



# Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

## INSIDE

### U.S. Government Donates Training Equipment worth \$250,000 for Health Services Extension Program

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) -- On Thursday, May 18, 2006, Ambassador Vicki Huddleston, the United States Chargé d’Affaires, presented training equipment and supplies to the Minister of Health, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, in support of the Ministry’s National Health Services Extension Program. The ceremony, held at the Addis Ababa office of Pathfinder International, recognized the

importance of the Extension Program and the critical role that health extension workers play in the expansion of health services throughout Ethiopia. The ceremony also recognized the successful partnership between the Ministry of Health and the United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The equipment, procured by Pathfinder Interna-

tional with USAID funding, will be used to train health extension workers at Technical Education and Vocational Training Schools. Donated materials and supplies include first aid and safe delivery kits and also equipment for use in the care of women’s health.

In her remarks at the ceremony Ambassador Huddleston congratu-

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### Bush Calls for Temporary Work Program, Increased Border Security

By Stephen Kaufman  
Washington File  
White House Correspondent

Washington -- President Bush, in a televised address to the American people, May 15 called for comprehensive immigration reform that is "secure, orderly, and fair," including a temporary guest worker program and the expansion of the U.S. Border Patrol with U.S. National Guard



President Bush delivers an Address to the Nation, Monday night, May 15. White House photo by Eric Draper

troops.

The United States is both "a nation of laws" and "a nation of immigrants," and must enforce its laws and uphold the tradition of immigration "which has strengthened our country in so many ways," the president said.

Calling for a program that would

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## U.S. Government Donates Training Equipment . . .

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lated the Ministry of Health for the realization of their vision to expand health services, and applauded the efforts of the new health extension workers to ensure the health and well being of Ethiopian families well into the future.

The Health Services Extension Program is designed to increase access to preventive health care at the kebele and household levels by deploying thousands of trained

health extension workers to rural areas of the country. The goal of the Ministry of Health is to train 28,000 health extension workers, most of whom are women, and station two of them in health posts in every kebele in the country. Currently, 9,900 health extension workers have been deployed to different areas and have started providing health services. ♦

## Bush Calls for Temporary Work Program, Increased Border Security . . .

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allow some illegal immigrants in the United States to work legally, Bush acknowledged that "there are many people on the other side of our border who will do anything to come to America to work and build a better life," including risking their lives.

"This creates enormous pressure on our border that walls and patrols alone will not stop. To secure the border effectively we must reduce the numbers of people trying to sneak across," the president said.

A temporary worker program would allow "honest immigrants" to legally earn wages, reduce the appeal of human smuggling and "make it less likely that people would risk their lives to cross the border."

The program would not provide an "automatic path to citizenship," but would recognize the reality that millions of illegal immigrants are already in the United States, Bush said.

The problem of illegal immigration "puts pressure on public schools and hospitals ... strains state and local budgets ... and brings crime to our communities," Bush said. However, he added, "we must remember that the vast majority of illegal immigrants are decent people who work hard, support their families, practice their faith, and lead responsible lives."

The president called for new immigrants to assimilate into American society in the country's "tradition of the melting pot, which has made us one nation out of many peoples." Applicants for citizenship already inside the United States would be asked to pay taxes, to learn the English language, and to work in a job for several years.

"People who meet these conditions should be able to apply for citizenship – but approval would not be automatic, and they will have to wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law," Bush said.

He also called for a tamper-proof

identity card for temporary workers, which will help employers verify their legal status and leave them with "no excuse" for violating U.S. law.

Addressing the coming congressional and national debate over immigration, the president asked Americans to remember that "real lives will be affected by our debates and decisions," and "every human being has dignity and value no matter what their citizenship papers say."

### **SUPPORTING BORDER PATROL**

As part of the Bush's plan to secure the border, U.S. National Guard troops would support U.S. Border Patrol personnel.

The guardsmen would not be involved in law enforcement, he emphasized, but would assist by "operating surveillance systems ... analyzing intelligence ... installing fences and vehicle barriers ... building patrol roads ... and providing training."

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## Bush Calls for Temporary Work Program, Increased Border Security . . .

(Continued from page 2)

He said the United States "is not going to militarize the southern border" with Mexico, describing the country as "our neighbor, and our friend." He pledged to continue to work cooperatively with the government of President Vicente Fox to improve security on both sides of the border and to confront common problems like drug trafficking and crime, as well as to reduce illegal immigration.

Bush's plan aims to increase the number of Border Patrol officers by an additional 6000 members by the end of 2008, and he said that when the new agents are deployed, "we will have more than doubled the size of the Border Patrol during my Presidency."

White House press secretary Tony Snow told reporters May 15 that Bush's remarks come ahead of U.S. Senate debates over a proposed bill on immigration, with a vote on the legislation expected early the week of May 22.

According to Snow, the president is eager to work with both houses of Congress for effective legislation concerning immigration and border patrol. (See related article [<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Apr/25-371817.html>].)

Bush "cares very deeply" about immigration, Snow said, and has "very strong feelings about addressing the issue, addressing it directly, and getting it right."

The White House press secretary said the president is focusing on four areas for immigration reform: border security, interior enforce-

ment, establishing a temporary guest worker program and assimilating newcomers.

"Part of the American dream has always been to welcome people who are eager to participate in the American experience and also assimilate," Snow said.

Bush also intends to visit the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona on May 18, the press secretary said.

### WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS GIVE FURTHER DETAILS

At a White House briefing shortly before the president's remarks, White House officials echoed Bush's statement that the deployment of National Guard troops "is not intended as a militarization of the border," and cited ongoing cooperation with Mexican law enforcement officials

"This is intended for us to take additional measures to strengthen our border enforcement effort while we continue to ramp up by frankly an impressive level the throughput in training of customs enforcers," the officials said, speaking on background.

The 6,000 guard members scheduled to be deployed in 2006 would free up approximately 500 border agents "from what otherwise would have been administrative work away from the front line jobs," and the officials noted that the guard already has had a presence on the U.S.-Mexico border for the past two decades as part of counternarcotics efforts.

One official described the proposed temporary worker program

as "an essential steam valve" that would relieve pressure on U.S. borders.

"America is a rich country and our neighbors are not as well off. We've got a large supply of labor that is willing to take extraordinary risks today to come into this country and that puts tremendous pressure on the borders," the official said.

The officials also said that while the president's plan would focus on the U.S. border with Mexico, the Bush administration is willing to consider the plan along the northern border if some U.S. governors whose states border Canada are interested in participating. "There's no ... limitation, and we remain open to working with those governors," they said.

A fact sheet [[www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060515-7.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060515-7.html)] on immigration reform and text [[www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060515-8.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060515-8.html)] of the president's remarks are available on the White House Web site.

For additional information, see Visas, Passports and Immigration [[http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/immigration.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.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>) ♦

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## U.S. Announces Fifth Africa Trade Forum for Washington

By Jim Fisher-Thompson  
Washington File Staff Writer



Washington -- The fifth African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum will be held in Washington June 6-7, and will focus on the private sector and helping eligible African nations develop real growth in gross domestic product through trade expansion into U.S. markets, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer announced May 11.

Frazer told journalists at a May 11 briefing that more than 35 African trade and finance ministers will attend the AGOA forum, as will hundreds of participants of the private sector and civil society.

She added Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice planned to address the opening of the forum whose official theme is: The Private Sector and Trade: Powering Africa's Growth.

AGOA provides duty and entry-free access to a wide range of more than 6,400 items -- including textile products -- into the U.S. market for African nations willing to reform their economies along free-market lines. The landmark trade legislation -- the first of its kind with Africa -- first was passed by Congress in 2000 and since has been updated and renewed by President Bush.

"AGOA continues to be a key component of a broader strategy for growth and development" in Africa, Frazer said.

Frazer told journalists, "AGOA has been and continues to be a success. In 2005, U.S. imports from AGOA countries totaled \$38.1 billion up 44 percent from 2004." However, she added that a smoothly operating "business climate" still was lacking in many African nations, an impediment to trade expansion.

Touching on the fact that a majority of U.S. imports from Africa are still in the energy sector, Frazer added, "There has been an impressive increase in a wide array of product categories not just petroleum. While U.S. imports of apparel from AGOA countries dropped in 2005, imports of products from other sectors including agricultural products, machinery and electronics all increased."

A State Department AGOA fact sheet also confirmed that since 2000 exports in a number of other areas were up including: footwear, 306 percent; toys and sportswear, 88 percent; fruits and nuts, 81 percent; and cut flowers, 35 percent.

Steve Hayes, president of the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), a trade advocacy nongovernmental organization that will co-host the private sector component of the forum, told the briefing, "I think textiles and apparel have been a very important part of AGOA, but there is a reason for the more than 6,000 other product lines."

Hayes said every African country can produce agricultural products but help is required from the private sector and the U.S. government to help expand export markets.

One problem, said Hayes, is that "the private sector in the United States hasn't really taken advantage of what I think is one of the greatest pieces of legislation between the United States and Africa. AGOA represents a great opportunity for American companies to invest in Africa and it's our [CCA's] role to move that agenda forward."

Having just returned from visits to South Africa, Namibia and Kenya, Lloyd Pierson, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) assistant administrator for Africa, told journalists, "We're looking forward to this forum. AGOA is very dynamic. It is doing a great job right now" in Africa.

For USAID, AGOA in Africa "means jobs, jobs and jobs," Pierson said. The agency is also making it easier for Africans and U.S. investors to obtain information about AGOA through four regional trade hubs in Accra, Ghana; Dakar, Senegal; Gaborone, Botswana; and Nairobi, Kenya.

The hubs, meant to be one-stop shopping centers for investors, are an important adjunct to the AGOA process, Pierson said.

Asked if President Bush still took the same keen interest in AGOA as he did when he mentioned the program numerous times during his July 2003 trip to Africa, Frazer said, "President Bush continues to see AGOA as a key component of his policies to address economic growth and development in Africa."

She added that those policies in-

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## Liberian Journalist Leaving U.S. To Shape Policy in His Country

The Sacramento Bee of California published the following article May 9 on Liberian journalist Gabriel Williams, written by Blair Anthony Robertson, staff writer for the newspaper. Any republications must credit the story to The Sacramento Bee.

(begin byliner)

Liberian to return to his troubled homeland

An international commute awaits Gabriel Williams, in his job with new government

By Blair Anthony Robertson --  
Bee Staff Writer

He came to Sacramento in 1993, a journalist fleeing death threats in his native Liberia.

He settled down, raised his family and found work. He appreciated a free society and embraced his right to speak his mind.

But he always knew his home and his heart were with his troubled nation on the west coast of Africa.

In the days ahead, Gabriel Williams, 45, will be making the mostly unlikely of commutes when he is in line to take a job in Liberia as assistant minister of information. Yet, the father of three daughters -- ages 11, 17 and 19 -- will not uproot his wife and children.

"The immediate plans are that I will be going back and forth. The kids are in school and you cannot adjust the normal order of things like that," he said.

Liberia has been in upheaval for the better part of Williams' life, beset by violent regimes and overwhelmed by economic and political strife.



Gabriel Williams

Last November, Liberia's hopes seemed to brighten with the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a Harvard-educated economist who has pledged to rebuild Liberia's economy and bring new openness to the government.

As assistant minister, Williams said he will be involved in forming and implementing the government's communication policies.

"I'm excited to go back and contribute to the development of my country," said Williams, who plans to leave for Liberia at the end of May. "There are millions of Liberians who deserve a peaceful life."

"He knows what the people want," said fellow exiled Liberian Siaka Konneh, who has known Williams since the early 1980s. "He can identify their needs and at least present them to the government."

"But it will be a real challenge. This government is coming in after the civil war and it will be difficult to put the pieces together."

Liberia, or "land of the free," is a country with long, sometimes troubling ties to the United States. It was founded by ex-slaves in 1847. But that ruling minority -- known as Americo-Liberians -- was often at odds with the land's indigenous people, who complained they were treated as second-class citizens.

A military coup in 1980, followed by 25 years of civil war beginning in 1989, left the nation in shambles, especially under the brutal reign of Charles Taylor, who went into exile amid international pressure for him to resign.

With the new government comes new hope for Liberia. And Williams is eager to play a role.

In the old days, he was a respected young journalist who tried to stand up to the authoritarian regime.

"I was involved in writing about the need for democracy, the basic tenets of human decency," said Williams, who became managing editor of a newspaper in Monrovia in 1991. "For the couple of years I presided over the newspaper, we received death threat after death threat. There was one time I had a gun put to my head and my head was almost blown off when they found out I was a journalist."

Things were far different in his adopted home. In Sacramento, Williams lived a low-key existence as a journalist, penning stories for the Sacramento Observer and the West Sacramento Press. He also wrote the newsletter for the Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce. In 2002, he published,

*(Continued on page 19)*

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## United States Has Spent \$1 Billion Feeding the Hungry in Darfur

By Charles W. Corey  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Between 2004 and 2006, the United States has spent more than \$1 billion feeding the hungry in the crisis-gripped Darfur region of western Sudan, and remains committed to caring for distressed people in the area, a top U.S. government official told the U.S. Congress May 11.

At the same time, Michael Hess, assistant administrator in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau of Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, said other donors must come through on their commitments. He made that point before the Human Rights Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives and its companion group, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

Hess was called to Capitol Hill to brief legislators on the latest USAID developments on Darfur. He was joined by Jonathan Dworken, acting director of USAID's Food for Peace Program; Dana Ott, acting director of USAID's Office of Sudan Programs; and Kenn Crossley, U.S. relations officer for the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

Hess reminded the lawmakers that in addition to other assistance, Congress is now considering a \$225 million emergency supplemental funding request for Sudan, of which \$170 million is earmarked for Darfur. He urged the lawmakers to approve the funding as quickly as possible so relief work can continue expeditiously.

In 2005, the United States contributed 85 percent of the funding for the World Food Programme's operation in Sudan, Hess said, but it continues to encourage other donors to contribute more to help care for those suffering in Darfur.

"While we give a lot to WFP," the United States also has given \$22 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC's) food distribution program and \$8 million to five NGOs distributing food in Darfur, he said.

Additionally, even though WFP has been forced to cut daily food rations by 50 percent because of a severe shortfall in funding, he reassured Congress that the United States will continue contributing to supplemental feeding programs to ensure that those people who are most in danger of acute malnutrition will receive the support they need.

"WFP and our partners are working hard to make sure that the therapeutic feeding programs and the supplemental feeding programs for those who are most at risk will continue," he pledged.

Dworken said Sudan will continue as "a top priority" for the Office of Food for Peace. He said Food for Peace has taken three key steps to help deal with the current WFP ration shortfall:

Moving 2,850 tons of noncereal commodities to Port Sudan from pre-positioned stockpiles in Dubai and Lake Charles, Louisiana, for distribution in Darfur;

Diverting 4,750 tons of food to Port Sudan that was being shipped

to stockpiles in Dubai; and

Procuring 40,000 tons of cereals valued at \$36 million for rapid direct shipment to Sudan (an emergency action taken by the U.S. Department of Agriculture).

Dworken said those three steps add up to about 47,600 tons of food, valued at \$48 million, which should be delivered from late May through late June.

Food for Peace, he added, also is working closely with the U.S. Department of State to help bring other donors into the process.

"The president spoke publicly [May 8 from the White House] to encourage other donors to get involved. Secretary Rice also spoke a couple of days ago. We have been speaking with donors continuously, as we always do, especially about Sudan -- both in Khartoum, in donors' conferences, and in capitals," Dworken told the lawmakers. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2006/May/08-770945.html>)).

The government of Sudan also has its own cereal stocks, Dworken said, which the United States, along with the United Nations, has been encouraging for feeding in Darfur, preferably through the World Food Programme.

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

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## A "First Look" at New African Exhibit Reveals Some Treasures

By Bruce Greenberg  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Called "First Look," an exhibition of African art in two parts unfolds May 17 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art and serves as "a tease," says a curator, for the second and much larger collection to go on display beginning in February 2007.

Chris Kramer, a curator involved with the project, mentioned the varied scope of the collection, and how it has both complemented and rounded out the museum's present permanent collection.

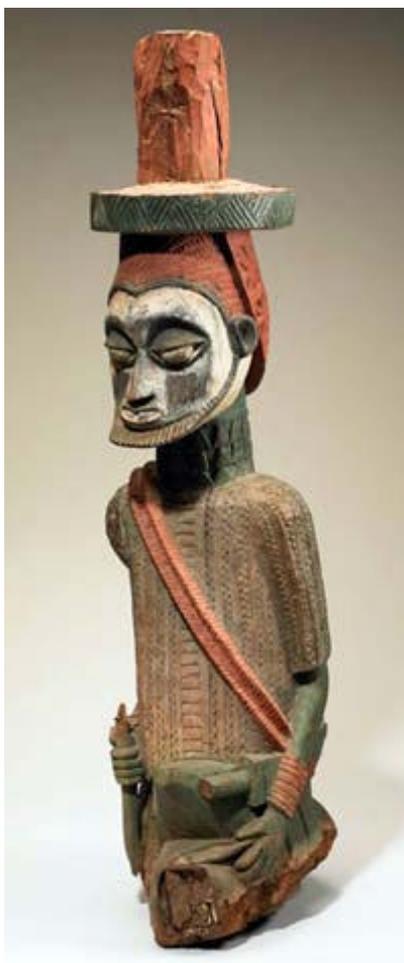
"We're seeing this collection with new eyes," she remarked. "In actually handling some of the objects, we've discovered details such as applications of paint, and certain materials not previously remarked on before in publications. So we are enormously excited about it."

The collection, she continued, "is meant to represent the range of African art to our visiting public, and should provide a good overview to anyone interested in learning about African art since it [represents] a diversity of form, a diversity of materials, a diversity of function and context."

Of special note, this sampler exhibit contains several rare stone sculptures -- uncommon because West African artisans mostly preferred to work with other more malleable materials.

The earliest work dates from 1497, an ivory hunting horn from modern-day Sierra Leone, crafted for the Portuguese and carved with

intricate African and European hunt motifs, plus European coats of arms.



**Yoruba peoples, Nigeria, one of the wood art displayed at the Exhibition.**

Other items, Kramer said, date from the early to middle 20th century, and "give one the sense of the creativity that existed in Africa and continues to exist today in Africa, and makes Africa relevant to our visitors as a place where art continues to play a very important role."

Susan Talbot, acting director of the museum, stressed the artistic and academic value of the collec-

tion, indicating its significance for African art historians and scholars. She added, "If you open any text book on African art, you will see examples from this collection."

Entitled "The Walt Disney-Tishman African Art Collection," it represents one of the finest contemporary assemblages of rare and historically valuable sculpture, statuary and masks from western and central Africa, dating from the late 15th century to the mid-20th century. Comprising 525 objects, the current preview places on display some 24 exemplary pieces.

New York real estate developer Paul Tishman, together with his wife, Ruth, began collecting African sculpture in the late 1950s and, through the next 20 years, amassed a varied trove of masks and figurines, together with large-scale works comprised of ivory, wood, bronze, ceramic and fiber.

The Walt Disney Company purchased the collection from the Tishmans in 1984, and soon made the works available to the public through loans, special exhibits and publications. In the fall of 2005, Disney donated the collection to the National Museum of African Art to become part of its permanent collection. (See related article [<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Oct/03-562173.html>].)

Talbot said she hopes this preview will prompt the public to return for "the big show" in February 2007.

More information on the National Museum of African Art [[www.nmfaa.si.edu/index2.html](http://www.nmfaa.si.edu/index2.html)] is available on the museum's Web site.♦

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## U.S. Will Destroy All Its Chemical Weapons, State's Joseph Says

By David Anthony Denny  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The State Department's top arms control official attributed the recent U.S. request to the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to extend its deadline for destroying all of its chemical weapons to technical and budgetary issues.

Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs Robert Joseph made this observation during an exclusive April 25 Washington File interview in which he discussed why the United States recently had asked for a five-year extension to the Chemical Weapons Convention's 2007 deadline for the destruction of all national chemical weapon stocks. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=April&x=20060420183936sjhtrop0.9848596&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).

The U.S. chemical weapons stockpile was accumulated during the decades of the Cold War as a counterweight and a deterrent to huge quantities of Soviet chemical weapons that the West feared could be used in battle.

Under the terms of the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention, the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention and direct or indirect transfer of chemical weapons are prohibited. The convention also bans using or preparing to use chemical weapons. Signatories also are prohibited from assisting, encouraging or inducing others to engage in any activities banned by the convention. (See fact sheet ([http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive\\_Index/Chemical\\_Weapons\\_Convention\\_States\\_Parties\\_Signatories.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive_Index/Chemical_Weapons_Convention_States_Parties_Signatories.html)).

state.gov/is/Archive\_Index/Chemical\_Weapons\_Convention\_States\_Parties\_Signatories.html).

The convention took effect in April 1997, six months after the 65th signatory ratified it. There



OPCW inspector

are currently 178 states that are party to the agreement. The convention set up the OPCW, which oversees implementation of the convention's requirements.

"No country should doubt our commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention," Joseph said, "or our determination to eliminate all of our stockpiles." He added that the United States is working with other governments to help them meet all of their convention deadlines.

"We are committed to having universal compliance with this convention," he said.

The Defense Department is the agency responsible for eliminating the chemical weapons stockpiles because it is responsible for their

storage and maintenance. Joseph said that Defense "has been working very hard" to destroy the entire U.S. stockpile.

Joseph said the destruction process is very difficult, complex and expensive, and it must be done "with all due diligence." But, he said, the United States is committed to eliminating all of its chemical agents.

"It's a lot of material, and of course it has to be handled in a very careful fashion," he said.

As to why the U.S. destruction effort is behind schedule, Joseph said technical, environmental and budget issues are involved -- even though, in the latter instance, the United States already has spent several billion dollars on the process. In addition, because of the United States' system of government, state and local politics have contributed to delays in the destruction process.

"We have made significant progress, but we have a long way to go," Joseph said. "We are going to do everything that we can to meet the timelines that are allowed under the treaty."

Additional information (<http://www.opcw.org/>) about the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons is available on its Web site.

For more information about U.S. policy, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation ([http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international\\_security/arms\\_control.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html)). ♦

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## World Food Programme Thanks American People for Contributions

By Charles W. Corey  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- An official from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) May 11 publicly thanked the Bush administration, the U.S. Congress and the American people for being "far and away" the largest donor to WFP operations in Sudan and worldwide.

Kenn Crossley, the U.S. relations officer for WFP, made that point before the House Hunger Caucus and its companion group, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. Concerned lawmakers called the WFP official to Washington, along with representatives from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), to brief them on developments in Darfur and the surrounding region and to explain WFP's recent decision to cut daily food rations to those in need.

Crossley, who also currently manages strategic humanitarian affairs for WFP for Sudan, North Africa and the Middle East, told the lawmakers that in Sudan, since 2005, WFP has received \$690 million in contributions from the United States, out of a total of \$975 million.

Crossley credited the United States with "clearly ... driving all of the effective response in Sudan right now." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2006/May/11-849194.html>).

### **TIMING OF DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS CRUCIAL**

He then went on to explain the

context in which WFP decided to cut rations for those receiving food aid in Darfur and elsewhere.

In addition to Sudan, "Kenya, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola, Liberia,

emergency food shipments of 47,600 tons of food (worth \$48 million), announced by President Bush May 8, for being an exception to that rule, saying it is moving "lightening fast" to help those in need.



**Ardamata Camp - Sorghum Distribution: Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ardamata camp outside of Geneina in West Darfur receive sorghum provided by USAID through WFP.**

Chad and several other countries have already or very recently gone onto partial rations or are about to go onto partial rations," he said.

He said the ration cuts came about because of the timing of donor contributions. "Timing is of the essence in order to have an effective donor response. Sadly, the food that doesn't arrive until October cannot be eaten in May, and we need to take that into account when we are planning our operations."

WFP, Crossley explained, usually factors in a four-to-six-month lead time before food from donors is actually distributed to the hungry in Sudan. He credited USAID's

### **DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS IN SUDAN**

Crossley told the lawmakers that food aid procurement and distribution is complicated and cumbersome, especially in Sudan. "Food has to be procured. It has to be shipped. It has to be off-loaded. It has to be warehoused while it clears through customs. It has to be then shipped on primary transport to a transshipment hub" and then possibly shipped several more times before it reaches partners for distribution to those in need, he said.

"All of this is happening in a ter-

*(Continued on page 10)*

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## U.S. Diversity Increasing, Census Data Show

Washington -- The population of the United States is becoming increasingly diverse this decade, with the minority population reaching 98 million in 2005, one-third of the total population of 296.4 million.

According to a May 10 news release from the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics remain the largest minority group in the United States, numbering almost 43 million. They are also the fastest growing segment of the population, having increased their numbers by more than 1 million in the year from 2004 to 2005 alone.

The growth of this single minority group accounted for almost half of the growth in the population at large during that period. The findings come in a report that is issued by the Census Bureau at mid-

decade, halfway between the comprehensive population survey taken by law once every 10 years.

Blacks made up the second-largest minority group, numbering just under 40 million. This group increased by almost 500,000, or 1.3 percent from 2004 to 2005.

With a population of 14.4 million, Asians are the third-largest minority group in the United States, having increased their numbers by 3 percent from 2004 to 2005.

Some common trends are appearing in the data about these three minority groups. The median age among each group is lower than that of the U.S. population overall. The national median age -- where half is younger, and half is older -- is 36.2 years. Hispanics are the youngest minority with a median

age around 27; blacks are next with 30 being the median age. Asians are closer to the national trend, with a median age of 33 years.

The mid-decade survey also shows that 12 percent of the U.S. population is aged 65 or older. The number of those over 85 passed 5 million. On the other end of the life span, 20.3 million Americans are under age 5.

More information (<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/006808.html>) on the mid-decade report is available on the Census Bureau Web site.

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

## World Food Programme Thanks American People . . .

*(Continued from page 9)*

rain which has no transport infrastructure -- once you get off three or four main corridors. Especially where the need is greatest, there is no infrastructure ... and ... insecurity can interrupt the entire chain" at any time, he said.

Further complicating the situation, he said, is the fact that Sudan is a country in which "a lot of permits and authorities need to be obtained to move anything anywhere, including travel of staff and implementing partners, etc."

WFP, he reminded his audience, is 100 percent voluntarily financed by the international donor community and, at times, funding runs out. "When the bank runs dry we

have a problem, and we have reached this point in Sudan. We can no longer continue to finance without donor contributions," particularly money to help pay for operations under way. "With no new contributions to draw upon, we could no longer sustain the pace at which we were running the operations. We were forced to reduce the rations," he said.

### SEASONAL HUNGER PERIODS ALSO A FACTOR

Returning to the timing issue, Crossley said timing is also important in Darfur because of seasonal hunger times -- which in Sudan fall on the last couple of months before the harvest, between August and October.

That is the time when there is the least food available in the country and when the rains cut off access to many areas, especially in western Darfur. "So, in order to get the food to get into the people during the peak hunger season," he said, "it needs to get in there before the rains."

While he called the ration cuts "regrettable," he said it is better to do it now than during the peak hunger months, when the populations are least accessible. He quickly added, however, that full rations could be restored during the peak of the hunger months, but for that to happen, "we need contributions now," in the next week, so the food procurement cycle can begin immediately. ♦

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## U.S. Works To Spread Message of Hope, State's Hughes Says

By Judy Aita  
Washington File Staff Writer

New York -- The United States faces no more important challenge as it works to extend freedom and expand opportunities across the world than telling its "story of hope," says U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes.

Hughes, who has been a key communications adviser at the White House and now at the State Department, said that "people around the world need to know that America proudly stands for not only our own rights, but also for human rights, human freedom, human dignity, the value of every person everywhere."

### **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**

Hughes discussed what she called "transformational public diplomacy" May 10 with academic, business and media leaders at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

She urged the participants to see promoting understanding not as a job for government alone, but "our shared American challenge" for everyone from college presidents to airport personnel. "You never get a second chance to make a first impression," she said.

U.S. public diplomacy, she said, is based on three strategic objectives: offering the world a positive vision of hope and opportunity; isolating and marginalizing the violent extremists and their ideology of tyranny and hate; and fostering a sense of common interests and values between Americans and

people around the world.

America's belief in freedom, equality, justice and opportunity for all "are universal and we seek to promote them in a spirit of partnership and respect," Hughes said.



**Karen Hughes**

Hughes said she spent her first months talking frequently with American Muslims to learn how best to counter ideological support for terrorism.

"One of their points," she said, "was that leaders across the Muslim world have clearly stated and are stating more and more that [Osama] bin Laden's views do not represent the values of Islam. He offers death and destruction only, in contrast with those who are working to address legitimate grievances through an ideology of life and constructive engagement."

### **REBUILDING U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

At the end of the Cold War, the United States cut back its public diplomacy efforts only to face an information explosion 20 years

later where ideas are competing for attention and credibility "in a time when rumors can spark riots, and information -- whether it's true or false -- quickly spreads across the world, across the Internet" in minutes, she pointed out.

Now involved in a rebuilding program that is "a very long-term challenge," Hughes said that the United States must muster the same "commitment that enabled us to prevail in a previous generation when communists denied freedom to millions" to counter current threats, especially to de-legitimize terrorism.

"I'd like to say we need to do for terror what was done to slavery," she continued. "Slavery went from being an international accepted norm to becoming an international pariah."

"The anti-slavery movement actually sprang from religious convictions about the worth and value of every person, convictions very similar to America's belief in the dignity of every human being," Hughes said.

The transcript (<http://www.state.gov/r/us/66098.htm>) of the under secretary's remarks are 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>)* ♦

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## U.S. Poet Laureate Stanley Kunitz Dies at 100

By Michael Bandler  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- "The poem in the head is always perfect," U.S. poet laureate Stanley Kunitz once observed. "Resistance starts when you try to convert it into language."

Kunitz, one of the most respected artists in his field throughout the past century and into the 21st, died May 15 at the age of 100.

In the summer of 2000, when he was 95, Kunitz chose to look to the present and future by accepting an appointment as poet laureate of the Library of Congress -- making him, effectively, the U.S. poet laureate.

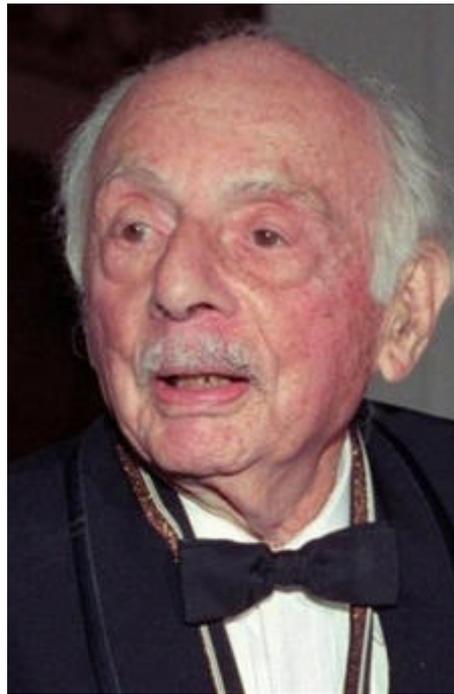
"I don't expect to be very kinetic, nor do I expect to traipse around the country," he told a New York Times interviewer on the occasion of his appointment. "I feel the best service I can do is to continue to function as a poet."

And so he did, in the manner that had been his life's lodestar. As a fellow poet, Jay Parini, described Kunitz's approach as "total devotion to the craft itself, not the slightest degree of affectation, a complete humility in his work."

In a lifetime of fashioning imagery that limned nature and time and beauty, as well as places, people, relationships and issues, Kunitz won most of the major poetry awards that exist, including the Pulitzer Prize. His scope was impressive - and included musings on World War II, the moon landing in 1969, and a sighting of Halley's comet - yet his point of view, particularly with regard to himself and

his art, was much more narrowly focused and humble.

"The poem comes in the form of a blessing," he said simply of his



Poet Laureate Stanley Kunitz  
(AP Photo/Anders Krusberg)

work. "Through the years I have found this gift of poetry to be life-sustaining, life-enhancing and absolutely unpredictable. Does one live, therefore, for the sake of poetry? No, the reverse is true: poetry is for the sake of life."

Besides his gift for writing, Kunitz was a masterful educator. In that role, for several generations of Columbia University students, he was, in the words of poet David Lehman - editor of the just-published Oxford Book of American Poetry -- "an inspiring presence and profound influence." At no time, perhaps, was that influence felt more than in the 1970s, when he judged the prestigious

Yale Younger Poets competition, selecting such newcomers as Robert Hass and Carolyn Forché - each of whom has gone on to great acclaim in the craft.

Kunitz's first collection, *Intellectual Things*, was published in 1930, but it was not until 1944 that the next volume, *Passport to War*, appeared. Thereafter, volumes of his poetry became more frequent, with other works - including translations of such poets as Anna Akhmatova and Andrei Voznesensky - dappling the oeuvre.

In 2005, in collaboration with poet and gardener Genine Lentine, Kunitz wrote *The Wild Braid: A Poet Reflects on a Century in the Garden*, in which he acknowledged one of his lifelong passions, as practiced in the garden of his Massachusetts home in Provincetown.

His beginnings as a poet were modest in the extreme. Throughout his years, he enjoyed recalling the heavy unabridged dictionary that was part of his family's library when he was a child. He would open it, find a virtually unpronounceable word that drew him in, then would run to the fields adjoining his family's home, and shout the words into the air. Eventually, he once said, "I began incorporating them into verses, into poems. But certainly my thought in the beginning was that there was so much joy playing with language that I couldn't consider living without it."

How do poems come into being, and how do they take flight, an interviewer on public radio asked

*(Continued on page 15)*

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## U.N. Human Rights Council Members Elected

By Judy Aita  
Washington File United Nations  
Correspondent

United Nations -- The General Assembly has elected 47 nations to serve on the new Human Rights Council that will replace the discredited U.N. Commission on Human Rights in June.

Members include states whose poor human rights records have been criticized and examined for decades as well as others with excellent records as human rights leaders. The United States did not seek a seat on the council.

U.S. Ambassador John Bolton said he was not surprised that "a number of countries that themselves are gross abusers of human rights got elected."

"The real performance of the Human Rights Council over a two- or three-year period is going to be what is critical," Bolton said.

Council membership is apportioned to five regional groups: 13 seats for African states, 13 for Asian states, eight for Latin American and Caribbean states, seven for Western European states and others, and six seats for Eastern European states.

The first meeting of the Human Rights Council will be held on June 19 in Geneva. The council will meet regularly, scheduling no fewer than three 10-week sessions a year and will be able to hold special sessions if needed.

Elected for one year are Algeria, Morocco, South Africa, Tunisia, Bahrain, Indonesia, Philippines, India, Poland, Czech Republic, Argentina, Ecuador, Finland and the

Netherlands.

Nations serving for two years are Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Zambia, Pakistan, Japan, Sri Lanka, Republic of Korea, Romania, Ukraine, Brazil, Guatemala, Peru, the United Kingdom and France.

Cameroon, Djibouti, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Bangladesh, China, Jordan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, Canada, Germany and Switzerland will serve for three years.

In the future, nations will be elected to three-year terms of office.

Candidates submitted pledges and commitments to promote and protect human rights. According to the regulations establishing the new council, its members will be the first to have their human rights records reviewed.

### THE U.S. POSITION

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Kristin Silverberg said the real test of the council will be whether it can take effective action in serious cases of human rights abuse, such as in Darfur, Burma and North Korea.

In 2006, the United States will "engage actively as observers," including lobbying for human rights resolutions, Silverberg said.

Assuming the council can work effectively, the United States plans to run for election next year, the assistant secretary said.

The United States, although it was a leading supporter of Secre-

tary-General Kofi Annan's 2005 proposal to abolish the Commission on Human Rights and replace it with a stronger organization, voted against the creation of the council in March.

The design of the new council, U.S. officials said, did not have standards for membership that were high enough to keep human rights abusers off the council.

### HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS

The reactions of human rights groups were mixed after the General Assembly vote.

Ann Bayefsky of the Hudson Institute project Eye on the UN said that 20 countries ranked "partly free" or "not free" by Freedom House are now on the council.

"Obviously a number of governments did get elected that we would prefer not to be there -- China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Cuba," according to Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch.

"The important step is that we've made real progress. Spoiler governments who have a history of trying to undermine the protection of human rights through their membership are now a significantly reduced minority when it comes to the council," Roth said.

The fact that Venezuela and Iran did not win seats on the council and that Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Syria and Vietnam did not even try was "good news," Roth added. "That doesn't guarantee it will be a success, but it is a step in the right direction." ♦

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## Rice Says U.S. Committed to Women's Global Success

By Carolee Walker  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington — Recalling the moment recently when she met young players of a girls' soccer team in Afghanistan, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told a Washington audience on May 10 that she could not help noticing the striking contrast to the scene four years ago when the Taliban turned soccer stadiums given to them by the international community into killing fields and condemned women to death for learning to read.

"When they want to suppress people, they always go after the right to read," Rice said. Women in Afghanistan are now being taught to read openly, Rice said, a sign that Afghanistan is progressing.

In her remarks accepting the third annual Barbara K. Olson Woman of Valor Award, given by the Independent Women's Forum, Rice applauded efforts on behalf of women's rights and opportunities in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait and Morocco, which recently passed a landmark family law reform that grants women basic legal rights to divorce and inherit property.

"When I see these kinds of events, I believe we are witnessing something very extraordinary indeed: the unfolding of moral progress," Rice said. Moral progress requires the work of people who are committed to helping men and women to secure the basic human rights that define human nature, she said.

Moral progress also requires optimism and a sense of historical perspective, Rice said.

"When we read the reports of the trafficking in women or of the camps in Darfur, that it must seem that this world is making no progress at all," Rice said. "But when I



**Secretary of Condoleezza Rice (C) accepts the third annual Woman of Valor Award from Independent Women's Forum (IWF) President and CEO Michelle Bernard (L) and former U.S. Solicitor General Theodore Olson during a ceremony in Washington, May 10, 2006. REUTERS/Jim Young**

have those moments, I think back on other historical times when it must have seemed quite impossible to imagine human progress."

Rice said the United States is doing more than any other nation to help women in Sudan's Darfur region.

"We provide nearly all the food that now sustains the people of Darfur and we are offering care and counseling to many women who have survived violence and rape," Rice said.

"Whether it is assistance to women in Darfur or the fight against human trafficking, the United States champions respect

for women because it is morally right," Rice said, adding it took the United States "130 years before we interpreted the phrase 'All men are created equal' flexibly enough to let ladies vote."

Americans are an imperfect people, Rice said, but the United States is guided by "ideals that summon us to become even nobler and indeed to pursue our perfect union."

"Those same ideals lead America into the world to combat the dehumanization of women in all its forums, especially the international evil of human trafficking, a modern form of slavery for millions of women," she said.

The Barbara K. Olson Woman of Valor Award is given

to honor the memory of Olson, a founder of the Independent Women's Forum, a passenger on American Airlines Flight 77, which was flown into the Pentagon after it was hijacked by al-Qaida terrorists on September 11, 2001. All passengers and flight crew aboard Flight 77 were killed. Previous recipients of the award have been Lynne V. Cheney, wife of Vice President Cheney, and U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao.

The transcript (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/66139.htm>) of the secretary's remarks is available on the State Department Web site. ♦

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## U.S. Renews Commitment to Sustainable Development Initiative

Washington -- The United States has renewed its commitment to the Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development (SEED) Initiative, the Department of State announced May 10.

The four-year-old program promotes innovative solutions to development challenges through local partnerships.

"SEED is making a real difference in our collective efforts to achieve development goals at the local level," said Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky in a media note.

Dobriansky made the announcement as she attended a meeting on the Commission on Sustainable



Paula Dobriansky

Development at the United Nations in New York. The meeting runs through May 12.

SEED presents awards to local-level applicants who advance innovative and promising approaches to solving problems of environment and development. Some of the projects highlighted on the organization's Web site include efforts to improve water service in poor communities and to promote sustainable, nonpolluting agriculture.

The U.N. Environment Program, the U.N. Development Program,

the World Conservation Union and the governments of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom are other partners in the SEED initiative.

The text of the media note (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/66125.htm>) is available on the State Department Web site. More information on SEED (<http://www.seedinit.org/>) is available on the U.N. Web site.

For additional information on U.S. policies, see Global Development and Foreign Aid ([http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic\\_issues/global\\_development.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/global_development.html)).

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

## U.S. Poet Laureate Stanley Kunitz Dies at 100 . . .

*(Continued from page 12)*

him as he was assuming the poet laureate post.

"I think a poem lies submerged in the depths of one's being," he reflected. "It's an amalgamation of images, often the key images out of a life. I think there are certain episodes in the life that really form a constellation, and that's the germinal point of the poems. The poems, when they come with an incident from the immediate present, latch on to those images that are deep in one's whole sensibility, and when that happens, everything starts firing at once."

Over the years, Kunitz continued to write - yet not incessantly, but only when the muse moved him, and only after long periods of what he described in *The New York Times* as "reading or simply brooding."

As he grew older, he never lost sight of the road ahead, and saw "the milestones dwindling toward the horizon," as he wrote late in life in a poem called "The Layers."

At the same time, he never forgot the distant past - the experiences and the poems themselves. His "collected poems," published in 2000, included one from 1914.

Why?

"I haven't dared to forget. I think it's important for one's survival to keep the richness of the life always there to be tapped. One doesn't live in the moment, one lives in the whole history of your being."

And so he did.

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

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## Rule of Law An Essential Component to Democracy

By Stephen Kaufman  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The French philosopher Montesquieu wrote that the law of the land "should be like death, which spares no one." The idea that the highest officials are subject to the same legal restrictions and requirements that must be followed by the most vulnerable in society is known broadly as "the rule of law."

The concept is considered indispensable for a democracy. Living under the rule of law, as opposed to the rule of an individual or a group, prevents the government from exercising any authority outside the country's written laws, which were enacted under established legal procedures. This protects the people from arbitrary rulings and decisions, and it demonstrates the strength of the country's legal system over the whim of powerful individuals.

It is important that the people have a voice, through fairly elected representatives, in establishing and amending the laws in their society so that they will be submitting to their own regulations, rather than rules that were imposed on them. Likewise, an independent and empowered judiciary must exist to be able to hold leaders accountable for any transgressions of the law.

As human history continues to advance beyond the days of absolute monarchy, where rulers claim and exercise supreme power through either force of arms, wealth or from a claim of divine right, people all over the world are holding their leaders more accountable for their actions, and demanding that they be subject to the same law as the

average citizen.

History has shown that corruption and preferential treatment of those tied to power often accompanied the lack of rule of law in a country. It also provided many demonstrations of the people's ability to unite against autocratic leaders in order to restore or establish a fairer and more just government that serves the interests of the country as a whole, instead of the powerful elite.

For example, in 2003, the people of Georgia took peaceful action against the corruption and cronyism of Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze, who had governed since 1992. His government gave preferential treatment to well-connected officials, including members of Shevardnadze's family, and their disproportionate share of the country's economy hampered Georgia's economic growth.

In a movement known as the "Rose Revolution," sparked by anger at Georgia's rigged November 2003 parliamentary elections, the popular opposition led by Mikhail Saakashvili stormed the parliament carrying roses, forced Shevardnadze's resignation and secured new parliamentary elections that were won by the opposition with a large majority.

Most recently in Nepal, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated and observed a 19-day general strike in a massive effort against King Gyanendra's direct rule over the country. On April 24, the king consented to end his self-decreed grip on power and restored parliament on April 28.

Commenting on the events in Nepal, the U.S. government welcomed the protest movement and repeatedly called on the king to restore the rule of law in the country and respect the country's constitution.

In Washington April 24, State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said that through largely non-violent means, "The people have acted to assert their sovereignty," in response to King Gyanendra who "has subverted the democratic process." (See related article [<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=April&x=20060424171336ndyblehs7.691592e-02&t=sa/sa-latest.html>].)

"It has been a failure. And it's important that the democratic process and democracy and the rule of law be restored, and that you move from autocratic one-man rule to rule by elected representatives of the people," Ereli said.

This principle, he added, "applies to Nepal as much as it applies anywhere, and it is a principle that we stand firmly behind when it is challenged."

For more information on the concept of the rule of law, please visit the pertinent section in the Principles of Democracy [<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/principles/law.htm>] publication.

See also, "Hot Debate, Hard Compromises Marked U.S. Constitutional Process" [<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2005/Aug/30-354107.html>]. ♦

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## Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi Sees Democratic Future in Iran

By Karl Fritz  
Washington File Special Correspondent

Washington -- Iranian Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi offers a cautious voice of hope for the prospects of a better and more democratic future in Iran. The human rights lawyer told a Washington audience, "I am an optimist on democracy in Iran because I am optimistic regarding the people of Iran and confident that they will push for change."

Ebadi has been an outspoken advocate for human rights in Iran, particularly on behalf of women and children. Formerly a judge, she and other women judges were removed from the bench when, following the 1979 revolution, government officials deemed women to be too emotional to administer justice fairly.

Choosing to remain in Iran, Ebadi has worked as a defense attorney and advocate on behalf of those whose fundamental human rights have been threatened or suppressed by the Iranian government. She has represented victims of government terrorism in a number of cases that have received international attention. She represented the family of Zahra Kazemi, an Iranian-Canadian photojournalist, who died in prison in Iran after photographing family members of missing students protesting outside a prison. She has represented Akbar Ganji, a leading investigative journalist, who, until recently, was imprisoned for a series of articles unfavorable to former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

She was awarded the Nobel

Peace Prize in 2003 in recognition of her work on behalf of democracy and human rights, and her special focus on the problems facing women and children in Iran.

### IRAN AWAKENING

Ebadi is conducting a 10-city tour in the United States to promote publication of her memoir *Iran Awakening - A Memoir of Revolution and Hope*, co-authored with Azadeh Moaveni.

In her memoir, Ebadi asserts, "the written word is the most powerful tool we have to protect ourselves, from the tyrants of the day." Her work is being translated for publication in 16 languages but not Farsi.

"The censorship that prevails in the Islamic Republic has made it impossible to publish an honest account of my life here," Ebadi notes. Her work provides the perspective of a jurist who has fought to avoid being marginalized by a regime intent on silencing her and other professional women. In opting to remain in Iran and pursue her career, she has been harassed, threatened and jailed for her defense of victims of violence and human rights abuse.

She told an interviewer on U.S. National Public Radio that she wants the victimization of women and children in Iran to be understood in simple terms.

"We have an expression in Persian that the strength of the chain is in the smallest link. We should always take care of the smallest links in society and must always look after children's and women's

rights," she said.

### A LAND OF CONTRADICTIONS

According to Ebadi, Iran is a land of contradictions. On the one hand, the 2000 parliamentary election brought into government a number of reform-minded individuals, including 14 women. One of



**Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi**

Iran's vice president is a woman; 63 percent of Iran's university students and 43 percent of salaried workers are women.

On the other hand, she noted that the unemployment rate for women is three times the rate for men, and the Iranian parliament has enacted a number of laws and adopted practices that undermine democracy and discriminate against women. The Iranian Guardian Council sits in judgment of the appropriateness of candi-

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## Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi Sees Democratic Future in Iran . . .

*(Continued from page 17)*

dates seeking election, despite the fact that the constitution provides for the conduct of free elections, she said. She noted that a separate law entitles women seeking to recover damages for an injury to only one-half the compensation that a man could obtain under the same circumstances. She said that the government censors books, puts up Internet firewalls, and bans satellite television in an effort to prevent Iranians from accessing information from the outside world. Ebadi said that human rights have deteriorated since former President Mohammad Khatami left office in 2005.

Ebadi learned of her award of the Nobel Peace Prize while traveling in France. Upon her return to Iran, she was met in the middle of the night at the Teheran airport by hundreds of thousands of supporters, many of whom arrived on foot at the airport when the crush of traffic made it impossible to travel by private car or bus. Most of the crowd was female -- women offering support and appreciation for Ebadi's work on their behalf in obtaining more equitable treatment under the law.

She resolved then to use her enhanced visibility to provide to readers her perspective on Iran and said she places her hope in people, not governments.

"We need the help of the people of the United States and of the rest of the world. We count on public opinion in the rest of the world and we know that public opinion is in support of human rights and democracies. My hope is in the people, not in foreign gov-

ernments," Ebadi wrote in her memoir.

"[D]espite their government's official stance, Iranian young people remain cheerfully pro-American, the last pocket of such sentiment in an angry Middle East," she added. Despite the obstacles, she encourages U.S. nongovernmental organizations supportive of civil society to seek out like-minded elements in Iran.

### **CALL FOR "ENHANCED DEMOCRACY" TO INSPIRE TRUST**

Asked about Iranian nuclear capabilities and the risk that Iran will continue to pursue nuclear weapons, she observed that the government of Iran claims to have peaceful purposes for its nuclear energy, but that the world is not accepting that. She said that the solution to this impasse must come from what she calls an "enhanced democracy" in Iran that could begin to inspire trust abroad. Ebadi noted that the world has no fear of France with its atomic bomb because the French people exercise control over their democracy.

"Iran, for its part, must peacefully transition to a democratic government that represents the will of the majority of Iranians. Between our still-too-recent revolution and the [war with Iraq] that followed, Iranians are tired of bloodletting and violence. Many are ready to go to prison or risk their lives for their dissent, but I don't see Iran today as a country where people are ready to pick up weapons against their government," she wrote. "In the end, the Iranian revolution has produced its own opposition, not least a na-

tion of educated, conscious women who are agitating for their rights. They must be given the chance to fight their own fights, to transform their country uninterrupted."

Regarding the reference to "revolution and hope" in the subtitle of her memoir, Ebadi says that "change comes to the Islamic Republic in slow and subtle ways that are easy to miss." She told an interviewer that while non-democratic countries tend to abuse the teaching of Islam, the culture of democracy exists in Islam.

"The problem is people's expectations are greater than what Islamic governments are delivering and if the majority wishes for change, it will work toward that end. We need an interpretation of Islam which fits the 21st century," she said.

In deciding to stay in Iran, she likens her situation to one whose mother becomes sick.

"Would you leave your mother sick on the street corner or try and get her treatment?" she responded.

Pressed on how one can justify supporting a mother who abuses her other children, Ebadi said, "A mother abusing others is facing problems and we need to treat that problem. Iran needs treatment at this 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>) ♦*

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## U.S. Announces Fifth Africa Trade Forum for Washington . . .

*(Continued from page 4)*

cluded "the Millennium Challenge Account [MCA], increases of foreign assistance at historic levels -- over \$4 billion -- [and] also what we're going to do at this AGOA Forum to reach the private sector. And finally on the multilateral front, transforming the WTO [World Trade Organization] and Doha [process] trying to end all agricultural subsidies" and further work on debt cancellation initiatives.

For more information, see African Growth and Opportunity Act ([http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade\\_economic\\_development/agoa.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade_economic_development/agoa.html)) and Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>).

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## Liberian Journalist Leaving U.S. To Shape Policy . . .

"Liberia: The Heart of Darkness," a book eight years in the making.

revered him as a very intelligent person."

"Gabriel has always been very concerned with what was going on in Liberia," said Velma Sykes, the chamber's executive director. "Even though he was living in Sacramento, he remained committed to ensuring that the political process in Liberia changed. Everyone who knew him

(end byliner)

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

## HIV/AIDS Vaccine Awareness Day Recognized May 18

Washington – HIV/AIDS activists, volunteers and researchers will be among those recognizing HIV/AIDS Vaccine Awareness Day May 18, an occasion that draws attention to the need for a vaccine to prevent this disease, according to the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), one of the National Institutes of Health.

Significant progress has been made in understanding the virus and its attack on the immune system in the 25 years since the disease first was reported, according to a NIAID press release. At least 58 vaccine candidates have been tested in 96 HIV vaccine clinical trials involving 23,000

volunteers without a breakthrough, but the search goes on for a serum that will provide immunity to the virus.

HIV/AIDS treatments also have been developed that prolong life and allow persons with AIDS to live productively with the disease, but still the disease has taken the lives of 25 million people since its 1981 identification.

The NIAID statement says international collaborative research projects continue the pursuit of a vaccine. The Global HIV/AIDS Vaccine Enterprise is working to accelerate the development of a new HIV vaccine, and the Center for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Immunology is working on problems in vaccine design and development. Community organizations have joined the scientists in the effort to develop

and test HIV vaccines.

The May 15 press release says that about 20 community groups across the United States are educating their communities about this work, trying to recruit more volunteers and expand support for the research.

The NIAID statement thanks all the volunteers, scientists and health professionals engaged in this campaign on HIV/AIDS Vaccine Awareness Day. It also promotes a theme of "Be the Generation" to find an HIV vaccine in the ninth annual recognition of the event.

"With over 40 million people living with HIV worldwide," says the campaign Web site, "and over 20 million lives already lost, the need for an HIV vaccine is more urgent than ever." ♦

