



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Situation in Somalia Very Dynamic, Frazer Warns



U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer
(State Dept. Photo by Janine Sides)

By Charles W. Corey
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Writer

Washington – Citing a "very dynamic" situation in Somali, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer says there is a critically important need for dialogue and the international community has "been engaged" to address the issue.

Briefing reporters June 16 at the State Department, Frazer said, "We have to reserve judgment about ... the ultimate intent of the Islamic Courts Union [ICU]," which re-

cently claimed to have taken control of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, following weeks of fighting.

Continuing, Frazer noted that at a June 15 inaugural meeting in New York of the Somalia Contact Group, the United States stressed, "It's critically important for the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI) [Somalia's nominal government] and the chairman of the ICU to begin a dialogue to ... decide for themselves what role the ICU would play."

Frazer described the TFI the only form of govern-

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Football Exchange Fosters Friendships for International Youths



Football Exchange Fosters Friendships for International Youths

By Scott Miller
Washington File Staff
Writer

Washington -- There are many different ways to play football, but young players from around the

world also are learning that they share more than a common appreciation for the game as part of a World Cup Sports Initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the U.S. Soccer Foundation, the U.S.

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Situation in Somalia Very Dynamic. . .

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ment that can be found in Somalia, which she called a "failed state."

Initial indications, she said, were that the ICU was not interested in taking over the government or even being in government. But she called the situation there "dynamic, [and] fluid."

Somalia has lacked an effective central government since early 1991, when largely clan-based tribal leaders overthrew President Mohamed Siad Barre, a Marxist dictator who seized control in a 1969 military coup. An interim government formed with United Nations support has not been able to enter Mogadishu, and instead has been stuck in Baidoa, about 240 kilometers away.

SOMALIA CONTACT GROUP

The United States joined with other interested states and international organizations in convening the Somalia Contact Group "to coordinate our common efforts and support positive developments in Somalia," according to a June 15 communiqué released by the group.

The communiqué from the group -- which met in New York -- said the situation in Somalia represents a "range of challenges" related to the humanitarian and socio-economic conditions, governance, human rights, security and terrorism factors there.

The goal of the Somalia Contact Group is "to encourage positive political developments and engagement with actors inside Somalia," according to its communiqué. The Contact Group said it "will

seek to address the humanitarian issues of the Somali people, establish effective governance and stability and address the international community's concern regarding terrorism. There is an urgent need for increased humanitarian assistance and improved protection of the civilian population."

The document also called on "all parties to give unrestricted access for relief agencies to vulnerable communities."

Members of the Contact Group include the European Union, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and the United States. Other interested parties such as the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the League of Arab States will be invited to participate as observers, according to the communiqué.

Briefing reporters June 14, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the United States is ready to work with all parties to promote peace and the re-establishment of effective governance in Somalia.

"We are committed to working with our local and international partners to assist in addressing our common concerns regarding terrorism, alleviating the growing humanitarian emergency in Somalia and helping the people of Somalia regain political and economic stability," McCormack said.

TERRORISM CONCERNS

Additionally, the State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, Henry Crumpton, and Vice

Admiral John Scott Redd, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, briefed lawmakers June 13 on the latest developments in Somalia.

At a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Redd cautioned the committee not to make premature conclusions with regard to developments in Somalia. "I would not jump to the conclusion ... that al-Qaida now owns Somalia, by any stretch of the imagination," he told the lawmakers. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Jun/15-149959.html>).)

Redd was referring to recent developments in which local tribal leaders were driven out of Mogadishu by Islamists believed to be harboring al-Qaida operatives.

"Somalia is clearly one of the key areas ... which we worry about and is an ungoverned state," he added. "The bottom-line objective," he said, "is to deny that [Somalia] as an effective safe haven for al-Qaida or for terrorism in general."

Crumpton told the lawmakers that in addition to working to deny al-Qaida a safe haven in Somalia, the United States also is seeking to "work with a very weak, nascent, transitional government to see if they can gain traction." The United States also is seeking to provide humanitarian relief and assistance to the Somali people, he said. In 2006, the United States has provided more than \$80 million in humanitarian assistance to Somalia, primarily in the form of food and health-related assistance.

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U.S. Lawmaker Hails Uganda as Emerging "Superstar"

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Uganda is "emerging as one of the superstars of Africa," in part because of its success in fighting HIV/AIDS, House Africa Subcommittee Chairman Chris Smith (Republican of New Jersey) said at a June 14 reception honoring Ugandan Ambassador Perezi Kamunanwire.

Smith was joined by fellow lawmaker Edolphus Towns (Democrat of New York). The lawmakers are co-chairmen of the Congressional Caucus on Uganda, formed in November 2004.

Congressional staff members, including Smith's Africa specialist, Greg Simpkins, also attended the evening event, as well as Rwandan Ambassador Zac Nsenga and former U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone Joseph Melrose.

Smith welcomed Ambassador Kamunanwire, most recently Uganda's envoy to Germany, who presented his credentials to President Bush on May 15, noting that he represents a country that has made significant inroads in AIDS prevention.

"Uganda is truly emerging as one of Africa's real superstars, and that is well known to people here on Capitol Hill -- on both sides of the [political] aisle," Smith said.

In particular, the nation is setting an example for AIDS prevention, the lawmaker said, because of President Yoweri Museveni and his government's strategy of "working with local faith-based organizations and others ... especially to reach young people with the message of

[sex] deferral and of life for themselves and their loved ones."

Smith, a champion of human rights and health issues in Africa who has visited the continent numerous times, including a recent trip to Uganda, said, "Frankly, I was blown over by the enthusiasm I saw for family values [there] ... so it was a very remarkable trip."

Uganda is one of 12 African nations targeted in the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), initiated by President Bush in 2003. The program is a five-year, \$15 billion effort aimed at battling the killer disease in 120 nations worldwide using the ABC strategy, which stands for "Abstain, Be faithful and Correct and Consistent use of condoms."

On the treatment front, as of March 31, life-saving antiretroviral medicines have gone to 561,000 people worldwide under the PEPFAR program -- 61 percent of them women. During that period, 75,000 people received anti-AIDS drugs in Uganda. Antiretroviral prophylaxis was also provided to women for 342,200 pregnancies, preventing an estimated 65,100 infant HIV infections, according to a PEPFAR fact sheet. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/05-267957.html>) and fact sheet (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/67502.pdf>).)

On the security front, Smith added, "We're also very encouraged and hopeful about what's happening in northern Uganda with the Lord's Resistance Army [LRA]," the rebel movement that has kidnapped children from vil-

lages, forcing them to serve as child soldiers.

"I know the government of Uganda is doing everything it can to try and mitigate and hopefully end that despicable activity by [LRA leader] Joseph Kony in abducting young children," Smith told the gathering.

Turning to Kamunanwire, the lawmaker pledged: "We will work with you. Our committee is a work-horse committee. We write a lot of laws" in areas such as human trafficking, and "we want to work with you on trade, environmental protection, humanitarian and human rights issues."

Kamunanwire, who described himself as "the new boy on the block," thanked the caucus for the welcome and pledged to work closely with Congress, as his predecessor Ambassador Edith Ssempera had done, on issues of interest to both Africa and the United States.

For additional information, see AIDS in Africa (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids/aids_in_africa.html).

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Empowered Senegalese Villagers Manage Their Forests

Illegal tree cutting, charcoal production, land clearing and fires were rampant in Mampatim, a collective of 100 villages in southern Senegal.

Mampatim's fertile soil and abundant forests have always been valuable resources. But over the past 10 years, the demands of a growing population brought about disorganized and sometimes abusive harvesting. Wild fruits, game, crops and wood for furniture and charcoal were under threat, and although Senegal's government increased the authority of Mampatim's elected rural council in 1996 to oversee natural resources, residents believed state forest agents were responsible for managing the country's forests. But with only one agent covering the entire collective, the state forest service alone could not protect the area.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has stepped in to help residents create a new approach to natural resource management, based on heightened communication and collaboration between the forest service and the community.

With support from USAID, Mampatim residents worked with technical specialists to learn about their role in managing their natural resources. Residents visited a neighboring collective and learned how its rural council had established a forest monitoring system. USAID helped Mampatim and the forest service develop a written code of conduct for volunteer monitors and train them to conduct patrols and deal with infringements. The U.S. agency also provided bicycles, uniforms and motorcycles for monitors and supervi-

sors and supplied fire-fighting equipment and training to village committees.

In 2004 the committees put out three brush fires, conducted preventive burning on 250 hectares of forest and pasture land and reported nine cases of illegal activities. The rural council and the forest service now coordinate forest maintenance efforts and everyone realizes they are working toward the same goal: to ensure that Mampatim's precious natural resources are managed wisely.

For the first time in years, Mampatim residents have an abundance of wild fruits, syrup from trees and forage for their livestock -- a change they credit largely to Mampatim's village surveillance committees.

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Laura Bush Previews Venetian Painting Exhibit in Washington (Exhibit of Bellini, Giorgione, Titian runs June 18 -- September 17) (450)

Washington -- First lady Laura Bush on June 14 previewed an exhibition of Renaissance Venetian paintings at the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

She was accompanied by Leila Castellaneta, wife of Italian Ambassador to the United States Giovanni Castellaneta.

The first lady expressed delight at "these magnificent works," which

are drawn from the first three decades of the 16th century, the Venetian Golden Age. She encouraged people to visit the exhibition - - titled "Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting" -- which opens June 18 and continues until September 17.

The National Gallery of Art in Washington and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria, jointly organized the exhibition, which includes such renowned works as Bellini and Titian's Feast of the Gods (1514 and 1529), Giorgione's Adoration of the Shepherds (c. 1500), Laura (1506) and Three Philosophers (c. 1506).

The Louvre in Paris is lending Titian's Pastoral Concert" to the United States for the first time for this exhibit, which comprises approximately 60 paintings.

Other major European museums providing works for the exhibit include London's National Gallery, Madrid's Prado and the Uffizi in Florence, Italy.

Bracco, an Italian company that makes diagnostic imaging systems, has provided major funding for the exhibit.

A room in the exhibition is devoted to technical studies of works on view including X-radiographs and infrared images, according to a Bracco press release.

"Paintings from 16th-century Venice were among the first to be studied with X-rays, which revealed pentimenti [images that were painted over]. More recently, infrared reflectography has ex-

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Football Exchange Fosters Friendships. . .

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Soccer Federation and Major League Soccer (MLS). Football is called soccer in the United States.

"We have one language and that is soccer and that is very important," according to Gustavo Gutierrez, a 16-year-old striker from Santa Cruz, Bolivia. "But I think young players from other countries that they are not different, just the language [is] so it is very cool that everybody is the same and friendly."

Gutierrez and Jose Basco of La Paz, Bolivia, are among the 30 young football players from around the world participating in the exchange program. They are joining other players ages 13-18 from countries including Afghanistan, China, South Africa, Nigeria, Pakistan and Indonesia who are visiting Washington and New York City from June 10 to June 20, before heading to Germany to watch the June 22 World Cup match between the United States and Ghana.

As part of the program, the young players have already had the opportunity to meet President Bush and Secretary of States Condoleezza Rice as well as hone their football skills by attending the practice of MLS team D.C. United. The participants, both boys and girls, also scrimmaged with American youths and the U.S. collegiate football champions from the University of Maryland.

(See related article: (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=June&x=20060615170137btruevecer0.2559626&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).)

The program endeavors to build international understanding and respect between young people around the world as well as reflects the 2006 World Cup theme of "a time to make friends."

In a June 16 interview with the Washington File, Basco said that even though meeting Jamie Moreno, a Bolivian D.C. United player, was among the highlights of his trip so far, the opportunity to forge new friendships has been the most rewarding element.

"Making friends is the thing that I like the most," he said. "I am sharing things and I am also learning things and I think that is the most important part of this program because I am learning things that I may use in my life."

Gutierrez echoed his new friend and fellow Bolivian. "Knowing different cultures is very important," he said.

The young players have embraced the opportunity to explore new cultures, but they also are looking forward to attending the World Cup.

"Being at the World Cup is very exciting, it is a dream for everybody, not just me," Gutierrez said.

"I would like to experience how people show their passion for soccer," Jose added, "It seems people are living a party."

In an interview with the Washington File, Under Secretary of State Karen Hughes, who hosted a pizza and ice cream party for the program participants at her home, explained the importance of the World Cup exchange program and

expressed her pride in leading the youth delegation to the match in Germany.

"Sports is a common language that fosters dialogue across borders," she said. "These young people are the future leaders of our world and it is a privilege to be a part of introducing them to America and to each other."

For more information, see World Cup 2006 (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/sports/world_cup.html) and the U.S. Embassy in Berlin's World Cup Web site (<http://worldcup2006.usembassy.de/>).

For more information on athletics in the United States, see Sports (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/sports.html).

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On World Refugee Day, United States Leads World in Darfur Aid

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The United States leads all international donors in supporting organizations working to ease the suffering of Sudanese refugees, according to Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration Ellen Sauerbrey in a World Refugee Day speech June 20.

More than 200,000 refugees have fled persecution and violence in the embattled Darfur region of Sudan to refugee camps in eastern Chad where U.N. organizations and nongovernmental entities are providing assistance.

In a Washington speech, Sauerbrey said the United States has contributed \$115 million to the international aid effort.

In her prepared remarks, Sauerbrey said the U.S. refugee assistance program represents a defense of human dignity, and is part of the nation's humanitarian imperative.

That imperative also has serious national security implications in today's world when repressive regimes and failed states create refugees, she said.

"As we assist victims of persecution and conflict, we transform societies and uphold the first pillar of President Bush's National Security Strategy: promoting freedom, justice and human dignity," she said.

Humanitarian work has become more difficult and dangerous in an era of heightened global security, however, and the United States is challenged to balance its two goals of deterring terrorist activity and

supporting humanitarian work, Sauerbrey said.

Post-September 11 changes in U.S. immigration laws have had the unintended effect of barring some victims of conflict and oppression from resettlement in the United States because they had a history of involvement in resistance activities, or were coerced to provide "material support" – as the law reads – to their persecutors.

Because of that legal stumbling block, the United States will not meet its target of admitting 54,000 refugees for resettlement in 2006, Sauerbrey said, even while officials attempt to resolve the issue justly.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently waived the security restrictions, allowing U.S. resettlement for several thousand members of the Karen, a Burmese ethnic minority living in a camp in Thailand. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/May/11-761548.html>).)

Some refugees who will be admitted for resettlement in the United States this year represent a long-awaited solution to decades of statelessness. A State Department official announced June 19 that several thousand Meskhetian Turks will be sponsored for resettlement, more than a half a century after their ancestors were deported from their South Georgia homeland by Josef Stalin. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/19-465440.html>).)

About 2.6 million refugees have gained permission to resettle in the

United States in the last 30 years, according to State Department statistics. The United States is the leading international donor to refugee assistance, and sponsors more refugees for resettlement than any other nation.

The full text (<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/2006/68116.htm>) of Sauerbrey's prepared remarks is available on the State Department Web site.

For ongoing coverage of refugee issues, see Humanitarian Assistance and Refugees (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/refugees.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>)◆

U.S. Doors Open for More Refugees on World Refugee Day

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Refugees caught up in years, sometimes decades, of strife soon will be resettled in the United States, according to an announcement June 19 from the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

Officials made the announcement at a Washington press briefing in recognition of World Refugee Day, June 20.

Eight thousand Meskhetian Turks recently resettled in the United States, and 4,000 more are coming soon, said Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kelly Ryan.

"This is a group of people that basically has had no home since the end of the Second World War," said Ryan. "So it's a very protracted situation, and we're very glad to welcome them to the United States."

Meskhetian Turks, a largely Muslim ethnic group, were deported by Josef Stalin from their native Georgia in 1944 to Uzbekistan. They encountered multiple displacements in the ensuing decades, and their status became further complicated by the break up of the Soviet Union. Many have integrated into other states of the Russian Federation but in a few areas they are denied citizenship and considered stateless.

Some 13,000 refugees from East Africa also will be resettled in the United States this year, Ryan said, notably groups displaced from Ethiopia, Burundi and Congo.

The United States will accept about 54,000 refugees for resettlement in 2006, officials said, more than any other country. Over the last 30 years, the United States has resettled 2.6 million refugees.

"The United States is by far our most valuable partner, resettling more refugees each year than all the other 18-or-so refugee resettlement countries combined," said Wendy Young, of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the world's foremost agency providing protection and support for people driven from their homelands.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

UNHCR is at the forefront of World Refugee Day commemorations, in 2006 focused on the theme, "Hope."

"It is also important that we not just think about refugees as victims, but that we also value their human capacity," said Young. "We need to support the strength of refugee communities and help them to rebuild their lives, their homes and their societies."

Young said the number of refugees under UNHCR care is now at its lowest point in a quarter century, down to 8.4 million, a decline of more than 1 million from 2004 to 2005. The decrease can be attributed to homeland returns for refugees in a number of world regions. More than 6 million have returned to their countries of origin in the last four years, notably in Afghanistan, Liberia, Burundi, Iraq and Angola.

A contrasting trend prohibits celebration of those figures, however. Young said the agency is concerned by increasing numbers of people known as "internally displaced persons." They are not considered refugees under international law if they have not crossed an international border. But violence, regional and religious conflicts have driven millions of people from their villages and towns to camps or other uncertain circumstances.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

UNHCR and the United States are working together to encourage other nations to increase support for this cause and open their borders to greater numbers of refugees.

"In Latin America we've seen a number of countries come forward to open the doors to resettlement," said Young. Ryan added the United States also is willing to help provide technical training, to guide other nations in the development of programs and support systems to give refugees a new start in a new country.

The United States recently admitted six refugees from North Korea for resettlement, the first time it has done so. Reporters probed Ryan for a forecast on whether this initiative will increase, but received few specifics. Ryan said the State Department is unwilling to outline the policy toward a broader resettlement of North Korean refugees at this time.

She did say that U.S. law might allow the admission of "hundreds, if not thousands," but gaining

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U.S. Commitment to Protect, Assist Refugees and Victims of Conflict

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BUREAU OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

June 16, 2006

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

The United States Working to Advance Freedom and Human Dignity

“The commitment of the United States to protecting and assisting refugees is deep and abiding. This commitment is part of our nation’s history and it goes to the very core of our values.”

–Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

World Refugee Day is June 20, a day when the United States underscores its commitment to the millions of refugees around the globe. The State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), headed by Assistant Secretary Ellen R. Sauerbrey, leads U.S. efforts to protect and assist refugees and victims of conflict, and coordinates U.S. foreign policy on population and international migration issues. It also oversees the U.S. refugee admissions program.

Since World War II, more refugees have found permanent homes in the U.S. than in any other country. The U.S. is also the largest single donor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), making it a global leader in refugee protection and assistance.

PRM manages over \$800 million in annual appropriations for programs that help some of the most vulnerable with their basic needs and that provide lasting solutions for

millions of refugees. PRM’s partnerships with international and non-governmental organizations strengthen responsibility sharing on behalf of the American taxpayer and program performance on behalf of victims of persecution and conflict.

PRM’s work demonstrates the generosity and compassion of the American people. As we assist victims of persecution and conflict, we transform societies and uphold the first pillar of President Bush’s National Security Strategy: promoting freedom, justice, and human dignity.

Protecting and Assisting Vulnerable People

PRM supports life-sustaining and capacity-building assistance programs addressing needs related to food, health, shelter, water and sanitation, education and empowerment. This support ranges from helping the World Food Program prevent food supply interruptions in refugee camps in Kenya, to providing kitchen kits for newly displaced Colombians, to sponsoring education and skills courses for women in Afghanistan.

PRM protection activities aim to raise awareness and to improve protection for some of the most vulnerable members of society. Programs have included national and community education initiatives to prevent and respond to gender-based violence; a micro-enterprise project for trafficking victims in India; and a youth education and athletic program for Sudanese refugees from Darfur to minimize recruitment of child soldiers.

PRM-funded activities enable victims of persecution and conflict to pursue a lasting solution to their plight, whether it involves returning to their home, building a new life in their country of asylum, or resettling permanently in another country.

A Nation of Immigrants and Refugees Welcomes Refugees

When refugees cannot return home or integrate into the local population in their country of temporary refuge, resettlement in the United States and other countries allows them the opportunity to rebuild their lives. More than 2.6 million refugees have come to the United States since 1975. The President of the United States, after consulting with Congress, determines the number of refugees that can be admitted each year.

Refugees selected for U.S. resettlement undergo rigorous health and security screening, and participate in an orientation program to introduce them to American culture, values, and laws. Congress allocates funding for the network of overseas and domestic organizations that provide critical services for refugees, but it is the enthusiasm with which communities welcome these new arrivals that best reflects America’s belief in freedom, human rights, and equality.

PRM also advocates for the U.S. Government’s international population and migration policies, promoting those goals through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

Leadership in Population Diplomacy

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Rising Prices Seen Lowering World Oil Demand in Coming Decades

Washington -- A continued rise in prices is projected to dampen global demand for oil and spur use of more coal, natural gas and renewable energy over the next quarter century, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).

In a June 20 news release, the U.S. Energy Department agency said its annual International Energy Outlook report revises upward the 2030 average price of oil to \$57 a barrel from \$42 a barrel forecast in the 2005 report. EIA said the new figure reflects a "more pessimistic" view of the willingness of oil-rich countries to expand production capacity as aggressively as previously expected.

EIA projects that, as a result of higher prices, oil demand will decline and its share of total energy consumption will drop to 33 percent by 2030 from 38 percent in 2003. Still, global petroleum consumption is projected to rise by almost 40 percent in the same pe-

riod with the United States, China and India together accounting for more than half of projected growth.

More than 60 percent of the increase in oil supply is expected to come from countries that currently are not members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Coal and natural gas are projected to increase their share of global energy consumption as demand rises for electric power and manufacturing.

The energy industry is seen in the report as relying increasingly on unconventional sources, such as oil sands, bitumen and biomass and on technologies such as coal-to-liquids and gas-to-liquids, not considered competitive until now.

In addition, higher fossil fuel prices and concerns about energy supplies are expected to improve prospects for nuclear power every-

where but Europe, where declines in nuclear capacity are projected.

The report projects the fastest energy consumption increase in big emerging markets, especially China and India, driven by strong economic growth. Much of the projected 75 percent increase in energy-related carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 is expected to originate in strong-growth countries. Carbon dioxide is widely suspected of contributing to global climate change.

The news release (<http://www.eia.doe.gov/neic/press/press271.html>) and the report ([http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/ieo/pdf/0484\(2006\).pdf](http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/ieo/pdf/0484(2006).pdf)) (PDF, 202 pages) are available on the EIA Web site.

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Empowered Senegalese Villagers. . .

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posed the underdrawings beneath the surfaces of many of these paintings. Used together, the two techniques are the primary tools for investigating the graphic preparation of these works," the Bracco release says.

Noted experts in Venetian Renaissance art will contribute to a fully illustrated catalogue, to be published in both English and German, according to the National Gallery.

The exhibition is also supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

"It's a show that's been in the works for a long time, according to the curator, David Brown," Laura Bush said. "And it shows the 16th century Venetian paintings, with the very, very famous masters -- the older Bellini, and then his young students."

"So this is a great opportunity for people in the Washington area to come to the National Gallery and have the chance to see these paintings that they might not ever have another chance to see, and certainly, they wouldn't have a chance to see them all in one installation," she said.

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Murder of Journalist in Venezuela Draws Global Concern

By Eric Green
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A global press freedom group has voiced concern over the murder of a Venezuelan journalist, who the group said was shot 11 times June 17 in Caracas.

In a June 18 statement, the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders said the independent press in Venezuela "is paying a heavy price for the generalized climate of violence" in that country, with the killing of Joaquín Tovar, the editor of the weekly paper *Ahora*, and the April 5 murder of Jorge Aguirre, a photographer with *El Mundo* newspaper in Caracas.

Reporters Without Borders called on Venezuelan authorities "to shed light on all aspects of this murder. We do not yet know if it was linked to Tovar's work, but that possibility should be pursued, given his editorial positions."

The press group quoted a relative of Tovar's as saying that the murder could be related to Tovar's journalism, as he wrote a column for *Ahora* in which he criticized both the government and Venezuela's political opposition.

The Miami-based Inter-American Press Association (IAPA) and the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists have both denounced hostility by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez toward the media in his country, in which he ordered a review of broadcast licenses issued to privately-owned television stations and warned that some licenses might be cancelled.

In a June 16 statement, the IAPA said "such threats, which the media have become accustomed to, only raise concern and feed a climate of antagonism" in Venezuela. The IAPA said it was referring to a "tirade" by Chávez against privately owned television stations, whose licenses are due to expire in 2007, in which Chávez charged that they broadcast content designed to "divide" the country.

The group said the threats by Chávez were particularly egregious because they came during the run-up to elections in Venezuela "when the press should be focusing on its important role as watchdog and analyst in order to offer the public a range of viewpoints." The IAPA said Venezuela's presidential elections, in which Chávez is expected to seek re-election, are scheduled for December 3.

The Miami group added that "this provocation and intimidation of divergent viewpoints defies the commitment of democratic governments" that is "enshrined in Principle 7 of the Declaration of Chapultepec," which states that "the assigning of radio and television frequencies and the granting or withdrawal of government advertising may not be used to reward or punish the media or individual journalists."

The Chapultepec declaration, adopted in 1994, sets forth the principles for a free press in the Western Hemisphere. Additional information (<http://www.declarationofchapultepec.org/>) on the declaration on the IAPA web site.

The IAPA said it will send an international delegation to Venezuela

soon to investigate violations of press freedom in the Andean country.

The Committee to Protect Journalists urged in its own June 15 statement that Chávez "refrain from making" menacing statements toward the media "which could have a chilling effect on the press. The allocation of broadcast frequencies should be based on technical considerations, not politics."

The press groups' statements follow a June 4 resolution adopted by a coalition of global press freedom organizations condemning attacks against journalists in Venezuela. The Global Coordinating Committee of Press Freedom Organizations said many journalists in Venezuela have been "assaulted while doing their work" and that the Venezuelan government has "arrested, imprisoned, prosecuted or threatened others." The committee criticized the Venezuelan government's restrictions on freedom of expression, and "the right to information." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=June&x=200606121239531xeneerg0.5350153&t=wh/wh-latest.html>).)

The U.S. State Department has joined the international community in criticizing Venezuela's "social responsibility" law, passed in 2004, and other Venezuelan laws restricting press freedoms. In its 2005 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, released March 8, the department said Venezuela's Chavez "repeatedly singled out

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Arab-American Writers Offer Universal Themes, Unique Perspective

By Lauren Monsen
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The latest wave of Arab-American writers is beginning to make its mark on the publishing world, but many of these authors reject the notion of Arab-American literature as a separate, easily identifiable genre.

Four highly regarded American writers of Arab descent, who appeared June 16 in Washington at a literary panel at the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee's annual convention, described how their individual experiences have shaped their perspectives as artists and activists.

But according to Steven Salita, a writer who teaches at Virginia Tech University, the very concept of "Arab-American writing" is problematic, "as it tends to imply a similarity or cluster of themes." In Salita's view, Arab-American writers should avoid such ethnic type-casting "we never want Arab-American literature to become ... predictable."

Nathalie Handal, a Palestinian-American poet, playwright and editor, who teaches at Columbia University in New York City, talked about her recent travels in the Holy Land and about the plight of her hometown of Bethlehem. "Jerusalem is our sister city, and we can't get there" from Bethlehem, because of the wall that now separates Israelis and Palestinians, she said. "The isolation is unreal."

Handal read one of her poems -- a passionate protest against the wall, and against the division of the West Bank. She also commented on the cultural cross-

pollination that occurs as the Arab diaspora settles in other parts of the world. With members of her family scattered throughout much of Latin America, Handal said, she has become increasingly familiar with what can be called "Latino-Arab experience." She offered a second poem, "about embracing all the cultures I've come to know, but not forgetting where I come from." That poem closes with a haunting admonition spoken in the imagined voice of Handal's ancestral land: "Compatriota, I will always find you, no matter what language you are speaking."

Moroccan-American novelist Laila Lalami, the creator and editor of the literary blog Moorishgirl.com, shared her thoughts on popular stereotypes that Arab-American writers -- particularly female writers -- inevitably confront. "As an Arab woman, [...] I'm certainly expected to talk about how oppressed I am by evil Arab men," she said with a laugh. "There's a market for that sort of thing -- what I call 'the burden of pity.'" In her view, "people can't cope when you don't conform to the stereotype" of Arab-woman-as-victim. "If you're trying to show the diversity within the [Arab] label, people are surprised."

Lalami and Handal agreed that ignorance of the Arab world is often pervasive in the West. "It's staggering when people challenge the emotional truth of what I've written, even though they've never been to Morocco," said Lalami. Her latest novel, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, explores the lives of four Moroccan immigrants to the West, all of whom have left their country for very different reasons and meet disparate fates. She

read an excerpt about an educated Moroccan man reduced to selling trinkets to tourists.

Another panelist, Gregory Orfalea, a poet, historian and novelist who teaches at Pitzer College in Claremont, California, read an excerpt from his forthcoming novel *The Fiends*, which examines the coming-of-age of a young Arab-American man during the early 1960s.

All of the panelists conceded that writers in America -- Arab and non-Arab alike -- have to overcome steep barriers to get their work recognized. "This is a literate society with a lot of competition [among writers], so there's a limited number of publishing slots available," said Orfalea. Also, "there's a shrinking market for books, as the culture has gone visual with a vengeance," he said, citing consumers' preference for movies and videogames.

Also, the tastes of American readers can be volatile and unpredictable. Orfalea recalled that Dan Brown, the best-selling author of *The Da Vinci Code*, told him that today coming-of-age stories about young men are particularly hard to sell. But similar stories about young women are much more readily accepted, he said.

But bias can cut both ways, added Lalami. She said that while writing classes often are dominated by women, the books that are featured in *The New York Times Book Review* and other publications mostly are by male authors. "It's as if men's viewpoints are weighed more heavily than women's," she said. "Women's

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Arab Americans Trace Their Immigrant Roots to the 1870s

By Afzal Khan
Washington File Special
Correspondent

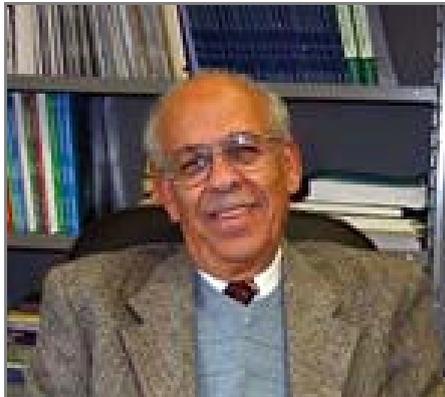
Washington – A history of Arab immigration to the United States and the community's political participation as American citizens were highlighted at a recent conference at the Woodrow Wilson International Center in Washington.

Professor Michael Suleiman of Kansas State University said today's estimated 4 million Arab Americans first began arriving in the United States more than 130 years ago. He said there were two successive waves of immigration – the first from the 1870s to the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and the second from the end of the World War II in 1945 to the present.

Suleiman said the first wave comprised mostly Christian Lebanese and some Syrians from the Greater Syria region of the Turkish Ottoman Empire that included modern-day Lebanon.

Suleiman, who edited and wrote the introductory chapter to *Arabs in America*, says that the economy of Greater Syria suffered in the mid-1880s as the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal made it easier for the Japanese silk industry to compete with the Lebanese. Then in the 1890s, Lebanese vineyards practically were ruined by an invasion of phylloxera – a plant lice that destroys grapevines.

In addition, rapid population growth in the region began to strain the capacity of traditional family farms.



Professor Michael Suleiman
(Photo: Kansas State University)

All the above factors drove many Lebanese to immigrate to the United States, Suleiman said.

The second wave of Arab immigration included more Muslim Arabs from Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Morocco and Yemen, as well as Lebanon and Syria. The number of Muslim Arab Americans rapidly increased in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, Muslim Arab Americans might represent more than one-third of the Arab-American population, which traditionally has been 75 percent Christian.

This second wave of Arab immigrants came not only because of economic need but also because of the desire to escape regional turmoil such as the Palestini an-Israeli conflict, the Iraq-Iran war and civil wars in Lebanon and Yemen. Political and social changes in Egypt, Iraq and Syria also drove many wealthy and middle-class families to leave.

Many of these new immigrants came as students to attend U.S. universities but decided to stay because of the lack of employment

opportunities or unstable political conditions back home, Suleiman said. As a result, this second wave of Arab immigrants included large numbers of well-off and highly educated professionals, unlike the first wave of less educated and relatively poor farmers and tradesmen.

But it was the early generation of Christian Arab Americans from Greater Syria that made a place at the table for Arab immigrants in the United States, according to Suleiman. They began moving into mainstream American society after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire cut them off from their homelands permanently.

Initially, they had come to America as "sojourners" for a temporary stay to make as much money as possible before returning to their native countries, according to Suleiman. They worked mostly as "peddlers" selling household goods and later moving into the dry goods store business in large metropolitan areas of the United States such as New York and Boston. But the second and third generation of Arab Americans born in the country -- and speaking more English than Arabic -- began moving out of family businesses to seek outside employment and, most important, to participate in local politics, Suleiman said.

Suleiman said that as early as 1912, Arab-American workers were at the forefront of a strike by some 25,000 textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Later, Arab-American workers became a major component of the automobile industry in the Detroit

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American Muslims to Visit Europe in New Citizen Dialogue Project

By Marissa Eubanks
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States and Europe are going through significant debates about immigration and integration right now, so "there is a lot we can learn from each other," says Mehdi Alhassani, 22, an American Muslim from Boston.

"Europe is a very critical fault line of the East and West," he said. "If you look at how fast [immigration is] growing in Europe, it's essential that we get this right."

Alhassani, the son of Iraqi immigrants, is one of four Muslim-American community leaders who embark June 17 for Europe to meet with hundreds of European Muslims in Berlin, The Hague, Netherlands, and Copenhagen, Denmark, as part of the Citizen Dialogue program of the U.S. State Department.

The five-day program is an effort to mobilize and amplify the voices of U.S. Muslims and Arab Americans, to encourage a cross-cultural dialogue and to advance diplomacy, according to Heidi Fincken, special adviser to Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes.

The delegates will serve as a bridge between the Muslim world and the United States, Fincken said. The Citizen Dialogue program sets up forums of exchange so that American Muslims can meet with European Muslims to present a genuine view of their lives in America.

Alhassani has participated in many interfaith dialogues, political de-

bates and events to help educate people about Islam. Now he hopes to help educate others about his experience as a Muslim American.

"From my time studying abroad in London and traveling to the Middle East, I realized that there is a general impression that Muslims in American are not treated well and are discriminated against," said Alhassani. "I've had numerous conversations with people abroad explaining to them how untrue that is and explaining to them that while there have been some unfortunate incidents, the vast majority of Americans want to learn more about Islam, and that Muslims live great lives in America."

Alhassani said he feels that these dialogues are an opportunity for him and other American Muslims to assume an active role in dispelling myths about the United States and of working towards the goal of a "peaceful and free society."

"It is really important Muslim Americans make it clear that Americans treat Muslims like every other American. People are always shocked when I tell them things such as how there is a Friday prayer service held in the Capitol Building [in Washington] for all the Muslim congressional staffers," he said.

Alhassani and the other delegates will have many opportunities to engage directly with European-Muslim community members and answer questions about the place of Muslims in American society. Over five days the delegates will participate in town hall meetings, community events, mosque visits and volunteer work.

Under Secretary Hughes established the Citizen Dialogues program in response to requests she received from European Muslims during a trip to Germany early this year. She met with a group of German Muslims who wanted the opportunity to meet with American Muslims to hear about their experiences living in the United States.

Hughes plans on organizing three more groups of Muslim-American community leaders who will participate in similar exchanges in South Central Asia, the Middle East and the East Asian Pacific regions.

The other delegation members for the June 17 trip are Farah Pandith, director for Middle East Regional Initiatives of the National Security Council of the White House; Yahya Basha, a physician and president of Basha Diagnostics; and Talal Eid, an imam who ran the Islamic Center of New England for many years.

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

U.S. Officials Arrest 2,100 Fugitives and Immigration Violators

By Michelle Austein
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents apprehended more than 2,100 immigration violators, gang members and fugitives in a just-completed nationwide effort, according to Julie L. Myers, assistant secretary for ICE. The initiative, called Operation Return to Sender, began on May 26 and concluded June 13.

Of the 2,179 people arrested in the operation, about half had criminal records for crimes including sexual assault, assault with a deadly weapon and abduction.

"The fugitives captured in this operation threatened public safety in hundreds of neighborhoods and communities around the country," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "This department has no tolerance for their criminal behavior and we are using

every authority at our disposal to bring focus to fugitive operations."

The majority of those apprehended were arrested for immigration violations. More than 800 of these people were sent back to their home countries.

Those arrested on criminal charges will face trial in federal courts.

Those arrested in the operation came from many countries, including Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Egypt, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, Thailand, Uganda, the United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.

Operation Return to Sender is the latest action taken as part of the Department of Homeland Security's

interior immigration enforcement strategy. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Apr/21-392788.html>).)

The interior enforcement strategy is part of the Secure Border Initiative, a multiyear plan introduced by Chertoff to secure America's borders and reduce illegal migration. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Nov/03-285764.html>).)

The full text (<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=5689>) of a press release on Operation Return to Sender is available on the Department of Homeland Security Web site.

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U.S. Doors Open . . .

(Continued from page 7)

access to would-be refugees from North Korea to ascertain their suitability would be the larger problem.

Young said South Korea typically is able to offer long-term solutions to those fleeing North Korea, rather than have them resettle in a third country.

More information on the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migration (<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/>) is available on the department Web site.

More information on World Refugee Day (<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/events?id=3e7f46e04>) is available on the UNHCR Web site.

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Arab Americans Trace. . .

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area, helping to organize the United Automobile Workers (UAW) in 1935, according to Ismael Ahmed, executive director of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) in Dearborn, Michigan. Arab Americans have been officers and leaders of the union and in the 1970s organized the Arab Workers' Caucus within the UAW to represent their rights as American citizens, Ahmed said.

In between, participation in the World War II brought many Arab Americans into the mainstream of American society just like other immigrant groups who served.

Ahmed, who also participated in the Wilson Center conference, said the 1967 Israeli-Arab war united different segments of the Arab-American community and galvanized them into political action. As a result, the Association of Arab American University Graduates was formed in 1967, followed by the National Association of Arab Americans in 1972, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in 1980 and the Arab American Institute in 1985.

No other ethnic group in the United States has been affected as much by political events outside the country as have Arab Americans, according to Helen Samhan, executive director of the Arab American Institute Foundation, who also participated in the Wilson Center conference.

The events of September 11, 2001, put a damper on Arab-American political progress. However, 9/11 also helped to

empower the different Arab-American organizations to gain greater access to various U.S. governmental institutions to present their case, Samhan said.

"If 9/11 happened 20 years ago, the backlash would have been greater," she said.

Recognizing their vulnerability, the Arab-American community through ACCESS contributed to the creation of an Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, which opened in May 2005. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2005/May/24-925511.html>).)

"By bringing the voices and faces of Arab Americans to mainstream audiences, we continue our commitment to dispel misconceptions about Arab Americans and other minorities," the brochure for the museum states.

Continuing their efforts to define themselves better in mainstream America, Arab Americans through the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) are holding their 26th annual convention from June 15 to June 18 in Washington. The convention features a wide array of panels that celebrates the heritage of Arab Americans while continuing to build social and political platforms for the community in the future.

For additional information, see Population and Diversity (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population_and_diversity.html).

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Situation in Somalia. . .

(Continued from page 2)

Crumpton classified Somalia as a "fractured political entity" with competing, conflicting tribal leadership.

"A lot depends on the Somali people themselves," he said. "Probably the most immediate challenge [is] to see if this fledgling government can establish some degree of legitimacy and some power. And right now they have very little."

For information on U.S. policy in the region, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>).

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The Best and Worst Countries to be a Mother

(WESTPORT, Conn., /U.S. News-wire/)

Save the Children, a U.S.-based independent global humanitarian organization, last month released its annual Mothers' Index that ranks the best-and worst- places to be a mother and a child. The Index, highlighted in the organization's State of the World's Mothers 2006 report, ranks the status of mothers and children in 125 countries based on 10 indicators pertaining to health and education.

Save the Children's State of the World's Mothers 2006 report takes a closer look at the inextricable link between the health and survival of mothers and babies, narrowing in on simple, affordable solutions that can help save 3 million of the 4 million newborns who die every year.

Scandinavian countries sweep the top rankings of the best places to be a mother, while countries in sub-Saharan Africa dominate the bottom tier. The United States ties for 10th place with the United Kingdom.

"The Mothers' Index illustrates the direct link between the status of mothers and the status of their children," said Charles MacCormack, president and CEO of Save the Children. "In countries where mothers do well, children do well; in countries where mothers fare poorly, children fare poorly. If we are to improve the quality of life for children, we must start by investing in the health and well-being of their mothers."

Zeroing in on only those indicators that capture children's well-being,

Somalia finishes in last place. More than 1 out of every 7 children in Somalia die before his or her first birthday, 71 percent of the population has no access to safe drinking water, and 17 percent of children are suffering from malnutrition. The situation for Somali mothers is equally dismal: 1 in 10 women dies in childbirth; 75 percent of all newborns are delivered without skilled health personnel, and 78 percent of pregnant women have anemia.

The Mother's Index (based on ranking of 125 countries)

(1) Countries that are tied

Top 10 Countries

1. Sweden
2. Denmark/Finland (1)
4. Austria/Germany/Norway (1)
7. Australia/Netherlands (1)
9. Canada
10. United States/United Kingdom (1)

Bottom 10 Countries

125. Niger
124. Burkina Faso
123. Mali
122. Chad
121. Guinea-Bissau
120. Sierra Leone
119. Ethiopia
118. Yemen
117. Central African Republic

115. Democratic Republic of Congo/Liberia (1)

KEY INDICATORS: The status of mothers was compared in 125 countries based on six indicators of women's well-being and four indicators of children's well-being:

-- lifetime risk of maternal mortality

-- percent of women using modern contraception

-- percent of births attended by skilled personnel

-- percent of pregnant women with anemia

-- adult female literacy rate

-- participation of women in national government

-- infant mortality rate

-- gross primary enrollment rate

-- percent of population with access to safe water, and

-- percent of children under age 5 suffering from moderate or severe nutritional wasting

"Life is not easy for moms and children in the bottom-ranked countries. Most have never been to school. Mothers are lucky to survive childbirth, and their babies fortunate to survive the first month, yet alone the first year, of life," said MacCormack. "But the good news is that we know what it takes to help these moms and children survive and thrive."

"Humanitarian organizations like Save the Children are working in partnership with communities and governments to provide proven

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International Hunt is On for Genes Affecting HIV Response

Washington – Researchers from the United States, Europe and Australia are going to pool their access to patient groups in a large-scale analysis of HIV infected patients, hoping the shared knowledge will lead them to a better understanding of the body's response to the virus.

Led by scientists at North Carolina's Duke University, the collaboration announced June 20 will try to find out what the body's immune system is really doing during HIV infection, and try to use that knowledge to produce an effective vaccine. Of special interest are those rare HIV-infected individuals who control infection on their own, whose systems may provide a critical clue in vaccine development.

The work is led by the Center for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Immunology (CHAVI), established at Duke with a multimillion-dollar grant from the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a federal agency for conducting and supporting medical research.

"We intend to use natural genetic differences among people to point the way toward the most promising avenue for vaccine development," said David Goldstein, director of CHAVI's genetic research. "We wanted to find out why some people naturally hold the virus down to almost undetectable levels while others lose control of it quickly."

The collaborators in EuroCHAVI, as the new effort is known, will be working to understand what genetic influences might cause the

widely varying immune responses that individuals have after HIV infection, and the differences in susceptibility to infection.

The nine research groups involved in EuroCHAVI will recruit 600 HIV-infected patients from different countries and then use state-of-the-art genome technology to analyze the genetic factors that contribute to disease.

In a briefing conducted earlier this month, NIAID Director Anthony Fauci explained that the HIV virus "has an uncanny ability to elude the immune system under natural circumstances, which has made it very difficult to develop a vaccine."

Fauci made the remarks as the medical community noted the 25th anniversary of the first report of an unusual disease that would later come to be recognized as HIV/AIDS. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/05-381621.html>).)

EuroCHAVI collaborators include the Swiss HIV cohort; the IRSI-Caixa study and the Clinic Hospital cohort in Spain; the Danish HIV cohort; the Perth-Western Australia cohort; the Modena cohort and the San Raffaele Scientific Institute cohort in Italy; the German National Competence Network for HIV/AIDS; and the Guy's, King's College and St. Thomas' Hospitals study in the United Kingdom. The University of Geneva, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne and the University of Ioannina in Greece will partner as analytical centers.

A Duke University press release (<http://www.eurekalert.org/>

pub_releases/2006-06/dumcai061906.php) on the collaboration is available on the EurekAlert Web site, a global news service operated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

For information on U.S. policies and programs, see HIV/AIDS (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html).

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Murder of Journalist. . .

(Continued from page 10)

media owners and editors," accusing them of treason and of provoking "political unrest." The full text (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/shrd/2005>) and section of the report on Venezuela (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61745.htm>) are available on the State Department Web site.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see Venezuela (http://usinfo.state.gov/wh/americas/andean_region/venezuela.html).

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Jakarta Boy Dies of Bird Flu, Indonesia's 39th Fatality

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – A 13-year-old boy from South Jakarta has died from avian influenza, five days after he fell ill, the Indonesian Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed June 20.

The child developed symptoms of illness one week after he helped his grandfather slaughter diseased chickens kept at the family home. The grandfather has shown no signs of illness so far, and is being monitored.

The case is the 39th death from the H5N1 avian influenza strain, which has led to the deaths of more than 200 million birds through either death or culling to prevent the spread of infection.

Indonesia has detected more human cases of this highly pathogenic bird flu strain in 2006 than any other nation. Some 28 deaths from 34 cases have been recorded in Indonesia. After a spate of outbreaks in 2005, Vietnam has experienced more human cases than any single nation, but none has been detected there in 2006.

With these developments at hand, an Indonesian government commission on avian and pandemic influenza has sought consultation from the international health community. Experts from the WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and others will gather in Jakarta, June 21-23, to assess the situation, according to a WHO update.

Indonesia also has experienced the greatest single cluster of cases,

though weeks after the episode, it appears that the seven family exposures did not mark a turning point in the evolution of the virus, as initially was feared. The Jakarta meeting will review the evidence gathered in the aftermath of that family outbreak.

Health experts warn that the H5N1 virus could be on the verge of a mutation that would make it contagious between humans, a change that could set pandemic influenza in motion, with serious health, economic and social consequences worldwide.

No further disease has been found in the North Sumatran village where this cluster appeared, weeks after the incubation period for infection has passed, according to WHO. A team of international health investigators swept through the area after the cases appeared, conducting tests to detect exposure of the disease in a wide circle of neighbors, caregivers and others in the community.

U.S. ASSISTANCE

After U.S. congressional passage, President Bush June 15 signed an emergency funding bill that provides an additional \$2.3 billion for pandemic influenza preparedness.

"We will continue our essential work to increase our domestic capacity to produce pandemic influenza vaccine and antiviral medications," said U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt. "These funds also will enable us to further enhance federal, state and local preparedness efforts and to further strengthen the international public health infrastructure, which is a critical com-

ponent of our global surveillance efforts."

The United States has been at the forefront of efforts to raise awareness about the threat of pandemic influenza and to build international cooperation to avert it. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/07-300690.html>).)

For ongoing coverage, see Bird Flu (Avian Influenza) (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html).

The WHO update (http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/) is available on the organization's Web site.

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African Youth Discuss Football, Future During Trip to U.S.

By Elisa Walton and Rachel J. King
Washington File Staff Writers

Washington - Six aspiring young football players from Nigeria, Uganda, and South Africa will represent their countries at the 2006 World Cup in Germany, not as athletes, but as part of an international youth delegation. Though their countries did not qualify for the games in 2006, they say they already are planning a second trip to the World Cup, next time as players.

The athletes are among 30 football players, ages 13-18, from 13 countries who visited Washington recently through the World Cup Sports Initiative, a multi-organizational partnership between the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the U.S. Soccer Foundation and Major League Soccer (MLS), among others.

Despite their young age, some of them have been playing football for more than a decade, they told the Washington File June 16. For them, the athletes said, football (called soccer in the United States) creates a bond that exists across borders.

"Everybody speaks soccer," said Memory, 13, from Uganda. "People can't [always] communicate through language, but they can communicate through soccer."

"I like playing soccer because it's the best game in the whole world," said Phillip, 14, from Nigeria.

Along with improving their football skills through several training sessions and games during their U.

S. visit, the athletes have met youth from around the world. They have shared ideas and learned to get along with others through conflict resolution seminars, Memory said.

The athletes played in a June 14 exhibition match against the 2005 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) men's champion University of Maryland, defeating the Maryland team 5-1. They also trained with Maryland coach Sasho Cirovski.

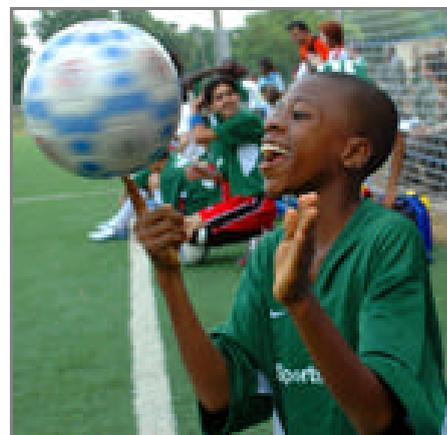
"It was cool, [a] cool game," said Henry, 14, from Uganda. "[We] make a great team."

Phillip, the smallest of the group, was happy to have won, despite "playing with big, big boys."

But the most special moments did not always involve football. Meeting President Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and professional coaches was a highlight of the trip, Henry said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jun/12-490420.html>).)

The World Cup Sports Initiative participants, joking and at ease with each other, spoke more seriously of the lessons they felt they could bring back to their countries.

"We will teach people of our country how we can stop conflicts, share ideas and stop fighting each other," said Memory, who attended a conflict resolution seminar with the group at George Mason University, in Fairfax, Virginia, just outside of Washington.



Phillip, 14, from Nigeria
(State Dept. photo by Ken White)

The selection process for the African delegates varied. Most were chosen at national camps or leagues. None has been out of Africa before; many never had been on an airplane.

All six agreed that their views on the United States had changed because of this trip.

"I thought: The United States, they didn't know anything about soccer," said Ibrahim, 16, from Nigeria. "I thought it was only basketball."

"I was surprised by women's soccer," said Thulani, 15, from South Africa, adding that there are not many leagues for women in his country.

Following their Washington visit, the delegates are scheduled to visit New York City, where they will meet with MLS players and attend a reception hosted by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton. Then they will fly to the 2006 FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football

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Young Arab Football Players Hone Skills During U.S. Visit

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Football is not just a recreational sport for a group of young athletes visiting the United States on a two-week citizen exchange program. It is a passion that occupies an important part of their dreams and aspirations.

Eight young men and women from Bahrain, Lebanon and Morocco are among the 30 athletes participating in a program sponsored by the U.S. State Department that includes visits to U.S. sports facilities, scrimmages with American football teams and meetings with U.S. leaders, including President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The program concludes with three days in Germany, where the participants will attend a World Cup match between the United States and Ghana.

Under Secretary of State Karen Hughes, who invited the visiting players to a pizza party at her house, said, "Sports is a common language that fosters dialogue across borders. These young people are the future leaders of our world and it is a privilege to be a part of introducing them to America and to each other."

The athletes welcomed the opportunity to hone their football skills with other players from around the world. "It's not just a hobby," said Rayane from Lebanon. "We have a passion for football."

Her colleagues agreed and spoke about their dreams of playing professionally in the future. Yasmeen dreams of leading Bahrain's women's football team to Olympic

gold. Fellow Bahraini Fahad said he hopes to play in the World Cup one day. Mohammed from Morocco expressed an even more ambitious goal of being the Number 1 player in the world.

The young athletes all have risen to the top of their game in their home countries after years of practice, but Rayane says she still needs a lot of practice to develop the skills she needs to achieve greatness.

Shortly after their arrival in the United States, the young athletes played a scrimmage against a team in Washington. Imane from Morocco explains that it was a tough game because the international visitors had met each other only four days earlier and had little time to practice together. But "we had fun," Rayane said. "That's what's important for us."

She added that she learned much from the American players. "The goalkeeper practiced with me, and she told me everything she knows," she said.

Although most of the young players aspire to careers on the field, some of them have other goals. Imane said she hopes to study in the United States and become a football coach. "If I come here and study and become a coach, I can go back to Morocco and teach young people who need it," she said.

Some of the young men and women also look beyond the football stadium when thinking about their futures. Racha from Lebanon said she would like to help the people of Africa, providing food and humanitarian assistance to

those in need. She is enjoying her visit to the United States and said the Americans she has met all have been very nice people, but she also dreams of traveling to Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa.

The young athletes look forward to sharing their experiences in the United States with their friends and families back home. "I'll tell them about all the things I learned here," said Yasmeen. "How to work with each other, how to communicate with different people from different countries."

Several of the young men and women commented on the similarities they found between the people of their own countries, the Americans they have met and their fellow athletes from around the world.

"I think people are all the same, but the cultures are different," said Rayane. Imane added that the differences are just a matter of traditions and religion.

The athletes also said they hope they have been able to give the Americans a good impression of their home countries. "Every one of us is representing his country," Rayane said.

For additional information on the World Cup and the visiting athletes, see World Cup 2006 (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/sports/world_cup.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>)◆

The Best and Worst . . .

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programs that benefit mothers and children in developing countries. Save the Children's 70-plus years of experience on the ground have shown us that increasing access to education and child and maternal health-including family planning-are critical to the well-being of children and their mothers," he said.

KEY FINDINGS: The Mothers' Index identifies female education, presence of a skilled attendant at birth and access to, and use of, family planning services, as the three areas most strongly associated with child survival and well-being.

-- Women who are educated are more likely to postpone marriage and early childbirth, seek health care for themselves and their families, and encourage all of their children, including girls, to go to school.

-- As contraceptive use rises and mothers are able to space their

births at healthy intervals, deaths among mothers and children decline. For example, in the United States, 71 percent of women use modern birth control, 1 in 2,500 mothers dies in childbirth and 7 out of 1,000 infants do not live to see their first birthday. Compare this to Mali, where 6 percent of women use birth control, 1 in 10 mothers dies in childbirth, and 1 in 8 infants dies before reaching age 1.

COUNTRY COMPARISONS: The Mothers' Index exposes an enormous disparity between the highest- and lowest-scoring countries and underscores an urgent need to address this divide. For instance, in Sweden, which tops the list, nearly all women are literate. In contrast, only 34 percent of Ethiopian women are literate. And a mother in Ethiopia is 37 times more likely to see her child die in the first year of life than a mother in Sweden.

-- Compared to a mother in the top 10 countries, a mother in the bot-

tom 10 countries is 28 times more likely to see her child die in the first year of life and over 750 times more likely to die herself in pregnancy or childbirth.

-- In the bottom 10 countries, nearly 1 out of 3 children is not enrolled in school, and only 1 out of 4 adult women is literate. In the top 10 countries, virtually all children go to school and all women are literate.

-- Skilled health personnel attend fewer than 15 percent of births in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Nepal.

-- Fewer than 5 percent of women use modern contraception in Chad, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

The complete Mothers' Index and State of the World's Mothers 2006 report is available online at <http://www.savethechildren.org> ♦

Arab-American Writers. . .

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books are categorized differently," and sometimes dismissed as mere "chick lit."

Ultimately, though, the main barrier to entry into the publishing world "is yourself," said Orfaea. With enough talent and perseverance, Arab-American writers can make themselves heard, he argued. Lalami agreed. "I refuse to regard the publishing world as monolithic," she said. "It's made up of people, and they can listen and be convinced to publish your work."

Handal emphasized that Arab-American writers have a mission that transcends their ethnic identity and cultural heritage. "I like to believe that art is universal; it crosses boundaries," she said. "These are human stories -- the audience is the whole world."

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African Youth Discuss. . .

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Association) World Cup in Germany and attend the U.S.-Ghana match on June 22.

The athletes said they are looking forward to going to Germany for a chance to see the football stars live. This is a special chance that many people do not have, Henry said.

Teams they most look forward to seeing include Argentina, Brazil, Togo, Ivory Coast, Ghana and the United States, the athletes said.

Many of the athletes added that they hope that the trip to the World Cup will be a stepping-stone in their careers.

"This is my first time in the World Cup -- the second time I'll be play-

ing," Henry predicted confidently. "[In] 2010, we will be watching each other [play in the World Cup]."

For more information, see World Cup 2006 (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/sports/world_cup.html) and the U.S. Embassy in Berlin's World Cup Web site (<http://worldcup2006.usembassy.de/>).

For more information on athletics in the United States, see Sports (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/sports.html).

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U.S. Commitment to Protect. . .

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The world's population is currently estimated at 6.4 billion, and is expected to increase by another billion before 2015. Approximately 98 percent of this population growth is expected to occur in developing nations. In contrast, many countries throughout the developed world are expected to experience dramatic population decline and aging.

The goal of U.S. policy is to promote healthy and educated populations. The U.S. supports voluntary and informed decision-making regarding family planning so that all couples can achieve healthy families of the size they desire. The U.S. Government provides substantial foreign assistance to improve

maternal health and to combat maternal, infant, and child mortality.

Promoting Orderly and Humane Migration

People migrate for many reasons: to escape conflict, to avoid environmental degradation or natural disasters, to seek economic opportunities, or to reunite with family. Of the world's estimated 191 million migrants, women and children are especially vulnerable to extreme exploitation such as trafficking for labor or sex.

PRM promotes orderly and humane international migration by supporting dialogue with governments to share best practices and cooperate on a range of region-specific issues, including border security,

asylum procedures, and the protection of the human rights of migrants. PRM also works with governments, international and non-governmental organizations in the fight against trafficking in persons.

"The U.S. response to global challenges in population and migration also reflects our values of promoting human rights, and protecting people from exploitation or coercion."

—Assistant Secretary of State,
Ellen R. Sauerbrey

(end text)

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