



# Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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## Former Ambassador Addresses Addis Audience

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia David Shinn delivered a very well-attended lecture on "Conflict and Stability in East Africa and the Horn of Africa" on June 29 at Addis Ababa University (AAU). Over 300 university lecturers, students, diplomats, government officials, journalists, and other guests such as the current U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia attended the lecture. Ambassador Shinn, who was Ambassador in Addis Ababa from 1996-1999, spoke on conflict and the



Ambassador Shinn addresses a large audience at AAU, flanked by AAU Associate Vice President Mohamed Habib and IO Tina Malone

chances for peace in the Horn of Africa, focusing his comments on conflicts in Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia-Eritrea.

Shinn observed that Africa's difficulty is not with the signing of peace agreements, but rather in their implementation.

## New Sheep and Goat Breeds Arrive in Ethiopia

*Cross-breeding of South African animals will improve Ethiopia's livestock exports*

Bole International Airport welcomed a different type of newcomer to Ethiopian soil today. One hundred and twenty Dorper Sheep and 123 Boer Goats arrived from the Republic of South Africa to be cross-bred with local breeds. These pure-bred and fast growing animals, once crossed with native sheep and goats, will produce higher quality off-spring to better meet the demands of the rapidly growing sheep and goat export market.

The arrival of the new breeds is part of the Ethiopia Sheep and Goat Productivity Improvement Program, a U.S. \$5.5 million dollar program which began in late 2005. This livestock development program is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and is implemented by Prairie View A & M University and Langston University in collaboration with the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The Ethiopia Sheep and Goat Productivity Improvement Program works in six major sheep and goat production regions of Amhara, Afar, Oromia, Somalia, SNNPR and Tigray Regional States in partnership with regional bureaus of agriculture, research institutes, universities, small-scale livestock producers, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations.

(Continued on page 24)

## African Economies Improve with Aid from Compacts with U.S.

By Jim Fisher-Thompson  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Since it was established in January 2004, the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has made "tremendous progress" working with African partners to diminish poverty by providing more than a \$2 billion in grants, not loans, to spur sustainable economic growth, MCC Deputy Chief Executive Officer Rodney Bent told Congress June 28.

Through its development programs and "through policy reforms that are vital to economic sustainability, MCC is helping Africans to help themselves," Bent told the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, which was holding hearings on MCC's progress on the continent.

Thus far, the U.S.-chartered organization has signed project agreements called "compacts" with five African countries -- Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Madagascar and Mali -- totaling \$1.5 billion. Another \$800 million has been approved for Mozambique and Lesotho for a total of \$2.3 billion in the development pipeline for Africa.

Billions of dollars more are in the offing, Bent said.

In addition to the "strong record on Africa" already established by MCC, Bent said, "We anticipate an even stronger push to fight poverty in Africa in the coming months."

With sufficient funding -- and Congress has pledged \$1.8 billion for the coming year -- he said MCC was in a position soon to sign compacts with Burkina Faso, Morocco, Namibia and Tanzania worth a further \$2.2 billion resulting in an investment of \$4.6 billion in 11 African nations.



Compacts with the United States are allowing African countries to improve their infrastructure by building new roads.

In addition to compacts aimed at infrastructure like roads, schools and health clinics -- e typically five years in length -- MCC also awards "threshold" grants to nations on governance and anti-corruption issues meant to bring them up to eligibility standards. Those grants last for two years. MCC has awarded \$91 million in threshold grants to six African countries -- Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

MCC grants are limited to countries with a per capita income of less than \$3,465 a year, a condition most of Africa's 53 nations meet. Already, grants are helping to increase pineapple production in Ghana; fight corruption in Kenya and Zambia; build and rehabilitate roads in Cape Verde; upgrade Mali's international airport and educate girls in Burkina Faso, Bent told lawmakers.

Commenting on African's input into the projects, Bent said, "MCC does not work with all poor countries, just those ready to engage with us who can use the money well." That means agreeing to undertake governmental and economic reforms that make the projects sustainable and beneficial to all of society.

"The partnerships between MCC and African countries exemplify the new vocabulary of responsibility in development," he explained. Although MCC "does not tell our African partners what they need ... we expect African countries to take the lead" in developing and implementing programs.

They do this by making the necessary reforms in government and their economies that make them eligible for MCC grants.

This means opening the political process, expanding educational benefits, loosening market restrictions and fighting corruption, Bent said.

The advantage is that "such profound responsibility holds African governments accountable not just to their own people, but also to American taxpayers" who ultimately pay for the grants, Bent said.

Americans will be willing to continue such assistance, he concluded, if they see "partner countries committed to the tough choices necessary to invest in themselves and to make the promise of poverty reduction ... a transformative reality for the poor."

According to Tony Carroll, vice president of Manchester Trade Ltd., "MCC represents a unique opportunity to foster investment in infrastructure on a scale unprecedented for U.S. devel-

*(Continued on page 21)*

## Senegal HIV/AIDS Center Helps Provides Support to Community

Mr. Mbaye walks down a dusty side street in a tiny suburb on the outskirts of Saint Louis, once the French capital of West Africa and still a bustling cargo port in the north of Senegal. He enters a nondescript building that looks as if it is someone's house. The building bustles with activity. It is the HIV/AIDS center for the entire northern half of the country.

"There's a real problem with stigmatization. People don't want others to know they have the virus but now we are trying to work with the whole community -- to start a dialogue and have everyone join," explains Mbaye, the center's director. "We plan to purchase a big sign for our door so everybody knows this is the place to come for information or assistance with regards to HIV/AIDS."

A tall, thin man, Mbaye has a long face with high cheekbones and a constant smile. He wears traditional clothing in bright blue and exudes a sense of calm leadership as he manages the center's facilities, which include a small warehouse for storing donated lentils and cooking oil, a tiny kitchen, two meeting rooms, an office and a guest room for travelers.

Counterpart International, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization, provides the donated food, funds to buy local ingredients for meals, desks, office equipment and support through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Food for Peace program.

"We want to make a fully functional center and provide materials to young people, such as films, information sheets, community meals and friends. We live with this problem every day. It is our responsibility," Mbaye says.

they are sick and who also want to seek treatment rather than hiding the problem, he says.

Mbaye plans to do more outreach, such as inviting local youth to watch football games and then holding discussions about HIV prevention afterward. He already has noticed an increase in attendance at the weekly meetings of spouses of people who have HIV.



Children enjoy food distributed by one of Counterpart International's programs in Senegal

"By getting the community involved and having people talk about the issue, we can prevent a lot of cases. Not only that, but we can also get more support to people who already have the virus," he says.

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<http://usinfo.state.gov> ♦

Mbaye worked as a chemist for 10 years until his employer learned he had HIV and fired him. He began the center in 2001 in his home, but it since has moved to this building, which was provided by the Senegalese government.

Most of the people who come to the center come because they already are showing symptoms and have been referred, explains the center's finance manager, Ahmadou, who also is HIV-positive.

Thus, the only people who make it to the center are those who can afford a trip to the hospital to find out why

## Africa Health, Education Programs Get Boost from U.S. First Lady

By Lea Terhune  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Winding up an eventful trip to Africa, U.S. first lady Laura Bush voiced support and promised more aid for nations struggling with HIV/AIDS and malaria, and to those striving to raise literacy levels. She completed her five-day tour in Mali June 29, after visits to Senegal, Mozambique and Zambia.

In Zambia, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Mark Dybul, who accompanied Bush on her trip, announced that U.S. aid to that country would be increased by \$266 million over five years.

“We need broader efforts to fight the AIDS pandemic and to prevent new infections especially in Africa because this is where there are 70 percent of AIDS orphans,” he told journalists in Lusaka June 28. The money will come from the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Zambia originally was slated to receive \$534 million in the first four years of the PEPFAR program, but that amount will be increased to \$800 million, he said.

Laura Bush toured Zambian projects funded by PEPFAR, the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and an umbrella group of companies called the Global Business

Coalition. That organization works with government and nongovernmental organizations to implement aid programs. The first lady announced that 500,000 mosquito nets would be distributed to protect people from malaria, a disease that often takes a greater toll than AIDS in Zambia, according to the Zambia Malaria Foun-



First Lady Laura Bush speaks at a school during her multi-country tour in Africa

ation.

At Lusaka’s Regiment Basic School, Bush and her daughter, Jenna Bush, inaugurated a PlayPump, a combination merry-go-round and water pump which harnesses young exuberance to provide a reliable source of clean water. It frees the children from having to bring water from home each day.

The two projects are examples of the public-private partnerships the Bush administration has promoted in the developing world. The mosquito net distribution project draws in entities as diverse as the Coca-Cola Company, Johnson & Johnson, the Case Foundation and the National Basketball Association, whose NBACares foundation is a partner in Nothing But Nets, a grassroots campaign to prevent malaria deaths in Africa.

A message the first lady repeated

throughout her tour of Africa was the importance of faith-based groups.

“Religious institutions bring a personal healing touch to the fight against AIDS,” she told a gathering at the Mutata Memorial Center. The center, through a network of volunteers, provides home-based care for those infected with HIV/AIDS, for orphans and vulnerable children, and it educates about HIV/AIDS transmission and protection. It is supported by RAPIDS, a consortium of organizations including World Vision, the Salvation Army, Africare, Catholic Relief Services and the Population Council.

Her trip began in Senegal, where she and Jenna visited Fann Hospital, in Dakar, with Senegal’s first lady, Viviane Wade. The hospital treats people living with AIDS, bolstering their nutrition. Steve Bolinger started a garden at the hospital when he was in the Peace Corps, and remained afterward to found Development in Gardening (DIG), a nongovernmental organization that helps HIV/AIDS victims maintain quality of life. Both hospital and garden programs are funded partially by USAID.

Bush told reporters on the flight to Senegal that it is important for Africa that the cooperation between the United States government and African governments “on the ground” be effective and tries “to stretch the money the furthest so that the most people get help.”

(Continued on page 5)

## Trade Official To Discuss U.S.-Africa Economic Interaction

Trade facilitation will share the stage with finance, infrastructure development, product quality standards and a host of other economic issues at the sixth African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum. The forum, which annually brings together high-level officials from the United States and representatives of the 38 AGOA-eligible countries, will take place in Accra, Ghana, July 18-19.

As Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa, Florizelle "Florie" Liser leads U.S. trade efforts in sub-Saharan Africa, oversees implementa-

tion of AGOA and serves as chief U.S. negotiator for a free-trade agreement with the five countries Southern Customs



Florizelle Liser

Liser was a founder and member of the education committee of the Washington chapter of TransAfrica Forum, a nonprofit global justice organization focusing on promoting diversity and

equity in the foreign policy arena and justice for the African world. She has been involved for many years in promoting trade and development policies that recognize Africa's growing importance to the United States and its African-American citizens.

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## Africa Health, Education Programs Get Boost from U.S. First Lady...

At the African Education Initiative (AEI) scholarship awards ceremony at Dakar's Grand Medine Primary School, the first lady was joined by Grammy-winning Senegalese musician Youssou N'Dour, also a U.N. goodwill ambassador and advocate for improvement of African health.

"An investment in education, no matter how significant, is always worth it," former educator Laura Bush told the audience, adding education helps governments fulfill their obligations to their citizens. In this endeavor, she said "[T]he American people are proud to partner with you."

The AEI helped provide nearly half a million books to children in Senegal. Bush said that over the summer, AEI will deliver another 800,000 textbooks to Senegalese children.

"Educated citizens will keep themselves in better health, and pass their knowledge along to their communities and to their children," she said.

A highlight of her trip to Mozambique was the announcement that \$507 million would be given from the U.S.-funded Millennium Challenge Corpora-

tion to help build infrastructure and tackle malaria. While in Maputo, the first lady toured facilities of members of the Inter-Religious Campaign Against Malaria in Mozambique. A pediatric hospital and a women's support group, Positive Tea, were among her stops. Promotion of malaria spraying and handing out insecticide-treated mosquito nets was part of her program.

Women's empowerment was another focus of the first lady's Africa tour. She participated in a roundtable on the subject in Mozambique, and visited two facilities in Zambia, Flame and WORTH, that work with vulnerable children, single mothers, widows and the elderly to give them more options in life. WORTH offers micro-credit schemes that finance small business ventures.

Bush expressed admiration for the dedicated caregivers, many of whom are volunteers, who go out to the sick and who help educate people about HIV/AIDS, a disease which still carries a heavy stigma in Africa.

Her final stop was Bamako, Mali,

where she visited an AEI-funded school and highlighted Millennium Challenge Corporation compact with the government that aims to reduce poverty through a five-year, \$460.8 million economic development program.

An online journal ( [http://slideshow.ivillage.com/ivillage\\_cares/a\\_day\\_in\\_mozambique/](http://slideshow.ivillage.com/ivillage_cares/a_day_in_mozambique/) ) of Laura Bush's visit is available on the Web site [www.ivillage.com](http://www.ivillage.com) ( <http://www.ivillage.com/> ).

For additional information on U.S. assistance, see Millennium Challenge Account ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic\\_issues/mca.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html) ) and HIV/AIDS ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/hiv\\_aids.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html) ).

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

## Darfur Genocide Graphically Depicted in Documentary

By Lea Terhune  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – As world leaders work for a resolution of the crisis in Darfur, a new film chronicling the depredations of the jingaweit Arab militia gives graphic evidence of atrocities committed there. The Devil Came on Horseback played to a sold-out house at the American Film Institute's Silverdocs Festival, with most of the audience staying for a panel discussion afterward.

The documentary, by Annie Sundberg and Ricki Stern, focuses on the experiences of retired U.S. Marine Captain Brian Steidle, who served as an unarmed military observer for the African Union in Darfur. There he monitored a conflict that began in 2003 when rebel groups attacked Sudanese government facilities, claiming neglect and oppression of African ethnic groups.

By the time he arrived in 2004, the conflict had escalated into "a full-scale government-sponsored military operation that, with the support of Arab militias known as the jingaweit was aimed at annihilating the African tribes in the region," according to Steidle, who narrates the film. Sudan denies supporting the jingaweit.

To date, more than 200,000 people are thought to have died in the Darfur conflict, and 2 to 3 million have been displaced from their homes, according to the United Nations.

"They are continuously being displaced from their camps, herded into larger camps," as death and displacement tolls continue to rise, Steidle told USINFO. He remains involved in advocacy and organizes humanitarian outreach, often returning to the region, although he cannot re-enter Su-

dan. "There are about a million people in the smaller camps in the outlying areas that cannot be reached by the aid organizations at this point in time," he said.



Brian Steidle surrounded by people in Darfur

During his time in Darfur, Steidle saw daily evidence of extreme brutality, which he meticulously documented. Some of the photos and video he shot are used in the documentary. One attack shown in the film is the burning of a village by militia who shouted slogans like "kill the slaves."

Steidle and other observers, such as the International Crisis Group (ICG), whose 2007 Darfur report shows deterioration of the security situation in the past year, say a second phase of genocide is in progress. According to ICG's John Prendergast, speaking at the June 12 panel after the film, the Sudanese government counters opposition "by arming communities, militias that represent one community against another so you have these local conflicts," and hinders delivery of relief supplies. He added, "They are attempting slowly but surely to erase certain segments of the non-Arab population from Darfur."

Blocking access to humanitarian aid, Steidle said, "is the way most people died." Thousands every month "are dying of dehydration, lack of food, medical aid," he said.

The nongovernmental relief organization Oxfam announced its permanent withdrawal from Gereida, the largest

of the Darfur refugee camps, on June 17. The group cited continued attacks by the Arab militia on aid workers.

"[T]he local authorities have not lived up to their responsibility to ensure our staff can work safely," Oxfam program manager Caroline Nursey said in a statement, adding that perpetrators of the attacks are still free.

"The people of Sudan are crying out for help, and they deserve it," President Bush said in May, when he called for sanctions on 30 companies that have ties to the Khartoum government and on two Sudanese officials connected with Darfur violence.

The United States also wants an arms embargo and the establishment of a no-fly zone over Darfur to curb military flights that abet ravages of the jingaweit militia.

"The international community has simply got to act more quickly," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told reporters in Paris after a June 24 meeting on Darfur. She called it a humanitarian disaster, and emphasized U.S. commitment to ending the Darfur violence.

"If you don't want to call it genocide, don't worry about it," Steidle says, "But there is a situation going on in Darfur, and the world should not allow it to happen, and we should do whatever we can, whatever is in our power to stop what's happening."

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

## China's Influence a Key to Peace in Darfur, Rice Says

By Jim Fisher-Thompson  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- China's economic clout in Africa has grown over the years, putting it in a significant position to help end the genocide in Darfur, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in a press interview in Paris.

The international community cannot continue to leave "innocent populations ... to their fate," Rice said of the victims of the government-supported Jingaweit militia, which has devastated the Western Sudanese region, killing more than 200,000 people and displacing 2 million others since 2003.

Rice attended the June 25-26 Paris conference on Darfur, which included U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, High Representative for European Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Louis Michel, European commissioner for development and humanitarian aid.

Rice said in a June 25 interview with French television that the Chinese "do have a special relationship with the Khartoum government and recently they've begun to speak out about the need for the Khartoum government to live up to the obligations it has repeatedly taken [to protect Darfuris] and then not followed through."

Given China's support in meeting challenges posed by nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran, Rice said that she remains confident in Beijing.

"I really do believe that the Chinese government will do now what it has

said it will do, which is to use its relationship to push the Khartoum government forward" to end the crisis in Darfur, Rice said in the French television interview.

The United States would like China to convince the Khartoum government to allow 7,000 African Union (AU) peacekeepers now in Darfur to be augmented by a U.N. peacekeeping contingent creating a hybrid force of more than 20,000 troops. Sudanese authorities have balked at the proposal.

"We have to have the peacekeeping



Rebels in Darfur

forces on the ground so that these people have a chance at a better life and a reconstruction of their lives," Rice said.

"We have had very good relations with China," Rice emphasized, and "we've had good opportunities to work with China on a number of difficult issues, like, for instance, the situation in North Korea, the situation in Iran. And so I believe that the Chinese government can and will act responsibly ... given its relationship with Khartoum."

At a later press conference, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon agreed, adding, "I think the Chinese govern-

ment has been playing a constructive role" in Darfur. "They have been dispatching senior-level officials ... [to the] Sudanese government [asking them] to fully cooperate with the international community, particularly with the United Nations and African Union. As far as I'm concerned ... I'm satisfied with what the Chinese government has been contributing to the resolution of this issue."

Ban said: "The international community has been waiting too long and the people in Darfur have suffered too much. So this time is for action, particularly by [Sudanese] President Bashir."

At the same time, the U.N. chief urged rebel groups in Darfur to participate in "this political process."

Commenting on the overall conference, Ban told journalists, "We have had a very good meeting," and he said the Darfur crisis was "the highest priority on my agenda."

A transcript (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/06/87378.htm>) of remarks by Rice and other officials after the conference is available on the State Department Web site.

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

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

## Immigration Bill Defeat Lamented by Bush, Congressional Leaders

By Eric Green

USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush, U.S. congressional leaders and immigration advocacy groups are lamenting the defeat of legislation that would have made the biggest changes in U.S. immigration law in more than 20 years.

The compromise bill was pulled from consideration June 28 following a 53-46 vote in the U.S. Senate against cutting off debate -- stopping debate would have allowed the measure to move to a vote on passage in that chamber.

Both the bill's supporters and opponents in Congress said the legislation was "dead" for the remainder of the Bush administration, which ends in January 2009.

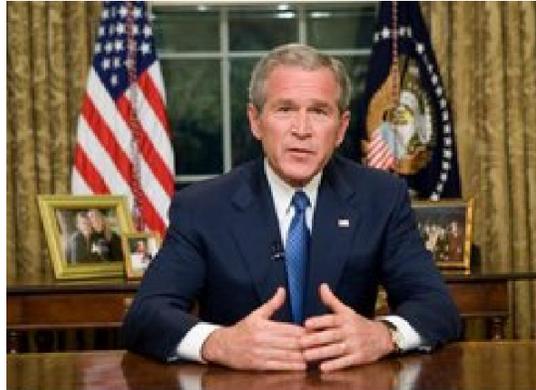
The bill aimed to create a temporary "guest worker" program for foreigners seeking employment in the United States, a pathway to provide legal status to millions of illegal immigrants in America, while beefing up measures to strengthen U.S. borders.

Bush said in a June 28 statement that he was disappointed that Congress failed to enact the bill.

Legal immigration is one of the "top priorities" of the American people and they understand the "status quo is unacceptable when it comes to our immigration laws," Bush said.

Bush said "a lot of us worked hard" to find common ground on crafting a bill that would pass Congress. "It didn't work," he said.

The president has said the last time a sweeping immigration bill was enacted, in 1986, the law failed because it did not secure U.S. borders, did not create a reliable system for employers to verify the legal status of their workers and encouraged more people to come to America illegally. (See related article (



President Bush speaks about immigration from the Oval Office

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2007&m=June&x=20070609110530esnamfuak0.8742639> .)

Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, the Democratic Party's chief sponsor of the bill, said that without new immigration legislation, the situation will get worse in the United States regarding what to do with the country's estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants. He voiced optimism that eventually an immigration bill would be enacted.

"You can't stop the march for progress in the United States," he said.

California Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein also said she expected the eventual enactment of a comprehensive immigration reform bill. "We will be back," she said.

Senate support and opposition to the bill created unusual bipartisan alliances of legislators. Some 33 Democrats, 12 Republicans and one independent, Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, voted to keep the bill alive. But 37 Republicans, 15 Democrats and liberal independent Vermont Senator Bernard Sanders voted to sustain the debate, thus effectively killing the bill.

A Washington-based immigration advocacy group, the League of United Latin American Citizens, called on Congress to make a "fresh start" at creating a bill that can win majority support. The Hispanic group urged Congress to pass a bill that ensures border security while bringing the 12 million undocumented people in the United States "out of the shadows."

Another Washington advocate, the National Council of La Raza, said the bill's defeat is a "victory for the status quo, and no one should be happy about that."

La Raza said the Senate vote is a "setback, not the death knell, for comprehensive immigration reform. We are not giving up on getting a real, effective and fair solution to the immigration issue."

The Los Angeles-based Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund said, in deploring the bill's defeat, that the situation regarding immigration in the United States is "simply indefensible. Families remain at risk of being split up, businesses remain unable to hire legal workers for all their jobs, and the immigration system cannot effectively devote resources to protect America's security

(Continued on page 9)

## Presidential Remarks on America's Independence Day

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

(Kennebunkport, Maine)

June 29, 2007

INDEPENDENCE DAY, 2007

I send greetings to Americans everywhere celebrating Independence Day.

Two hundred thirty-one years ago, 56 brave men signed their names to a bold creed of freedom that set the course of our Nation and changed the history of the world. On this anniversary, we remember the great courage and conviction of our Founders, and we celebrate the enduring principles of our Declaration of Independence.

Through selfless sacrifice and unrelenting determination, the patriots of the American Revolution ensured that our Nation's claim to liberty and

equality would not be dismissed or



Fireworks explode in a July 4th celebration in Boston, Massachusetts

forgotten. The ideals they fought for and the country they helped establish are lasting symbols of hope to the entire world.

Our commitment to America's founding truths remains steadfast. We believe that freedom is a blessing from

the Almighty and the birthright of every man and woman. As our Nation faces new challenges, we are answering history's call with confidence that our legacy of freedom will always prevail. On Independence Day, we express our gratitude to the generations of courageous Americans who have defended us and those who continue to serve in our country's hour of need, and we celebrate the liberty that makes America a light to the nations.

Laura and I wish you a Happy Fourth of July. May God bless you, and may He bless our wonderful country.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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<http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

### Immigration Bill Defeat Lamented by Bush, Congressional Leaders...

or future."

However, opponents, such as Democratic Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, called the bill an "unworkable mess, and I cannot support it." The bill's call for foreign guest workers in the United States could drive down wages for Americans "on the lower rungs of the economic ladder," Harkin said.

Another Senate Democrat, Ben Nelson of Nebraska, said the bill was "not only hopelessly flawed, it is unsalvageable. We have to start over" on a new immigration bill.

Republican Senator Susan Collins of Maine said: "I just don't think the bill

struck the right balance. People were troubled by the proposed solution for the 12 million people here [in the United States] illegally."

Another opponent, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, said an "integrated lobbying strategy" in the United States involving talk-radio shows, e-mails, phone calls, the Internet and "local grassroots activists" brought the bill down. The group said the legislation was "weak, impractical and unfair in the extreme."

U.S. WELCOMES LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Even as partisans debate the contentious immigration issue, the United

States is welcoming legal immigrants to America with a new Web site -- [WelcometoUSA.gov](http://WelcometoUSA.gov) -- that helps them find such things as the requirements for naturalization, the location of nearby English-language classes or a copy of the U.S. Constitution.

For more information on U.S. policies, see Visas and Immigration ([http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/immigration.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.html)).

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<http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

## First Muslim Representative Mends Global Fences

Daniel W. Reilly

*The Politico*

June 19, 2007

With a few short words, Rep. Keith Ellison had just stunned a joint session of Congress.

Last March, Jordan's King Abdullah II had concluded his address in the House chambers with the traditional Arabic salutation, "as-salaam 'aleikum," which means, "Peace be unto you."

Ellison, a freshman Democrat from Minnesota and the first Muslim in Congress, instinctively replied, "wa 'aleikum as-salaam" -- "And to you be peace."

The assembled lawmakers were hushed.

"It was as quiet as a church," Ellison recalled. "I realized at that moment, wow, there is something about me that is a little different."

In an America post-Sept. 11, Ellison is not just another freshman congressman. In just a few short months, he has become a congressional ambassador to the Islamic world. He has been recruited by the State Department to be a cultural envoy and has traveled to Syria with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

When he served in the Minnesota state legislature, Ellison said, his religion had not been a major issue. Now, his every move is scrutinized, sometimes unexpectedly. After his election in November, for instance, cable television host Glenn Beck asked him to "prove to me that you are not working with our enemies." And the ques-

tion made waves throughout the Muslim world.

Ellison, though, is a reluctant spokesman, saying he is "not qualified to rep-



resent a world religion." He would much rather talk about his first bill -- an ambitious attempt to tackle predatory lending practices by credit card companies -- than detail the differences between Sunni and Shia.

"I almost never bring it up," Ellison says of his religion. "Someone else always brings it up for me."

Ellison, 43, took his Minnesota seat from retiring Rep. Martin Olav Sabo last fall, easily winning the overwhelmingly Democratic district.

A self-proclaimed "bleeding-heart liberal," Ellison says he wants to make a name for himself not just as a Muslim, but by pushing for better health care, reducing poverty, ending the

war in Iraq -- and tackling predatory lending practices.

"Barney Frank encouraged me to jump right into deep water," Ellison

said of the House Financial Services Committee chairman. "This bill is at the heart of what it means to get to the middle class, to enjoy the great prosperity of this country."

Much to Ellison's frustration, however, it is not the credit card bill that has drawn media attention.

His Muslim religion drew controversy, even before he took office.

In December, Rep. Virgil H. Goode (R-Va.) wrote a letter saying America's borders must be tightened or "many more" Muslims like Ellison would flood the country and run for office.

*(Continued on page 25)*

## Islamic Center of Washington Boasts a Rich History

By Elizabeth Kelleher  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The Islamic Center of Washington is impressive. Prominently situated along Embassy Row in the U.S. capital city, the mosque often is considered the symbol of the Muslim community in America. In the 50 years since its dedication on June 28, 1957, it has become one of the city's most familiar landmarks.

The idea for the mosque occurred to prominent businessman and contractor A.J. Howar at the 1944 funeral of a Turkish diplomat. Howar was a Palestinian immigrant, a Muslim whose name had been Yousef Abu El Hawa before he came to America. During the funeral, Howar said to the ambassador of Egypt, Mahmoud Hassan Pasha, "Isn't it a shame that the prayer for such a great Muslim is not held in a mosque?" The ambassador's reply was to ask Howar to help build one.

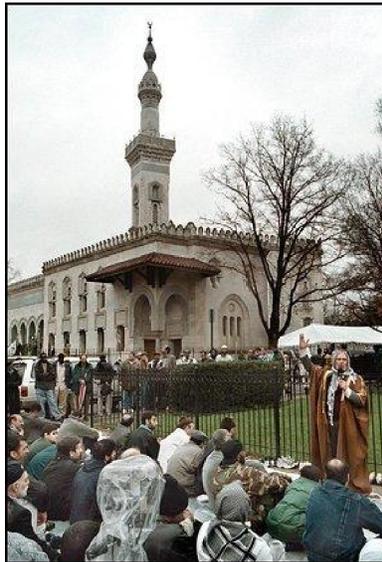
The men formed a foundation to raise money and support, and the mosque was finished in 1957. Donations came from Muslim communities in the United States and from Afghanistan, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

At the dedication, President Dwight D. Eisenhower said: "America would fight with her whole strength for your right to have here your own church and worship according to your own conscience. This concept is indeed a part of America, and without that concept we would be something else than what we are."

Italian architect Mario Rossi designed the building. He had worked for years as assistant to a famous Italian, Ernesto Verucci Bey, who was

Egypt's chief court architect. Egypt sent the workmen who crafted the Quranic verses that adorn the mosque's walls and ceiling.

The Islamic Center is a global edifice. Egypt donated a magnificent chandelier; Iran, an extraordinarily well-made, very large carpet; Malaysia, the dome; Morocco, the stained glass



The Islamic Center in Washington, D.C.

windows; Turkey, blue tiles; and Iraq, yellow glass.

"This was an era when there was a lot of international cultural exchange in the field of architecture," said Mina Marefat, an urban designer who has written extensively about Washington architecture.

The building is a "monumental, respectful design statement," Marefat said. "It is made of very good materials and has aged well." Its style, the Egyptian classical style of the time, was a wise choice. "Had it been built to seem modern in the 1950s, it would have aged poorly."

Abdullah M. Khuj, imam of the Is-

lamic Center of Washington since 1984, said that since he arrived, the number of participants at prayers, held five times a day, has gone from hundreds to thousands -- he estimates that 3,000 participate at Friday prayers. Khuj said they come from roughly 75 countries -- they are visitors, diplomats, students and American Muslims, both immigrant and native-born.

A lot of cultural exchange goes on along with the praying, he said.

The center is very "ecumenical," Marefat said, and always has symbolized cooperation among all Muslims. "It is the counterpart in Washington to the National Cathedral," she said, referring to an Episcopal cathedral in the city that welcomes worshippers from all faiths.

Mahama Bawa, of Washington, has visited mosques in Ghana, Nigeria, Egypt, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia, yet thinks the Islamic Center of Washington is one of the most moving mosques in which he has prayed.

Bawa, who has been a regular worshipper at the Islamic Center of Washington for 15 years, said the mosque's high ceiling is soothing -- "very good for concentration and prayer.

"Go there," he said, "and it evokes in you a sense of spirituality and submission, a prayerful mood."

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

## Muslim face of the US Marines

By Matthew Wells  
BBC News, Hawaii

Navy Lieutenant Commander Abu-hena Saifulislam welcomes everyone with a broad smile and prefers to be called "Chaplain Saif".

He is the only Muslim chaplain in the elite US Marine Corps, and one of only two in the US Navy overall.

It is a classic immigrant's tale. He arrived in America from Bangladesh at the end of the 1980s, with a masters degree in business and every intention to serve Wall Street, not his newly adopted country.

As a boy, he had always been fascinated by movie sequences featuring white naval uniforms of the World War II and the code of honour they represented.

"When my family came to know that the navy was going to accept me, they were thrilled," he says, talking in his spacious new home, a short commute from Washington DC.

"I am living the American Dream," he is proud to admit. But his importance as a military role model and ambassador extends way beyond cars, kitchens and new living room suites in suburban Virginia.

Diverse group

There may be more than 100 faiths represented now throughout the armed services, but no relationship is more sensitive than the one between

the Pentagon and Islam.

Chaplain Saif is the public face of that - a veteran of hundreds of interviews and sound bites, personifying the notion that there is nothing incompatible about serving both Islam and the US military.

His commitment is much deeper than



just public relations.

Until he arrived a few years ago, the vast Marine Corps base at Quantico had nowhere for Muslim service people to pray.

Some just knelt beside their cars or behind buildings on their own.

Now they have a modest prayer centre where several dozen meet each Friday.

It is a diverse group, including an officer from the Moroccan Air Force, and several female servicewomen who change behind a curtain at the back, substituting combat fatigues for ankle

length robes.

One of them, a Military Police officer, says she looks forward to serving in a Muslim land, such as Iraq or Afghanistan.

"The frightening part is the extremists that make us look bad (there), they create a difference where there really isn't one," she says.

Another soldier - an Egyptian American who has completed a recent Middle East tour - says Islam and the Marines have the same values.

"Honour, courage and commitment - those are the same three philosophies that Islam teaches us. The bond that we have is a bond as Muslims, as brothers," he adds.

The chaplain spends much of his time away from Virginia, lecturing and preparing troops who are heading for war zones in the heart of the Muslim world.

For many of the young faces staring out at him, Saif is the first Muslim they have ever met.

Guantanamo

I caught up with him at a training session at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii.

Several hundred uniformed men sit in a darkened theatre, being given the opportunity to learn the basics of a

*(Continued on page 25)*

## Organization of the Islamic Conference Will Gain U.S. Envoy

By Lea Terhune  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – American appreciation for Islam was the theme of President Bush's speech at the Islamic Center of Washington on the mosque's 50th anniversary June 27.

The president also announced he will appoint a U.S. envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to "listen and learn" and share U.S. views with delegates from Muslim nations.

The appointment is intended "to demonstrate to Muslim communities our interest in respectful dialogue and continued friendship," he said. It will be the first time an American president has appointed an envoy to the OIC.

Bush reaffirmed U.S. commitment to the Middle East peace process. "We will work toward a day when a democratic Palestine lives side by side with Israel in peace," he said.

Calling the mosque's anniversary a "celebration of America's diversity of faith and our unity as free people," Bush quoted the poet Rumi: "The lamps are different, but the light is the same."

He said the location of the Islamic center, on the same street as Christian churches, a Jewish synagogue and a Buddhist temple, is evidence of a society where "people can live and worship as they choose without intimidation."

The long-time imam of the Islamic Center, Abdullah M. Khouj, introduced the president, remarking on the

tolerance and freedom of religion in the United States and recalling the speech of another U.S. president.

When the Islamic center was dedicated in 1957, then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower called it one of "the most beautiful buildings in Washington," and said "America would fight with her whole strength for your right to have here your own church and worship according to your own conscience." Fifty years later, Bush echoed his sentiments.

"The freedom to worship is so central to America's character that we tend to take it personally when that freedom is denied to others," he said.

Adding that "the greatest challenge" is to "help the forces of moderation win the great struggle against extremism," Bush condemned extremists and the way they misrepresent Islam and the American perspective. "This enemy falsely claims that America is at war with Muslims and the Muslim faith, when in fact it is these radicals who are Islam's true enemy," he said.

Bush paid a visit to the Islamic center days after the September 11, 2001, attacks, when he also spoke of the importance of the Muslim community in America.

The generous outpouring of assistance to Muslim countries in times of disaster is a sign of American friendship toward Muslims, he said, citing relief sent after earthquakes in Iran and Pakistan, and the tsunami in Indonesia and Malaysia.

"Our country defended Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo after the breakup of Yugoslavia. Today we're rallying the world to confront genocide in Su-

dan," he said.

Bush reiterated U.S. commitment to young democracies in the Muslim world, saying, "A democratic future is not a plan imposed by Western nations; it is a future that the people of the region will seize for themselves."

"America offers its hand in friendship," Bush concluded.

For additional details, see the full text (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-eng-lish&y=2007&m=June&x=20070626154822Inkais0.6946985&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>) of Eisenhower's speech and a transcript (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-eng-lish&y=2007&m=June&x=20070627124943eaifas2.862185e-02&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>) of Bush's speech.

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

## India-U.S. Partnerships Should Bolster Global System, Rice Says

By Jaroslaw Anders  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Thriving economic ties between the United States and India make the relationship between the two countries a strategic partnership of global importance, according to top U.S. officials.

But they add that both sides must work hard to overcome remaining trade and political hurdles to fully realize the relationship's potential.

"We in America look to the rise of India as an opportunity, a chance to work with a great fellow democracy to share not only the benefits of the international system, but, indeed, the burdens and responsibilities of maintaining it, of strengthening it, and defending it," U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said June 27 at the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) conference in Washington.

Rice said that the two countries have an opportunity of "putting the partnership to use in the world" and strive together with other free nations and "large, multiethnic, multireligious democracies" like Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa for "effective, principled multilateralism" on behalf of shared interests and ideals.

A key to U.S.-Indian partnership is the civil nuclear initiative concluded by President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and approved by Congress in December 2006, Rice said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=December&x=200612181155402idybeekcm0.1876795>)).

Both countries are still negotiating on the technical aspects of the deal, especially the question of reprocessing spent atomic fuel that can be used to



The Bombay Stock Exchange in India

produce weapons-grade nuclear material.

Rice said she is confident both sides will be able to complete the deal by the end of 2007.

### EXPANDING GLOBAL ROLE

India, with a nearly \$1 trillion economy and global trade in 2006 reaching \$437 billion, is one of the world's fastest-growing large developing economies. In 2006, its gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 9.2 percent.

Also speaking at the USIBC conference, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez said that since 2003 U.S. exports to India doubled to \$10.1 billion in 2006 and have

surged an additional 24 percent so far this year. India's investment in the United States more than doubled in 2005, providing jobs for thousands of American workers.

"In India, millions have been pulled out of poverty, while millions more have now entered the professional and consumer class. Quite a few of these Indian consumers and the companies they work for are investing in the U.S. or buying American products," he said.

Participants in the conference said that India's role in the global economy has expanded far beyond information technology services and now includes high technology, pharmaceuticals, aviation, energy, steel and global retail.

But both Gutierrez and U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab, also at the conference, said trade and investment obstacles still impede the growth of U.S.-Indian economic contacts. They cited caps on foreign investments in India, intellectual property rights (IPR) issues and still substantial Indian import tariffs in several trade areas.

Indian restrictions on wheat imports, for example, "effectively prevent American farmers from bidding on contracts to India," Gutierrez said.

Schwab cited the need to simplify "often complex investment policy and approval processes" in India to allow U.S. businesses "take advantage of India's technological surge and vast human resources."

Rice, Gutierrez and Schwab delivered a unified message that India's economic boom and the country's new

*(Continued on page 15)*

## Government Mismanagement Responsible for Iranian Fuel Rationing

By Stephen Kaufman  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The Iranian government's decision to ration fuel for private vehicles is a result of its mismanagement of Iran's economy, a senior State Department official said July 2.

Spokesman Sean McCormack said the Iranian government "doesn't really have the expertise to properly manage the Iranian economy."

The sudden June 27 decision by Iranian authorities to limit private drivers to 100 liters of fuel per month caused widespread unrest in the country, including the burning and vandalizing of gasoline stations.

"The fact that you have gas rationing, the fact that you have inflation, the fact that you have the Iranian government borrowing against its future are all indications that this is a government that is writing a lot of checks with its promises," he said.

### India-U.S. Partnerships Should Bolster Global System, Rice Says...

global status make it a major participant in the global trading system.

On June 21 Brazilian and Indian delegations walked out of the "G4" talks with the United States and the European Union in Potsdam, Germany, meant to revitalize the stalled World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on the multilateral free-trade system known as the Doha Development Agenda.

"I have said before that failing to realize the promise of Doha would be a historic missed opportunity," Rice

The spokesman acknowledged that U.N. Security Council sanctions imposed on Iran "inevitably" are having an effect on the Iranian people, adding "we don't want that." But he said "that effect really only adds marginally to the larger problem of the Iranian government's mismanagement



Above, oil refineries in Iran. Below, protesters outraged by fuel rationing torch cars in Tehran

of their economy."

McCormack added that even though international sanctions on Iran have caused financial difficulties for the Iranian government, the United States and others "are working hard to make sure that the costs of these sanctions aren't borne primarily by the Iranian people."

said.

Gutierrez said that India would greatly benefit from a positive Doha outcome because "without the future stimulation of trade among developing countries," the ambitious WTO goals of growth and development cannot be achieved.

"Perhaps we are at a crossroads in the international trading system," Schwab said, "and the path that India takes ... is likely to have a profound effect not just on the Indian economy but on the economies of other devel-

The sanctions appear to have "made it more difficult for the Iranian government to engage in illicit activities" and "raised some of the costs for the Iranian government operating in the international financial system."

McCormack said the sanctions are due to the Iranian government's "failure to cooperate with the international system," which has expressed, for example, concern that Iran is developing nuclear weapons under the guise of a civilian nuclear program.

"[I]f they continue in that sort of defiance of the international system, you're going to see more of these sanctions and there are going to be more costs to the Iranian government," he said.

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<http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

oping countries that look to India for leadership as well as on the trading system itself."

The full text (<http://www.osec.doc.gov/>) of Secretary Gutierrez's prepared remarks is available on the Commerce Department Web site.

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<http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

## Bush Approach to Russia on Human Rights Backed by Expert

By Eric Green

USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration has adopted a reasonable approach in dealing with Russian President Vladimir Putin's crackdown on human rights, says a prominent U.S. expert on Russia.

Andrew Kuchins, director of the Russia and Eurasia program at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), told US-INFO June 26 that the United States must weigh its criticism of Putin with the reality that it does not have "much leverage" to influence the Russian leader's repressive tactics against dissidents.

One factor limiting the effect of criticism of Putin's human rights record is the Russian leader's popularity with his citizens. That popularity, Kuchins said, can be attributed to an upswing in the country's overall economic health that has increased the personal incomes of Russians dramatically.

When Bush and Putin meet July 1-2 in Kennebunkport, Maine, they are expected to discuss issues such as human rights, a planned U.S. missile defense system based in Europe and Russian objections to a U.N. proposal for Kosovo's final status.

The United States must continue to speak out against human rights abuses and to support civil society in Russia, said Kuchins. Yet he questioned the effectiveness of overdoing complaints about "things you can't influence" in Russia.

Kuchins said the United States funds nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Russia that influence re-

form in such areas as local self-governance, economic development and social policy. One NGO program had more than 2,600 Russian broadcast journalists participating in U.S.-financed training, competitions and



Protestors in Denmark call for improved human rights in Russia.

conferences on professional standards, socially responsible journalism and similar matters. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061020162838esnamfuak4.531497e-02> ).)

The Bush administration has offered a measured response to Putin's restric-

tions on dissidents. For example, in a June 7 speech in the Czech Republic, Bush said that even though the United States has a "strong working relationship" with Russia, he regretted that reforms in that country that "were once promised to empower citizens have been derailed, with troubling implications for democratic development."

State Department official Daniel Fried said in June 21 testimony before a congressional committee that the Bush administration has sought to address its problems with Russia "in a constructive spirit wherever possible while at the same time -- and this is important -- remaining firm in defense of our principles and friends."

But Fried, assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, said Russia's curbs on the right to protest, "constriction of the space of civil society, and the decline of media freedom all represent serious setbacks inconsistent" with the country's "professed commitment to building and preserving the foundations of a democratic state. And these setbacks ultimately weaken any nation as well as the partnership we would like to have with Russia."

Another State Department official, Barry Lowenkron, said in May 1 congressional testimony that Russians have been subjected in 2007 to "further erosion in freedoms of expression, association and assembly, with repeated, heavy-handed responses by the authorities to peaceful demonstrations" in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and in another large Russian city, Nizhny Novgorod.

Lowenkron, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights

(Continued on page 24)

## Former British Prime Minister Named Mideast Envoy

Washington – Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair will represent the Quartet in peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, the U.S. State Department announced June 27.

The Quartet comprises the United States, Russia, the European Union and United Nations.

Blair, who stepped down earlier on June 27 as prime minister, becomes the first Quartet representative to the often tenuous peace negotiations, the announcement said.

President Bush offered his immediate support for Blair's appointment in a June 27 statement.

"I welcome the appointment of Tony Blair as the Quartet Representative. In his new role, Tony will help Palestinians develop the political and economic institutions they will need for a democratic, sovereign state able to provide for its people and live in peace and security with Israel," Bush said.

As Quartet representative, Blair will:

Mobilize international assistance to the Palestinians, working with donors and existing groups;

Help identify and secure international support in addressing the governance needs of the Palestinian state, focusing on the rule of law;

Promote Palestinian economic development, including business partnerships, by building on previously agreed plans, especially those addressing access and movement; and

Coordinate with other countries as necessary in support of Quartet objectives.

Blair will focus Quartet efforts to promote an end to the conflict in conforming to the 2003 road map for



President Bush and then-Prime Minister Tony Blair shake hands after a press conference at the White House

Middle East peace, according to the announcement.

The road map is a comprehensive plan to resolve political, economic, security, and humanitarian issues to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"He will spend significant time in the region working with the parties and others to help create viable and lasting government institutions representing all Palestinians, a robust economy, and a climate of law and order for the Palestinian people," according to the statement.

Blair will be supported by a small team of experts, based in Jerusalem, and "seconded" by partner countries and institutions, the announcement said.

The full text ( <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/jun/87431.htm> ) of the Quartet announcement is available on the State Department Web site.

The full text ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/06/20070627-7.html> ) of President Bush's statement is available on the White House Web site.

For more information on U.S. policies, see *The Middle East: A Vision for the Future* ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/me\\_vision/me\\_vision\\_archive.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision/me_vision_archive.html) ).

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## Surge Strategy Helping Iraqis Protect Their Country, Bush Says

As the United States prepares to celebrate Independence Day, President Bush is citing "hopeful signs" of progress in reducing sectarian violence in Iraq. The president, in his weekly radio address to the American people June 30, also praised the bravery and sacrifice of U.S. forces helping the people of Iraq and Afghanistan defend democracy.

(Kennebunkport, Maine)  
Saturday, June 30, 2007

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE NATION

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning.

To defend that freedom, the 56 signers of the Declaration pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. Their sacrifices built a new Nation and created a future of freedom for millions yet to be born.

Today, a new generation of Americans has stepped forward and volunteered to defend the ideals of our Nation's founding. Around the world,

In Iraq, Bush says that the top U.S. strategic priority of its "surge strategy" is to help the Iraqi government and its security forces protect their population -- especially in Baghdad. The aim is to allow the government to make progress toward reconciliation and to build a free nation that respects the rights of its people, upholds the rule of law and is an ally in the war on terror.

U.S. reinforcements have arrived to start a new offensive against terrorists, insurgents, and militias inciting sectarian violence between Iraq's Sunni and Shia communities. Bush cited "hopeful signs" in the capture of senior al-Qaida leaders, a decline in sectarian murders and bombings and an increase in seizures of illicit arms by coalition and Iraqi forces.



The surge has given U.S. troops a greater presence in Baghdad

"[W]e give thanks for all those from every generation who have defended our Nation and our freedoms," Bush said.

An audio link (<http://whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/06/20070630.a.mp3>) to the address is available on the White House Web site.

Following is transcript of the president's radio address:

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

Next week, Americans will gather with friends and family to celebrate the Fourth of July. I look forward to spending this Independence Day in Martinsburg, West Virginia, with the men and women of the West Virginia Air National Guard.

On the Fourth of July we celebrate the courage and convictions of America's founders. We remember the spirit of liberty that led men from 13 different colonies to gather in Philadelphia and pen the Declaration of Independence. In that revolutionary document, they proclaimed our independence based on the belief that freedom was God's gift to all mankind.

our brave men and women in uniform are facing danger to protect their fellow citizens from harm. In Afghanistan, our military and NATO forces are hunting down the Taliban and al Qaeda, and helping the Afghan people defend their young democracy. And in Iraq, American and Iraqi forces are standing with the nearly 12 million Iraqis who voted for a future of peace, and opposing ruthless enemies who want to bring down Iraq's democracy and turn that nation into a terrorist safe haven.

This week I traveled to the Naval War College in Rhode Island to give an

*(Continued on page 26)*

## Iraq Surge Showing Results, President Bush Says

By David McKeeby

USINFO White House Correspondent

Washington – The surge of thousands more U.S. troops into key areas of Iraq is beginning to show results, according to President Bush.

"I'm encouraged and, more importantly, the people in Baghdad are encouraged by what we're seeing," Bush said June 28 at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. "Citizens are forming neighborhood watch groups. Young Sunnis are signing up for the army and police. Tribal sheikhs are joining the fight against al-Qaida. Many Shi'a are rejecting the militias."

Following a comprehensive strategic review, the Bush administration announced "a new way forward" in January to help Iraq and give its parliament the time needed to pursue key reforms and political reconciliation among its Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish communities.

The centerpiece of the strategy, led by coalition commander General David Petraeus, is a "surge" of more than 21,500 U.S. combat troops tasked with supporting Iraqi efforts to clear neighborhoods of hostile insurgents, establish a continuous presence and work with local leaders to rebuild communities.

"The last of the reinforcements ar-

rived in Iraq earlier this month," Bush said. "The full surge has begun."

In Iraq's southwestern Anbar province, Bush said, U.S. Marines have joined with local Sunni sheikhs to confront insurgents from al-Qaida in



An American soldier patrols the streets of Baghdad

Iraq, who have sought to establish a regional stronghold in the area and launched a systematic campaign to assassinate opposing tribal elders.

Al-Qaida remains a dangerous presence in Anbar, but thanks to the Iraqi and coalition partnership, attacks are at a two-year low and a new police academy has opened to train local recruits to serve and protect their community, Bush said.

In Baghdad, Iraq, the newly deployed forces are leading a new offensive targeting insurgents operating in the capital and surrounding provinces, according to the president.

North of Baghdad, Iraqi and coalition forces are fighting block-by-block in

Diyala to disrupt militant activity, Bush said. In the west, they are intercepting foreign fighters infiltrating the border. Along the Tigris River south of the capital, Bush said, forces are moving into territory controlled by insurgents and have seized weapons caches and bomb making materials.

"If we can clear these strongholds of al-Qaida and death squads, we can improve life for the citizens of the areas and inhibit the enemy's ability to strike within the capital."

The next challenge, Bush said, would be to secure communities located along Sunni-Shiite "fault lines," where extremist elements likely would try again to undermine the Iraqi govern-

ment by staging new attacks to reignite sectarian violence.

Bush also highlighted the quiet but important role of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), which bring military and civilian experts to help local communities pursue reconciliation and help promote self-reliance. Across Iraq, he said, PRTs are helping Iraqi judges to restore the rule of law, local governments to initiate rebuilding projects and create new jobs, and business leaders to encourage new economic development.

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

## Global Disease Detection Program Key Part of Worldwide Network

By Cheryl Pellerin  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- When AIDS arose in animals in western Africa, jumped to people, evolved over decades and then emerged in 1981 as clusters of unusual disease in New York and San Francisco, there was no systematic way to detect potentially global diseases.

Today, a handful of international networks criss-cross the globe, working together to respond to disease outbreaks, build laboratory capability in nations that need such help, and train scientists and others in each region to detect, confirm and contain pathogens.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta has been working since 2004 to build the newest network -- the Global Disease Detection (GDD) program.

"The GDD program was funded by Congress in the wake of SARS [severe acute respiratory syndrome]," said Dr. Scott Dowell, CDC chief of global disease detection and emergency response, in a June 26 USINFO interview, "and the appreciation from the U.S. point of view that we needed to do a better job of detecting these [outbreaks] early and containing them before they spread internationally."

SARS caused an epidemic between November 2002 and July 2003, with more than 8,000 cases and 774 deaths. It was first reported in Asia, and over a few months spread to

more than 24 countries in North America, South America, Europe and Asia.

### GLOBAL OPERATIONS

The CDC program has five centers so



After the SARS epidemic killed hundreds, the CDC began work on a Global Disease Detection program that would enable effective responses to epidemics.

far -- fully functioning centers in Thailand and Kenya, and new centers established in 2006 in Guatemala, China and Egypt that are expected to be fully staffed and operational in 2008.

Linking each laboratory is the GDD Operations Center, an analytical clearinghouse and coordination point at CDC in Atlanta.

The operations center gathers outbreak information, coordinates responses and supports the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network, a technical collaboration of institutions that pools human and technical resources to allow rapid identification, confirmation and response to outbreaks of international importance.

GDD works with other international networks and laboratories, like the U.S. Defense Department's Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System and its overseas laboratories, including the U.S. Army Medical Research Unit in Kenya and the U.S. Navy Medical Research Unit No. 3 (NAMRU-3) in Cairo, Egypt.

(See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=May&x=20070522123149lcni-rellep3.213137e-02> ).)

The international networks are "very complementary programs," Dowell said. "Our relationship with the Department of Defense centers varies in how robust it is, from a good cordial working relationship with occasional collaborations with Army centers in Athens and Thailand, to

full collaboration with NAMRU-3 in Cairo."

In Cairo, the most recently established GDD outpost, the center is nested within NAMRU-3. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=January&x=20070125113122lcni-rellep0.3603327> ).)

Key activities at each center include a regionally networked outbreak response, population-based surveillance, scientific research, field epidemiology and laboratory training, and networking with other organizations.

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## Global Disease Detection Program...

Population-based surveillance is a special kind of high-intensity surveillance, Dowell said. In practice – in the case of monitoring the causes of pneumonia – it means very clearly defining geographic areas, confirming every suspected case with X-rays, intensively investigating for the bacteria, viruses and other organisms that cause pneumonia, and tracking the disease over time.

Such surveillance is done, he said, “so we have a sense of burden of disease and seasonal trends and other things. It’s the kind of surveillance that’s done at 12 sites across the United States, but very few other places around the world are able to afford it.”

### DISEASE RESPONSE

In fiscal year 2006, the five centers responded to more than 144 outbreaks of avian influenza, hemorrhagic fever, meningitis, cholera and unexplained sudden death. Effective responses to those cases prevented thousands of other infections and dozens of deaths.

In China, for example, there was an 83 percent decline in a severe form of streptococcus infection. In Thailand, delivery of a botulism antitoxin prevented multiple deaths. In Nicaragua, investigation and control measures saved hundreds of lives put at risk by methanol intoxication.

On June 15, the revised International Health Regulations became effective, bringing a comprehensive set of rules and procedures into force for WHO and its member states, and changing the way the global community responds to infectious disease threats. (See related article ([english&y=2007&m=June&x=](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

20070614125613lcni-rellep0.6933252 ).)

The revisions updated 1969 regulations that addressed only cholera, plague, yellow fever and smallpox, a disease now eradicated. Most countries have adopted the revised regulations as legally binding rules to contain disease threats like avian influenza and SARS that could spread rapidly from country to country.

The regulations have been the focus of discussions among GDD and WHO about the degree to which the GDD centers can be used to help implement the new regulations.

The regulations “put a big burden on countries,” Dowell said. “In many ways, they require all member states to be able to detect new outbreaks, report them right away and contain them,” but many do not have the resources or expertise to do so.

“Positioning these well-resourced GDD centers in different regions is not the whole answer,” Dowell added, “but we hope it’s a contribution toward that.”

More information (<http://www.cdc.gov/about/stateofcdc/everywhere/globalDisease.htm> ) about the Global Disease Detection Program is available on the CDC Web site.

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## African Economies Improve...

opment assistance to Africa in the past 30 years.”

Manchester Trade Ltd. is a Washington-based consulting firm on international trade and investment issues.

Looking at the compacts with Ghana and Benin, Carroll told the subcommittee, “It is clear that investments in roads, port facilities and agricultural infrastructure can create a platform for export growth among both large and small-scale producers.”

MCC, like the African Growth and Opportunity Act, also has the chance of becoming a “legacy program” for the United States, he said, because “it is not only a government-to-government but also a people-to-people initiative.”

On that level, MCC is like the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, he said, “because it is an example of the compassion of the American people and our willingness to respond boldly to Africa’s challenges.”

For more information, see Millennium Challenge Account ([http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic\\_isues/mca.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_isues/mca.html) ).

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## Pollution Control Focus of Coordinated North American Effort

By Cheryl Pellerin  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Pollution tracking and environmentally friendly buildings featured prominently in discussions at the 14th council session of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) in Morelia, Mexico, June 27.

The governments of the United States, Canada and Mexico established the CEC in 1994 to improve coordination of North American environmental and trade policy. The partnership complements environmental provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Stephen Johnson joined Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada, the Mexican secretary of environment and natural resources, and Canadian Environment Minister John Baird to launch collaborative initiatives on “green” building and pollution tracking in North America.

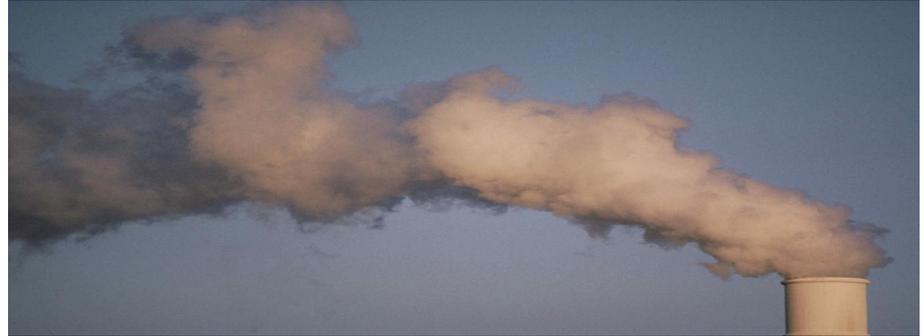
Green building refers to the incorporation of environmentally friendly materials and processes into construction activities. These can include increased use of recycled materials, building methods that minimize waste and energy-efficient heating and cooling systems.

“Three years ago our nations agreed to the important mission of the CEC to serve as a catalyst for cooperative action,” Johnson said. “At this council session we have reaffirmed that mission by supporting efforts to create a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable North America.”

“This has been a very productive session,” Quesada said, “celebrated in a

climate of great optimism and joint work.”

During the session, Johnson added, “the CEC committed itself to supporting two projects – one to protect the monarch butterfly as well as the va-



At the Commission for Environmental Cooperation council session, North American leaders discussed ways to decrease pollution, like the type that comes from these factories, and improve air quality on the continent.

quita porpoise, and the communities that rely on the green environment for their economic livelihoods.”

### CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Every fall, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, millions of monarch butterflies migrate across eastern North America to remote sites in central Mexico – a long flight they undertake fuelled only by nectar from flowers still in bloom along their route.

Biologists call this migration an endangered phenomenon because of pesticide use, dwindling food availability for butterfly larvae and loss of over-wintering sites in Mexico.

In Mexico, the butterflies require special fir forests that are found in only 16, 200 hectares to 20,200 mountaintop hectares in Mexico, all more than 3,000 meters above sea level. Even in this small range, they pile thickly on a few trees, so millions can die from a windstorm, snow or logging.

Forest thinning is their greatest threat. Monarchs must have a constant temperature, and the fir forests provide this from November to March. Even partial forest thinning exposes them to heat, cold, predators and wind.

Another threatened species is the vaquita, a small porpoise from Mexico's Gulf of California. It is the world's smallest and most endangered small marine cetacean – the order of mammals that includes whales and dolphins.

The total population of vaquita porpoises is estimated at 600, and high levels of entanglement in fishing gear could cause their extinction. Each year, 40 to 80 vaquitas are killed in gillnets and trawl nets used in traditional and commercial fishing. Damming of the Colorado River in the United States has changes their habitat.

### NORTH AMERICAN AIR QUALITY

It was not on the official CEC agenda, but Canadian Environment Minister John Baird said attendees had “a good number” of informal discussions on climate change.

“We all feel it’s very important to

*(Continued on page 23)*

## Pollution Control Focus of Coordinated North American Effort...

*(Continued from page 22)*

have strong regional, national and global actions," he said, "and this will continue to be something on which we collaborate in North America and around the world."

EPA's Johnson said the United States sees greenhouse gas emissions as a global challenge.

"President Bush urged our international partners to come together to establish a framework for addressing climate change," he said. "I look forward to working with Canada and Mexico and other nations to rapidly develop a comprehensive post-2012 approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

The date refers to the expiration date of the Kyoto Protocol, an amendment to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. The agreement assigned mandatory greenhouse gas emission limits for 169 signatories, mainly developed nations. The United States, which prefers voluntary actions, is not a signatory.

At the meeting, the officials highlighted CEC's role in developing Mexico's report on emissions of toxic chemicals to air, water and land from industrial sources.

Mexico's emission reporting requirements for its Pollutant Release and Transfer Registry became mandatory for the 2004 reporting year. Those

data will be included along with similar data from Canada and the United States in Taking Stock 2004, due to be released by the CEC later this summer.

"Combined with comparable information from Canada and the United States," Johnson said, "this marks the first truly North American registry of pollution releases and transfers. It is a milestone for environmental management and citizens' rights in each of our countries."

Registry information is available to everyone through a free, interactive Google Earth mapping tool (<http://www.cec.org/naatlas/prtr>) developed by CEC. The map layer lets users obtain information on pollution from more than 30,000 North American industrial facilities.

Sources for the data include Environment Canada's National Pollutant Release Inventory, Mexico's Registro de Emisiones y Transferencia de Contaminantes, and the U.S. Toxics Release Inventory.

More information (<http://www.cec.org/>) about the CEC is available on the organization's Web site.

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## Approach to Russia on Human Rights Backed by Expert...

and labor, said the Chechen Friendship Society, an NGO dealing with human rights abuses, was shut down and another NGO, the Internews/Educated Media Foundation, was "raided in an excessive action by Russian police, resulting in a suspension of its work."

Moreover, NGOs operating in Russia have struggled to meet "onerous reporting requirements" leveled by a new law making it more difficult for those groups to operate, Lowenkron said. The law increases the Russian government's oversight of the registration, financing and activities of NGOs in Russia.

### DANGER FOR JOURNALISTS

CSIS's Kuchins said that "it's still dangerous" to be an investigative reporter in Russia, especially one writing about Russia's actions to suppress a revolt in Chechnya or investigating organized crime. Russia always ranks high in the number of reporters killed each year, he said.

The Paris-based press advocacy

group Reporters Without Borders calls Putin a "predator" of press freedom. The group said that as Putin nears the end of his term as Russian president in 2008, he has "little to be proud of," with "broadcasting diversity now just a distant dream" and regional news media working "under pressure from Putin-appointed governors or local business potentates."

Even the most distinguished journalists are targeted in Russia, said the group, citing the 2006 killing of investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya, an outspoken critic of Putin's policy in Chechnya. She is one of 21 journalists killed in Russia since Putin came to power in March 2000, said Reporters Without Borders.

The State Department said April 30 that the United States remained "gravely concerned about the intimidation and murder of journalists like Politkovskaya" and that her killing was an "affront to free and independent media and to democratic values."

For additional information human rights in Russia, see the Europe and Eurasia section ( <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/shrd/2006/80588.htm> ) of Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2006 on the State Department Web site.

The prepared testimonies of Fried ( <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/86990.htm> ) and Lowenkron ( <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/rm/2007/84182.htm> ) also are available on the State Department Web site.

The full text

([http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=13622](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=13622) ) of the Reporters Without Borders statement is available on the group's Web site.

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## New Sheep and Goat Breeds Arrive in Ethiopia...

zations.

The imported Dorper Sheep and Boer Goats will be temporarily kept at Sebeta at the National Animal Health Diagnostic and Investigation Center in a quarantine unit constructed with USAID support. Upon completion of the quarantine period, the animals will be transferred to their permanent locations: Adami Tulu Research Center (Oromia) and the Hawassa University (SNNPR) for the Boer Goats, and Melka Worer Research Center (Afar) and Fafen Agro-pastoral Research Center (Somalia) for the Dorper Sheep. In addition to these

four locations, eight more facilities will be established across the six regions as crossbreeding and distribution sites.



Two of the new goats that have been imported by USAID to improve Ethiopia's livestock exports

## Muslim face of the US Marines...

*(Continued from page 12)*

religion that many media outlets in America's heartland treat with barely concealed hostility.

It was more a practical guide than a theological lesson. The chaplain is realistic about what can be absorbed.

He teaches that the rift between Shia and Sunni has no religious basis but that it cannot be ignored in the field.

He understands that much of the Arab world hates the US military and the occupation of Iraq, but he wants both those cynics and his own soldiers to realise one thing:

"Don't see the entire religion, or judge it, through one set of eyes. The Arabs shouldn't generalise (either)...The majority of Americans

may not approve of many things that we do outside, but it doesn't mean that we don't love the country."

The biggest test of his diplomatic skills came when he was the first Muslim chaplain to enter the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

During his three-month deployment he introduced the call to prayer, and tried to encourage better treatment of detainees.

There was never any doubt that he was there to follow his commanding officers' orders: "We all agreed that I should be in uniform, because that's what I am."

"There were some who never accepted me. They said, 'he's the devil'," he added, saying that some

saw him as a traitor to their fundamentalist doctrine.

"I knew where they were coming from. That's why they ended up being there (in Guantanamo) to begin with."

He believes that Guantanamo served a purpose, but points, diplomatically, to the fact that even President George W Bush has previously expressed a desire to see the prison closed.

*Story from BBC NEWS:*

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## First Muslim Representative Mends Global Fences...

And when Ellison chose to be sworn in on a Quran once owned by Thomas Jefferson, his religion was again thrust into the spotlight, sometimes in disparaging ways on talk radio.

Still, the incidents helped Ellison quickly earn global recognition.

"Both in terms of symbolism and in terms of historical development, his election means a lot," said Akbar Ahmed, a former adviser on Islam to President Bush and the author of a new book, "Journey Into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization."

Ahmed said that while traveling across the Muslim world researching the book, many people had heard of Ellison, viewing him as a symbol of increasing acceptance of Muslims in America.

And in the halls of Congress, Muslim staffers agree.

"He is someone who understands our faith and the things we can accomplish in the U.S.," said Jameel Aalim-Johnson, president of the Congressional Muslim Staffers Association and chief of staff for Rep. Gregory W. Meeks (D-N.Y.).

On the whole, Ellison said Congress has been a "hospitable place." In fact, some of the harshest criticism he has faced has come from liberal activists back home, angry with him for not taking a tougher stance on ending the war; the critics even staged a sit-in in his congressional office.

"I have to be a practical idealist, not just an idealistic idealist," he said of his stance.

Still, the pressure from the anti-war faction is small compared with the weight others place on him to help the U.S. burnish its tarnished image in the Muslim world. Ellison insists that although he gets requests almost daily to travel to the Middle East and is constantly meeting with foreign journalists, he doesn't feel pressured.

"My focus is right here, right now, what's in front of me," he said. "I don't ever take a moment to think if my (being Muslim) is a big deal or not. ... I just do the best I can with what I got."

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## Surge Strategy Helping Iraqis Protect Their Country, Bush Says...

*(Continued from page 18)*

update on the strategy we're pursuing in Iraq. This strategy is being led by a new commander, General David Petraeus, and a new Ambassador, Ryan Crocker. It recognizes that our top priority must be to help the Iraqi government and its security forces protect their population -- especially in Baghdad. And its goal is to help the Iraqis make progress toward reconciliation and build a free nation that respects the rights of its people, upholds the rule of law and is an ally in the war on terror.

So America has sent reinforcements to help the Iraqis secure their population, go after the terrorists, insurgents and militias that are inciting sectarian violence, and get the capital under control. The last of these reinforcements arrived in Iraq earlier this month, and the full surge has begun. One of our top commanders in Iraq, General Ray Odierno, put it this way, "We are beyond a surge of forces. We're now into a surge of operations."

Recently, we launched Operation Phantom Thunder, which has taken the fight to the enemy in Baghdad, as

well as the surrounding regions. We're still at the beginning of this offensive, but we're seeing some hopeful signs. We're engaging the enemy, and killing or capturing hundreds. Just this week, our commanders reported the killing of two senior al Qaeda leaders north of Baghdad. Within Baghdad, our military reports that despite an upward trend in May, sectarian murders in the capital are significantly down from what they were in January. We're also finding arms caches at more than three times the rate of a year ago.

The enemy continues to carry out sensational attacks, but the number of car bombings and suicide attacks has been down in May and June. And because of our new strategy, U.S. and Iraqi forces are living among the people they secure, with the result that many Iraqis are now coming forward with information on where the terrorists are hiding.

The fight in Iraq has been tough, and it will remain difficult. We've lost good men and women in this fight. One of those lost was a Marine Lance Corporal named Luke Yepsen. In the spring of 2005, Luke withdrew from his classes at Texas A&M to join the

United States Marines. And in October 2006, he deployed to Iraq, where he manned a 50-caliber machine gun on a Humvee. Six months ago, Luke was killed by a sniper while on patrol in Anbar province. Luke's father describes his son's sacrifice this way: "Luke died bringing freedom to an oppressed people. My urgent request is ... finish the mission. Bring freedom to the Iraqi people."

On this Fourth of July, we remember Luke Yepsen and all the men and women in uniform who have given their lives in this struggle. They've helped bring freedom to the Iraqi people. They've helped make Americans more secure. We will not forget their sacrifice. We remember their loved ones in our prayers. And we give thanks for all those from every generation who have defended our Nation and our freedoms.

Laura and I wish you a safe and happy Fourth of July. Thank you for listening.

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