



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

John McCain Wins Enough Delegates To Become Republican Nominee

By Michelle Austein
Staff Writer

Washington -- After Americans in Texas, Ohio, Rhode Island and Vermont voted in primaries March 4, Arizona Senator John McCain earned enough delegates to become the presumptive Republican nominee for president.

McCain received the majority of the votes in all four states and now has more than the 1,191 delegates needed to secure the Republican nomination. He does not officially become the party's nominee until delegates cast their votes at the Republican National Convention in Sep-

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President George W. Bush and Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) wave after delivering a statement in the Rose Garden of the White House

Rice Says Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks To Resume

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington -- There are always enemies of peace who try to hold the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks hostage, but that simply can not be permitted when peace, security and prosperity for the Palestinian people are at stake, says Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

" Hamas, which in effect, holds the people of Gaza hostage ... is now trying to make the path to a



Mahmoud Abbas walks with Condoleezza Rice in the Palestinian presidential headquarters.

Palestinian state hostage to them. And we cannot permit that to happen," she says.

After talks in Cairo, Egypt, with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and in the West Bank town of Ramallah with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas over the past two days, Rice announced in Jerusalem March 5 that talks between the Israeli and Palestinian peace negotiators would resume shortly.

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tember.

Speaking in Texas alongside a banner displaying the number "1,191," McCain told his supporters, "I am very pleased to note that tonight, my friends, we have won enough delegates to claim with confidence, humility and a sense of great responsibility that I will be the Republican nominee for president of the United States."

McCain, who had sought the Republican nomination in 2000, initially was viewed as a favorite to win the nomination in 2008. But over the summer of 2007, his numbers sank in the polls and his funds diminished, leaving many political experts to say that McCain's campaign was hopeless.

With the Republican nomination secure, McCain focused on the upcoming general election.

"The contest begins tonight," he

said. "It will have its ups and downs. But we will fight every minute of every day to make certain we have a government that is as capable, wise, brave and decent as the great people we serve."

Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee also spoke to supporters in Texas where he ended his campaign, which he called a "journey of a lifetime."

Huckabee told supporters that he called McCain to congratulate him on his victory. "I extended to him not only my congratulations but my commitment to him and to the party to do everything possible to unite our party," he said.

Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama also congratulated McCain on his victory.

DEMOCRATIC RACE CONTINUES

As has been the case in many Democratic contests this year, record turnouts were reported at many

precincts in the delegate-rich states of Ohio and Texas.

Record turnout was reported at many Ohio precincts, despite flooding and icy streets in various parts of the state. A handful of polling places had to be moved because of floods, and voters at a few sites cast their ballots during power outages. A federal judge allowed polls in some counties to extend their hours to accommodate voters.

New York Senator Clinton, who lost the last 11 Democratic nominating contests, won Ohio by 10 percent.

"For everyone in America who has been counted out but refused to be knocked out, and for everyone who has stumbled but stood right back up and for everyone who works hard and never gives up, this one is for you," she told supporters in that state.

"We're going on, we're going strong and we're going all the

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Rice Says Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks To Resume

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"I've been informed by the parties that they intend to resume the negotiations and that they are in contact with one another as to how to bring this about," she said during a briefing with Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni.

In addition, the secretary announced she is sending Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Welch back to Cairo for further discussions with Egyptian officials about how to improve the situation.

In Ramallah, Abbas announced in a statement that "the peace process is a strategic choice and we have the intention of resuming the peace process," according to the Associated Press.

Abbas did not say when talks would resume, but Rice said she is sending Lieutenant General William Fraser in the week ahead to assist the peacemaking process. Fraser was appointed in January by President Bush to monitor both sides' compliance with the Middle East peace process road map, which has helped form the basis for the current talks.

The peace talks, which were launched after the November 2007

Annapolis Conference in the United States, stalled in recent days after Israel used military force in the Gaza Strip, which Hamas controls, to stop rocket attacks from there into Israeli towns.

The secretary said Israel has the right to defend itself against these attacks, but she reiterated the U.S. position that innocent people should

the peace talks.

"I've also talked a lot about the importance of continuing negotiations because, ultimately, the answer to many of these problems has to be given in the solution that Annapolis put forward, which is two states living side by side in peace and security," she said.



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Israel's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni hold a joint news conference in Jerusalem March 5, 2008. (AP Photo/Jim Hollander, Pool)

Rice said that Welch will discuss with Egyptian officials the situation in the Gaza Strip that was created when Hamas illegally seized control there. "That means security issues, it means humanitarian issues, it means trying to do something about the tunnels which continue to be a problem," she said.

Israel and Egypt have their own direct contacts, she said, and the United States is not trying to broker a separate deal, but is trying

not be caught in the crossfire.

"The rocket attacks against Israel ought to stop. And as I've said, as Israel defends itself, Israel also needs to be very careful about innocent people who get caught in the crossfire, about the humanitarian conditions in Gaza," she said.

Efforts to broker a cease-fire between Hamas and the Israelis had been discussed with Palestinian President Abbas, Rice said, but it is not a condition for resumption of

to have all parties in discussions.

Rice left Jerusalem for Brussels, Belgium, March 5 for meetings at NATO headquarters, closing out the Middle East portion of her trip.

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

Kenyan Unity Agreement Praised by United States

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States congratulates Kenyan leaders for reaching a power-sharing accord that ends months of civil strife that nearly destroyed the East African country's society and economy. Kenya has been a long-time democratic ally of the United States and a nation that could be turned to for assistance in efforts to resolve other crises in Africa.



Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, centre left, and opposition leader Raila Odinga, centre right, sign a power-sharing agreement in Nairobi, Kenya, Thursday, Feb. 28, 2008 after weeks of bitter negotiations on how to end the country's deadly post election crisis. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan looks on, rear second right. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)

In Washington, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice praised the power-sharing accord reached Feb-

ruary 28 between Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga, who will become the new prime minister of Kenya under the terms of the agreement. "In the true spirit of democracy, the Kenyan people delivered clear messages to their leaders on the need for a political solution to the crisis their country faced," she said in a statement.

Rice said the power-sharing agreement was developed by the Kenyans but with able assistance from former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and African Union (AU) representatives, who helped mediate the talks. "The United States provided intensive support for those efforts and will continue to do so as

the two sides finish work on the remaining agenda item dealing with needed reforms," Rice said, adding that "the Kenyan coalition government and people can count on our support as they move forward to implement the agreement and reform agenda."

Civil strife erupted violently after the December 27, 2007, re-election of Kibaki. In the ensuing months, more than 1,000 people were killed and thousands more injured in largely ethnic violence, and Kenyan society and its economy were threatened with collapse. In the meantime, Annan led a team of negotiators from the AU to try and reach an accord between Kibaki and Odinga.

Annan said that "compromise was necessary for the survival of this country," according to press accounts.

The United States believes that the agreement reached in Nairobi is an important step in sustaining Kenya's democratic government and free market economy, and that it demonstrates to the region and the world that even the most profound crises can be resolved if there is political will to do so. Rice added that she urges all Kenyans to seize this opportunity to bolster unity, democratic governance and prosperity.

Rice traveled to Nairobi February 18

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VOA Adds Amharic morning show



Washington, D.C., March 3, 2008 - The Voice of America's (VOA) Amharic Service has launched a new morning radio show, offering an additional half-hour of up-to-the-minute news and information to millions of VOA listeners throughout Ethiopia.

The new morning show features on-the-ground news reports, the latest U.S. and world news, cultural highlights, and in-depth coverage of social, political and economic issues

directly affecting Ethiopians.

"We're always striving to meet the growing needs of our audience," said VOA Amharic Service Chief David Arnold. "We want to reach the widest possible audience, particularly in the rural areas where listenership has peaked," he added.

The morning show airs live, Monday-Friday at 0300 UTC (6:00 a.m. local) via shortwave. In addition, VOA Amharic airs a one-hour evening show at 1800 UTC (9:00 p.m. local), seven days a week. Both programs are available live and on demand at www.VOANews.com/horn.

VOA's Horn of Africa Service broadcasts 12 hours a week, in the Amharic, Afan Oromo and Tigrigna languages. More than 11 percent of Ethiopia's 76.5 million people

tune in to VOA Amharic weekly.

The Voice of America, which first went on the air in 1942, is a multimedia international broadcasting service funded by the U.S. government through the Broadcasting Board of Governors. VOA broadcasts more than 1,250 hours of news, information, educational, and cultural programming every week to an estimated worldwide audience of more than 115 million people. Programs are produced in 45 languages.

For more information, please contact VOA's Office of Public Affairs at 202-203-4959 or via e-mail at publicaffairs@voa.gov. ♦

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way," Clinton said.

In Texas, where Democrats could participate in both a primary and a caucus, turnout was also very high. The 2008 contest marked the first election since 1968 in which Texan Democrats cast their ballots before a candidate had acquired enough delegate votes to secure the party's nomination.

Long lines of voters were reported at primary polling places across the state, meaning that many sites had to stay open late to allow those in line by the set closing time to vote. Caucuses could not begin until primary sites closed, making counting votes a slow process. After hours of counting, Clinton won the primary with about 51 percent of the vote.

In Texas, two-thirds of delegates are awarded based on primary results, while the remaining third are awarded from the caucuses. As of the morning of March 5 only 36 percent of the caucus votes had been counted, with Obama slightly leading with 52 percent of the vote. It remains unclear which candidate will earn more delegates from Texas.

Obama and Clinton each won one of the day's small-state Democratic contests by large margins. Voters favored Obama by about 22 percentage points in Vermont while Clinton won Rhode Island by about 18 percentage points.

Democrats award their delegates proportionally, so when the final

delegate counts are tallied, both candidates are likely to have earned similar numbers of delegates.

"No matter what happens tonight we have the same delegate lead we had this morning and we are on our way to winning this nomination," Obama told his supporters in Texas before the results of the primary were determined early March 5. Obama held a lead of approximately 100 delegates prior to March 4.

The candidates now will focus on the next contests: the Wyoming caucuses March 8 and the Mississippi primary March 11. The next major contest, with 158 delegates at stake, is Pennsylvania on April 22, and both candidates are likely to spend a great deal of time there in the coming weeks. ♦

New Encyclopedia Celebrates Arab-American Artists

Washington -- Faye Oweis, noted artist and professor of Arabic language and culture at Santa Clara University in California, has published a unique volume entitled *Encyclopedia of Arab American Artists*, which highlights 85 individuals and groups working in painting, sculpture, photography, film, cartooning, calligraphy, mixed media, architecture and theater design.

In his introduction, Oweis writes, "The profiles in this book are not just biographical; they also highlight the many issues that influenced, inspired, and informed the artists' work. These include politics, language, culture, identity, economics ... and provide a portal into the rich culture of the Arab world."

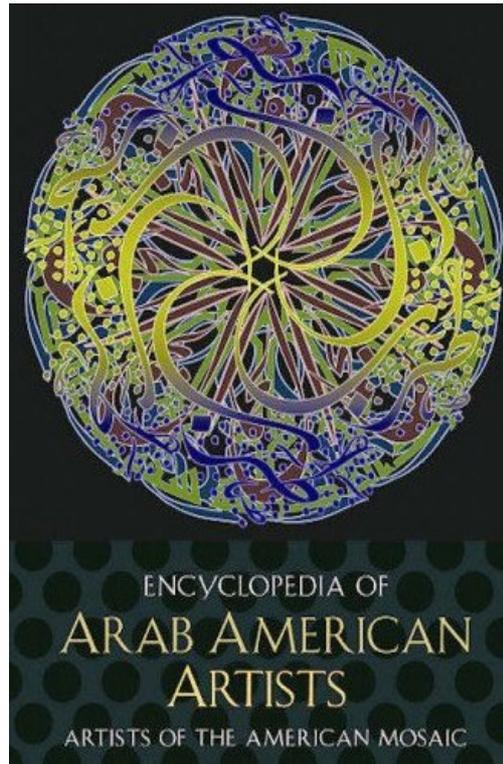
DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY

One of the encyclopedia's themes is the diversity of artists and their works, which makes categorizations such as "Middle Eastern" or "Arab" art inadequate. The individual artists trace their heritage to 22 Arab countries - whether first-, second- or third-generation -- and many identify themselves as Lebanese, Egyptian or Palestinian Americans as much as Arab Americans.

They also reflect the diversity of the Arab world itself, whether by faith, or as members of non-Arab ethnic groups like Chaldeans, Assyrians, Kurds, Berbers and Armenians, who nevertheless identify with Arab culture.

Within this diversity, however, many of the artists are connected by common themes and concerns, according to Oweis. One of those

concerns is identity in what Oweis calls the "the Arab Diaspora." As with immigrants from other parts of the world, the Arab-American artists profiled in the encyclopedia wrestle with the problem of belonging to two cultures simultaneously.



He quotes the words of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish: "I am from there, I am from here."

Oweis also cites the well-known statement of the late Palestinian-American scholar and writer Edward Said: "Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees."

Inevitably, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict looms large in the works of many, as do conflicts in Lebanon, Iraq and elsewhere. "Arab-American artists also explore social justice issues, including immigration ... freedom of expression, human

rights, women's issues, racism, and discrimination," Oweis writes.

ARTISTS KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

The *Encyclopedia of Arab American Artists* profiles individuals both familiar and obscure in the United States and elsewhere. Among the famous is Sam Maloof, a furniture designer, whose distinctive wood-working and signature rocking chairs won him a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, known informally as the "Genius Award." Painter and muralist Sari Khoury (1941-1997), who was born in Jerusalem and emigrated to the United States as a teenager, is the subject of a major exhibition at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, through April.

But others, many of whom are women, are relatively unknown to wider audiences and often work in unconventional media.

Katherine Toukhy, born in Rhode Island, is a painter and performance artist who sees her work as dealing with her identity as both a woman and a first-generation Egyptian American. In works such as life-size "shadow portraits," she has written: "There is a dense net of memories that has formed in my mind as a result of the impressions Egypt has made on me. All of these are filtered into my work somehow: the light and colors of the desert, the sounds of Arabic and Coptic, an incredible tension between tradition and change."

Hend al-Mansour, born in Saudi Arabia, became a medical doctor before moving to the United States to become an artist. She describes her work as "enclosed spaces that sym-

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American Company Donates Educational Toys to Pakistan

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington -- A Florida-based company is donating hundreds of educational toys that nurture healthy development to madrassas (schools) and orphanages in Pakistan.

"We very much believe in the value of play" in healthy child development, said Ron Kaplan, chief executive officer of Action Products International, at a February 28 press gathering at the Foreign Press Center in Washington.

Action Products distributes through specialty toy stores in the United States, Canada and Great Britain brands that include modern and classic play-sets and activity kits. The toys emphasize creative self-expression through arts and crafts and exploring nature and science.

The program is being implemented in cooperation with the State Department, and the toys will be distributed through the U.S. Embassy in Karachi.

The idea for distributing educational toys in Pakistan began with a State

Department-sponsored visit to the country by Ann Stone, an Action Products board member.

While in the country to train women in entrepreneurship and the importance of political involvement, Stone met with community representatives, university students and educators, including a vice principal of a Sufi madrassa. He said his mission was to educate children in non-violent behavior as the best foundation for social interactions, Stone said at the press briefing.

Most of the children in the schools receiving the toys -- which are aimed at children ages 4 to 8 -- "come from the poorest families throughout Pakistan," Stone said.

"It is a very trying time in that part of the world," Kaplan said in a press release. "During times like these children are even more vulnerable. ... We felt this modest toy donation was a chance to promote peace and good will between our countries."

Action Products' goal is to provide children "with the definitive, hands-on learning and toy experience to develop strong motor skills [and] a

vivid imagination and create lasting memories," Kaplan said.

Play gives children "the opportunity to explore themselves and the world around them. They grow more confident," said educator Susan Magsamen, creator of "Curiosity Kits," one of the brands being sent to Pakistan. Every Curiosity Kit includes all the materials necessary to complete a project, as well as easy-to-understand illustrated instructions.

Educational toys can help young children on a path of "learning, growing and finding success in life," and they also can provide a "respite" to children who lack the support of a stable family, Magsamen said.

This is the first toy giveaway Action Toys has been involved in, Kaplan said, adding that he would like to see other toy companies join in giving toys to poor children.

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to meet with Annan and the Kenyan leaders to reinforce the United States' view that the violence had to end and a workable agreement had to be reached. She was traveling with President Bush, who was on a five-nation visit to Africa at the time.

After weeks of seemingly frustrating negotiations, Kibaki and Odinga agreed to a plan that will make Odinga the new prime minister. As prime minister, Odinga will have power to "coordinate and supervise" government affairs and operations.

The Kenyan Parliament will reconvene in a week to pass the unity

agreement into law. Kenya will have two deputy prime ministers, who will be nominated by each member of the coalition government.

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Rice Looks at U.S. Diplomacy in the 21st Century

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington -- The interdependence among peoples and governments and the rapid international movement of information, money, technology and people are the main drivers of change today. "This is commonly referred to as globalization, and it is, indeed, transforming our world in two important ways," says Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Globalization is empowering those nations that can seize its benefits, and at the same time, it is revealing the weaknesses of many others and their inability to govern effectively, Rice says. "Globalization is not displacing the importance of geopolitics, as many assumed that it would in the last decade. Rather, it is reshaping it."

The landscape of international politics is becoming more decentralized as more countries are pursuing their interests vigorously, she says.

"Perhaps our greatest foreign policy challenge, now and in decades to come, then, stems from the many states that are simply too weak, too corrupt or too poorly governed to perform even basic sovereign responsibilities like policing their territory, governing justly, enabling the potential of their people and preventing the threats that gather within their countries from destabilizing their neighbors and, ultimately, the international system," Rice said in a recent speech at Georgetown University on the emerging nature of U.S. transformational diplomacy.

The challenge for the United States,



Secretary Rice at a recent news conference (© AP Images)

Rice says, is to fashion a foreign policy and national security strategy that focuses on working with international partners to build and to sustain a world of democratic, well-governed states. It requires nations to respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty and conduct themselves responsibly in the global system.

Meeting those 21st-century challenges will not occur through military power or any other means alone, but will require the full integration of defense, diplomacy, development assistance, democracy promotion efforts, free trade and the work of the private sector and society, Rice says.

"The United States has national interests and we use our power to advance them. But what has always distinguished America is that we are a people united and led into the world by universal ideals, our conviction that all human beings are

born free, equal in dignity, deserving of justice, the protections of law, and that the most responsible governments are those that respect the rights of their people," Rice says.

Much was lost during the 1990s when the United States looked to cash in on a peace dividend following the end of the Cold War. Since 2001, however, the United States has begun the long-term effort of rebuilding and transforming American diplomacy to reflect the highly dynamic world of the new century.

"To fulfill this mandate, transformational diplomacy requires a civilian-led, whole-of-government approach to the challenges of our time," Rice says.

Consider, she says, the approach taken with Colombia.

"Several years ago, Colombia was

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Al-Qaida Remains Leading Threat, Say Intelligence Officials

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- Top U.S. intelligence officials warn that al-Qaida and its affiliates remain a leading threat to the United States and its allies around the world, followed closely by the rapid spread of missile technologies and ongoing efforts by terrorists or nation states to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

"Despite our successes, the group [al-Qaida] has retained or regenerated key elements of its capability, including top leadership, operational mid-level lieutenants, and de facto safe haven in Pakistan's border area with Afghanistan," Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee February 27.

As director of national intelligence, McConnell is a principal adviser to the president, and his office oversees efforts by 17 agencies across the U.S. government that comprise America's intelligence community. Since most of the work of the Office of National Intelligence is shrouded in deepest secrecy, the Annual Threat Assessment sent to Congress, the subject of McConnell's testimony, offers rare and unique public insight into American policymakers' top national security priorities.

Continued close counterterrorism coordination among the United States and its allies in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and elsewhere helped bring hundreds of al-Qaida

operatives to justice in 2007 and prevented several major incidents, including attempted attacks in Denmark and Germany, McConnell said.

Al-Qaida's affiliate organization in Iraq also experienced significant setbacks in the face of the U.S.-led



Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell, testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008, before the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on worldwide threats. (AP Photo)

coalition's surge strategy and support from local Iraqi groups fed up with the terrorists' targeting of civilians. But McConnell expressed concern that al-Qaida in Iraq remains both a threat to Iraqis, and may be capable of staging attacks outside the country.

"Other al-Qaida regional affiliates in the Levant [a large area in the Middle East], in the Gulf, Africa and Southeast Asia, maintained a lower profile in 2007, but they also re-

main capable of conducting strikes against U.S. interests," McConnell said.

Joining McConnell at the hearing was General Michael Maples, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, who said that in addition to extending its operational reach through these regional partnerships, al-Qaida also continued to seek chemical, biological and nuclear weapons for use in future attacks and was interested in recruiting new operatives from European countries to obtain easier access into the United States.

Al-Qaida and its Taliban allies also continue to enjoy safe haven along the Afghan-Pakistani border region, but both McConnell and Maples highlighted the commitment of Pakistan's security forces and the growing capability of Afghan military and police units to confront them.

"Ultimately, defeating the insurgency will depend heavily on the government's ability to improve security, deliver effective government and expand development for economic opportunity," McConnell said.

PROLIFERATION CHALLENGES AHEAD

Another major security challenge, said McConnell, comes from continuing efforts by North Korea and Iran to acquire nuclear weapons.

North Korea's continued failure to disclose fully its past nuclear activities is a worrisome development, Maples said, despite the diplomatic

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on the verge of becoming a failed state. Insurgents were winning the war, thousands were fleeing their homes, and the democratic government was losing control, literally physical control, of parts of the country," Rice says.

The Clinton administration began a strategy to help Colombia recover control and the Bush administration has sustained and expanded that plan, a comprehensive strategy to support Colombia, she says.

"Our diplomats have led a country team that unites our law enforcement agencies, our military, our development professionals and our trade negotiators. And we have helped our democratic allies in Colombia to reclaim their country and improve the [lives] of their people," Rice says. "Efforts like these are a foundation for future progress."

The success of U.S. efforts globally will be determined by the progress countries make in moving from war to peace, despotism to democracy, poverty and inequality to prosperity

and social justice, Rice says. It requires a diplomatic posture that reflects the landscape of international politics in the 21st century.

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progress made in the Six-Party Talks that involve North Korea, China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States.

"Although Pyongyang continues to deny uranium enrichment programs and proliferation activities, we believe North Korea engages in both," McConnell said. "We remain uncertain about [North Korean leader] Kim Jong Il's commitment to full denuclearization."

McConnell also addressed lingering misperceptions about a 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's nuclear program, stressing that while intelligence agencies believe Tehran may have halted efforts to design nuclear warheads in response to international pressure in 2003, it is only one piece of the

nuclear issue.

Iran continues to enrich uranium, McConnell said, and even may be able to manufacture enough to build nuclear weapons by late 2009. Tehran also continues to perfect ballistic missile technology capable of delivering nuclear weapons, he added, and currently is building new models capable of reaching targets in Europe and North Africa.

Iran's nuclear program, its support of terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, and ongoing efforts to undercut security in regional neighbors Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon combine into a significant regional challenge, said McConnell.

"Iran is pursuing policy intended to raise the political, economic and human costs for any arrangement that would allow the United States

to maintain presence and influence in the Middle East region," McConnell said.

The full text of prepared testimony by McConnell (http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2008/February/McConnell_02-27-08.pdf) (PDF, 45 pages) and Maples (http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2008/February/Maples_02-27-08.pdf) (PDF, 37 pages) can be found on the Senate Armed Services Committee Web site.

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U.N. Security Council Approves Third Round of Iran Sanctions

By David I. McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- The near-unanimous vote by the U.N. Security Council to impose a third set of economic sanctions on Iran illustrates that the council will take action when a nation violates its international obligations, says a senior U.S. official.

The Security Council approved sanctions against Iran March 3 for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment and for not answering questions about its nuclear program for the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"It gives us no pleasure, but regret, to have to pass another sanctions resolution," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Zalmay Khalilzad said afterward. "But our vote today demonstrates that the Council will act when countries violate their international obligations."

The measure was unanimously backed by the Security Council's five permanent members -- China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States -- and passed the council in a 14-0 vote, with Indonesia abstaining. The move is the latest effort to pressure Iran to suspend its nuclear program and come to the negotiating table, Khalilzad said. "Such negotiations, if successful, would have profound benefits for Iran and the Iranian people," he added.

While previous rounds of U.N. sanctions in December 2006 and March 2007 targeted Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs and froze the foreign assets of individuals and companies associated with them,

the latest sanctions, co-sponsored by Britain and France, now impose new restrictions on trading in goods with Iran that have civilian and military uses.

In addition, the new sanctions freeze the foreign assets of a dozen



Zalmay Khalilzad addresses members of the Security Council after the Council voted 14-0 to increase sanctions against Iran Monday, March 3, 2008. (AP Photo/David Karp)

companies and a dozen individuals linked to Iranian weapons programs; require financial monitoring of two banks with suspected links to proliferation activities, Bank Melli and Bank Saderat; and impose an international travel ban on several other individuals associated with Iran's nuclear program.

The Iranian government claims that its nuclear enrichment activities are designed to develop civil nuclear power. But the regime's continued refusal to allow U.N. nuclear inspectors full access to all facilities leads many, including the United States, to suspect that Tehran secretly is seeking nuclear weapons development.

"So long as the Iranian government continues to be secretive about its

nuclear activities," Khalilzad said, "we must inevitably conclude that Iran is hiding weapons work and thereby preserving or establishing options for a nuclear weapons program."

Khalilzad noted that two of the Security Council countries voting March 3, South Africa and Libya, abandoned past efforts to develop nuclear weapons, as have Brazil, Argentina, Romania, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

The United States joins the rest of the Security Council's permanent members in supporting Iran's pursuit of nuclear power for peaceful purposes and has offered Iran support in developing civil nuclear power.

"If your goal is to generate nuclear power for peaceful purposes," Khalilzad asked, "why do you court increasing international isolation, economic pressure, and more for a purported goal more easily and inexpensively obtained with the diplomatic solution we and others offer?"

Meanwhile, in Vienna, Austria, the IAEA called on Iran to explain new intelligence gathered from multiple international sources suggesting that efforts to manufacture nuclear weapons may have continued past 2003, when U.S. intelligence agencies believe they halted operations in response to growing international pressure.

"I urge Iran to be as active and as cooperative as possible in working with the agency to clarify this matter of serious concern," IAEA Director General Mohammed ElBaradei said. ♦

NATO Summit To Address Afghan Strategy, Enlargement

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Staff Writer

Washington -- NATO is committed to helping the Afghan people realize complete security, economic prosperity and political progress, and to keeping the alliance a relevant force for security and peace in the world.

These principles formed the centerpiece of strategic talks between President Bush and NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer during a White House meeting.

Bush said he is looking forward to attending the 2008 NATO Summit to ensure that the alliance "is a relevant organization aimed at bringing security and peace to the world." More than 60 countries and many international organizations will be in Bucharest, Romania, for the 20th summit.

The president reiterated America's continuing commitment to NATO's mission in Afghanistan during de Hoop Scheffer's February 29 White House meeting.

The NATO secretary-general, who recently had returned from a meeting with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, said the alliance is there to support Karzai and the Afghan people "for the long haul." The 26 NATO nations are also there to fight terrorism and "we are prevailing," he added.

The two leaders also discussed NATO enlargement. Three nations are on a short list to be considered as new alliance members: Albania, Croatia and Macedonia. Adding new members is a decision the alliance must embrace through consensus.



*NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (L) shakes hands with the Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Kabul February 21, 2008.
REUTERS/Ahmad Masood*

De Hoop Scheffer said the ticket for admission to the alliance has not been punched yet for any country and that they should continue reform efforts in the weeks ahead of the summit.

Bush and the NATO chief also discussed NATO's role in the Balkans, particularly in the newly independent Kosovo, where there are 16,000 NATO troops. Other subjects for the summit include defense against cyber and missile attacks, energy security and NATO's training mission in Iraq.

AFGHANISTAN'S PROGNOSIS IS NOT GLOOMY

De Hoop Scheffer also delivered an address to the Brookings Institution in Washington, saying that he seeks to promote trans-Atlantic harmony. He said NATO members cannot afford to discuss publicly what he described as "the blame-game" with

respect to the level of support nations are providing in Afghanistan. He also predicted that more nations would be stepping up to aid that nation within weeks.

De Hoop Scheffer said NATO members must build on existing successes and figure out how best to move forward together. In his speech entitled, "Afghanistan and NATO: Forging the 21st Century Alliance," the secretary-general said the alliance needs to have a better appreciation of what is at stake in Afghanistan -- the security of Europe, the United States and Afghanistan; as well as NATO's evolving relationship with Asia.

As long as NATO is in Afghanistan, he said, the Taliban will not have the opportunity to re-conquer the country or play host to al-Qaida. The official said he is convinced that NATO's presence will marginal-

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First U.S. Envoy to Organization of the Islamic Conference Named

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush has appointed high-tech executive Sada Cumber as America's first special envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

"The core of his mission is to explain to the Islamic world that America is a friend -- a friend of freedom, a friend of peace," Bush said after a February 27 Oval Office meeting with Cumber.

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, in 1951, Cumber immigrated to the United States in 1978 and has been a U.S. citizen since 1986. A successful and well-known entrepreneur based in Austin, Texas, Cumber has founded six companies in the past 25 years, and most recently served



President George W. Bush meets with Sada Cumber, the first U.S. envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008, in the Oval Office. White House photo by Chris Greenberg

as chief executive officer of SozoTek, a firm that specializes in wireless imaging.

"This is an important job," Bush said. "There's a lot of mispercep-

tions about America and Sada's going to be a part of our effort to explain the truth."

Cumber will be the first U.S. representative to the OIC, an intergovernmental organization that strengthens political, economic, social, cultural and scientific cooperation among its 57 member states, says White House spokeswoman Dana Perino.

"The president is signaling our desire to have a greater ... dialogue with the organization as well as Muslims around the world," she said.

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

NATO Summit To Address Afghan Strategy, Enlargement . . .

(Continued from page 12)

ize the Taliban sufficiently "to give Afghanistan the breathing space it needs."

Afghanistan's situation is not "as gloomy as it may appear," de Hoop Scheffer said, particularly since it emerged only recently from decades of conflict. He pointed to remarkable progress, including greater access to health care, an improving economy, declining narcotics production, refugees returning by the millions, larger numbers of banks and more cell phones.

The majority of the Afghans want NATO to stay and finish the job, he said, to help the country stand on its own.

The secretary-general underlined that NATO is not alone in its support for Afghanistan -- there are 14 other nations contributing to the International Security Assistance Force including Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. He said this demonstrates that countries around the world share certain security interests and that NATO "is an excellent mechanism" for translating them into a singular military opera-

tion.

With greater security comes stronger development, de Hoop Scheffer said, and that means the international community must increase the number and effectiveness of provincial reconstruction teams and international agencies must help the government with its counterdrug efforts. A strong United Nations envoy is needed to coordinate the overall development effort in Afghanistan, he said, because NATO is a military alliance and not a development committee. ♦

U.S. Calls for Global Partnership To Combat Narcotrafficking



By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington -- The world is growing more aware that no country or society is immune from the social, economic and political damage caused by international drug trafficking, a U.S. government representative said during the release of the 2008 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.

Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs David Johnson said February 29 that drug trafficking is no longer viewed as largely a problem for consumer states in North America and Europe.

"We estimate that over 530 metric tons of cocaine are smuggled from South America to the United States each year, with more than 90 percent passing through Mexico. Mexico also is a major supplier of heroin, methamphetamines and marijuana destined for U.S. markets, and Mexican drug trafficking organizations now control many of the drug distribution networks within the United States," Johnson said.

Singling out Mexican President Felipe Calderon for taking "decisive action to fight trafficking and criminal organizations that affect both sides of our shared border," Johnson said the U.S. government is working with Mexico and Central

American countries to stanch the flow of drugs into the United States.

The assistant secretary said Colombia continues to lead the world in coca cultivation and is the source of 90 percent of the cocaine entering the United States.

He added that Colombia has made "notable progress in combating the drug traffickers and narcoterrorists that only recently posed serious threats to the stability of that country."

In 2007, Colombia, with U.S. assistance, eliminated 219,000 hectares of coca cultivation, he said. During the same year, Peru and Bolivia increased coca cultivation as coca growers' associations asserted that the plant is linked to their countries' cultural identity and national pride, according to Johnson. "Traffickers exploit these unions for their own benefit," he said.

Johnson raised a red flag of concern about the "rapid growth of cocaine trafficking to Europe from Latin America through transit states in West Africa." He said the issue deserves greater attention, especially from European states that are the markets for these products.

Venezuela plays a growing role in the cocaine shipments both to North America and Europe, Johnson noted.

"A permissive and corrupt environment in Venezuela, coupled with counternarcotics successes in Colombia, has made Venezuela one of the preferred routes for trafficking illicit narcotics out of Colombia.

While the majority of narcotics transiting Venezuela continue to be destined for the U.S., a rapidly increasing percentage has started to flow towards western Africa and onward to Europe. The movement of drugs has compounded Venezuela's corruption problem, and increased the level of crime and violence throughout the country," the report says.

Afghanistan, which accounts for 93 percent of the world's opium poppies, saw production soar in 2007 in the southwestern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand, where the insurgency is strong, Johnson said. He said there is a growing nexus between the insurgency and narcotics production. In the poorer but more secure provinces of central and northern Afghanistan, poppy production is down, and 13 provinces were poppy free in 2007, he noted.

The United Nations predicts that poppy production likely will decrease by small amount in 2008, "a welcome development after years of double-digit growth," Johnson said.

The assistant secretary said that success in combating narcotics trade is dependent on international partners.

"They must take often the difficult step of standing up to politically influential lobbies that view illegal drug crops as cultural patrimony, and they sometimes must arrest highly influential, corrupt officials that threaten the integrity of their governing institutions. As we have in the past, the United States will provide strong support to those governments that demonstrate real commitment to confronting these very difficult challenges," he said. ♦

Women's History, Accomplishments Celebrated Every March

By Louise Fenner
Staff Writer

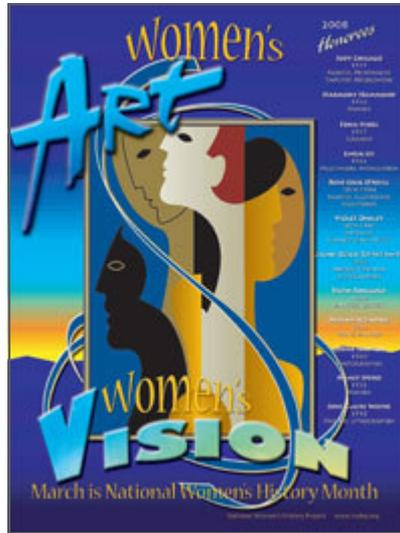
Washington -- In 1981, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution establishing National Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress expanded the week to a month, and has since passed such a resolution every year. Congressional action is followed by a U.S. presidential proclamation declaring March as Women's History Month.

Since its founding in 1980, the National Women's History Project (NWHHP) has recognized and celebrated the rich and varied contributions of women to the history and culture of the United States.

In introducing the 2008 Women's History Month theme, Women's Art: Women's Vision, NWHHP says, "The history of women and art is quintessential women's history. It is the story of amazing women's accomplishments acclaimed at the time but written out of history."

The accomplishments of 12 women artists are being honored in 2008. Two are historical figures: Violet Oakley (1874-1961), who in 1902 was commissioned to paint murals in the Pennsylvania capitol building -- the largest public commission given to an American woman up to that time -- and Rose O'Neill (1874-1944), one of the first female cartoonists in America and the inventor of the Kewpie doll.

The other honorees are Edna Hibel, an internationally renowned artist who has been painting for more than 70 years; Taiwan-born Lihua Lei, who incorporates references to her life as a polio victim into her multimedia installations; Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, one of today's



Logo for the Women's History Month 2008 theme, *Women's Art: Women's Vision*. (Courtesy of National Women's History Project)



Edna Hibel is one of 12 women artists honored during Women's History Month. (Courtesy National Women's History Project)

most acclaimed American Indian artists; Faith Ringgold, who creates painted story quilts -- art that combines painting, quilted fabric and storytelling; Miriam Schapiro, a pioneer in feminist art and co-founder

in 1972 of the A.I.R. (Artists in Residence) Gallery in New York, the first collective of women artists in the United States; Lorna Simpson, who uses African-American women as a visual point of departure in drawings, photographs and video; June Wayne, whose lithographs are recognized as masterpieces of the medium; Nancy Spero, a painter whose art focuses on the struggle of women around the world; Harmony Hammond, a painter who lectures and writes on feminist art and lesbian art; and Judy Chicago, a multimedia artist whose best-known work is *The Dinner Party*.

For more information see the National Women's History Project (<http://www.nwhp.org/>)

resourcecenter/equalityday.php) Web site.

The National Women's History Project also recognizes International Women's Day March 8. ♦

Trafficking, Health Top U.S. Agenda at Meeting on Women's Status

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington -- Trafficking and women's health issues are among the priority items for the U.S. delegation at the 52nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

In her remarks at the opening of the session on February 25, Ambassador Patricia Brister, who is leading the U.S. delegation, emphasized the U.S. commitment to fighting human trafficking.

The United States, she said, has obligated more than \$528 million to combat international trafficking in persons since fiscal year 2001. Another \$79 million was committed in 2007 to fund 180 anti-trafficking programs in more than 90 countries.

Aware that trafficking is also a problem inside the United States, the U.S. government has spent \$23 million in 2007 on domestic programs to fight trafficking. The Department of Justice continues to increase its anti-trafficking task forces: 42 such entities now operate in 25 states.

Although trafficking for sexual exploitation represents about two-thirds of transnational human trafficking, labor exploitation is another important component, Brister said. To help discourage this type of trafficking, the United States is devising strategies to deny access to markets for products made through forced labor. In an interview with America.gov, Brister said the United States is not planning to introduce any new resolu-



Ethiopian women, in a hospital in Addis Ababa, recover from surgery to repair injuries from childbirth. (© AP Images)

tions to the commission in 2008.

Brister, who has led the U.S. delegation to the Status of Women Commission meetings since 2003, said a major triumph came in 2005, when the commission adopted the U.S.-presented resolution "Eliminating Demand for Trafficked Women and Girls for All Forms of Exploitation." The resolution calls for governments to take appropriate measures to eliminate demand for trafficked women and girls, criminalize human trafficking and address the root factors of trafficking, including poverty and gender inequality.

"Passing resolutions here is not easy," Brister told America.gov in a phone interview from the U.S. United Nations Mission in New York City. "I thought that [the 2005 resolution] was a monumental resolution."

HEALTH AND GENDER EQUALITY

Access to adequate health care is vital if women are to achieve gender equality Brister told America.gov.

"Generally women have more care responsibilities for family members," she said. "Consequently, anything we do to help that situation certainly helps women."

Of health care issues facing women, obstetric fistula is among the most devastating. The result of prolonged or obstructed labor, a fistula is a tear between a woman's vagina and/or bladder that allows urine or feces to pass uncontrolled into the vagina. The condition is considered a disgrace in many countries, leading to social isolation; and some husbands will desert wives who suffer from the condition.

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Governors Set Sights on Clean Energy

By Lea Terhune
Staff Writer

Washington – Fresh from the National Governors Association (NGA) meeting where he promoted the conference theme of “securing a green energy future,” NGA chair and Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty heads for the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC), where he is a keynote speaker.

He calls energy and its environmental impact “among the most important issues facing our country and our world.” Speaking to America.gov, he urged the adoption of more renewable and cleaner fuels to spare the environment and to make America “less reliant on foreign oil.”

The clean-energy initiative that he introduced to the NGA is a four-pronged approach, with energy conservation being the first step.

“The cheapest and cleanest energy is energy we don’t use,” he said.

Other steps are developing and using cleaner, renewable fuels; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and sharing research on and commercializing green technologies.

“We can create an economic benefit, more jobs and more economic activity through green collar jobs ... that come with a new industry developing and accelerating in the United States,” Pawlenty said.

The states, he said, are “so-called laboratories of democracy, where they can ... try new things before it is rolled out across the whole country. That’s certainly happening in the area of clean energy and green-



Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty (third from left) joined agriculture officials and cooperative board members for the March 19 groundbreaking of the Minnesota Soybean Processors biodiesel refinery near Brewster, Minn.

house gas emissions.” Different states have different strategies, depending on their own needs and resources, but Pawlenty sees “a great consensus about making progress” toward energy efficiency.

“It’s going to vary from area of the country, area of the world, based on that state or region’s political heritage, their cultures, their natural resource base, their economy, their appetite for this kind of change,” he said. Minnesota is a major producer of wind energy, for instance.

Pawlenty is enthusiastic about electric vehicles. “If we can get plug-in electrics that are between 30 miles [78 kilometers] and 100 miles [260 kilometers] per plug-in, that’s going to make a huge difference in our greenhouse gas emissions and in

the way we use energy in the United States.”

A COMING REVOLUTION IN GREEN TECHNOLOGY

The Minnesota governor thinks green technology has potential analogous to the information technology revolution in Silicon Valley. The business sector, increasingly interested in this emerging industry, is only “waiting for the right signals coming from policymakers and policy leaders so that they can plan their future,” he said.

At the NGA closing plenary session on February 25, Pawlenty said, “From the discussions we’ve had these past three days, it’s clear that governors are leading the way to ‘Americanize’ this country’s energy

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Use of Hydrogen Grows To Fuel Vehicles, Produce Electricity

By Cheryl Pellerin
Staff Writer

Washington -- As a fuel source and an energy carrier, hydrogen -- the most abundant element in the universe -- is beginning to move from science fiction and basic research to the world's warehouses, airports, cell phone towers and highways.

Hydrogen is the most versatile of renewable energy resources -- a universal fuel that can be burned in an engine or integrated into a fuel cell to power vehicles, buildings and homes, utility power plants and anything else that uses electrical energy.

When burned in an engine, hydrogen is about 30 percent more efficient than gasoline. When a fuel cell is used to power a vehicle, the fuel cell is 100 percent to 200 percent more efficient than gasoline. Hydrogen engines do not emit carbon dioxide, and the only byproduct of fuel cells is clean water.

In a fuel cell, hydrogen is an energy carrier rather than a fuel. An energy carrier is a substance or system that moves energy in usable form from one place to another. Electricity, the best-known energy carrier, moves the energy stored in coal, uranium and other sources to power plants that distribute the transformed power to homes and businesses.

"Hydrogen is an excellent enabler for renewable energy technologies," Patrick Serfass, president of the National Hydrogen Association, told America.gov. "It works with fossil technologies, nuclear, ethanol, biomass -- all the alternative fuels. It works well with hybrid-vehicle technologies and with batteries and plug-ins."

"The three major challenges for producing hydrogen," George Sverdrup, a government researcher U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) official, told America.gov, "are how to produce hydrogen at a cost of \$2 to \$3 per equivalent gallon of gasoline; for storage, it's how to store enough hydrogen on board a vehicle to economically allow a 300-mile

[483-kilometer] driving range; and for fuel cells, it's how to get them to the point where they're cost competitive with gasoline engines and as durable." Sverdrup is technology manager for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) Hydrogen, Fuel Cells



Quantum's Hydrogen Vehicles Featured at Norsk Hydro's First Hydrogen Refueling Station

Fuel cells can be used to make up for the intermittent nature of wind and solar power, for example, and to extend the limited range of batteries in electric vehicles.

CHALLENGE AND PROGRESS

Hydrogen gas is plentiful on Earth but it is found only in compound form with other elements -- two hydrogen atoms combined with one oxygen atom is water (H₂O), and hydrogen combined with carbon forms compounds (hydrocarbons) like methane, coal and petroleum. Scientists around the world are addressing this and other technology barriers.

and Infrastructure Technologies Program,

Hydrogen can be produced chemically from hydrocarbon fossil fuels or from a range of renewable sources. But electricity produced from fossil-fuel hydrogen is not renewable and generates greenhouse gas emissions.

At NREL, the hydrogen work focuses on producing the element from renewable energy sources for hydrogen production and delivery, hydrogen storage, fuel cells, technology validation (testing systems in a commercial environment), safety, codes and standards, and analysis.

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New Encyclopedia Celebrates Arab-American Artists . . .

(Continued from page 6)

bolize women's private dreams and desires." Sama Alshaibi, of Palestinian and Iraqi heritage, has used photo montages that stress "the intersections of her Iraqi/Palestinian, Arab/American, and Islamic/Christian cultures," Oweis writes.

The Encyclopedia features several experimental artistic organizations as well, including the House of Leba-



Fayeq Oweis is an Arab American artist, educator, and linguist

non Artists Group, based in Los Angeles, and Other: Arab Artists Collective -- Detroit.

FAYEQ OWEIS

Oweis is an artist in his own right. In addition to teaching at Santa Clara University in California's Silicon Valley, he is a calligrapher and designer. He is an authority on Arabic calligraphy as an art form and the author of *Pocket Guide to Arabic Script*, published in 2005.

He designed striking calligraphy that decorates the entryway and dome

of the National Arab American Museum. Oweis also has collaborated with other artists on wall murals in San Francisco that celebrate Arab life and culture, including a Palestinian cultural mural at the student center of San Francisco State University.

In his introduction to the Encyclopedia, Oweis writes: "While the works represented in this book are rooted, in part, in Arab American culture, they also speak to audiences around the world about universal issues that are enlightening and educational."

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

Use of Hydrogen Grows To Fuel Vehicles, Produce Electricity . . .

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For example, for a process called electrolysis (running an electrical current through water to break apart the hydrogen and oxygen atoms), NREL scientists are working on producing hydrogen from water using sunlight, biomass, wind and biological sources like algae and bacteria.

Hydrogen storage is one of the main hurdles to commercialization, and NREL is one of three national centers of excellence in the United States working on the problem using different approaches.

"Hydrogen has tremendous promise for a sustainable energy future as a key element of a mix of fuels," Sverdrup said. There are still technical hurdles to be overcome, but we have fine scientists and engineers in

the United States and we're working on the problem."

ON THE ROAD

Hundreds of hydrogen cars are on the road around the world, at least three manufacturers -- BMW, Honda and General Motors -- are rolling out their first vehicles. Vehicle manufacturers are putting hydrogen vehicles into the hands of consumers for extended test drives. The cars have hydrogen engines or run on fuel cells.

According to DOE, the system cost for automotive fuel cells has gone from \$275 per kilowatt hour in 2002 to \$95 per kilowatt hour in 2008 and is projected to be \$60 per kilowatt hour in 2009. The target is \$30 by 2015. The estimated cost for a gasoline engine is about \$50 per kilowatt hour, Serfass said.

BMW's Hydrogen 7 is the world's first production-quality vehicle, and Honda is leasing its FCX Clarity hydrogen fuel-cell sedan to a limited number of drivers in southern California this summer -- a three-year, \$600-per-month lease in an area that has operating hydrogen fueling stations and participating auto maintenance facilities.

In the United States, DOE's National Hydrogen Learning Demonstration, which has about 70 hydrogen cars on the road, is a government-industry partnership created to test, demonstrate and validate hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and fueling stations.

Many countries have strong hydrogen vehicle programs, Serfass said, including the United States, Canada and countries in Asia and Europe. ♦

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Trafficking, Health Top U.S. Agenda at Meeting . . .

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Brister said the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) recently announced a new \$70 million, five-year program to prevent and treat obstetric fistula in developing countries. The program also will promote increased community understanding of the condition.

**NEW EMPHASIS ON STOPPING
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

On the first day of the CSW session, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon kicked off a 15-year global campaign to end violence against women, saying "at least one out of every three women is likely to be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime."

Violence against women impedes economic and social growth, Ban said. The campaign, he said, recognizes that women and girls "have the right to live free of violence. ...

It is a campaign to stop the untold cost that violence against women inflicts on all humankind."

Established in 1946, the Commission on the Status of Women is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women.

Forty-five member states of the United Nations serve as members of the commission at any one time. Members are elected for a term of four years and represent an equitable geographical distribution.

Every year, the commission members gather at U.N. headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide. The 2008 session is being held February 25 through March 7. ♦

Governors Set Sights on Clean Energy . . .

(Continued from page 17)

future" to improve energy security and quality of life. America's green-energy growth is being accomplished with the help of international partners. In states such as California, Nevada and Minnesota, major renewable energy projects have been built with the expertise of foreign companies.

"We have foreign investment in the clean energy industry in our state," Pawlenty said, giving the example of India-based Suzlon Energy that built a wind power plant in Minnesota, providing needed jobs. "Now they are planning on doubling or more the size of that plant and the number of employees." Suzlon, which ranks fifth globally among producers of wind turbines, has projects in 15 coun-

tries.

But environmental efforts begin at home, he said. "It starts with us as individuals. Everybody can do some things individually to use energy more wisely," from using energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances to simply using less energy. Communities also are beginning to pitch in and define clean-energy goals.

"They don't call it America warming, they call it global warming," he said, adding that what happens in one place is felt across the globe; the challenge must be met by all nations. "A real solution is going to have to involve India, it's going to have to involve China," Pawlenty said. "No one country can do it alone."

The U.S. government's aim at the WIREC event it is hosting March 4-6 is to sign up more countries to achievable renewable energy goals. Plenary sessions and a massive trade show exhibiting the latest technologies will provide ideas to international delegates trying to evolve solutions.

Pawlenty's own environmental commitment stems from a lifelong appreciation of the beauties of his home state, "the land of 10,000 lakes." He said, "I personally believe that this planet was given to us by a creator and we have a stewardship obligation to try to take care of it and pass it on in as good or better shape than we found it. The old rules of the campsite -- leave it better than you found it. ... the outdoors are such a great source of joy." ♦