area which is extremely vital in the ongoing progress of any nation, especially Ethiopia.

As President of the State University of New York – Old Westbury, I was also especially interested to meet with Addis Ababa University President Andreas Eschete to sign an articulation and exchange agreement between our two universities, as well as to meet with Professor Abiyi Ford about the work they are doing in advanced education here in Ethiopia. All of these meetings provided new and deeper meaning to a notion that has long been my own personal mantra: “Education and faith are the twin rivers at the source of our redemption” – as a people, as an African church, as a nation. Without a strong faith in God and a trained mind, we cannot hope for redemption.

We also spoke at length with the Ethiopian Minister of Health about advances in healthcare in this country and programs that are currently being implemented to help provide some level of medical care to people who have previously had very little or in some cases, none.

Just yesterday, we held a roundtable at the United Nations - Economic Commission for Africa in which we shared a panel with Presi-

dent Eschete and Professor Ford and discussed economic development and investment, health, and education issues of concern in Ethiopia with each respective Ministry – sharing models of success that the Abyssinian Baptist Church has used in our efforts to bring about progress in these areas...the ordained work that we have been able to do through Abyssinian Development Corporation – investing more than half a billion dollars in the Harlem community in New York; examples of patient engagement through the work of our health ministry in the community; and the building of schools to ensure our children have better opportunities to receive a quality education.

But it doesn't end there. On Wednesday during the ceremony in which I received an honorary degree from Addis Ababa University, we also participated in a music workshop and cultural exchange – including the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (performing traditional chants), the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Council (performing a Menzuma Chant), and an ensemble from the Abyssinian Baptist Church choir (performing good old gospel music, which we know has its roots here, too). This exchange particularly underscored one of the many great attributes of Ethiopia – the peaceful co-existence of a people who may worship differently, but who understand that one God is found in many houses and is called by many names. We profess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and accept Him as our savior, but we respect all people under God.

I also want to take this opportunity now to clarify an incorrect statement that was attributed to me in a

(Continued on page 7)

Address by Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts at Abyssinian Baptist Church . . .

(Continued from page 6)

local newspaper. Contrary to what was reported, I believe that Ethiopia is the epitome of co-existence between three major faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The one thing that has impeded the strengthening of our church's relationship with Ethiopia has been the struggles that we have each been engaged with in America and Ethiopia – struggles against social and racial injustice and struggles against imperialist aggression and attempted colonial invasion, respectively.

As you can see, we have managed to fit perhaps a month's worth of activities, meetings and visits (to fistula hospitals, AIDS centers, religious conferences and more) in the course of two weeks here ...and later today, I will have additional meetings with the Minister of Culture and Tourism and the business community here in Addis. But as much as we have done during our time here, our work is just beginning. If we have learned nothing else thus far, it is that we have a spiritual foundation here on which we can help build a plan for social justice and improved conditions for our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia, and that we cannot separate our struggles here from our struggles at home in the United States.

We have a mandate to which I am holding each of us accountable... and that mandate is to continue the ministry of Abyssinian Baptist Church in support of Ethiopia. We have been changed by our encounters with the brave, intelligent people of this nation and we will continue the struggle with you. We know the relationship won't happen overnight. It may take a while to effect change in all of the areas

we've seen since our arrival. But standing here today, I can say that we are committed to building a permanent bridge across the Atlantic. Just this week, I had the honor of laying the cornerstone at the future site of the Arnold J. Ford Center for the African Diaspora – which is intended to build better links between Africans in Africa and in the African Diaspora. We are committed to making a reconnection of our faith as a Christian people and our responsibility as an African people here in Ethiopia.

Yes, we know that Ethiopia can eventually solve its own challenges, but we humbly offer our help to fulfill the vast potential that lies within this country – our country. And with our commitment to Ethiopia, we are not forgetting our struggles at home in the U.S. Let me repeat, and with our commitment to Ethiopia, we are not forgetting our struggles at home in the U.S. We are proud of America because we helped build it. But Africa is also our native land and as African Americans, we must help our brothers and sisters here as well. Ethiopia has a past and a legacy of which the whole world should be proud, and we are honored to work with this nation to highlight a great history, but to also help create an even greater future.

When we return to the United States, we will hold a series of meetings to determine specifically how, given what we've learned here in the areas of economic, health, education and social needs, we can apply our resources to encourage advancement in Ethiopia – whether via public policy, direct aid, professional exchange programs, healthcare initiatives or other areas. So, as I stand before you today, I pledge on behalf of Abyssinian Bap-

tist Church that we will be a partner to Ethiopia – working together as a united whole - in helping to defeat its greatest enemy...and that enemy is not a lack of dignity, morals, faith or religion. That enemy is not another nation or government. That enemy is poverty.

As Prime Minister Zenawi so eloquently responded to a question by a journalist during our meeting concerning the priority of spirituality over economic growth – “we know that without faith, we can accomplish nothing.” So, as we return to America, we will be Ethiopia's spiritual ambassadors – spreading the gospel of a great nation, of a beautiful country, of a faithful people. We will do everything in our power to make sure that our people – especially our young people – see and know Ethiopia as we have experienced it...not just as they read or hear about it, and we will work to create opportunities for them to visit here themselves.

Before I close, I would like to thank the Ethiopian Government for receiving us in such a spirit of respect, love and fellowship. I would like to give special thanks to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Culture and Tourism who assigned members of their staffs to us for our entire journey to make sure we were taken care of...and I would like to particularly thank these gentlemen, and they stand here throughout the room today, who have so unselfishly given of their kindness, generosity, time, and limitless help over the course of these two weeks. Brothers, you will always have a home at Abyssinian.

Lastly, just as we have been so graciously welcomed here during Ethiopia's Millennium celebration, I invite

(Continued on page 8)

Rev. Calvin Butts Lays Cornerstone for the Arnold J. Ford Center for the African Diaspora

The Mrs. Ford's School was dedicated as the Arnold J. Ford Center for the African Diaspora with the laying of the cornerstone by Rev. Calvin Butts of the Abyssinian Baptist Church on September 26. Mrs. Margaret Yamamoto represented the U.S. Mission at the ceremony. The school is located in Kazanchis, in historic Addis Ababa.

The Center of the African Diaspora has been established to serve as a venue for a sustained exchange of knowledge between Africans at

home and Africans in the Diaspora. The Center will serve as a bridge across the Atlantic to narrow the understanding gap between Africa and her people abroad. In addition to preserving the original structure, plans call for the construction of a multi-purpose auditorium adjacent to the historical structure for use by the school,



Mrs. Yamamoto gives remarks at cornerstone laying (from left to right), Rev. Butts, President Andreas Eshete, Mrs. Yamamoto and Prof. Abiy Ford.

(Continued on page 9)

Address by Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts at Abyssinian Baptist Church . . .

(Continued from page 7)

each of you to New York to help celebrate Abyssinian Baptist Church's bicentennial celebration in November 2008. Our theme of "True to Our God, True to Our Native Land" means that just as Ethiopia is our home, Abyssinian is yours and we hope you will join us there throughout the coming year and beyond. Our celebration activities include a first-time collaboration featuring Jazz at Lincoln Center with Wynton Marsalis, myself and a mass choir premiering Marsalis' penned mass for the bicentennial; a theme song composed by legendary duo Ashford & Simpson; a published book featuring contributions from Dr. Maya Angelou and Dr. Cornel West and co-authored by Drs. Quinton H. Dixie (who accompanied us on this journey), Genna Rae McNeil, and Houston Roberson; a Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture exhibition tracing Abyssinian's significant role in the history of New York City; a partnership with StoryCorps, the national

oral-history project (in partnership with the Library of Congress) to document and preserve the stories of Abyssinian for future generations; a formal White-Tie gala for elected officials, dignitaries, business leaders, and the entertainment industry in recognition of Abyssinian's significance to the global community; a formal Black-Tie event and auction in New York City for the Abyssinian congregation and community supporters; a music CD featuring the Abyssinian Choirs and special guests; and a specially commissioned abstract painting titled "Til Now We Stand at Last" by Harlem artist Dianne Smith.

Now, in closing, beloved, having experienced here in Ethiopia a history that far exceeds our comprehension and a spirituality that permeates the very air we breathe, we leave here a much more faithful and humbled people than when we arrived.

I gave a speech yesterday, and in it, I told a story of Jesus touching a

blind man and then asking him, "Can you see?" The blind man replied, "Yes, Lord. But men look like trees." So, Jesus touched him again – a second time – and it was then that he was able to see. I liken our experience here as "the second touch."

We were all touched the first time, over the course of years, in speaking with Ethiopian friends and associates who shared their first-hand knowledge of this country, reading books, researching on our own, and via other ways that we educated ourselves about Africa and Ethiopia. But it wasn't until we came here, until we landed and walked on the soil of this land, felt its spirit, heard its sounds, and breathed its greatness that we were finally able to see. Yes, beloved, the second touch. We have seen a new heaven and a new earth, and that – is Ethiopia.

Thank you, God Bless, and Keep the Faith.♦

Government of Ethiopia Takes Ownership of Sebeta Health Quarantine Facility

New facility, built by USAID, will strengthen animal disease investigation

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – On Sunday, September 20th, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) inaugurated a health quarantine facility in Sebeta, officially handing over ownership to His Excellency Dr. Abera Derese, State Minister for the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD).

The facility will strengthen animal disease investigation and control capacity of the National Animal Disease Investigation Center of MoARD. The Center will use the newly built facility to test, observe and certify that imported animals are free of diseases before they enter Ethiopia's livestock market. The quarantine facility, valued at over US\$100,000, also has a small hay section, storage for medicine and medical equipment, toilet facilities, and washing and changing room for workers.

The facility, built to house up to 350 sheep or goats, has been keep-

ing 225 Dorpher Sheep and Boar Goats imported from the Republic of South African for the last three months. The new breeds have completed their quarantine check up at the center and will soon be released.



Partial view of animals in the facility.

The quarantine facility, as well as the importation of new breed of sheep and goats, is part of the Ethiopia Sheep and Goat Productivity Improvement Program, a U.S. \$5.5 million dollar program which began in late 2005. This livestock

development program is funded by USAID and implemented by Prairie View A&M University and Langston University in collaboration with MoARD.

The Ethiopia Sheep and Goat Productivity Improvement Program

works in six major sheep and goat production regions of Amhara, Afar, Oromia, Somalia, SNNPR and Tigray Regional States in partnership with regional bureaus of agriculture, research institutes, universities, small-scale livestock producers, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations.♦

Rev. Calvin Butts Lays Cornerstone for the Arnold J. Ford Center for the Afri-

(Continued from page 8)

which still functions, and for Center-related activities, including video and film screenings, displays, lectures, seminars, recitals, dance performances and musical concerts.

Mrs. Ford's School was originally built around 1905 as the residence of Kegneazmatch Mulugeta. During the Italian occupation it was used

as Hospitale Luigi Razza del Lavoratori del Africa Orientale D'Italia. After the departure of the Italians in 1941, it was classified as confiscated enemy property administered by the Crown. In 1943, Empress Mennen donated the property to Princess Zenebe Worq School. There, Mrs. Ford established the first co-educational boarding school in Ethiopia, educating generations of Ethiopian youth. In recent years,

the school has been known as Mrs. Ford's School. It has been classified as one of Addis Ababa's historic structures slated for preservation.♦

Demera and Maskal Celebration at the U.S. Embassy in Pictures September 25, 2007



President Bush's Remarks on Africa

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

(New York, New York)

September 25, 2007

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT IN UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON AFRICA

Security Council Chamber
United Nations Headquarters

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. President, thank you. And thank you for convening this meeting of the United Nations Security Council. I appreciate the opportunity to join you. And I appreciate your focus is -- your focus on the challenges to peace and security in Africa, particularly in Sudan and Darfur.

The reason I say that is my nation has labeled what's taking place in Darfur as genocide, and when we find genocide it's time to do something about it. Time is of the essence. And so, Mr. President, you're focusing our attention on this crucial matter.

I want to thank the Secretary General, as well, for your support of the people of Darfur. I appreciate your determination to make relieving their suffering a priority of the United Nations.

And I want to thank Chairperson Konaré for the leadership of the African Union. After all, you deployed 7,000 troops. But 7,000 troops is not enough, if you believe what's taking place on the ground is genocide. Maybe some don't think it's genocide, but if you've been raped, you think it's -- your human rights have been violated. If you're mercilessly killed by roaming bands, you know it's genocide. And the funda-

mental question is, are we, the free world, willing to do more? You've made a strong effort, and we appreciate you. But you know better than me that the area of Darfur is bigger than France, or Texas, and both are plenty big for 7,000 troops.

Your Excellencies, the fighting in Darfur between the rebels and the government continues. Two hundred thousand people have lost their lives -- 200,000 innocents are no longer with us. More than 2 million people have been forced from their homes. They're fleeing the violence. And they go into refugee camps, and they head into neighboring countries like Chad and Central African Republic.

That's why I appreciate your leadership, Mr. President, to help these countries help these refugees. The resolution adopted today addresses the plight of the refugees in Chad and Central African Republic. In other words, it's a step in the right direction. It's a practical solution to a big problem. It's a part of a grand solution, Mr. President. That's why your leadership is appreciated.

The resolution authorizes the deployment to these two nations of a robust European peacekeeping force and several other police and military advisors. This U.N. mission is going to help national and local governments exercise sovereignty over their territory. It's going to allow workers to deliver humanitarian aid. That makes us feel good. We're spending \$2 billion so far on providing aid, and we want to make sure our aid gets to the people who need help.

And that's why the United States strongly supports the resolution and

the mission. We continue to support swift implementation of existing resolutions of this Council. We want the words of this Council to mean something. We want it to be said, when the Council speaks on behalf of suffering people, those words will be followed by action.

And so we call on the government in Khartoum to facilitate the deployment of a robust U.N. peacekeeping force to save life. We call on all parties to cease arm sales to the combatants. We expect people gathered around this table to send a focused message that innocent life matters. We expect President Bashir to observe a cease-fire during next month's peace talks, and we want the rebels to do the same.

We're tired -- the message has got to be, we're tired of people trying to escape the noose of pressure. We want the pressure to be uniform. Why? Because we believe in universal freedom and peace.

The conflict in Darfur has claimed too many lives, and there's too much suffering. The innocent victims of this conflict want only to return to their homes. They want to live in peace. And it's our duty to help them realize that dream.

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

U.S. Africa Command Will Enhance Local Skills, Problem Solving

By *Jim Fisher-Thompson*
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The new U.S. regional military command for Africa (AFRICOM) will have a distinctly different mission from its sister commands: it will focus on helping African militaries handle conflict and implement African solutions through military expertise and knowledge shared on the continent.

"The primary objective [of AFRICOM] is not to fight and win wars on the continent," says Theresa Whelan, deputy assistant secretary of defense for African affairs, "but rather to build [sufficient] military capacity in Africa so that Africans can manage their own security challenges and not essentially be importers of security from the international community."

A secure and peaceful Africa is in the best geopolitical interests of the United States, and AFRICOM's chief priority will be to work with African nations toward that goal, she said.

Whelan, who recently spoke at a seminar on AFRICOM sponsored by the Washington-based American Enterprise Institute (AEI), said, "What we hope is that African nations will be able to manage security in their own territorial waters, in their own land territories, in their own regions and across the continent."

While Africans "will continue to dictate the course of security priorities on the continent," she said, the intent of AFRICOM is "not to impose American solutions" on Africa's problems, "but rather to take what the Africans have already built," such as peacekeeping within the

African Union (AU), and help to make it more effective.

Army General William Ward, who has been nominated to lead AFRICOM, told his Senate confirmation hearing that the effectiveness of the command will be measured "in terms of how it directly contributes to the stability, security, health and



U.S. Army General William Ward

welfare of the regional institutions, nations and people of Africa." It will focus on tasks that include peacekeeping, enhancing maritime and border security, and counterterrorism efforts, he said.

AFRICOM also will help countries interested in improving government accountability, Ward said at the September 27 hearing. Other activities will include programs related to humanitarian assistance, humanitarian land mine removal, natural disaster response and security reform.

Since 1983, U.S. military involvement on the continent has been divided among the European Com-

mand (EUCOM), headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, which is responsible for most of sub-Saharan Africa; the Central Command (CENTCOM), located in Florida, covering the Horn of Africa region; and Pacific Command (PACOM), headquartered in Hawaii, responsible for activities in the Asia-Pacific region and a number of large island nations in the western Indian Ocean, including Mauritius.

Initial operations for AFRICOM will begin in October. It will take about a year for the command to become fully operational. Ultimately responsible for all of Africa, except Egypt, command headquarters will be in located in Stuttgart as the transition between commands is implemented.

Whelan made it clear there would be no new U.S. military bases destined for Africa. The U.S. presence there will be small, with no more than 20 percent of the entire command stationed in Africa, the official said.

A top command priority will be helping Africans establish a standby force of up to 25,000 troops that will be associated with the African Union (AU). Such a unit could respond quickly to conflict on the continent without waiting for the United Nations to act, Whelan said.

The State and Defense departments already operate military partnership programs with African nations worth \$250 million a year and "that will not change," she told the AEI audience, which included the Liberian defense minister, as well as a number of other military and civilian representatives from African embassies in Washington.

(Continued on page 25)

Consultations with African Partners Key to U.N. Process

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Talks among U.S. officials and African leaders meeting during the opening week of the 62nd United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) focused on the crisis in Sudan's Darfur region, security challenges in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and needed reforms in Zimbabwe.

Jendayi Frazer, U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs, said "We've had an opportunity to meet with several [African] heads of state and many foreign ministers" in sessions and on the sidelines. Frazer made her comment to reporters in New York.

U.S. SUPPORTS HYBRID FORCE FOR DARFUR

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Sudan's Darfur region was a key issue, particularly on deploying a joint force of African Union (AU) and U.N. peacekeepers to Darfur where more than 200,000 people have been killed in a four-year conflict between rebels and the Sudanese government.

Related discussions concerned peace talks on Darfur that are set to begin in Tripoli, Libya, in late October, she said. Andrew Natsios, President Bush's special envoy for Sudan, will lead the U.S. delegation to the peace talks hosted by Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, Frazer added.

Asked what would happen if Abdul Wahid, leader of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) a prominent Darfur rebel movement, boycotted the meeting as he has pledged to do, Frazer said, "It would be disappointing if he does not attend Tripoli; if

he refuses to be part of the negotiations and becomes a hindrance to the peace process."

"The United States is urging him to go to Tripoli and will continue dialogue with him," she added. But, if Wahid stays away, "[e]ventually he

and the Southern Peoples' Liberation Movement led by John Garang. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=January&x=20050113155824sssillE0.0023157>).



Assistant Secretary Frazer and Secretary Rice meet with His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City during UNGA events. (State Department photo by Michael Gross).

will completely marginalize himself to the peace process. And that is certainly a concern of mine because I think he does have much to offer" on resolving conflict in Darfur.

On the humanitarian front, Frazer said, "we looked into how we can continue to strengthen humanitarian assistance" to Darfur, adding the United States already has contributed more than \$4 billion to assistance to Sudan, including support for the AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

Part of that overall aid, Frazer said, is going to southern Sudan "to help the southerners see a peace dividend after 22 years of civil war." A Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in January 2005 between the Sudanese government

A provision of the agreement calls for a referendum to be held in 2011 on the question of southern secession from Sudan. Asked where the United States stood on the issue of southern independence, Frazer said, "we support John Garang's vision of unity" for Sudan.

MORE PEACEKEEPERS NEEDED IN SOMALIA

Also of major concern among African and U.S. officials at UNGA, Frazer said, was the crisis in Somalia, where Islamic extremists and warlords are battling the Transitional Federal Government.

She said the focus of talks was on strengthening the African peace-

(Continued on page 15)

U.S. Muslims Observe Ramadan in Supportive Environment

*By Lauren Monsen
USINFO Staff Writer*

Washington -- Muslims in the United States typically observe Ramadan and fulfill their other religious obligations with the encouragement and support of non-Muslim friends, colleagues and neighbors, say U.S. State Department officials Seema Matin and William Lawrence.

vert to Islam -- to co-host the Webchat and answer questions from online participants about Muslim life in the United States.

Newly arrived Muslims usually adapt very well to the United States because historically "immigrants from different lands have come to this country and have been able to integrate within a generation," said Matin. "Of course, this requires the immigrants to reach out of their

Constitution protects the wearing of all religious symbols, including the hijab. "I have never had any problems wearing the hijab in the United States," she said. In some Western societies, "there are misconceptions about the hijab," but "I think they will change," she added. "I think it's important for people to know that for many of us in America, [wearing the hijab] is a personal choice: something that was not forced upon us by our parents or spouses." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=August&x=20070806141303ajesrom0.6975214>)).

Iftars, the dinners served at sunset to break the Ramadan daytime fast, often are shared by Muslims and non-Muslims, since U.S. mosques almost always welcome public participation. "But it isn't just the Muslim Americans who invite people to iftars; in fact, some of my non-Muslim friends have invited me to iftars in their home," said Matin. "Just recently, one of my dearest friends invited me to his home for iftar and said that he and his wife -- both non-Muslim -- would even prepare the meal with halal meat that they were going to purchase specifically for this occasion. I was really moved by their kind gesture."

Interfaith events are hosted by many U.S. mosques during Ramadan, and also at other times of the year, to promote peace and understanding. "These are always very pleasant occasions for everyone," said Matin.

According to Lawrence, Americans have become more knowledgeable about Islam in the last several years, in keeping with the rapid

(Continued on page 15)



Ramadan prayer services are held at the Muslim Community Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. (Ken White/State Dept.)

"I have always found that my non-Muslim colleagues and friends are very supportive during this [holy] month of Ramadan," Matin said in a September 26 USINFO Webchat. She recalled that when she was in college, many of her non-Muslim classmates expressed solidarity with her by joining in the daytime fasting that Ramadan requires. "At work, many of my colleagues will try not to eat or drink around me, and ... I am always touched by their thoughtfulness," she said.

Matin, an American-born Muslim whose parents emigrated to the United States from Pakistan, teamed up with Lawrence -- a con-

own cultural comfort zone and get involved and engage with their local community and neighborhood. I think the most important part of integrating into American society is to understand that you are an American and ... not see yourself [as] separate from mainstream society."

Americans, she said, are among "the most welcoming and friendliest people you will find."

Asked whether the United States bars women from publicly wearing the hijab (the traditional headscarf worn by many, but not all, Muslim women), Matin replied that the U.S.

Consultations with African Partners Key to U.N. . . .

(Continued from page 13)

keeping force currently deployed in the country and "working on getting new troop contributors." A Ugandan contingent of 1,500 troops is currently in Somalia while thousands of Ethiopian soldiers are providing security for the Transitional Federal Government.

A U.N. peacekeeping role in Somalia will be essential, Frazer added. With national elections slated for 2009, it is appropriate for the United Nations to provide security and aid for transition to elections in Somalia, just as the international body did in 2006 for elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), she said.

FRAZIER EXPRESSES U.S. CONCERN ABOUT CONGO

Another major Africa issue discussed at UNGA, Frazer said, was "the rising tensions in Eastern Congo" related to General Laurent Nkunda as well as concerns by neighboring countries Rwanda and Uganda about negative forces that are continuing to operate in the region. This includes former Hutu-led forces such as the Interhamwe that destabilized Rwanda in the 1990s and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which is fueling a smoldering insurrection in northern Uganda, she said.

These groups are using eastern Congo as a base, Frazer said, and "acting as destabilizers" and

sources of friction between the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda.

Frazer said U.S. diplomats also discussed Zimbabwe with African partners at the U.N. meeting. The challenge there, she said, was how to help the southern African nation "return to democracy" while responding in some helpful way to "the rapid failure of its economy" caused by President Robert Mugabe's failed economic policies that centered on uncompensated farm seizures that have wrecked Zimbabwe's agricultural sector.

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U.S. Muslims Observe Ramadan in Supportive . . .

(Continued from page 14)

growth of the U.S. Muslim population. "I converted to Islam in 1994," he said. "When I was young, few people [in the United States] knew what Ramadan was. Now nearly every American has heard of Ramadan ... [and] all Americans now know we have millions of Muslims in the U.S. Information about Islam has increased greatly."

To honor Ramadan, "the White House will be hosting an iftar, as will the State Department," he said.

In response to a question about building trust between the Islamic world and the West, Lawrence suggested that the two entities are not entirely separate. "I would like to

point out that the Muslim world includes elements of the West, and the Western world includes large [numbers] of Muslims, so ... blending is part of the process," he said. "Trust starts with trustworthiness. It also includes respect, and listening, and tolerance for different points of view. Ramadan is an excellent time of year to spend more time listening and reflecting and trust-building."

On the subject of why U.S. Muslims are well integrated into the larger society, Matin and Lawrence agreed that several factors probably come into play. "American Muslims tend to be [highly educated] professionals," earning significantly more money and voting "at much higher rates than average Americans," said Lawrence. This degree

of sophistication makes assimilation much easier, he indicated.

Besides, Matin added, the nation's ethnic and religious diversity fosters social inclusion, and U.S. laws forbidding discrimination reinforce that concept. During Ramadan, Muslims go to work, attend school and maintain their usual schedules, while also adhering to Islamic customs. "I think America is unique in this regard: that you can integrate into mainstream society without completely giving up your traditions and values," said Matin.

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Hard Work, Supportive Friends Helped Woman Break into Politics

By Jane Morse
USINFO Staff Writer

It takes courage and hard work to break into politics and seek elected office. USINFO looks at three very different women who made the effort and won. This is the second of a three-part series about women serving their first terms in the Maryland General Assembly.

Washington -- Hard work and some very supportive friends helped Gerron Levi realize her lifelong dream of holding public office.



Gerron Levi

In November 2006, Levi defeated two incumbents and another nonincumbent for a seat as a delegate in the Maryland General Assembly, representing her district in Prince George's County. The Maryland General Assembly, which has 141 delegates and 47 senators, meets each year for 90 days to act on more than 2,300 bills, including the state's annual budget.

"I had always had the desire to run for public office," Levi told USINFO. "I didn't know exactly how I would

enter into that. I didn't have a great number of contacts in the [Democratic] party establishment in Prince George's County -- in fact, I had none." But Levi's friends always urged her to reach for her dream.

In December 2005, she held her first community meeting to establish herself as a contender for the delegate seat.

"The primary obstacle," Levi said, "was simply 'name recognition.' For any candidate [who wants to enter] into office, the primary obstacle is getting known and getting your message out to enough people."

To do that, of course, takes money.

"Money is central to being able to mail things to people, to host events, to get to know people," Levi said. Initially, she raised money from family, friends and professional colleagues -- Levi is an attorney and serves as assistant director of the Legislative Department at the AFL-CIO, a federation of more than 50 national and international labor organizations.

By January 2006, Levi had \$38,000 and eventually was able to raise a little more than \$70,000 for her entire race.

At the end of March 2006, Levi had mailed literature about herself and her political goals to more than 30,000 voters. In the course of her campaign, most voters got at least five pieces of mail from Levi. She walked through neighborhoods, knocked on doors and personally introduced herself to more than 8,000 voters at their homes. She went to countless community events and held her own fundrais-

ers. "That's how I was able to gain enough name recognition and then go on and win the race," Levi said. "I basically outworked the incumbents."

Levi credits her success despite being a political newcomer to two special aunts, who gave her emotional support, and the support of many great friends.

"When I got ready to run for office, I was surprised by some of the things my friends did," Levi said. "I had so many friends who gave me enormous money, opened their homes and just 'went over and above [the call of duty]' for me. And so I feel that I owe them a great debt -- that is part of the reason I really try to be as best a public official that I can be and to remain true to my convictions."

Those convictions include improving the troubled school system in Prince George's County, closing the "achievement gap" between students of color and their Caucasian counterparts, and reducing crime. Levi is proud of the work she did on passing a bill to prevent truancy, which she considers to be a "feeder crime" -- a "small crime" that potentially leads to more serious crimes. She also has been tireless in her work to get parents and communities to become more involved in working to improve the performance of neighborhood schools.

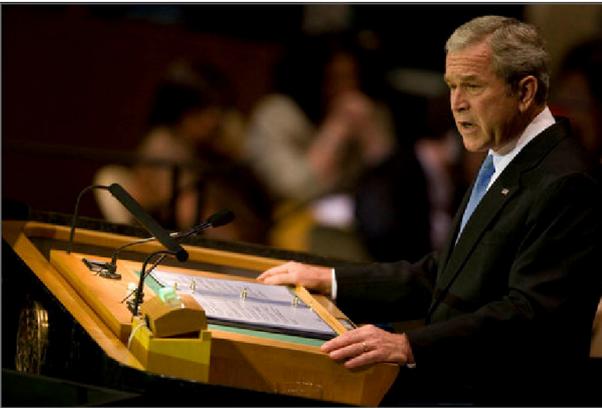
A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley and the Howard University School of Law, Levi got her first taste of politics while serving as legislative assistant for U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (Democrat of California) on judiciary issues. Levi helped Feinstein draft campaign-finance legislation and secure

(Continued on page 25)

Human Rights Declaration Is a Call to Support Burmese Freedom

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- In President Bush's September 25 speech to the 62nd United Nations General Assembly, he called for renewed efforts to enforce the organization's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and cited the situation in Burma where the government severely restricts basic freedoms such as speech, assembly and worship and persecutes many of its citizens.



President Bush addresses the United Nations General Assembly session at the United Nations headquarters, September 25. White House photo by Eric Draper

Bush said each member of the United Nations is required to join in what he called a "mission of liberation" to "free people from tyranny and violence, hunger and disease, illiteracy and ignorance, and poverty and despair." (See related article ([http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2007&m=September&x=20070925140940esnamfuak0.9778864&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html&distid=ucs)

[p=washfileenglish&y=2007&m=September&x=20070925140940esnamfuak0.9778864&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html&distid=ucs](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2007&m=September&x=20070925140940esnamfuak0.9778864&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html&distid=ucs)).

In the days since the president's remarks, Burma's military government has begun a violent crackdown against the largest pro-democracy movement the country has seen in nearly 20 years, with

reports of soldiers shooting, clubbing and arresting peaceful demonstrators, and cutting off phone and Internet access.

Bush referenced the first article of the UDHR, which says "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," as part of his argument that "[e]very civilized nation ... has a responsibility to stand up for the people suffering under dictatorship."

Whereas Americans traditionally have used documents in their own history, such as the 1776 Declaration of Independence and the 1791 Bill of Rights, to hold their government accountable for safeguarding their rights, the UDHR is a document all people can cite when their countries fail to honor human rights standards. (See related article ([http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2005&m=December&x=20051207142522maduobbA0.6249048&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html)

[p=washfileenglish&y=2005&m=December&x=20051207142522maduobbA0.6249048&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2005&m=December&x=20051207142522maduobbA0.6249048&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html)).

The document states in its preamble that the legal protection of human rights is essential "if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression." It also proclaims the declaration to be a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations."

Unlike the 1976 International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic Social and Cultural Rights, the UDHR is not a treaty

and therefore carries no binding legal commitment on U.N. member states. Nevertheless, as Australian human rights expert Peter Bailey argues, it has become an internationally accepted set of standards.

"When countries such as Burma, Argentina, China and the former Yugoslavia feel bound to defend themselves when they are accused of being in breach of the UDHR, then it can be said to have achieved an important political and moral status," Bailey said in an article published on the universalrights.net Web site.

Every December 10, the date of the UDHR's 1948 adoption, is recognized as Human Rights Day, and it is marked by the international community, civil society groups and dissidents around the world.

Secretly observing the most recent Human Rights Day in 2006, the Burmese group Human Rights Defenders and Promoters issued a statement to international supporters saying it was "hoping for the best and prepar[ing] for the worst."

"We dare to face everything for human rights. So we need the recognition of the international community, especially the United Nations," the group said.

The call from the Burmese opposition for outside support in its struggle is not new. In a 1997 speech smuggled out of the country, Nobel Prize laureate and leader of the National League for Democracy Party Aung San Suu Kyi called on those living in free societies and enjoying full political rights to "[p]lease use your liberty to promote ours," saying the "deeply-rooted human need for a meaningful existence" is un-

(Continued on page 21)

Burma's Monks Have History of Democratic Protest

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- In assuming de facto leadership of Burma's monthlong popular protest against its military rulers, the country's Buddhist monks are returning to a familiar resistance role they have played against the junta previously, as well as against Burma's colonial rulers in the early 20th century.

The protests were sparked by a dramatic increase in the price of fuel in mid-August that has affected prices on most goods and services. Following clashes with armed government soldiers in Pakokku September 5, Buddhist monks and nuns mobilized to lead the largest protests against the junta in nearly 20 years.

The monastic community's, or sangha's, place as "a point of coalescence" for the protests is highly significant, said Penelope Edwards, a professor of South and Southeast Asian studies at the University of California Berkeley.

Edwards told USINFO that the sangha is a strong and well organized institution in a particularly devout Buddhist country.

"Burma has a really strong tradition of meditation and practice, and the Burmese are very serious about their Buddhism," she said. The importance of Buddhism is such that the military rulers have established their own religious council, Sangha Nayaka, and have tried to boost their own legitimacy by portraying themselves as devout with highly public sponsorship of religious institutions.

Edwards explained that in Buddhist practice "one succeeds in the next

life and one gets on to a better life and also earns social standing and status by accumulating merit," which she described as the "spiritual currency of Buddhism."

"[T]he current government has been spending a lot of time in the last [17 years] really trying to build up the image of themselves as 'merit making' by investing a lot of money in pagodas and temple building," she said.



Buddhist monks lead a march in Mandalay, Burma, September 26 in protest of the military government. (© AP Images)

One of the most important aspects of the monks' protest against the military government is their boycott of alms (charity given by lay people to monks, who are dependent on the giving) from the rulers and their families, symbolized by overturning their alms bowls. The action, known as pattam nikkujana kamma, is "very significant" because it denies merit to the government.

"It takes away a sense of legitimacy, and it is sort of the ultimate or the only, in a sense, weapon or leverage that monks have against the government. It's an ultimate sanction, actually," Edwards said.

In a September 22 statement advocating countrywide protests, an organization of clergy known as the All Burma Monks Alliance described the junta as an "evil military despot-

ism, which is impoverishing and pauperizing our people of all walks, including the clergy, as the common enemy of all our citizens." The alliance also called for the junta's banishment "from Burmese soil forever."

There is a "strong historical resonance" to the monks' participation in the current protests, Edwards said. She noted a similar boycott of alms from the military government in 1990 during protests of the junta's refusal to recognize the results of the country's parliamentary elections, won by Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. Before that, monks played a leading role in the pro-democracy demonstrations of 1988.

Both episodes were crushed brutally by the military, with many monks among the estimated 3,000 people killed in 1988. When the most recent round of protests broke out, there were still 90 monks held among Burma's 1,100 political prisoners for their previous political activity.

Edwards said that even in official state history, the military rulers must acknowledge the role of monks in the anti-colonial struggle against Great Britain in the early 20th century, and her research has compared that struggle to India's independence movement led by Mahatma Gandhi.

For example, the Venerable U Ottama is "well known in the popular version of [Burmese] history" for his leadership in the resistance to colonial rule. As an activist, U Ottama set a precedent for going beyond monastic rules of conduct by stepping into the political arena.

(Continued on page 21)

Small Arms Destruction Efforts Reverberate Around the World

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Left unattended, even small stockpiles of surplus and obsolete AK-47 assault rifles, grenade launchers and shoulder-fired missiles could be stolen and used to fuel regional conflicts.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban have been launching shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles against Western aircraft.

In 2003, a German DHL cargo plane taking off from Baghdad International Airport for Bahrain was struck by a shoulder-fired missile. The year before, an Israeli passenger plane leaving Kenya was targeted by terrorists affiliated with al-Qaida using the same kind of weapon.

In the past few decades, these shoulder-fired missiles, formally known by the military as man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS), in the hands of terrorists and militias have caused more than two dozen aircraft crashes and hundreds of deaths.

U.S. Representative Steve Israel of New York says MANPADS are easy to acquire and have "become a weapon of choice among terrorists."

These small arms and light weapons also pose another threat. Old artillery shells exploded during a Central European heat wave this year, and tropical heat reportedly caused spontaneous combustion at a Mozambican weapons depot. The Mozambican incident killed more than

100 people, wounded 500 more and damaged thousands of homes.

Such incidents are propelling nations to be more active in eradicating trade in small arms and light weapons. Weapons destruction programs are under way in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, ac-

The United States has given \$3.6 million to a NATO project that will destroy more than 1,000 MANPADS, 1.5 million small arms and light weapons and 133,000 tons of munitions in Ukraine.

INTERNATIONAL SMALL ARMS DESTRUCTION DAY



Angola Navy Captain Mario Andre destroys a weapon with HALO Trust equipment in Luanda, Angola, on International Small Arms Destruction Day July 9. Ukraine, Albania, Afghanistan, Honduras, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo all participated in the event, which marked the symbolic destruction of a million small weapons. (U.S. Embassy Luanda, Angola)

According to the U.S. Department of State.

Over the years, U.S. assistance has helped destroy more than a million weapons in places like El Salvador, Suriname, Burundi, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Cambodia. A \$58 million investment in more than two dozen countries has destroyed more than 21,000 MANPADS and 90 million ammunition clips.

Ukraine, Albania, Afghanistan, Honduras, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo all celebrated the symbolic destruction of a million such weapons on International Small Arms Destruction Day July 9. It was a reminder of the U.S. commitment to aid nations recovering from deadly conflicts and to implement steps under the United Na-

(Continued on page 22)

HIV/AIDS Fight Targets Health, Related Development Issues

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Twenty-five years into the global struggle against HIV/AIDS, international partners are calling for a redoubling of effort, coordination and funding to battle an infectious disease whose burden stretches beyond the health care system to affect development.

The United States is a world leader in the response to HIV/AIDS, and on September 26, as part of its 2007 commitment to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the U.S. government transmitted more than \$531 million to that organization.

The contribution, made through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), brings the total investment of the American people in the Global Fund to more than \$2.5 billion since its launch in 2001.

"On the ground, where it matters most," PEPFAR's coordinator, Ambassador Mark Dybul, told USINFO, "there is strong coordination of PEPFAR and Global Fund programs to ensure that they complement each other."

Through PEPFAR's partnerships with the Global Fund, and with private-sector, community and faith-based organizations, he added, "the people of many developing nations are now confronting this pandemic in an effective and coordinated manner."

On May 30, President Bush announced that he would work with Congress to reauthorize PEPFAR -- which expires at the end of fiscal year 2008 -- for another five years and \$30 billion. This proposal

would double the initial \$15 billion commitment made in 2003. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenlish&y=2007&m=May&x=20070530161954lcnirellep0.4527094>)

But during a September 20 briefing on PEPFAR and the Global AIDS Response at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, Dr. Peter Piot, executive director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, urged the United States to give even more to PEPFAR so other na-



PEPFAR supports HIV/AIDS Prevention Campaign
Photo: USAID/Zambia-Renuka Naj

tions will do the same.

"We saw that when President Bush announced in his State of the Union in 2003 that this country will put \$15 billion on the table in the fight against AIDS. This was followed by others -- the first one being the United Kingdom -- and then others. This has happened again and again.

That is the power of American leadership."

PREVENTION

It takes large numbers to tell the AIDS story. Around the world, 39.5 million people live with HIV/AIDS; there were 4.3 million new infections in 2006; 32 million people have died since the beginning of the pandemic; and every day, 8,500 people die of AIDS.

Today, thanks largely to PEPFAR, 1.1 million people are receiving treatment. But it is not enough.

"In 2006," U.S. House of Representatives member Nita Lowey said during the PEPFAR briefing, "for every person who received treatment, another six people became infected. This statistic translates into an additional 60 million infections by 2015 if the world has not dramatically shifted its prevention paradigm."

The first PEPFAR program changed the world forever by initiating treatment, she added. "Our next program must reflect a true commitment to prevention."

PEPFAR supports prevention activities that focus on sexual transmission, mother-to-child transmission, transmission through unsafe blood and medical injections and greater HIV awareness through counseling and testing.

In 2006, some 22.6 percent of PEPFAR funds, or \$396 million, went to resources for prevention, treatment and care.

"In the next iteration of what the Global Fund does," said Kent Hill, assistant administrator in the Bu-

(Continued on page 24)

Human Rights Declaration Is a Call to Support . . .

(Continued from page 17)

derstood by “thinking and feeling people everywhere.”

Along with expressing support for Burma’s pro-democracy activists and urging countries with ties to the junta to pressure the government against using violence, the Bush administration on September 27 tightened sanctions against the military government.

The sanctions froze the U.S. assets of 14 senior Burmese officials and prohibited Americans from doing business with them. (See related text (<http://usinfo.state.gov/>

[xarchives/display.html?p=texttransenglish&y=2007&m=September&x=20070927172006xjsnommis0.7969629](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttransenglish&y=2007&m=September&x=20070927172006xjsnommis0.7969629)).

“The president has made clear that we will not stand by as the regime tries to silence the voices of the Burmese people through repression and intimidation,” Adam Szubin, the Department of Treasury’s director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control, said in a statement.

For more stories on U.S. policy, see U.S. Support for Democracy in Burma (http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/burma.html). See

also the full text (http://usinfo.state.gov/dd/democracy_dialogues/keydocs/universal_declaration.html) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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Burma’s Monks Have History of Democratic . . .

(Continued from page 18)

At about the same time, the Venerable U Vissara used hunger strikes as a political tactic against the British. He ultimately died in prison from his hunger strike.

According to Edwards’ research, the two “combined [Gandhi’s] ascetic realism with a commitment to social justice and spiritual purity.”

National League for Democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has drawn not only on Gandhi’s example for her struggle, but also on her country’s Buddhist philosophy and the legacy of monastic involvement in resistance.

The military junta reportedly has suppressed scholarship on U Ot-

tama, is suspiciously silent about Gandhi in official history texts and mentions Suu Kyi only in lukewarm tributes on Burmese national days. Some outside observers have suspected that this is due to a fear that the Burmese people will tie the continuing pro-democracy campaign to the country’s struggle against its colonial rulers.

As the protests continue, President Bush announced at the United Nations September 25 that the United States is tightening economic sanctions against Burma’s military rulers and their financial supporters. (See full text (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttransenglish&y=2007&m=September&x=20070925120250eafas0.1523096>) of Bush’s remarks.)

“We will impose an expanded visa ban on those responsible for the most egregious violations of human rights, as well as their family members. We’ll continue to support the efforts of humanitarian groups working to alleviate suffering in Burma. And I urge the United Nations and all nations to use their diplomatic and economic leverage to help the Burmese people reclaim their freedom,” Bush said.

For more stories on Burma, see U.S. Support for Democracy in Burma (http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/burma.html).

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Small Arms Destruction Efforts Reverberate Around . . .

(Continued from page 19)

tions program to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Stephen Mull, acting assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, told US-INFO that the United States envisions a future world "where illicit, unsecured and indiscriminately used weapons of war are not available to bad actors." Destroying excess and obsolete weapons, securing at-risk stockpiles and enforcing robust arms export regulations depend on "constructive engagement with our international partners," he said.

Partners may include governments or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like HALO Trust. Farid Homayoun of the HALO Trust in Afghanistan spoke in Kabul about the problems of abandoned ammunition and illegal groups arming themselves with ill-gotten weapons. He cited U.S. funding for humanitarian mine clearance and the removal of weapons debris through HALO's Weapon and Ammunition Disposal program that has destroyed more than 7,000 anti-vehicle mines and almost 56,000 small arms and light weapons. In addition, 12,300 tons of general ammunition and 13,900 tons of small arms ammo have been destroyed.

Homayoun said this contributes greatly to improved security and "peace building efforts in Afghanistan." Besides the United States, he extended his thanks to the gov-

ernments of Norway, the Netherlands and Germany as well as the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP).

The State Department has provided \$5.8 million for weapons abatement programs in Afghanistan in the past three years. While some of the money is used to eliminate tons of surplus weapons and ammunition, it also helps remove hazardous ordnance that poses risks to farmers and herders.

In 2006, the United States gave the Mine Advisory Group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo \$1.1 million to destroy 5,000 surplus weapons, and it will provide another \$1 million this year.

Speaking to government, military, NGO, and U.N. representatives waiting to see hydraulic shears cut up rifles at the Congolese Joint Forces Central Logistics Base in Kinshasa, U.S. Ambassador Roger Meese said destruction efforts prevent arms from being used in future conflicts. These efforts also reflect a desire to see an end to "the danger and conflict that has plagued the Congo as well as other African countries for so many years," he said. It is also part of a lengthy and "crucial process to reform the military," the official added.

In Albania, representatives from the Ministry of Defense, the Armor-Group, UNDP and NATO gathered at the destruction site in Mengle about 1.5 hours from the capital. To mark the occasion, Deputy Minister of Defense Petrit Karabina

said: "With over 500,000 light weapons in the hands of civilians, Albania recognizes the importance of collecting and destroying surplus weapons and ammunition. It is also clear that the cost of keeping these weapons is ultimately higher than the cost of destroying them. We want to make Albania a better and safer place for all our citizens."

In Luanda, Angola, HALO Trust and the U.S. Embassy worked with the Angolan police to secure weapons for destruction. Representatives from the police and the military as well as from the Dutch Embassy and American Embassy joined forces to shred weapons.

In Tegucigalpa, several Honduran newspapers covered the special day, noting that U.S. assistance -- totaling \$300,000 -- has been used to destroy more than 20,000 unused military weapons.

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U.S. Agency Funds Climate Change Projects in Nine Nations

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will spend \$2 million in nine countries to fund climate-change projects that enhance the capture and use of the powerful greenhouse gas methane.

The awards -- to projects in China, Russia, Argentina, Brazil, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, India, Nigeria and Ukraine -- are funded through the Methane to Markets Partnership, launched by the United States and 13 other countries in 2004.

The most recent member, the European Commission (EC), joined in September and brought the number of partners to 21. Together with more than 600 participating public and private organizations, the partners work on nearly 100 projects and activities around the world. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=August&x=20070823152734lcnirellep0.9353449>).

Paul Gunning, branch chief in the Climate Change Division at EPA, told USINFO, the EC membership "is a good development because it brings additional expertise into the partnership and additional commitment that will help us grow the partnership and continue to achieve reductions in greenhouse gases globally."

Methane accounts for 16 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. About 60 percent of methane emissions come from anthropogenic (people-generated) sources. It is 23 times better than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere, and

methane concentrations in the atmosphere have more than doubled over 200 years, largely because of human activity.

About 25 percent of methane emissions and 43 percent of people-generated emissions come from four sources that Methane to Markets targets -- agriculture (animal-waste management), coal mining, landfills and oil and natural gas systems.

Gunning said the EC has expressed interest in partnership activities that deal with capturing methane from coal mines and from oil and natural gas systems. The EC will send a delegation to the Methane to Markets Exposition in Beijing October 30-November 1 to learn more about the partnership.

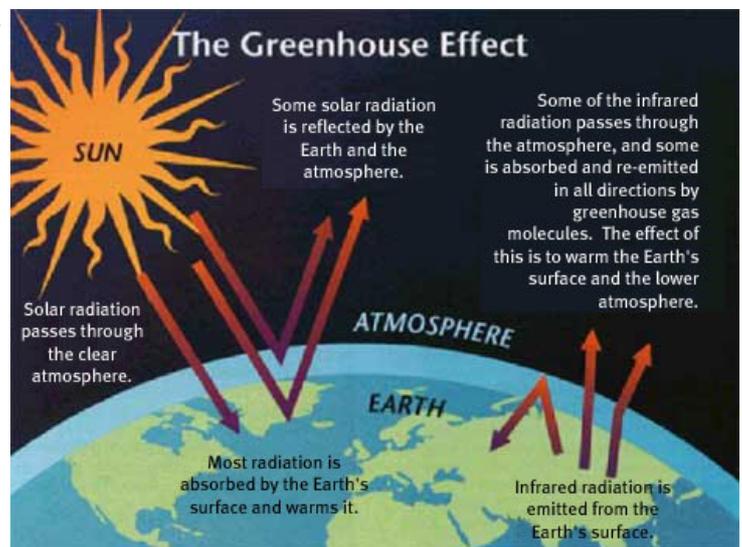
The EC is the first multicountry entity to join Methane to Markets. Four EC member countries (Germany, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom) are already members. In the coal sector, the EC will be able to provide more than 50 years of European Union experience in targeting methane emissions from coal mines.

CAPTURE AND USE GRANTS

Methane not only is a greenhouse gas, it also is the main component of natural gas and a clean-burning energy source. The EPA-funded projects support a range of activities

that help remove technical and other barriers to methane capture and use.

With the grants, EPA is supporting a suite of activities that include training, database development on potential project sites, feasibility studies, technology transfer and project expositions.



"One of the more important areas is direct project assistance," Gunning said, "so for example in Mexico we'll be working with the Border Environment Cooperation Commission to undertake two [gas recovery and use] feasibility studies in two cities in Mexico" -- Saltillo, Coahuila, and Hermosillo, Sonora.

"Our expectation is that the reports that are developed and issued from those studies will serve as a catalyst for private-sector investment to undertake a full-scale project," Gunning said.

Of several projects being funded in India, one will help the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce coordinate activities for advancing

(Continued on page 24)

HIV/AIDS Fight Targets Health, Related Development . . .

(Continued from page 20)

reau for Global Health at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), "we are going to [need] an increase in the amount and quality of effort on prevention to make a difference there."

BEYOND HEALTH CARE

Equally important to the struggle against HIV/AIDS is addressing what the authorizing language of the Leadership Act, which created PEPFAR, called "related activities." Hill calls these "wraparound" issues, and they are linked intimately with the disease.

"Gender issues are related to human rights," he said in prepared remarks. "Orphans' issues are immediately connected to education and access to all sorts of other health interventions. Economic growth issues are involved because HIV undermines the work force, and HIV-positive individuals often

cannot work or face discrimination. HIV-positive women ... need mosquito nets and access to reproductive health information and services."

To deal with these wide-ranging issues, PEPFAR is "connecting the dots of international development" by increasingly linking its programs with other development initiatives that are having a real impact in countries and communities.

These include the President's Malaria Initiative, to increase the impact on public health and reach more at-risk populations; the African Education Initiative, to improve educational opportunities for Africa's children; U.S.-supported food aid programs, to bolster nutrition among those with AIDS; and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, to promote sustainable economic growth.

With a focus on sustainability, Hill said, PEPFAR support is allowing

USAID's energy office in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade to work with partners to provide technical assistance on integrating energy issues into overall planning.

Applications range from identifying electrification rates in country districts to investigating solar energy options.

"The people of severely affected nations have accomplished so much in their fight against HIV/AIDS," Hill said, "and the American people are privileged to partner with them through PEPFAR."

More information about PEPFAR (<http://www.pepfar.gov/>) is available on the program's Web site.

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U.S. Agency Funds Climate Change Projects in Nine . . .

(Continued from page 23)

Indian methane recovery and use projects in the agriculture and landfill sectors, and another will help the International Institute for Energy Conservation there initiate a nationwide system for recovering methane from manure at animal feeding operations.

In Nigeria, the Center for People and the Environment received a grant for a study of electricity generation from coal mine methane at a site to be determined, and the International Solid Waste Association will develop a Nigerian landfill inventory.

The Ecological Regional Centre in Russia will develop a landfill inventory for that nation, and the Russia Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zones Association will create a Clean Energy Technology Information Center in Moscow.

And in South Korea, the Korea District Heating Corporation will conduct feasibility studies of methane recovery from the Chuncheon, Gangneung, Jinju and Mokpo landfills.

"Virtually all the projects are leveraging other resources," Gunning said, "so in all cases the institutions we are cooperating with will con-

tribute funding for projects and in some cases have partnered with others, too, so the award amounts aren't necessarily the full amount -- it's a portion supported by the U.S. government."

For more stories about U.S. efforts to combat climate change, see Climate Change and Clean Energy (http://usinfo.state.gov/global_issues/climate_change.html).

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Hard Work, Supportive Friends Helped . . .

(Continued from page 16)

passage of a bill to ban on assault weapons.

"I really have a high regard for her [Feinstein], so as a professional politician, I would say I probably emulate her," Levi said.

"I think it is very important for women to be involved in politics," Levi told USINFO. "And it's important for them to join together in organizations with like-minded women who can support them in that effort.

"It can be very difficult, when you are one of a very few, so you really need a support base."

Levi could have a long political career ahead of her. When asked her age, Levi will admit only to being "under 40."

"I don't feel that I've accomplished enough at this point. I'm always sensitive about my age because of that," she explained. She said that after completing her first year in the House of Delegates, she might consider running again after completing her four-year term.

"This is a lot of work!" she acknowledged.

See also "Maryland Delegate Urges Women To Be 'Part of the Process.'" (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2007&m=September&x=20070914122445ajeroM0.214596>)"

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U.S. Africa Command Will Enhance Local Skills, . . .

(Continued from page 12)

Ward, who has been serving as EUCOM's deputy, said security cooperation programs remain the cornerstone of U.S. strategy "to promote common security" in Africa.

Whelan said the lesson of operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq is "that you cannot promote security and stability successfully in a vacuum. They are interlinked with other elements like good governance and the rule of law, economic opportunity, et cetera."

While such concerns normally are not part of the Defense Department's mission, she said if it "is to be successful in carrying out its

[security] mission, it needs to be able to work in an integrated, cooperative fashion with those agencies that have those missions," such as the departments of State and Commerce, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Ultimately, Whelan said, "this more holistic, unified" approach by AFRICOM "will make us a more effective supporting player" in the African security system, strengthening U.S. relations with the continent. Ward said solidifying U.S.-African relations will help achieve the mutual goal of "a bright future full of promise and opportunity for Africans everywhere."

The full text (<http://armed-services.senate.gov/>

[statemnt/2007/September/Ward09-27-07.pdf](http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2007/September/Ward09-27-07.pdf)) of a document with questions from the committee and answers by Ward is available on the Senate Armed Services Committee Web site.

For more information, see AFRICOM (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/africom.html>).

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