



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Muslim Americans Prepare for Eid-ul-Fitr

By **Lea Terhune**
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington --When American Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr they observe the same religious traditions familiar to Muslims around the world, but celebrate in a distinctly American way, as people from diverse national and cultural backgrounds come together to share the feast.

Imam Mohamed Magid from the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) center in Sterling, Virginia, says that Muslims

in America look forward to Eid-ul-Fitr for several reasons. Besides the religious observances, breaking the *monthlong* Ramadan fast and socializing, Muslims receive special greetings from the president of the United States. "It makes Muslims feel their holiday is part of mainstream American holidays," the imam told the *Washington File*.

It has been a tradition to mark the occasion of *eid* in the White House since George H. W. Bush was president. The Clinton White House continued

the observance, as has George W. Bush. In 2001, a U.S. postage stamp was issued commemorating *eid*.

According to Magid, new technology has made it easier to plan *eid* celebrations. Now Muslims accurately can calculate when the new moon will signal the beginning of *eid* in their locality. No longer must they wait for an imam to sight the moon. "They can know far ahead of time when to take off work," he said.

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U.N. Security Council Making Progress on North Korea Sanctions

By **Judy Aita**
Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- Diplomats negotiating a Security Council resolution that would impose sanctions on North Korea for its reported nuclear test called the talks positive, saying many areas of agreement have been reached.

U.S. Ambassador John Bolton said that after two sessions on October 10, the five permanent Secu-



U.S. Ambassador John Bolton arriving at the U.N. Security Council meeting

rity Council members and Japan have made "substantial progress" on the U.S. draft resolution. "We're continuing to move ahead."

Early on the morning of October 9, the United States and South Korea detected a "seismic event" at a suspected nuclear test site in North Korea, according to the

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Africanists Discuss Somalia as Regional Security Challenge

By Bruce Greenberg
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – With Somalia slipping in and out of anarchy, a panel of Africanists met at the American Enterprise Institute October 4 to discuss how U.S. security interests in the Horn of Africa region might be affected by Somalia's instability.

The panelists agreed the situation in Somalia is precarious: Warring clans vie for power while a conservative Islamic movement consolidates its control over the capital, Mogadishu, and much of the rest of the country. A fractious secular government is trying to establish its autonomy. In addition, there are continuing threats from terrorist groups aligned with al-Qaida and from pirates operating off Somalia's coast.

Panel member David Shinn, former U.S. ambassador to Burkina Faso and to Ethiopia and now a professor of political science at George Washington University, pointed out the volatility of the area, noting the decades-old animosity between Ethiopia and Somalia, and their common 1,600-kilometer border.

The two nations' disagreements, he said, are stoked by territorial claims, by both countries' support of secessionist movements and by disputes over natural resources.

Additionally, the area remains a powder keg because of illicit arms shipments, with the Ethiopians accusing Eritrea of aiding Somalia, and the Islamic Courts Union faction in Somalia charging Ethiopia

with arming the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the secular entity centered in Baidoa.

Other countries in the region are pursuing their own strategic interests, Shinn said.

long border with Somalia. "Djibouti, unlike Ethiopia and Kenya, is now urging that the TFG and Islamic Courts reach an understanding at the [peace] talks in Khartoum designed for this purpose. Djibouti does not support a



"Kenya now favors an African peacekeeping force in Somalia but has not offered to contribute troops," he said. "Recent strong Kenyan support for the TFG may be driven by fears that the Islamic Courts intend to pursue incorporation of Somali-inhabited territory in Kenya's northeastern region, which shares a [684-kilometer]-

peacekeeping mission in Somalia and recently urged that outsiders not interfere in the country." Djibouti, Shinn said, "is an overwhelmingly Muslim country and increasingly dependent on Arab investment, which may account for its greater willingness to accept the [Somali] Islamic Courts."

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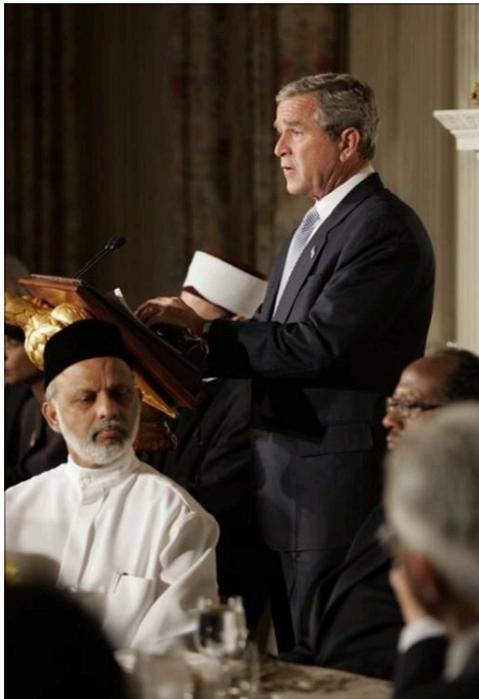
Muslim Americans Prepare for . . .

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The ADAMS center has a congregation of 5,070 families from diverse Muslim traditions. The mosque is known for its openness and involvement in interfaith dialogues. Sunni and Shiia worship there together. "I think we find a common ground being Muslims and Americans. We focus on the common good, working and studying together," Magid said. "Respect for all in Islam must be in a mosque," he said, "respecting each other and living in harmony." He said his mosque initiated a Sunni-Shiia dialogue, which is continuing nationwide. "We hope we can send the dialogue to Pakistan and Iraq" and other places where there is conflict between the two sects, he said.

Most families observe the same general *eid* customs of going to the mosque after sunrise. "Before anything we offer *zakat*," or alms to the poor, said Moroccan-American Saad. In America, this is customarily done through the mosque. Then special *eid* prayers are said. Usually, on *Eid-ul-Fitr*, the faithful pray in a large group in the mosque, outdoors or in some other venue where an imam will give a sermon. The Ramadan fast is broken with sweets. Everyone wears new clothes -- especially children are dressed in bright, new outfits. Later, most families celebrate with a sumptuous midday meal complete with holiday delicacies. Meeting relatives and friends is also an important part of the *eid* celebration.

Magid, who is originally from Sudan, says part of his *eid* celebration is taking his children to an amusement park for a special day of recreation. Amina, originally from Egypt, makes traditional cookies or *kak-ul-fitr* for her family to break the fast, as do Arab-American Muslims from the Gulf



President George W. Bush welcomes American Muslim Leaders and Ambassadors from Islamic nations in the State Dining Room—File photo by Paul Morse -White House

states. Iranian-American Muslims prepare a sweet, saffron-spiced rice dish and halwah in honor of the holiday. And for the big luncheon, halal meat is readily available in cities and towns with Muslim communities.

Businessman Mukit Hossain, who hails from Bangladesh, told the Washington File that on *eid* Bangladeshi Muslims relish vegetables

fried in batter and moori, puffed rice with chickpeas. Misti doi, a thick yogurt sweetened with palm sugar and lassi, a yogurt drink, are also a must on his *Eid-ul-Fitr* menu.

Hossain said Bangladeshi Muslim organizations sometimes invite members of the Bangladeshi-American community to special observances. *Eid* sermons are delivered in English because many second-generation Bangladeshi Americans do not speak Bangla, and American Muslims have various ethnic and linguistic origins. Regarding the *eid* sermon, Hossain said, "If I know a person who is ultraconservative, I avoid those people because, in my humble understanding, they don't represent Islam."

The majority of Muslims in the United States are African Americans. South Asians are thought to be the second largest group, with Arab Americans third largest. Estimates of the Muslim population in the United States range between 3 million and 8 million. There are more than 800 mosques in the United States.

In the hectic pace of daily life, Muslim Americans have the same difficulty meeting their friends socially as do most hard-working Americans. Consequently, Hossain identifies one of the greatest joys of *eid* saying, "You meet a lot of people you haven't seen in a long time."

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

Sudan Gives Up Threats to U.N. Peacekeeping Contributors

By Stephen Kaufman
Washington File White House Correspondent

Washington -- Facing strong objections by the United States and other nations, Sudan has withdrawn its warning to countries potentially supplying troops to a U.N. peacekeeping force in Darfur, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton said.

Bolton, speaking in New York October 6, said Sudan's ambassador to the United States informed the Bush administration that a recent letter from Sudan's U.N. mission "no longer reflected Sudanese policy." The letter had warned that contributing troops to the U.N. force would be considered a "hostile act" by Khartoum. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061005172146atia-yduj0.59219>).

"The government of Sudan has backed down, and this threat against potential troop-contributing countries I take to be null and void," he said.

Bolton credited the "strong position" taken by members of the Security Council, including the United States, against "the atmosphere of intimidation" caused by Sudan's threat against potential troop contributors.

However, he added, there is still a need to "dispel" that atmosphere. He said the United States remains focused on the goal of moving peacekeeping operations in Darfur from the African Mission in Sudan

(AMIS) to a larger U.N. force.

"It would be a mistake to believe that the government in Khartoum can frustrate the U.N. and therefore frustrate the international community," Bolton said.

On October 6, the Security Council extended the mandate for the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) for an additional six months -- until April 30, 2007 -- "with the intention to renew it for further periods." The mission supports the implementation of Sudan's 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and performs some functions relating to humanitarian assistance, protection, promotion of human rights, and supporting AMIS.

At the State Department, deputy spokesman Tom Casey said the United States is pleased to have received clarification from the Sudanese government.

"They've made clear to us that that idea that somehow offering contributions to a U.N. force would be some kind of hostile act in fact does not reflect the policy of their government," Casey said.

The United States understands that stopping the violence in Darfur is "long overdue," Casey said, and is addressing the violence by providing "a large portion of the humanitarian assistance needed," as well as working to strengthen and support the existing African Union force.

However, he added, "what we need to see happen is not just a strengthening of that force but see

it re-hatted as soon as possible into a broader, stronger United Nations force."

Casey said President Bush's special envoy for Sudan, Andrew Natsios, has applied for a visa to travel to Sudan later in October, and the United States expects his visa will be granted.

"He intends to travel out there ... [and] continue to have our discus-



A military observer for African Union in Zam Zam Camp- Darfur (file Photo)

sions with the government of Sudan, to encourage them and push them to do the right thing and do what they essentially agreed to under the Darfur peace agreement, which is accept a U.N. force and to move forward with implementation of it," Casey said.

Earlier on October 6, President Bush spoke with Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade on the situation in Darfur and "emphasized an urgent need to stop the offensive of the government of Sudan."

White House deputy press secretary Dana Perino said Bush "stressed the need to facilitate

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U.N. Security Council Making Progress on North Korea . . .

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White House. North Korea claimed that it conducted an underground nuclear test.

Bolton said discussion thus far show that all nations "want both a strong resolution and a swift response by the council. We don't want a trade-off between those two variables; we want both."

Citing "convergence on many issues," he said, "I'm pleased by the positive nature of the discussions and look forward to more progress tomorrow." Those discussions are being held at the ambassadorial level, not the legal or so-called "experts level," in order to deal with policy issues, the ambassador added.

Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin offered "supportive" comments on the proposed measures, Bolton said. British and French diplomats also characterized the sessions as positive, while Chinese Ambassador Wang Guangya indicated to journalists that China would be willing to agree to some portions of the resolution falling under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter, which provides for enforcement measures.

China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States are permanent members of the Security Council, with veto power over any resolution.

Japanese Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, the current president of the Security Council, called the sessions "good and productive," adding that "we all have some instructions from capitals which enable us to go into details and specifics of the draft resolution."

PROPOSED SANCTIONS, "HUMANITARIAN EXEMPTION"

The U.S. draft resolution would prohibit trade with North Korea in all materials with direct or dual-use application for all chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile (weapons of mass destruction or WMD) programs and would prohibit financial transactions that support missile activities.

The U.S. draft also would require nations to take steps necessary to ensure their territories are not used to facilitate WMD related activities, prevent the abuse of financial systems, and freeze assets and transactions associated with WMD programs. In addition, the U.S. draft also would authorize international inspection of cargo to and from North Korea to limit proliferation and prohibit trade in all military goods and services and luxury goods.

Japan has submitted additional proposals, including a travel ban for high-ranking North Korean officials.

In the draft resolution, the United States provided "a clear humanitarian exemption for the sanctions," according to Bolton. The measure is designed "to go after North Korea's programs of weapons of mass destruction -- nuclear, chemical, biological weapons and ballistic missile programs -- as well as their illicit activities such as counterfeit-

ing and drug running and other kinds of activities," the ambassador said.

Proceeds from those activities "do not do anything to benefit the oppressed people of North Korea but benefit the elite, help preserve the regime in power, and support their WMD programs," he said. Bolton added that properly designed and implemented sanctions have been successful in changing policies in the past, such as "the sanctions regime that helped persuade Libya after a sustained period to give up its own pursuit of



North Korea

weapons of mass destruction."

The permanent Security Council members and Japan have scheduled meetings for October 11.

U.S. STILL OPPOSED TO BILATERAL TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA

The Bush administration also reiterated its opposition to holding bilateral discussions with North Korea outside the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

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United States, Botswana Sign "Debt-for-Nature" Agreements

Washington -- The United States and Botswana signed a series of debt reduction agreements October 5 that will generate funds to help conserve and restore Botswana's tropical forests, including the ecologically fragile Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park regions.

The agreements -- comprising the first U.S. "debt-for-nature" pact to be concluded with an African country -- were made possible through a contribution of nearly \$7 million from the U.S. government and will reduce Botswana's debt by more than \$8.3 million.

The forests covered in the Botswana agreements include closed-canopy tree cover, riverine forests and dry acacia forests. They are home to the fishing owl, leopard, elephant, hippopotamus and many other wildlife species. Populations living in and around these forests depend upon them for their livelihood and survival, and these agreements will help ensure the sustainability of the forests for future generations.

Under the U.S. Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA), eligible developing countries have the opportunity to reduce concessional debts owed the United States while generating funds to conserve domestic forests.

The agreement with Botswana marked the 12th debt-for-nature pact concluded under the Bush administration, following agreements with Bangladesh, Belize, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama (two agreements), Paraguay, Peru and the Philippines. These agreements, together with another TFCA agree-

ment concluded with Bangladesh in 2000, will generate more than \$135 million in the coming years to protect tropical forests in developing countries.

The October 5 agreements were signed in Gaborone, Botswana, by U.S. Ambassador Katherine Cavanaugh and Botswana Minister of Finance and Development Planning Baledzi Gaolathe.

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



Botswana has one of the largest varieties as well as concentrations of wild animals in the world.

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White House Press Secretary Tony Snow told reporters in Washington that the six-party format has created "a more promising mechanism" for dealing with the North Korean government than existed in the past. Countries like China, South Korea and Japan, all of which have direct leverage over

the North Korean government, are "fully invested as equal partners," Snow said.

"The people who can turn the spigots economically and politically are now fully engaged and invested in this. That was not the case in the 1990s. It was not the case earlier in this decade. It is the case now," Snow said.

White House correspondent Stephen Kaufman contributed to this article.

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

Seeds of Hope from the Private Sector for South Africans

Every day, across rural South Africa, families struggle to make ends meet. They struggle to feed their children, buy clothes and pay school fees.

Now imagine that these families had enough to eat, that their children were not hungry and they had a little extra money to buy shoes or school uniforms -- that they had hope.

In Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal there are farmers who have more to eat and more money to spend on essentials.

In the towns of Mlondozi, Belgrade and Hlabisa farmers who grow maize (corn) have hope that comes in the form of a box filled with a small amount of seed, fertilizer and herbicide. The name on the box is Xoshindlala, which means "chase away hunger."

You might wonder where this box comes from, and you might be surprised to learn that it does not come from the government or from a nongovernmental organization (NGO). Instead, the box, also known as a combi-pack, comes from the Monsanto Company, a large, U.S.-based agricultural corporation doing business in South Africa. Monsanto sells the product to local smallholders and hopes to make a profit along the way.

Over the past several years, farmers have been experimenting with combi-packs and a technology called no-till, or minimum-till, plowing. The results to date have been good: yields are higher and more stable, labor costs are down, and farmers gain valuable experience they can use to move from subsis-

tence to small-scale commercial farming. Families are more confident they will get enough food.

One example is Rabie Mntungwa, the father of nine children, who lives in Belgrade. He started using a combi-pack with no-till technology a few years ago. The results were so positive that he has expanded his planting from five to 13 hectares of maize. He has gained valuable experience and is now building a business as a small-scale commercial farmer.

Not only can Mntungwa feed his own family, but he also can employ others and help them feed their families. This year he needed 10 additional workers to help him get in the harvest.

George and Queen Thango are another example of a smallholder family who has "graduated" from using maize combi-packs along with no-till technology to planting larger areas with hybrid seed. Queen remembers that not too long ago she worked late into the night on her sewing machine to supplement the family's income. Now that they have had good success growing maize, she has left the sewing machine behind.

The Thangos grow enough to feed themselves and they have extra maize to sell at market. With the money they earn, they have helped pay for their sons to attend school. One son is studying civil engineering in Pietermaritzburg. George would like to open a small mill to service other local farmers.

Combi-packs are not the sole answer to the complex problems of rural poverty in South Africa, or in the rest of Africa, but this seed mix is an important tool that farmers can use to battle privation. That the tool comes from the private sector may be surprising to some, but increasingly the private sector is creating products that meet the needs of people like Nkosi and Mntungwa.



Farm workers in South Africa
(File Photo)

Combi-packs have helped make the difference between food security and hunger -- good news for the 75 percent of South Africa's poor who live in rural areas.

(The above article is adapted from a piece by Karol Boudreaux published September 15, 2006, online by the Mercatus Center in Arlington, Virginia. It is reprinted with permission.)

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

U.S. Business Advancing Global Development, U.S. Official Says

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. businesses, focusing on long-term economic growth, societal advancement and environmental protection, are advancing international development, a State Department official says.

Business is "setting the right tone" in partnering with governments to promote policies and practices that advance this "triple bottom line" of development, said Jonathan Margolis, State's special representative for sustainable development.

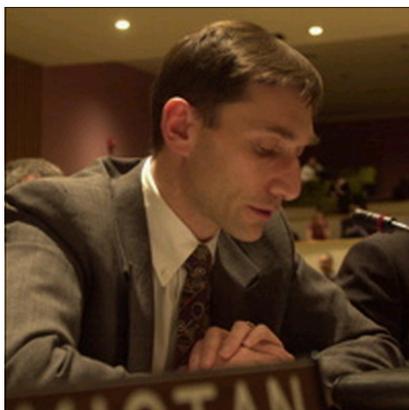
Margolis addressed a group of more than 100 business chief executives October 4. The meeting, sponsored by the Business Roundtable, focused on how business can work voluntarily to address the social, economic and environmental change needs in poor countries. It was held in the city of San Jose, in the heart of California's innovative high-technology "Silicon Valley" region. The Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of leading U.S. corporations.

The business world has evolved into an environment that combines "traditional corporate goals of higher profit and lower cost with a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and social improvement," according to a statement issued by the Roundtable at the start of the four-day gathering.

That evolution and a stronger focus on measuring the achievements of public-private develop-

ment efforts -- both short- and long-term -- have marked a "cultural shift" in addressing the needs of developing countries, Margolis said.

He cited government-business partnerships that have achieved "on-the-ground results" in such areas as assisting people affected by HIV/AIDS, curtailing the refining and selling of gasoline containing lead in poor countries and increas-



Jonathan Margolis
State's special representative
for sustainable development

ing access to banking and credit services.

The current challenge is deciding on the best ways to measure qualitative results, Margolis said. This involves reaching common understanding among donors of terms used in reporting results of poverty reduction, he said.

Margolis challenged executives to highlight their companies' sustainable development efforts during future meetings with representatives of other countries.

"That is one of the best ways to reinforce the message that words are good, actions are better, but results are what really matter," he said.

The day after Margolis' appearance, the State Department announced it had agreed to reduce more than \$8.3 million of Botswana's debt, with the funds going toward conserving and restoring that country's tropical forests.

The bilateral agreement is the first for Africa under the Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA). Botswana's forests are home to numerous species of wildlife. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061005183845mbgrebneerg0.8093836>).

The full text (<http://www.state.gov/g/oes/rls/rm/2006/73708.htm>) of Margolis' prepared remarks is available on the State Department Web site.

For information on U.S. private-public partnerships on development, see Partnership for a Better Life (<http://www.sdp.gov/>) and Sustainable Development (<http://www.sdp.gov/>) sites.

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President Signs Bill Giving \$33.8 Billion to Homeland Security

By Jane Morse
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush signed a bill October 4 that allocates \$33.8 billion to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year that began October 1.

At the signing ceremony in Scottsdale, Arizona, Bush said the bill includes a 25 percent increase in funding for immigration and customs enforcement. This funding will help provide at least 6,700 new beds in detention centers, thus establishing better controls over illegal immigrants who are apprehended by the U.S. Border Patrol, he said.

"[W]hen people know that they'll be caught and sent home if they enter the country illegally, they're going to be less likely to try to enter illegally in the first place," Bush said.

In addition to border control efforts, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (H.R. 5441) will help fund the deployment of nuclear detection equipment at U.S. ports of entry, raise security standards at the nation's chemical plants, safeguard American cities against weapons of mass destruction and stop terrorists seeking to enter the United States, the president said.

Bush said the bill also will help the U.S. government better respond to emergencies and natural disasters by strengthening the capabilities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is responsible for dealing with catastrophes such as the destruction left by Hurricane Katrina.

In his remarks, however, the president focused on the difficulties created by illegal immigration. Accompanied by Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano, a Democrat, and U.S. Congress members, Bush acknowledged the burdens imposed by illegal immigration -- most especially on Arizona and other southern border states.

"I understand full well," Bush said, "that illegal immigration puts pressure on the public schools and hospitals. It strains state and local budgets. In some communities, it increases crime. The administration and Congress have been taking decisive steps to address this issue."

H.R. 5441, the president said, includes nearly \$1.2 billion in additional funding for strengthening the border via additional border fencing, vehicle barriers, lighting and cutting-edge technology such as ground-based radar, infrared cameras and advance sensors. The bill also supports an increase in the number of Border Patrol agents to about 18,000 by the end of 2008. The president said that since he took office in 2001, the number of Border Patrol agents has increased from 9,000 to 12,000.

The president said, "Enforcement alone is not going to work." What is needed, he said, is comprehensive reform that provides a legal way for people to work in the United States on a temporary basis. Such reform, Bush said, would "free up our law enforcement officers to focus on criminals

and drug dealers and terrorists and others who mean us harm."

Bush vowed to continue to work with Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that secures U.S. borders, upholds the laws, "and honors our nation's proud heritage as a land of immigrants."



President George W. Bush is joined by Arizona legislators as he delivers his remarks at the signing ceremony for H.R. 5441, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2007, Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2006, in Scottsdale. From left are: Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano, Rep. J.D. Hayworth, Rep. Rick Renzi, Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., and Rep. Trent Franks
White House photo by Eric Draper

For more on U.S. policy, see Immigration Reform (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.html).

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061004-2.html>) of the president's remarks at the signing ceremony for the bill is available on the White House Web site.

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

State's Hughes Says Nations Need To Empower Women

By Carolee Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The world must continue to assist women around the world who have “recently found their voices to use them effectively and powerfully for change,” the State Department’s Karen Hughes, the under secretary for public diplomacy and public



Karen Hughes
U.S. Under Secretary
for Public Diplomacy
and Public Affairs

affairs, told the International Women’s Forum for Economy and Society.

“I have come to realize it is increasingly women who are arbiters of peace and reconcilia-

tion,” she said. “Women – and what they teach their children – can be a powerful prescription for

peace,” Hughes said in Deauville, France, October 5.

As women become leaders of their countries, they are increasingly vocal advocates for education and health, according to Hughes, and as educated women engage in the economic development of their countries, they are increasingly agents of political and economic change.

For example, Michelle Bachelet, president of Chile and “a victim of hate,” Hughes said, has dedicated her life “to turning that hate into understanding.” In Liberia, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has begun “the task of healing that troubled country,” Hughes added, and in Rwanda, women now hold a large block of seats in the Parliament and make up 40 percent of the Cabinet.

“All the statistics show [that] when you educate and empower women, you improve almost every

other aspect of a society,” Hughes said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060908140729bcrekla-w0.5213587>).

For more information on U.S. efforts to empower women, see Women in the Global Community (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/women.html) and Partnerships for a Better Life (<http://usinfo.state.gov/partners/>).

A transcript (<http://www.state.gov/r/us/73614.htm>) of Hughes’ remarks is available on the State Department Web site.

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

New U.S. Procedures Intended To Help Intercountry Adoption

Washington -- Taking another step toward ratifying the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoptions, the United States announced that November 17 is the deadline for potential adoption service providers to submit their accreditation applications to designated agencies.

The 1993 Hague Convention sets minimum international standards and procedures for adoptions that occur between implementing coun-

tries. It seeks to ensure that such intercountry adoptions are made in the best interests of the child and aims to prevent abuses such as abductions, sale or trafficking in children, as well as the exploitation of birth parents and adoptive parents.

To date 68 countries have ratified the convention or acceded to it. The United States signed the pact in 1994 and hopes to ratify it by 2007.

In 2005 Americans adopted nearly 23,000 children from countries around the world, with more than half coming from countries that are parties to the Hague Convention, according to the State Department.

A State Department notice published in the October 5 Federal Register states that in order to be accredited or approved to handle Hague Convention adoptions at the

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time the convention enters into force for the United States, an agency or a person must submit an application and required fees to an accrediting entity on or before the "transitional application deadline" (TAD) of November 17.

In July the State Department designated two accrediting entities -- the Council on Accreditation (COA) and the Colorado Department of Human Services.

This action followed the publication in February of the final outline of standards and procedures these entities must follow in accrediting nonprofit agencies or other providers to handle Hague adoptions. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060727132106xlrennef0.275387>).

The State Department announced on October 4 the approval of fees that the two accrediting entities will charge adoption service providers.

The establishment of the transitional application deadline is "a significant achievement and brings the United States closer to its goal of ratifying the Hague Adoption Convention in 2007," according to an October 5 State Department media note. "Once the Convention enters into force for the United States, prospective adoptive par-

ents adopting a child from a Convention country will have assurances that they and the children they are adopting have the protections and safeguards provided by the Hague Convention."

The full text (<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/pdf/E6-16502.pdf>) of the Federal Register notice, which provides contact information for the accrediting entities, is available on the Government Printing Office Web site.

Additional information (http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/adoption_485.html) about international adoption is available on the

State Department Web site, as is the full text (http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/notices/notices_3043.html) of the announcement. The Web site also offers information on the Hague Convention (http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/convention/convention_462.html).

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Many children from other countries are available for adoption. Russia, China, Korea, India and countries in Eastern Europe, Central America and South America are the source countries for most foreign-born children adopted by Americans

Reconciliation Progressing in Iraq, Coalition Officials Say

By David McKeeby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Despite ongoing violence in Iraq, the country's new government continues to make progress toward national reconciliation and building the democratic institutions essential to long-term success, coalition officials say.

"Iraq's young government, though still in its infancy, is facing extremely complex ... issues that would cripple many mature nations," Army Major General William Caldwell, coalition spokesman, told journalists at an October 9 press briefing in Baghdad, Iraq.

As predicted, terrorist bombings and sectarian murders and kidnappings have increased in the Iraqi capital while residents observe the holy month of Ramadan. That these attacks are more frequent and severe in neighborhoods not protected under the government's recently issued Baghdad Security Plan, Caldwell said, highlights the need for an "Iraqi solution" rooted in political and economic development rather than military strategy. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060927145840idybeekcm0.1001856>).

But first, Caldwell said, the Iraqi government recognizes that it must move forward with its proposed National Reconciliation and Dialogue Project, an initiative announced earlier in 2006 aimed at bringing Iraq's diverse communi-

ties together. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2006/Jun/27-239223.html>)).

Caldwell reported that Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki met October 1 with political and religious leaders who signed a pledge to try to end sectarian violence in Baghdad by establishing new district committees tasked with monitoring and addressing Sunni-Shia violence in their communities.

On October 7, Maliki met with



Army Major General William Caldwell

ministerial officials and influential sheiks from al-Anbar province to develop and discuss solutions to the security and economic development challenges facing their region, second only to Baghdad in violent attacks. At the local level, Iraqi government and tribal officials across the country have met to consider ways to improve security.

Sunni and Shia religious leaders currently attending the Organization of the Islamic Conference in neighboring Saudi Arabia also are discussing the issue, Caldwell said, adding that later in October hundreds of Iraqis will meet for the

third of four scheduled national conferences at the heart of the Iraqi government's national reconciliation initiative.

"The most telling sign of progress toward reconciliation is that the leaders from diverse factions, with different interests, are working together and are communicating with each other," the general said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060914164458idybeekcm3.849429e-02>)).

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Caldwell was joined by Rob Tillery, chief of staff for the State Department's Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, who updated journalists on the progress of the U.S. provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). He said the teams are aiding community authorities in achieving greater self-reliance by helping build strong local governments.

"Iraq belongs to the Iraqi people," Tillery said. "And success here depends on decisions of the people and their government."

Originally developed for use in Afghanistan, the PRTs bring together personnel from across U.S. military and civilian government agencies to serve as advisers to provincial authorities. In Iraq, the teams are focused primarily on repairing and rebuilding more than \$100 million

(Continued on page 17)

U.S. Expresses Shock Over Murder of Russian Journalist

By Howard Cincotta
Washington File Special Correspondent

Washington – The United States has expressed shock and sadness over the murder of noted Russian journalist and author Anna Politkovskaya in Moscow on October 7.

Along with extending "deepest sympathies" to Politkovskaya's family, the Department of State called upon the Russian government to conduct an immediate and thorough investigation to bring the perpetrators to justice.

"Politkovskaya devoted much of her career to shining a light on human rights abuses and other atrocities of the war in Chechnya and the plight of Chechen refugees," according to the statement issued by State Department spokesman Sean McCormack.

The statement points out that 12 journalists were murdered in Russia in the past six years, including American citizen Paul Klebnikov killed on July 9, 2004. The statement calls intimidation of journalists "an affront to free and independent media and to democratic values." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=July&x=20040714183635xlrennef0.4571192>).

The 46-nation Council of Europe, currently chaired by Russia, urged that her death "be investigated quickly and convincingly."

In the days before her death, Politkovskaya was working on a story about torture and abductions in Chechnya, her editor at the weekly newspaper Novaya Gazeta (New Journal) said in interviews October 8. He praised Politkovskaya as someone who was never afraid and a complete professional in all her work, according to a VOA news account.

The Associated Press reported that Politkovskaya had collected witness accounts and photos of tortured bodies for an article scheduled for publication on Monday October 9.

News accounts have described Politkovskaya, a 48-year-old mother of two, as a champion for human rights and an unsparing critic of Russian authorities, who drew both death threats and high praise for her unflinching coverage of the war in Chechnya and ethnic-based conflicts throughout the North Caucasus.

She served as a mediator between Russian security forces and Chechen terrorists who took hundreds of hostages in a Moscow theater in 2002.

Politkovskaya received numerous journalism awards for her bravery and commitment to uncompromising investigative journalism. She was awarded the Golden Pen Award from the Russian Union of Journalists in 2000, the Prize for Journalism and Democracy from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as well as awards from the Overseas Press Club and Amnesty Interna-

tional, according to the State Department.

In 2004, she shared the Olof Palme Prize for human rights work with two other Russian human rights advocates, Lyudmila Alekseyeva and Sergei Kovalyov.

The Palme citation reads: "With their great courage, often matched with considerable personal sacrifice, risk-taking and dogged insistence in never compromising the fundamental ideals of strengthening free speech and a free press, they thereby represent those who have influenced and promoted democratic development in the country."

Hundreds of mourners gathered in central Moscow to pay tribute to Politkovskaya, laying flowers and lighting candles, according to news account.

The text (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/73739.htm>) of the press statement can be found on the State Department Web site.

For additional information, see Freedom of the Press (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/rule_of_law/press_freedom.html).

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Growth Policies Aiding Poor Key to Reducing Poverty, Experts Say

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Promoting sustainable economic growth policies that benefit the poor is critical for achieving international poverty-reduction goals, development experts say.

That means broadening development policies focused so far primarily on such basic needs as health care and education -- a strategy many aid donors emphasized in the 1990s -- to involve poor people in constructing policies that can lead to the self-sufficiency of their communities, said James Smith, a retiring senior official of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Smith spoke September 29 at a meeting sponsored by the Washington office of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) related to the recent publication of OECD's policy report, *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth*. The OECD, composed of 30 industrialized nations, conducts policy research and makes recommendations on economic and social issues.

Until recently, Smith also chaired the poverty network project (POVNET) of the 22-country OECD development assistance committee (DAC).

The DAC seeks to expand, aggregate and make more effective development-aid resources. POVNET addresses policy areas that contribute to economic growth policies that benefit the poor, with particular attention to private sec-

tor development, agriculture and infrastructure.

Smith said, for instance, that empowering poor women and men "to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth" is essential for helping to bring investments to their countries.

Citing the need for a change in the "pattern" of poverty-reduction policies, Smith said donors should recognize that poverty has many causes and "dimensions" -- economic, political, socio-cultural and security-related. Progress in tackling poverty-related issues of one dimension can accelerate progress in another, he said.

"A significant proportion of poor people have been marginalized in the growth process and not been able to escape poverty," the report states. "For pro-poor policies to emerge, the poor need to be informed and empowered to influence a policy making process that is accountable to their interests," according to the report.

Smith said there also is a need for more policies that promote making new-business registration easier, expanding the land-ownership rights of the poor and helping the poor obtain official identity certificates so they can gain access to credit.

Smith also said donors should recognize that the demographics of the poor vary among countries and that more poor people are moving from rural to urban areas. In response, "donors need to adjust their goals to what the country needs," Smith said.

The report says other key issues donors need to consider include better market-based approaches to providing aid and helping countries develop their private sectors in ways that avoid distorting markets.

Another issue, cited by Richard Manning, development committee chair, is the need for donors to stay engaged in countries where rule of law and governance are weak, and where aid may play a vital role as a catalyst for change. Approximately 30 percent of the world's poor live in these failed or fragile countries, according to OECD.

Manning, who represents the United Kingdom on the OECD, cited a need for more cooperative analysis by donors of development programs and for policies that allow for more "experimentation" in the ways resources are delivered while maintaining discipline in monitoring use and results.

The report, *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth* (<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/54/36570936.pdf>) (PDF, 56 pages), is available on the OECD Web site.

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Global Polio Eradication Within Our Reach: The U.S. Role

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, DC
October 6, 2006**

Fact Sheet

Polio is an insidious, incurable disease that kills and cripples children. For thousands of years, polio had been endemic until the mid-twentieth century when the development of vaccines against polio by Drs. Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin offered the first hope for prevention and control. At the outset of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 1988, polio was endemic in more than 125 coun-



Dr. Jonas Salk
(Photo - Yousuf Karsh 1956/National Gallery of Australia)

tries on five continents, and paralyzed approximately 1,000 children every day. The GPEI is a unique public-private partnership led by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF, and Rotary International, and represents a coordinated, global effort to eradicate polio everywhere.

The world has made remarkable progress toward polio eradication. Since 1988, two billion children around the globe have been immunized against polio. The annual number of polio cases has dropped by over 99 percent, from 350,000 cases per year to fewer than 2,000 per year. The Americas, Europe, and the Western Pacific have been certified as polio-free. Only four countries in Africa and Asia are still polio-endemic -- Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Nigeria. We have never been closer to the goal of eradicating polio.

Emerging Challenges

Difficult challenges remain. Polio transmission has intensified in key countries in 2006. In addition, there are critical funding gaps for the global polio efforts this year and beyond.

The populations still affected by polio in the remaining endemic countries are among the poorest and most difficult to reach with tools of public health, such as vaccines, communication campaigns, or trained health workers. In many cases, conflict, grim poverty, and religious-social tension trouble the affected areas. Setbacks in these areas have resulted in the exportation of the illness to countries that had previously eradicated polio, creating new challenges for countries and for the global program.

Eliminating polio will require commitment, cooperation, and community engagement that extend beyond the efforts of public health workers. Overcoming the remaining challenges requires diplomatic efforts at the highest levels of Government along with public health action on the ground.

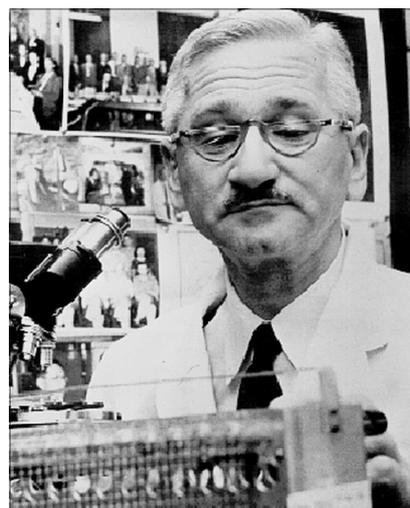
The U.S. International Strategy

The strategies and tools to eradicate polio are well developed and effective:

Build on partnerships with agencies such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Rotary International, and the Child Survival Collaborations and Resources (CORE) Group.

Strengthen and improve health systems in affected countries.

Support polio immunization campaigns, outbreak responses, and supplemental immunizations.



Dr. Albert Sabin

Develop integrated disease-surveillance approaches and establish networks for laboratory support.

Coordinate polio-eradication activities with other public health campaigns, such as measles and HIV-prevention.

(Continued on page 17)

Central American Fires Affect Weather, Climate Continent Wide

Washington -- Pollutants expelled from widespread biomass fires in Central America can influence air quality, visibility and climate over vast stretches of North America, according to research announced October 10 by NASA.

Studying a two-month period of burning in 2003, the research team of government and university scientists found that smoke plumes degraded visibility and air quality in coastal regions along the Gulf of Mexico, and increased the concentration of airborne particulate matter in the nearby state of Texas, according to an October 10 press release.

Smoke particles and aerosols act to diffuse incoming sunlight, and black carbon aerosols can absorb solar radiation, potentially boosting the temperature. Evaporation, cloud formation and rainfall all can be influenced by these atmospheric changes.

A distinctive element of these findings – published in the *Journal of Geophysical Research-Atmospheres* – is that the researchers used a newly developed computer model to simulate the effects the smoke would have on the broader atmosphere.

The researchers then confirmed their predictions with observations provided by NASA's Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on the Terra and Aqua Earth Observing System satellites.

Comparison between MODIS data on actual conditions and the computer model's predictions showed that the model accurately simu-

lated how smoke, diminished sunlight and temperature would behave.

This work demonstrates a new ability to improve air quality and climate forecasts for the benefit of the global weather community.

"MODIS data allows us to capture the meteorological impacts of



Smoke in Miami - courtesy WSVN

smoke and aerosols, especially important during the tropical dry season each spring when biomass burning peaks and pollutants are transported to the United States," said study co-author Sundar Christopher of the University of Alabama.

RELATED RESEARCH

The results announced by NASA October 10 are part of a growing body of international research and cooperation in atmospheric science and the study of the wide-ranging effects of pollution:

A bilateral air quality program between the United States and Mexico is improving air quality in a region along that international border, the U.S. Environmental Pro-

tection Agency announced in May. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/May/31-420394.html>)).

An international research consortium funded by U.S. agencies is conducting a study to track pollution over the Indian Ocean. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Apr/19-476339.html>)).

NASA and research partners are conducting the Intercontinental Chemical Transport Experiment, which is tracking pollution flows on long-distance travel. The project has looked at pollution transfer from North America to Europe, from Mexico to other Western Hemisphere locations and from Asia to North America. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Mar/08-990548.html>)).

For additional information, see Environment (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/environment.html).

The press release (http://www.nasa.gov/centers/goddard/news/topstory/2006/central_am_fires.html) on the research is available on the NASA Web site.

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Reconciliation Progressing in Iraq, Coalition . . .

(Continued from page 12)

worth of key infrastructure in 15 provinces. But the challenge in Iraq extends beyond construction projects, Tillery explained. After decades of tight central control from Baghdad, provincial governments also need to develop skills in budgeting and public finance to deliver essential services to their citizens and to build the security, anti-corruption and rule of law programs essential to political and economic development.

Seven U.S. PRTs currently are active in Baghdad, Anbar, Diyala, Salah ad Din, Ninawah, Ata Min (Kirkuk) and Babil provinces. Three more teams, led by Italy, South Korea and the United King-

dom, operate in Dhi Qar, Erbil and Basra provinces.

PRTs contribute to national reconciliation by helping local officials develop effective conflict resolution techniques, improved security programs and good governance skills, as well as advising them on job creation and vocational training to provide new opportunities for area residents.

"I am convinced that the only way we're going to achieve success here is not to try to do this centrally, but to have each of the provinces start to take a leadership role in returning essential services to their people. Who knows best [other] than the leaders in the villages and the towns and the cities and in the provinces what is necessary? The PRT is helping them

develop the infrastructure development plans to address those needs," he said.

A transcript (http://www.mnfiraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6293&Itemid=30) of the Caldwell and Tillery briefing is available from the Multi-National Force – Iraq (<http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?lang=english>) Web site.

For more information, see Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).

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Global Polio Eradication Within Our Reach: . . .

(Continued from page 15)

Reach out diplomatically to financial donors and to affected countries to maintain commitment and cooperation.

U.S. Assistance for Global Polio Eradication

The U.S. Government has contributed nearly 28 percent of the total \$5 billion donated to GPEI thus far, including \$132 million in 2006.

The U.S. Government funds help to improve health systems: purchase vaccine; detect and investigate the suspected cases of polio;

map communities and plan vaccination campaigns; train and supervise surveillance officers, vaccinators, and laboratory personnel; provide and maintain equipment to transport and store vaccine; and develop and maintain critical accredited laboratories.

The U.S. Government funds approximately 500 million doses of oral polio vaccine annually, purchased through UNICEF.

The United States supports National Immunization Days in priority countries with funding and cutting-edge technical expertise.

The U.S. Government links U.S.-based private voluntary organizations with community-based organizations to develop and deliver communications in local languages to increase the acceptance of vaccinations in hard-to-reach communities and to conduct polio immunizations campaigns in the poorest and most challenging areas.

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Sudan Gives Up Threats to U.N. Peacekeeping . . .

(Continued from page 4)

access for delivery of humanitarian assistance." In his conversation with Wade, Bush called for AMIS to transition to a U.N. force and "stated that friends and allies need to work together to solve the genocide and stop the suffering of the people of Darfur."

Asked about current U.S. economic sanctions imposed upon Sudan, the deputy press secretary said there is a "pretty full and extensive list" of prohibitions against foreign assistance to this country.

This includes "a ban of defense exports and sales, controls over U.S. exports to Sudan of dual-use items, directed voting at the international

financial institutions and other miscellaneous financial restrictions," Perino said.

A http://www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov/06_261.htm of Bolton's remarks is available on Web site of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

For additional information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

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Africanists Discuss Somalia as Regional Security . . .

(Continued from page 2)

COUNTERTERRORISM, EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, HUMANITARIAN AID

In this volatile mix, the goals of U.S. policy in Somalia "remain clear: we address the threat of terrorism, support the establishment of effective governance and political stability and respond to the humanitarian needs of the Somali people and promote regional security," U.S. State Department official Eunice Reddick, another panel member, said.

Reddick, director of State's Office of East African Affairs, said the United States is committed to working with all Somalis and all members of the East African community to bring about a lasting peace in the region. At the same

time, she added, the United States seeks "to ensure that our engagement can adapt to the changing dynamics and future developments on the ground in Somalia."

She said this means the United States must focus on building institutions – "in that regard, the U.S. is the largest bilateral donor of humanitarian assistance to Somalia, which in the last fiscal year of 2006 topped \$90 million."

Reddick added that the United States has worked closely with the international community to form the International Somalia Contact Group, which supports the return of effective governance to the country. But, she said, ultimately it is up to the Somali people themselves to establish a functioning central government.

Somalia must not serve as a haven for terrorists, "including the several foreign al Qaida operatives that have taken refuge there," among them some of the individuals responsible for the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, as well as the 2002 attacks on an Israeli airliner and an Israeli hotel in Kenya, Reddick said, adding, "We would urge the Islamic Courts to support the bringing of these individuals to justice."

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