



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Ambassador Huddleston Applauds Bella Military Hospital for Outstanding Performance in HIV/AIDS Service Delivery

Inaugurates Building for HIV/AIDS Services

The U.S. Charge d'Affaires Ambassador Vicki J. Huddleston on April 3, 2006 recognized the Bella Military Hospital in Addis Ababa for its outstanding performance in the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS (PMTCT). Ambassador Huddleston and State Minister of Defense H.E. Ato Kassahun Dendir, together inaugurated an HIV Service Building, renovated with funding from the U.S. President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) with the support of the U.S.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC Ethiopia). The building houses clinics for men, women, and children to receive services such as Voluntary Counseling and Testing and Antiretroviral Treatment.



Ababassador Huddleston (left) presents certificate of outstanding performance to Dr. Berhanu Zenebe (right) together with State Minister Ato Kassahun Dendir and Dr. Leslie Mancusao

Also present at the event was President and Chief Executive Officer of JHPIEGO, Dr. Leslie Mancuso, who is visiting Ethiopia this week. JHPIEGO is a non-profit international public health organization affiliated with the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, that

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U.S. National Security Strategy Spotlights African Partnerships

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff
Writer

Washington -- The White House document outlining America's concerns and strategic aims in a world confronted by international terrorism highlights security training and partnerships with African nations.

President Bush's March 2006 National Security Strategy is a foreign policy road map that states, "Africa holds growing geostrategic importance and is a high priority of this administration." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=Mar>

ch&x=20060316192322adynned0.0295679&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html).

Seen by foreign policy specialists as a signpost of U.S. intentions abroad, the security strategy recognizes that U.S. safety depends in part on partnering with

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Ambassador Huddleston Applauds Bella Military Hospital . . .

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works to improve the health of women and families in many countries of the world, including Africa.

In her remarks prior to the building inauguration, Ambassador Huddleston congratulated the doctors, nurses and other staff of the Bella Military Hospital for their outstanding performance in service delivery for the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, or PMTCT. In 2004, CDC Ethiopia, in collaboration with U.S. based NGO JHPIEGO, supported the development of the Ministry of Health document entitled - PMTCT Performance Standards. The

purpose of this document was to standardize and promote PMTCT services in Ethiopia through the provision of tools, standards for service delivery and a system to monitor the improvement of PMTCT service delivery at health-

care facilities.

This "standards based" management approach was then imple-

marks by saying, "The staff of this hospital have distinguished themselves in their efforts to institute and improve the quality of HIV preventive and treatment services, and for this you should be proud. The achievement of Bella hospital in service improvement is a giant step towards improving the quality of HIV services throughout Ethiopia. Bella Hospital has in effect, set a "gold standard" for other institutions to follow as they too seek to improve their performance through the setting of standards for service delivery."



Ambassador Huddleston (second from right) and State Minister Ato Kassahun Dendir inaugurate new VCT center with Dr. Leslie Mancuso (left) and Dr. Berhanu Zenebe, Bella Hospital Medical Director.

mented in 25 hospitals in Ethiopia supported under the PEPFAR program. Bella Hospital in Addis Ababa was the first hospital out of the 25 to achieve over 80% of its performance standards. Ambassador Huddleston concluded her re-

The inaugural ceremony highlighted the continuing partnership between the U.S. Government and its agencies and the Ministry of Defense of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to combat HIV/AIDS in the military. ♦

U.S. National Security Strategy Spotlights African Partnerships . . .

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Africans on security programs to prevent terrorist acts like the bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in August 1998, which killed more than 250 Africans.

The NSS says, "America is committed to working with African nations to strengthen their domestic

capabilities and the regional capacity of the AU [African Union] to support post-conflict transformations, consolidate democratic transitions and improve peacekeeping and disaster responses."

From October 2004 to September 2005, the U.S. government provided \$650 million to support the AU peacekeeping force in Sudan.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs Theresa Whelan touched on the growing political support in Washington for such funding at a seminar in December 2005.

"Africa is actually much higher on the U.S. agenda now than it has been in the last 10 to 15 years," she said. "In fact, the at-

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ention that the U.S., EU [European Union], G8 [Group of Eight] and now NATO are paying to Africa is unprecedented and continues to grow."

EMPHASIS ON SECURITY PARTNERSHIPS

With an estimated 25 percent of 400 foreign fighters captured in the insurgency in Iraq coming from Africa, according to the Defense Department's European Command (EUCOM), security partnerships with African nations are becoming more important.

In Africa, according to the security strategy document, "the struggle against militant Islamic radicalism" is being waged with new security partnerships like the Global Peace Operations Initiative, launched at the 2004 G8 Summit "to train peacekeepers for duty in Africa." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2004/Jun/10-164883.html>.)

Other cooperative efforts include the follow-up to the Pan Sahel Initiative, a \$6 million U.S. military training partnership begun in 2002 with the militaries of Mali, Mauritania, Chad and Niger that saw success against a radical Muslim group operating in the region in 2005. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=March&x=20040323170343r1EJrehSiFO.1366693&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>.)

That initiative has been expanded into a new training partnership

called the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCI), which also includes Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, Nigeria and Tunisia, with Libya possibly to follow later. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Mar/15-505791.html>.)

Marine General James Jones, the overall commander of NATO and the European Command EUCOM) - the U.S. military command responsible for most of Africa -- told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September 2005 that TSCI is "more ambitious in both geographic and programmatic terms." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Oct/08-777088.html>.)

TSCI is a valuable security partnership with Africans, Jones told the lawmakers, because "it helps to strengthen regional counterterrorism capabilities, enhance and institutionalize cooperation among the region's security forces, promote democratic governance, foster development and education and ultimately benefit our bilateral relationships with each of these [participating] states."

Another successful U.S. training initiative is the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, whose goal is to upgrade the professionalism and peacekeeping skills of African militaries. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=July&x=200507221624391EJrehSiFO.8220636&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>.)

AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

One of the most innovative Department of Defense-Africa partnership programs is the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). Begun in 1999, ACSS has hosted more than 2,000 African officers and defense officials at training seminars at locations in Africa and at its headquarters at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington.

ACSS faculty member Herb Howe said its main goal is "to promote military professionalism" by exposing African officers to the most up-to-date operations, management and systems programs in the U.S. military as well as share ideas about civil-military relations.

Those relations, Howe said, are "very important to counterterrorism. Because it deals with more efficient and rational military practices and policies, with an emphasis on transparency and accountability."

The 2006 national security strategy (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/>) and an accompanying fact sheet (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060316.html>) are available on the White House Web site.

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

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

Preventing HIV in Newborns

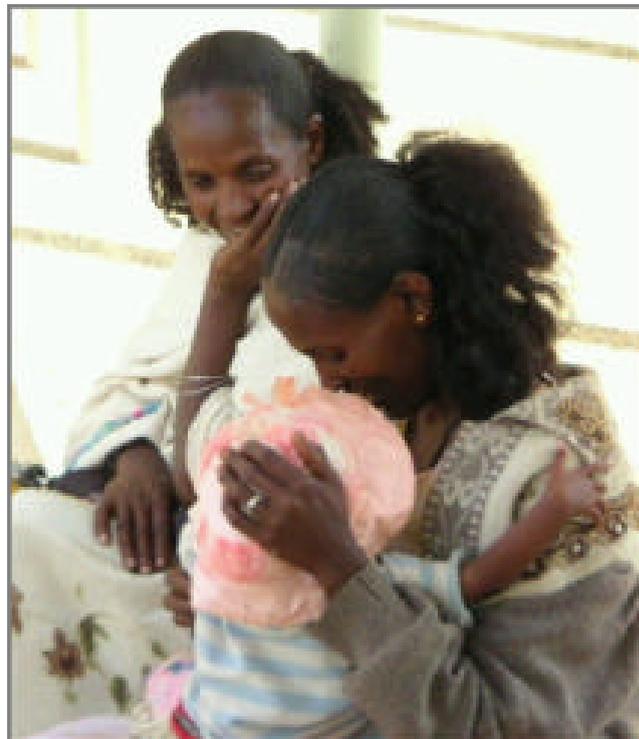
Traditional Ceremonies become a forum to discuss critical health issues

In the village of Bati in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, Fatuma Nuru and her neighbors gather daily for traditional coffee ceremonies, where they share in a favorite beverage and casual conversation. Integral to social and cultural life in Ethiopia, coffee ceremonies also provide an opportunity for neighbors to come together and discuss issues that concern them.

Pregnant with her fourth child, Fatuma attended a coffee ceremony organized to educate women on preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Individuals known as "community core team members" are chosen by local governments and village residents to be trained in health issues by USAID-sponsored programs. Then, they organize coffee ceremonies in villages to discuss health issues and inform people about prenatal care, family planning, coping with stigma, and decreased discrimination. They also educate women on how to make decisions on reproductive health and how to encourage men to participate in family health and well being.

Following the coffee ceremony Fatuma then went to an additional forum to be sure she understood HIV/AIDS transmission fully. There, she received a referral to a local health center for prenatal care.

"Today is the first time I have been seen by health staff. Thanks to our village community core team members," Fatuma says, "I now understand how HIV is transmitted from mother to child."



Fatuma Nuru on her first visit to a health clinic for prenatal care.

Fatuma delivered her first three children at home in the village, with only the help of her neighbor. For her fourth child, she was better informed, armed with knowledge on the importance of prenatal care and on methods to prevent HIV transmission to her child. ♦

Cameroonian Couple Promotes African Foods in the U.S. Market

By Susan Ellis
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Julie and Albert Ndjee, originally from Cameroon, have combined their interest in food and their qualifications in law and information technology into a profitable business in the United States. In 2005, their company, Ultimate Seasonings, grossed more than \$500,000.

Julie, 33, from the English-speaking part of Cameroon, is an

information technology specialist; her husband Albert, 35, from French-speaking Cameroon, graduated in law from George Washington University in Washington, after first obtaining a law degree in his country.

Their seasonings, sold widely on the U.S. East Coast and fast expanding southward, into the central states and to the West, are the basis of dense, spicy vegetable-based sauces for making such African staple dishes as

n'dolé. They also have started producing ready-to-eat entrées, Neilly's Ultimate, named after their daughter. Albert Ndjee says, without hesitation, "The American market is very ready for African products, especially in the food industry."

The spices, whose ingredients come from Africa and the United States, are manufactured in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. "Ginseng we bring from back home, and a

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lot of different herbs like bitter leaf. You can add that to any recipe or do a complete dish with it. Other things like tomato, garlic, onions we can get here," Albert said.

He says they are helped by the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a U.S. trade preference program enacted in 2000 that is reducing barriers to trade, increasing exports, and expanding opportunities for Africans to build better lives. Under AGOA, eligible countries receive duty-free access to the U.S. market for most of their products, a measure that offers tangible incentives for African countries to continue efforts to open their economies and build free markets. The original act has been amended twice. (See African Growth and Opportunity Act (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade_economic_development/agoa.html)).

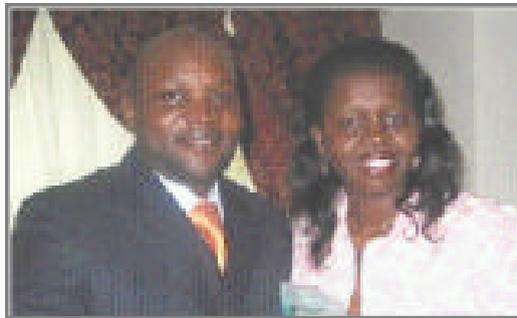
"The people we work with in Africa use it. We just have the network in place and put these products into the hands of one shipper and that shipper is the one who sends the products through [the mechanism of] AGOA," he said.

As a lawyer, Albert was instrumental in setting up their distribution system.

Julie has a political science background, so was familiar with research methods, and with her husband's law background they were "able to come up with a strategy on how to really penetrate the market with very few resources."

Asked to describe the taste of

their spices, Julie Ndjee said: "They're a combination of a lot of different things. Africa is a huge continent, so food from West Africa is very different from [food from] East Africa. And there's a lot of influence like Indian and Mediterranean, and some of that colonial influence, too." In short, she said, "they're the basis of fresh vegetable dishes, with some zing to them."



Julie and Albert Ndjee

Their goal, the Ndjees said, is trying to get African food known across mainstream America and promoting its healthy aspects.

"There's a lot of organic food in Africa," says Julie. "People eat natural foods, unprocessed." So the Ndjees say they are intent on getting healthy food, with flavor, out into the marketplace.

Albert says he and Julie launched Ultimate Seasonings in 2003 while he was at George Washington University.

His law degree helped with getting a fair contract with distributors and in other business matters. "Right now we're trying to bring a lot more African products into the U.S.," he said. "For that, we're trying to use all that the federal government has put in place to help African companies to come

here. Through AGOA, we're working with the IESC [International Executive Service Corps] on Africa Fast Track Trade." The Africa Fast Track Trade (AFTT) program provides technical and trade support to companies in more than 50 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

They are affiliated with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), he said, and "have antennae [contacts] all over Africa, specifically within the food industry.

"When the IESC locates a company that has viable products, they usually send the FDA [U.S. Food and Drug Administration] to look at the plant, and we work with them, because after they have vetted products [found them suitable for the U.S. market] they give us those contacts."

For example, he said, if he is looking for a specific item in South Africa, "and I've never been there, I'll ask them if they have companies in South Africa and they may guide me. They say: 'We have this company, that company, etc.' They're very helpful. Also, we're working with the Corporate Council on Africa [CCA]."

More information (<http://www.ultimateseasonings.com/>) on the Ndjees and Ultimate Seasonings is available on their company's Web site. More information on the IESC (<http://www.iesc.org/>) and the CCA (<http://www.africacncl.org/>) are available on the organizations respective Web site.

(This is the first in an occasional series of articles on African entrepreneurs in America.) ♦

U.S. Computer Project Moves Senegalese Merchants into Digital Age

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Africans are finding it easier to buy into globalization, thanks to a U.S. government-funded program that encourages merchants in Senegal to use computers and the Internet to sell their products.

The Digital Freedom Initiative (DFI), a collaboration between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Commerce and the Peace Corps, was inaugurated by the White House in March 2003 to help spur use of the Internet among developing nations.

While DFI currently operates partnership projects in Jordan, Indonesia and Peru, its pilot program began in Dakar, Senegal, where USAID representatives partnered with a local merchant organization to establish an Internet café called "Cyber Louma" in Dakar's Sandaga Market.

Merchants and other Senegalese learned that computers and the Internet are not just the domain of scholars and libraries but can be useful tools in researching market prices and costs that have a direct bearing on their livelihoods.

After word got out, curious merchants dropped by to examine the new technology themselves, according to a USAID document.

Souhaibou Diop, a cloth merchant who usually bought his

goods from wholesalers in Dubai, became interested in the computer operation. After training, Diop set up an e-mail account, looked for new suppliers and established a more lucrative relationship with a new supplier, Magna Fabrics of New Jersey.

does all his bills and accounting by computer. In addition, he now e-mails suppliers, receives offers and negotiates prices electronically.

The future has especially brightened for Abdoul Fall, USAID notes. A construction-materials wholesaler, Fall was able to use computers at Café Louma to search the Internet and find fans he could buy at a price lower than available locally. Fellow merchant Mamadou Guèye, a dealer in tiles from Italy, also has used the Internet at Café Louma to enhance his business prospects.

Guèye told USAID, "I'm now planning to arrange a space in the shop to build an office and buy a computer to better manage my business."

Since its inception, DFI has expanded beyond Sandaga Market. In 2005, USAID officials working with Peace Corps volunteers and other international organizations helped more than 70 people find jobs while training people in 360 businesses to use computers. More than 300 entrepreneurs in Senegal were also trained to use information technology to manage their businesses better.

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



Students at the TechnoFair in Tambacounda, Senegal. The fair attracted up to 6,000 participants over the course of four days. The DFI was initiated in Senegal on March 4, 2003. In October 2003 President Bush announced that Peru and Indonesia had agreed to join the DFI program. More countries are anticipated to join the program in the next four years to increase business activity, develop more efficient markets, create more jobs in the U.S. and DFI beneficiary countries, and help establish a business friendly regulatory framework conducive to U.S. investment and partnerships.

Another enthusiastic consumer of the new electronic business link is Gor Mbaye, a wholesaler in Sandaga Market who does business with many suppliers in Senegal. According to USAID, Mbaye, who once spent hours doing his bills and other paperwork by hand, received training at the U.S.-sponsored cybercafé and now

Bush Welcomes Nigeria's Capture of Charles Taylor

President Bush welcomed the news of former Liberian President Charles Taylor's capture in Nigeria. Taylor was subsequently transferred to Sierra Leone, where he will face a war crimes court for his activities in that country.

Speaking with Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo March 29 at the White House, Bush said he appreciated the Nigerian leader's decision to turn Taylor over to face charges.

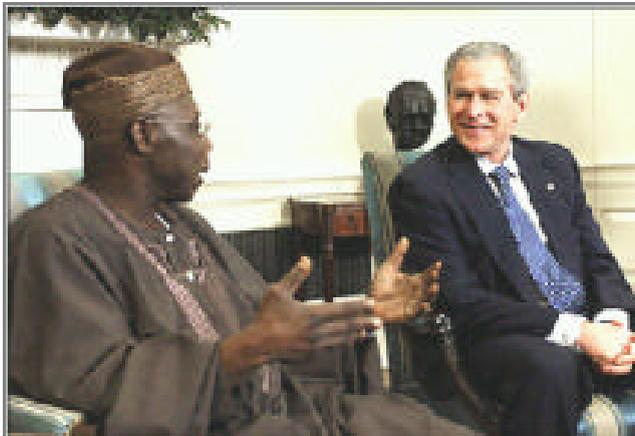
"The fact that Charles Taylor will be brought to justice in a court of law will help Liberia, and is a signal, Mr. President, of your deep desire for there to be peace in your neighborhood," he told Obasanjo.

White House press secretary Scott McClellan congratulated Nigerian authorities for taking Taylor into custody "so quickly after his disappearance from his residence" on March 28.

McClellan said the United States is "committed to continuing to work with Nigeria and Liberia to make sure that Charles Taylor is brought to justice."

President Bush said he and President Obasanjo also discussed the situation in Sudan.

"I made it very clear to him that we're deeply concerned about the humiliation, the rape, the murder that's taking place ... against the



President Bush (R) listens to Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo during a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC. (AFP/Mandel Ngan)

citizens of Darfur," Bush said, adding that the Nigerian leader shares his concern.



Charles Taylor arrives at Monrovia's Roberts International Airport in Liberia on March 29 from Nigeria. A few seconds later, he was handcuffed and whisked off to a helicopter before being taken to Sierra Leone. (AP Photo/UNMIL, Mathew Elavanalthoduka, HO)

The two leaders discussed having a dual-track international effort towards peace in which the Sudanese rebels would "come to-

gether and negotiate with the government," Bush said, while African Union peacekeeping troops would be bolstered by United Nations forces. (See Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>.)

"I explained to him my desire to have a NATO overlay to make sure that force is robust," Bush said.

President Obasanjo said that with the settling of Charles Taylor's disposition, "the West African subregion is gradually becoming a haven of peace," mentioning positive developments in Togo, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone.

He said Nigeria is working to establish a Gulf of Guinea commission to oversee security, supply and price stability of hydrocarbons from that area, as well as to deal with misunderstandings between countries in the neighborhood.

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

Following is the transcript of President Bush and President Obasanjo's remarks:

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

Africans Prefer Democracy, Survey Shows

By Charles W. Corey
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A recent survey in 15 African countries showed that about 70 percent of those responding said they prefer democracy to all other forms of government.

The United States wants to help them achieve that goal, says Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky, by promoting human rights and democracy as an investment in freedom and security worldwide.

She spoke March 29 in Washington at a conference, "Africa at the Crossroads," sponsored by Freedom House, a nonprofit organization that works to advance political and economic freedom around the world.

Dobriansky said the United States is focusing on countries where U.S. resources and other tools can "make a tangible difference to every man and woman" -- especially those who want to have a voice in their communities.

The approach, she told her audience of diplomats, development specialists and democracy activists, is known as "transformational diplomacy." It differs from traditional diplomacy in that it entails "working with partners to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people" and will help their people better their lives, build their nations and transform their futures.

"We see this current spirit in Mali," she said, which currently

chairs the Community of Democracies Group, a coalition of more than 100 nations seeking to strengthen democracy across the globe by sharing best practices and helping those countries that still are struggling in the democratic process.



Political Discussion in Sierra Leone

Community of Democracies countries like Cape Verde and Mali, she said, show that Africa has important resources to offer when it comes to democracy promotion.

She said that in 2005 Cape Verde participated in a nine-country delegation as part of the East Timor Initiative to help strengthen and consolidate democratic institutions in that new democracy.

DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LINKED

Dobriansky acknowledged that there has been much talk about which should come first, democracy or economic development. The United States believes both

should be advanced simultaneously, she said.

Democracy and economic development are "inseparably linked" she said, and can yield a range of tangible benefits by encouraging stability and good governance, which are essential ingredients for economic prosperity. Accountability in government and business should go hand in hand, just like free enterprise and free speech," she added.

"As we look around the continent of Africa we see what Mali has already identified, and that is that economic development and democracy are mutually reinforcing and do go hand in hand," she explained.

Dobriansky singled out South Africa for playing a "very significant role" in promoting democracy across the continent and trying to "engage and persuade some of its more ... recalcitrant neighbors to democratize. We welcome these initiatives. We welcome their engagement and we commend them for their efforts.

"We see this spirit in Liberia, where men and women from across the country that not long before had been rocked by civil war flocked to the polls and elected Africa's first woman [elected leader], Ellen Johnson Sirleaf," she said.

Through the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United States spent \$137 million in 2005 to implement democracy and good governance programs in Africa -- a 30 percent increase over the previous year before, she said.

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American Muslim Shares Views on Life in United States

By Mark Betka
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- American Muslims seek the same opportunities and face the same challenges all Americans do as they pursue their hopes and aspirations of achieving the "American Dream," says Tina Kareema Dauod.

Dauod, a graduate student and State Department "citizen ambassador," discussed her experiences as a Muslim American and her work to build bridges between Americans and Muslims worldwide in a March 30 webchat marking the close of Women's History Month.

Dauod is a student of Arabic linguistics at Georgetown University in Washington. She also works for the U.S. Department of State on public diplomacy initiatives involving the Middle East and outreach programs to Muslims around the globe. Dauod is a first-generation American of German and Arab descent who is also a practicing Muslim.

"The road to dialogue is two ways: we need to understand one another, and others need to understand [the United States] in this ever-increasing globalized world," said Dauod, echoing earlier statements by Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes. "There may be differences, but in fact I believe that the world can and is coming closer together," Dauod said.

The webchat attracted a diverse and geographically dispersed audience. Questions were submitted from online participants in the Middle East, Europe, South, Central,

and East Asia and Africa. Dauod particularly focused on the concerns and questions from young participants, such as those repre-



A Muslim high school girl competes in a relay race in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

senting their schools in Tajikistan and Bangladesh.

Responding to a question about the treatment of Muslim women on U.S. college campuses, Dauod drew from her own experiences as a student at Georgetown University. "I will tell you that [Washington] D.C. is a place of diversity and tolerance for the most part. America is full of such regions: Los Angeles, Dearborn Michigan, New York, etc."

Another participant asked whether she felt comfortable as a Muslim working in the U.S. State Department. "[T]he work environment here at the State Department is very conducive to all Americans,

irrespective of their religious beliefs. I have an equal voice," Dauod said. She went on to note the service of Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Dina Habib Powell, an American of Egyptian heritage.

"My goal is to work for my government and to build bridges of understanding between Arabs, Muslims, Americans, Europeans, and the rest of the world," Dauod said.

Upon learning that the United States is home to more than a 1,000 mosques, one participant said, "I'm surprised to learn that there are 1200 mosques in the U.S. I think this is good enough to understand the religious tolerance in the country." Other participants expressed their eagerness for such online dialogues to continue, a sentiment shared by Dauod who closed the webchat with a pledge to "chat with you all [again] sometime soon."

A transcript of Dauod's webchat and information about upcoming webchats are available on the US-INFO's Webchat Station (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>).

For additional information, see Population and Diversity (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population_population_and_diversity.html) and the State Department publication Muslim Life in America (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/muslimlife/>).

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

State's Hughes Outlines Public Diplomacy Initiatives

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes outlined the initiatives she has introduced during her seven-month tenure, describing them as an effort to lay a "long-term foundation for waging peace."

Hughes offered her remarks in Houston March 29 as part of the Shell Distinguished Lecture Series at Rice University's James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy. Among the figures delivering previous Shell Lectures are U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Nobel laureate Nelson Mandela and King Abdullah II of Jordan.

The under secretary described the strategic imperatives of U.S. public diplomacy, and then explained a number of specific initiatives crafted to achieve those objectives.

THREE STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

American public diplomacy, Hughes said, must offer foreign audiences a positive vision of hope for a better life "rooted in freedom, justice, opportunity and respect for all."

It also must work to isolate and marginalize extremists by discrediting their attempts falsely to portray a conflict between the United States and Islam, she added. Communicating the positive experiences of American Muslims, she argued, would be vital in that effort.

Special teams of Muslim-American speakers soon will be

traveling throughout the world to spread that message, and to encourage dialogue, the under secretary said.

Finally, Hughes said, the U.S. must foster a sense of common interests and values between Americans and peoples of different cultures.

The under secretary also said that these three strategic imperatives transcend the War against Terror, and she promised to continue the dialogue that began with her "listening tour" at the beginning of her tenure.

TRANSFORMATIONAL DIPLOMACY

Hughes grouped her "transformational diplomacy" initiatives into six broad areas.

First, despite budgetary restrictions, Hughes pledged increased funding for specific programs known to produce results. Citizen exchange programs, she said, are among the most effective public diplomacy tools, and resources have been added and reallocated to facilitate their growth.

Funding for exchange programs recently was increased by \$70 million; the Bush administration has requested an additional \$38 million for fiscal year 2007.

The under secretary also emphasized improving the means by which the U.S. government communicates with overseas audiences. A new rapid response team supplies public diplomacy professionals with the materials they need to counter misinformation,

while new "regional hubs" will position spokesmen in key locales.

Already there has been a dramatic increase in appearances by U.S. representatives on Arab media, while ambassadors and professional diplomats have been "unleashed" to engage directly with foreign audiences, Hughes said. Experience in public diplomacy, she added, is now a criterion for promotion within the Foreign Service.

Third, structural reorganization within the Department of State assures public diplomacy a seat at the policymaking table. Within each regional bureau, a deputy assistant secretary for public diplomacy attends senior meetings and assures consideration of public diplomacy concerns.

The forging of new partnerships is a fourth transformation, Hughes said. The Department of State now works with the private, education and intellectual sectors to make the best use of national resources. Hughes praised public-private initiatives that will enable foreign journalists to study and examine U.S. journalistic practices, to help American higher education institutions enroll foreign students and to encourage and assist American students learn and use foreign languages.

Fifth, Hughes promised expanded use of cutting-edge technology. New Web portals, including Partnerships for a Better Life (<http://usinfo.state.gov/partnerships/index.html>), which highlights beneficiaries of U.S. overseas development assistance, and Democracy Dialogues (<http://www.democracy>.

(Continued on page 11)

Africans Prefer Democracy, Survey Shows . . .

(Continued from page 8)

Additionally, she said, the United States has spent more than \$36 million in the past three years to prevent trafficking in persons across Africa.

Good governance is essential for sustainable development and is one of the founding principles of the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), she said.

Three of the eight approved MCA compacts are in Africa -- Madagascar, Cape Verde and Benin -- she said, and three of the five approved threshold programs are in Africa as well -- Ghana, Mali and Lesotho. That, she said, totals \$573 million in assistance. "An additional nine African countries are pending approval for compacts totaling almost \$2.7 billion, she said.

In addition to focused aid, the under secretary said, the United States also supports free trade in Africa through the African Growth

and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides significant trade benefits to African countries that are making continual progress through establishing the rule of law, democracy, human rights and a fair environment for investors.

"AGOA is an ambitious initiative," she said, that is helping to increase exports from Africa to the United States in key economic sectors.

But for all the progress that has been made in Africa, Dobriansky said, "considerable challenges" lie ahead on the road to democracy and prosperity. These include the repression and intimidation that continue in Zimbabwe and the fact that there are countries just now emerging from devastating conflicts. Food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and sexual violence also continue at an "unacceptable rate," she said, and Darfur still suffers "the horrors of genocide," despite efforts by the United States to better the situation there.

"Despite these problems, there is reason ... to be hopeful about Africa," she stressed. "It is clear that democracy is taking hold in many parts of that continent and ... citizens are being empowered, the rule of law is being strengthened and the chances of conflict every day are being reduced. The likelihood of achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication is heightened."

The United States, she pledged, will "remain steadfast" in its pursuit of democracy, in concert with its African partners.

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

State's Hughes Outlines Public Diplomacy Initiatives . . .

(Continued from page 10)

gov/), which hosts global conversations about different aspects of democracy, directly engage international audiences. Expanded use of digital videoconferencing, SMS text messaging, podcasts and similar technologies promise to enhance further America's public diplomacy resources.

Hughes' sixth area slated for expansion is a broad effort to delegitimize terrorism, an effort the under secretary likened to the 19th

century abolitionist movement that gradually undermined chattel slavery. All religions, Hughes observed, hold that life is precious. She described the State Department's ongoing engagement with mainstream Muslim leaders to spread the message that the killing of innocents always is wrong.

Hughes fielded questions from her audience. In response to one, she contrasted the public diplomacy challenges faced during the Cold War, when the task was to

get information into closed societies, with the contemporary information overload.

Today, Hughes said, the United States competes "for attention and credibility."

(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 Peace Corps, 45 and Growing, Plans To Serve More Nations

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- More than 45 years ago on the steps of a student hall at a university in the state of Michigan, then-U.S. Senator John F. Kennedy challenged Americans to give two years of their lives to act as global citizens and help people in countries of the developing world.

When Kennedy was sworn in as president months later, one of his first executive actions was to sign an order creating a "Peace Corps" on March 1, 1961.

Now concluding a month-long observance of its 45th anniversary, the Peace Corps is looking to expand into countries "where volunteers have never had the opportunity to serve before," said Gaddi Vasquez, the agency's current director. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2006/Mar/02-69994.html>).

More than 5,000 Americans took the first exams to enter the corps, which since has become a world model of volunteerism. The first volunteers arrived in Ghana five months after Kennedy created the Peace Corps.

THREE GOALS

Through the decades, Peace Corps has continued to fulfill its three goals:

To help the people of interested countries meet their need for trained workers;

To promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and

To promote a better understanding of other peoples among Americans.

voices. Former volunteers possess a high level of confidence, independent judgment and cross-cultural resourcefulness.

The Peace Corps experience is reflected in its popular messages to potential volunteers -- from the original "The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love," to the current "Life is Calling: How Far Will You Go?"



President John F. Kennedy greets some of the first Peace Corps volunteers in 1961

REFLECTING AMERICA'S DIVERSITY

The people who join the Peace Corps reflect the rich diversity of the United States in race, ethnic background, age and religion, and possess a wide range of physical abilities and professional skills. They come from all geographical regions and all walks of life. Each brings a unique perspective.

"I can honestly say that I am not the same person I was before becoming a Peace Corps volunteer. I am a better person. I am able to see all sides of an issue or situation. My views on life

and people . . . are multifaceted and global," says Nicki Hendrix, a 35-year-old

Californian who was the first African-American woman ever to live in her host village in Armenia.

She said she has used her neighbors' unfamiliarity with people of African descent to teach that the United States is an ethnically diverse country.

Since the Peace Corps' beginning, more than 180,000 have served as volunteers in a total of 138 countries. Alumni include members of Congress, diplomats, educators, business leaders, researchers, doctors, writers and contributors to society in many other fields.

Returned Peace Corps volunteers use the skills and experiences they gain overseas to become leaders, problem-solvers, and creative

(Continued on page 13)

The Peace Corps, 45 and Growing, Plans To Serve More Nations . . .

(Continued from page 12)

PEACE CORPS THROUGH THE DECADES

The 1970s was a period of maturation for the Peace Corps. Despite budget constraints, volunteers were serving in 69 countries by the end of 1974. The Peace Corps was working more closely with developing nations to plan and select projects meeting countries' specific needs.

Volunteers became known to have a significant "multiplier effect" -- transferring their talents to host country nationals who, in turn, share these skills with their fellow citizens.

As the Peace Corps matured so did its volunteers. In the 1970s, the average age of a volunteer was 27; 5 percent were over 50 years old.

In 1981, Congress passed legislation making Peace Corps an independent government agency. By the Peace Corps' 20th birthday, nearly 98,000 volunteers had served in 88 countries.

In 1989, Peace Corps established World Wise Schools, a program that enabled students in U.S. classrooms to correspond with volunteers serving overseas in an effort to promote international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. By the end of the

year, more than 550 schools were participating in the program. Returning volunteers still participate in the continuing World Wise Schools program as guest speakers.

The 1990s witnessed several historic events involving the Peace Corps:

In 1990 the first volunteers to serve in Eastern Europe departed the United States for Hungary and Poland; in 1992, the first group of volunteers to serve in the former Soviet Union departed to work in small-business enterprise projects in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; in 1993, the first group of volunteers to work in China departed to serve as English teachers.

The Peace Corps launched the Crisis Corps in 1995. This program allowed volunteers who had returned to the United States to provide short-term assistance during natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

In the 1990s, volunteers began to have access to new technologies that brought to them teaching and technical materials and ways to stay in contact with their families.

THE PEACE CORPS CURRENT AND PAST

Throughout its history, the Peace Corps has kept volunteer safety its

top priority. When conditions in a country raise safety or security concerns, the agency suspends and sometimes closes operations in the country. In March, the Peace Corps withdrew volunteers from Bangladesh for safety reasons.

Currently there are more than 7,800 volunteers serving in 76 countries. The oldest current volunteer is 79.

On March 29, the Peace Corps announced a partnership with Cambodia March 29 that will bring American volunteers to the Southeast Asian country for the first time in the agency's history. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=March&x=20060329123341tjkcollub0.8932001&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).

Peace Corps volunteers -- current and past -- continue to fulfill John F. Kennedy's vision. They are helping to bring the world closer together.

More information is available on the Peace Corps (<http://www.peacecorps.gov/>) 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>) ♦

U.S. Company, Centers for Disease Control Help Purify Water



Washington -- Chemists at a U.S. company have developed a powerful household water purification system that puts the cleansing power of an industrial water treatment plant into a container the size of a ketchup packet.

The Children's Safe Drinking Water program at Procter & Gamble, a consumer products company based in Ohio, has been developing the packets since 1995 in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), according to a March 29 press release from the American Chemical Society.

The researchers have shown that the small packet, which acts as a chemical filter, can be added to highly contaminated water to reduce dramatically pathogen-induced diarrhea -- the top killer of children in much of the developing world.

"There's clearly a need for simple, safe and effective decontamination systems for third world countries," said Greg Allgood, director of the Children's Safe Drinking Water program.

The packets also show promise for boosting water safety during emergencies and natural disasters,

such as earthquakes, floods and hurricanes, when water purity suddenly is compromised, the researchers say.

Use of the lifesaving packets is being expanded globally.

According to public health experts, about 1.5 million children under age 5 die each year around the world from simple diarrhea caused by bacteria and other pathogens (disease-causing microorganisms) in drinking water.

That translates to about 4,000 children dying each day as a result of contaminated water.

In countries that lack modern water purification systems, boiling is often the main water decontamination method, Allgood said. But boiling must be done properly to be effective.

Unlike large stationary purification systems, the packets are small and portable and can be used in remote locations and emergency situations.

In tests conducted by CDC involving 25,000 people in Guatemala, Pakistan and Kenya, the chemical packets reduced the incidence of diarrhea by about 50 percent, Allgood said.



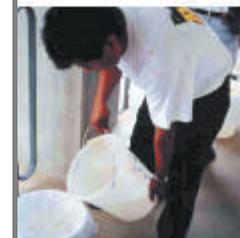
Source water



Floc formation after PuR addition



Floc formation after complete stirring



Decanting the water through a clean cotton cloth filter



Drinkable, clear water

The packets also were tested by researchers from Johns Hopkins University in Maryland at a refugee camp in Liberia, and produced a more than 90 percent reduction in diarrhea.

The system, "PUR Purifier of Water," consists of a packet containing a grayish powder composed of chemicals, including bleach, that can remove contaminants within minutes of being added to water.

The packets can kill waterborne pathogens that cause cholera, typhoid and dysentery; remove toxic metals like lead, arsenic and mercury; and remove some pesticides, Allgood said.

A single packet can decontaminate 9.5 liters of drinking water. The packet is added to a large container of impure water, stirred, filtered through a cloth to remove impurities, then allowed to sit for 20 minutes. The result is clear, safe drinking water.

Each packet costs a few cents and Procter & Gamble has been providing them free to some countries hit hard by sudden water emergencies, he said. More than 40 million packets have been distributed world-

(Continued on page 23)

Rice in U.K. Defends U.S. Policies on Terror Detainees, Iraq

By Jeffrey Thomas
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice defended the U.S. prosecution of the war on terrorism and the U.S. intervention in Iraq in a speech in the United Kingdom March 31.

Acknowledging concern in Europe and other parts of the world that the United States has emphasized security at the expense of respect for the law and human rights, Rice said, "No one should ever doubt the U.S. commitment to justice and the rule of law."

The United States does not tolerate torture, she said. "We also have no desire to be the world's jailer," she added at the foreign policy research center Chatham House in Blackburn, a town in northern England represented in the U.K. House of Commons by Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. "We want the terrorists that we captured to stand trial for their crimes."

"But we also recognize that we are fighting a new kind of war, and that our citizens will judge us harshly if we release a captured terrorist before we are absolutely certain that he does not possess information that could prevent a future attack, or even worse, if we meet that terrorist again on the battlefield," Rice said.

For more information on enemy combatants held at the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba, see Detainee Issues (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/detainees.html).

CHANGE TAKING PLACE IN MIDDLE EAST, IRAQ

Turning to the effort to encourage democracy in the broader Middle East, Rice asked for patience.



Secretary Rice delivers the inaugural Chatham House lecture at the Ewood Park stadium in Blackburn, northern England, March 31, 2006. REUTERS/Phil

Real change is beginning in the Middle East, she said. Asked whether she was being overly optimistic, Rice replied that her response to skeptics is a question: "What is the alternative? Is the alternative that the Iraqi people were left somehow to Saddam Hussein?"

The secretary defended the "incredibly difficult endeavor" of attempting to bring democracy to Iraq as something that simply had to be done. "The old status quo was unstable. Any sense of instability was a false sense of stability. It was not serving any interest and democratic reform had to begin."

In response to a question after her speech, Rice acknowledged the United States has made mistakes. "I know we've made tacti-

cal errors -- thousands of them, I'm sure," she said. "But when you look back in history, what will be judged is did you make the right strategic decisions."

She said she believed "strongly it was the right strategic decision" to remove Saddam Hussein from power and set Iraq on the course of democratic development. Saddam "wasn't going anywhere without military intervention," she said.

IRANIAN NUCLEAR ISSUE

Rice also responded to questions on the Iranian nuclear issue, which was the focus of her meeting in Berlin March 30 with the foreign ministers of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, China and Russia. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2006/Mar/30-374394.html>).

"It is enormously important that we get the message through to the Iranian people that it is not the international community that is isolating Iran," she said. "It is the Iranian regime that is isolating Iran."

She reiterated that the United States believes the Iranian nuclear issue can be solved diplomatically, but she also said that the U.S. president never precludes any option, including the option of military force.

"Iran is going to have to make a choice," she said. "Accept a way to the development of civil nuclear power that does not have the proliferation risk associated with enrichment and reprocessing on Iranian soil, or face deeper isola-

(Continued on page 24)

Bush Meets with Mexican, Canadian Counterparts Before Summit

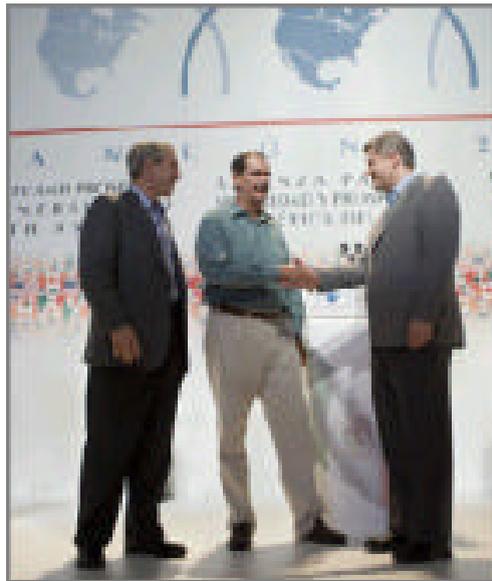
Washington -- On the eve of a North American leaders summit on enhancing regional security and prosperity, President Bush met separately with Mexican President Vicente Fox and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper to discuss issues including immigration, border security and softwood lumber.

In remarks following his meeting with Fox March 30, Bush said that both the United States and Mexico have an obligation to secure their borders. He applauded Mexico's efforts to secure its southern border as well as the government's recent statements that securing its northern border is a shared responsibility with the United States.

"Border security is not just one country's prerogative; it's the prerogative and duty of both countries," Bush said. "We spent time talking about how to work together to continue to strengthen that cooperation necessary to do our duty."

As the debate over immigration reform unfolds in the United States Congress, Bush said he reaffirmed to Fox his commitment to comprehensive U.S. immigration reform that includes border security, increased enforcement of immigration laws within the United States, and a temporary worker program. (See White House fact sheet (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060327-1.html>) and related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=March&x=20060325101604mbzemog0.3481256&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).)

He added that a guest worker program would not reward undocumented workers with amnesty, but allow them to get in line for citizenship behind those individuals who have already applied.



President Bush, Mexico's President Vicente Fox, center, and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, right, meet to shake hands following their joint news conference, Friday, March 31, 2006 in Cancun, Mexico, at the conclusion of their summit meeting. White House photo by Eric Draper

"I told President Fox that I think a program that will work is somebody working on a temporary basis with a tamper-proof ID card," Bush said. "And if they want to become a citizen, they can get in line, but not the head of the line."

To accommodate increased applications for legal status in United States, Bush told Fox that he has called on the U.S. Congress to increase the number of green cards made available to immigrants.

Bush and Fox also discussed co-

operative efforts to address alien smuggling, narcotics trafficking, and money laundering, including the important steps Mexico has taken to facilitate extraditions.

More broadly, the two leaders shared their visions for working together in the hemisphere and Bush expressed his appreciation for Mexico's leadership on trade and support for democracy in the region. Bush also applauded Fox's vision for encouraging economic growth in Central America, starting with an energy initiative.

CANADA

As with Fox, Bush discussed a variety of topics with Harper, including cooperation on global issues and the bilateral dispute over softwood lumber.

"One of the key themes and key topics of conversation for the President and the Prime Minister was the fact that we, with Canada, are global partners; that this is more than a bilateral relationship, it's more than a trilateral relationship," Dan Fisk, senior director for Western Hemisphere affairs at the National Security Council, told reporters after the meeting. "It's one in which we have global interests, we share global interests -- we're working together in Afghanistan, we're working together in Sudan, we have a presence in Haiti."

Bush and Harper also discussed ways to advance the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and their commitment to NORAD [North American Aerospace Defense Command] renewal and

(Continued on page 17)

Media Emerging Explores New World of Information Access

Washington -- Innovation in information technologies has thrust the world into an era of democratic media in which people have access to news and information beyond the barriers of time and place.

Media Emerging, an electronic journal from the State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs, goes to the front lines of this media revolution.

In the journal, experts describe what happens as citizens gain the means to disseminate their own ideas and opinions, circumventing media corporations and governments, the long-standing gatekeepers of information.

In the face of the new upstart media, newspaper and broadcast corporations scramble to reshape

their products to maintain profitability and viability in a new media atmosphere.



Journalism changes as newsrooms and editors begin to listen to audiences through the interactive capabilities of the new technologies.

Special features include comments on blogging, fast-paced developments in the delivery of wireless video, and an interview with a newspaperman at the forefront of the citizen-journalism movement.

Media Emerging is being released March 29 in English. Translated versions in Chinese, Spanish, French, Arabic, Russian, Persian and Portuguese will soon follow. Those versions will be accessible through the complete listing (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/journals.htm>) of all issues of eJournal USA.

This edition of Global Issues is available in HTML and PDF formats at http://usinfo.state.gov/pub/ejournalusa/global_issues.html.

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

Bush Meets with Mexican, Canadian Counterparts Before Summit . . .

(Continued from page 16)

strengthening the U.S.-Canadian defense relationship, Fisk said.

The long-standing bilateral dispute over softwood lumber subsidies was discussed and the president and prime minister agreed that the issue must be resolved, Fisk said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/wh/Archive/2005/Nov/25-879270.html>).)

"The Prime Minister made an emphatic case for softwood lumber. And I appreciate his steely resolve to get something done," Bush said. "I assured him that our intention is to negotiate in good faith, in a timely fashion to resolve

this issue."

SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP

Following their bilateral meetings, the North American leaders were set to participate in the formal Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) summit March 31.

The SPP was launched by the United States, Canada and Mexico in March 2005 as a new framework for cooperation to strengthen continental security and common prosperity.

Fisk said that among the questions to be addressed at the SPP included North American competitiveness within the global econ-

omy, regional plans for dealing with natural or manmade disasters and a potential influenza pandemic.

Transcripts of Bush's remarks after meeting with Fox (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060330-7.html>) and Harper (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060330-8.html>) are available on the White House Web site.

For additional information on U.S. policy in the region, see The Americas (<http://usinfo.state.gov/wh/>). ♦

U.N. Designates April 4 as International Day for Mine Awareness

April 4 marks the first annual observance of the U.N.-designated International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

The United States has contributed more than \$1 billion to humanitarian mine action since 1993, including mine detection and clearance, mine risk education to threatened populations, assistance to mine survivors and their families, and staff training for mine removal programs.

"April 4 presents another opportunity to remind the public that the global landmine problem still exists while also recognizing that great progress has been made in reducing it," said John Hillen, assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs in an April 4 media note. "Through the concerted efforts of governments and private citizens, a world free from the humanitarian impact of landmines is coming closer to reality."

Following is a State Department media note on the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action:

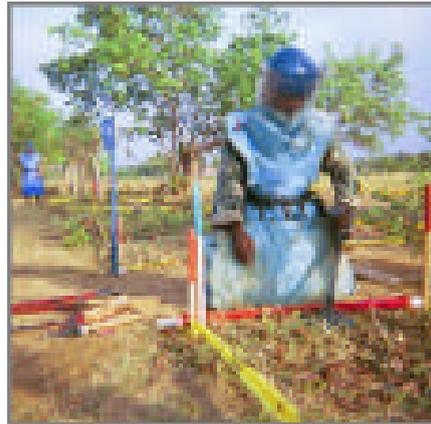
(begin fact sheet)

International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

The United States joins in observing April 4 as International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action to help draw attention to the global landmine problem. April 4 was designated as a day of remembrance by UN Resolution A/c.4/60/L.7/rev.1 on November 8, 2005. As the world leader in helping to reduce the impact of persistent landmines and unexploded ordnance left from past con-

flicts, the United States is honored to participate in the first annual observance of this day.

"April 4 presents another opportunity to remind the public that the



Sri Lanka is one of the many countries that receives assistance from the U.S. Humanitarian Mine Action Program. Photo courtesy of Deborah Netland, PM/WRA, State Dept.

global landmine problem still exists while also recognizing that great progress has been made in reducing it," remarked Dr. John Hillen, the Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs. "Through the concerted efforts of governments and private citizens, a world free from the humanitarian impact of landmines is coming closer to reality."

To commemorate April 4, several U.S. embassies are sponsoring or participating in various events. In New York, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is hosting a discussion, "Ridding the World of Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War," in which Richard Kidd, Director of the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, will participate. On April 5, the U.S. Mis-

sion to the UN will host a panel discussion on "Landmine Awareness: A Tribute to the Work of Nongovernmental Organizations."

The United States takes this opportunity to call upon all nations to work within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (www.ccw-treaty.org) to restrict the use of all landmines and join it in strengthening these limits through the completion of an additional protocol dealing specifically with mines other than anti-personnel mines.

The U.S. Humanitarian Mine Action Program supports mine action worldwide through bilateral and multilateral assistance and through more than 50 public-private partnerships with non-governmental organizations and civic groups. The U.S. has contributed well over \$1 billion to mine action since 1993. To learn more, visit the following websites:

U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement www.state.gov/t/pm/wra (<http://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra>).

U.S. Department of Defense Humanitarian Demining Research and Development Program <http://www.humanitarian-demining.org/demining/default.asp>.

U.S. Agency for International Development's Leahy War Victims Fund <http://www.leahywarvictimsfund.org/>.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ierh/research&survey/warrelated.htm>.♦

International Scientists Announce Neutrino Particle Discovery

Washington – First results of a new experiment on neutrinos were announced March 30 by an international collaboration of scientists at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab).

The experiment involved 150 scientists, engineers, technical specialists and students from 32 institutions in six countries, Brazil, France, Greece, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

A neutrino is one of the fundamental particles that make up the universe, and scientists have been working since 1931 to prove its existence and, later, to understand its properties.

The abundance of neutrinos in the universe, produced by stars and nuclear processes, might explain how galaxies formed and why antimatter has disappeared. Ultimately, the elusive particles might explain the origin of the neutrons, protons and electrons that make up all the matter in the universe. One thing that is known about the neutrino is that, unlike particles such as electrons, muons and tau particles, it has no electrical charge. Three kinds, or flavors, of neutrinos exist, each related to a charged particle – the electron neutrino, the muon neutrino, and the tau neutrino.

Neutrinos are very hard to detect because they rarely interact with anything. They can pass easily through solid objects such as a planet, walls or even a human hand without leaving a trace of their existence.

THE EXPERIMENT

At Fermilab, during the Main Injector Neutrino Oscillation Search (MINOS) experiment, scientists sent a high-intensity beam of muon neutrinos from the lab's site in Illinois to a particle detector in Minnesota, and observed the disappearance of a significant fraction of these neutrinos.



The MINOS far detector is located in a cavern half a mile underground in the Soudan Underground Laboratory, Minnesota.

(Photo credit: Fermilab)

The observation is consistent with an effect known as neutrino oscillation, in which neutrinos change from one kind to another.

Most of the neutrinos traveling the 724 kilometers from Fermilab to Minnesota – straight through the Earth, no tunnel needed – leave no signal in the MINOS detector.

If neutrinos had no mass, the particles would not change as they travel through the Earth and the MINOS detector in Minnesota would have recorded about 177 muon neutrinos.

Instead, the MINOS collaboration

found only 92 muon neutrino events – a clear observation of muon neutrino disappearance and hence neutrino mass.

In this scenario, muon neutrinos can turn into electron neutrinos or tau neutrinos, or it is possible that the neutrinos decayed. The MINOS collaboration will have to record much more data to find out exactly why the neutrinos are disappearing.

DOE provides the major share of the funding, with other funding from the U.S. National Science Foundation and the United Kingdom's Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC).

"The MINOS experiment is a hugely important step in our quest to understand neutrinos – we have created neutrinos in the controlled environment of an accelerator and watched how they behave over very long distances," said PPARC chief executive

Keith Mason.

"This has told us that they are not totally massless as was once thought," he added, "and opens the way for a detailed study of their properties."

The Fermilab side of the MINOS experiment consists of a beam line in a 1,219-meter-long tunnel pointing from Fermilab to Minnesota. A neutrino detector 107 meters below the surface of the Fermilab site measures the composition and intensity of the neutrino beam as it leaves the lab. ♦

United States Allocated \$3.8 Billion To Avian Flu Preparedness

The U.S. Department of State, through the Bureau of Oceans and International



Environmental and Scientific Affairs, issued a fact sheet April 4 on international partnerships to meet the threat of avian influenza.

According to the fact sheet, the United States is concerned that ongoing outbreaks of the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus in birds have the potential to turn into a human influenza pandemic that would have significant global health, economic and social consequences.

The United States has allocated \$3.8 billion in emergency funding to address the threat of avian and pandemic influenza domestically and internationally, the fact sheet said.

For more information on the disease and efforts to combat it, see Bird Flu (http://usinfo.state.gov/global_issues/bird_flu.html).

Text of the fact sheet follows:
(begin text)

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs
Washington, D.C.

April 4, 2006

Fact Sheet

Avian Influenza: International Partnership To Meet a Global Threat

"If left unchallenged, this virus could become the first pandemic of the 21st century. We must not allow that to happen."

- President George W. Bush

The U.S. Government is concerned that the ongoing outbreaks of avian influenza in birds have the potential to turn into a human influenza pandemic that would have significant global health, economic, and social consequences. It has allocated \$3.8 billion in emergency funding to address the threat of avian and pandemic influenza domestically and internationally.

WORLDWIDE PROBLEM

To date, outbreaks of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza have been confirmed among birds in nearly 50 countries, 28 of which reported outbreaks since the beginning of 2006. Official figures from the World Health Organization put the number of human cases at around 200 and the number of deaths at over 100.

Avian influenza has occasionally spread from bird to human, but there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission at this time. An effective vaccine for humans has not yet been approved.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

President Bush announced the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza during the UN General Assembly in September 2005. Its goals are to:

Elevate the avian influenza issue on national agendas.

Coordinate efforts among donor and affected nations.

Mobilize and leverage resources.

Increase transparency in disease reporting and the quality of surveillance.

Build local capacity to identify, contain and respond to an influenza pandemic.

The first meeting of the Partnership took place October 6-7 in Washington, DC, hosted by the U.S. Department of State. Top foreign affairs, health and agriculture officials from 88 countries, as well as representatives from eight international organizations, including the World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, and the World Organization for Animal Health, took part.

The countries and organizations participating committed themselves to work together to combat avian and pandemic influenza and to identify priority areas for further collaboration.

Three general topic areas were covered: surveillance and prevention; preparedness, planning and outreach; and response and containment of avian influenza.

AVIAN INFLUENZA ACTION GROUP

The President's National Strategy assigned to the Department of State the lead role for coordinating the U.S. Government's international efforts in dealing with avian and pandemic influenza. In March 2006, the Department established the Avian Influenza Action Group,

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Bird Flu Vaccine Would Require Supplies Beyond Capacity

Washington -- A trial vaccine against the H5N1 strain of avian influenza produced some immune response in a study conducted on 450 healthy adults, but unusually high levels of the vaccine were required, according to results published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) March 30.

An accompanying editorial says worldwide vaccine production capacity would be inadequate to make enough vaccine to protect the large populations that could be vulnerable if pandemic influenza begins to sweep the world.

The level of vaccine required to produce an immune response in trial subjects was 12 times that used in normal annual influenza immunization campaigns.

Projecting the results of the trial across the world, editorialist Dr. Gregory Poland writes that the world's vaccine supply would be sufficient to provide dosages for only 75 million people -- 1.25 percent of the world's population.

The trial also showed that the vaccine produced a lower-than-hoped-for level of immunity. Poland calculated that, of the 75 million who received vaccine doses, only half would achieve a reliable level of protection.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), one of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, backed the study conducted at three university-based

NIAID-supported Vaccine and Treatment Evaluation Units.

In a press release, NIAID Director Anthony Fauci said researchers are working to address the challenges in the development of a vaccine against the H5N1 virus.



“We are investigating other options,” he said, “that may allow us to reduce the dosage -- for example, adding an immune booster, or adjuvant, to the vaccine -- so we can achieve a

more practical immunization strategy.”

NIAID announced the preliminary results of the trial in August 2005, and publication of the results in NEJM marks completion of analysis of the trial findings.

In his editorial, Poland writes that the development of alternatives is “imperative both to improve immunogenicity [its capability to promote an immune response] and to increase the number of doses available.”

Poland is involved in a trial of a flu vaccine being conducted by Merck Research Laboratories. His essay echoes observations made by a number of U.S. officials over the last several months, as concerns about pandemic influenza have increased.

Vaccine production methods are slow and outdated, and already have led to U.S. supply problems

in the routine preparation and distribution of serums for each annual flu season.

Pandemic influenza resulting from a highly virulent strain would produce a staggering level of illness that would make the annual flu season seem tame in comparison.

The annual flu results in about 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations each year in the United States alone.

An estimate compiled by the Congressional Budget Office predicts that pandemic influenza could cause as many as 90 million critically ill and 2 million dead in the United States, with vastly higher numbers worldwide.

The National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza, released by the Bush administration in late 2005, calls for “significant and targeted investments in promising technologies” to produce “next-generation countermeasures against influenza.” (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Nov/01-887894.html>).

A form of bird flu that began in Southeast Asia more than two years ago has spread to dozens of countries and caused the deaths of tens of millions of birds from disease or through culling ordered to prevent the further spread of sickness through flocks of domesticated birds.

The disease has infected almost 200 humans, resulting in 105 deaths. Those cases most often have resulted from direct contact with diseased animals. ♦

New Vaccination Technique May Work for Dengue Fever

Washington -- A new study funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation suggests a new vaccination technique that would protect people against the four known dengue viruses.

Previous attempts to vaccinate against the four viruses have failed, and the solution might be injecting the vaccines at the same time into different places on the body, according to a March 29 press release from Rice University in Texas.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne disease that kills tens of thousands of people every year and sickens 100 million more. It is called "bone-break disease" and is characterized by excruciating pain.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called dengue "the most important mosquito-borne viral disease affecting humans" in 2005.

IMMUNODOMINANCE

The new study, by Rice University bioengineers and physicists, suggests the multisite vaccination strategy -- called polytopic vaccination -- might also be effective against other diseases, including HIV and cancer.

Dengue infection occurs from one of four closely related viruses. Previous exposure to one of the four -- either by prior infection or by vaccination -- makes people much more likely to develop a potentially lethal hemorrhagic infection if they are infected

later by one of the other three viruses.

"This is a classic case of something called [immunodominance]," said lead researcher Michael Deem,



This is the female Aedes Aegypti mosquito during feeding. Dengue fever is contracted during the feeding cycle.

"which happens when our immune system becomes overly reliant upon memory when recognizing diseases similar to those that it has seen before."

The immune system's tendency with diseases like HIV, influenza and dengue is to "go with what it knows," Deem said, leaving people "more vulnerable to infection from a mutant strain or a related virus."

The immune system might respond less favorably in these cases than if it had never been exposed to the disease. Immunodominance arises from the way the immune system targets infection. When the immune system identifies infected cells, it takes pieces of them into the lymph node for targeting.

TARGETING INFECTION

Lymph nodes are any of the small structures located along the lymphatic vessels, particularly at the neck, armpit, and groin. Lymph nodes filter bacteria and foreign particles from lymph fluid.

During infection, lymph nodes can become swollen with activated lymphocytes -- or kinds of white blood cells, along with T-cells, that are part of the body's immune response.

Within a few days of infection, the immune system completes a massive scan of the 100 million available T-cells in its arsenal. Through a complex trial-and-error process, it identi-

fies three to five T-cells that best recognize and attack the components of the sickened cells. Once the cells are chosen, they are produced by the millions and sent out to clear the infection. When the infection is gone, thousands of the pre-programmed T-cells stay in the body in case the disease returns.

In recent years, public health officials have documented the co-existence of four dengue viruses in Brazil, Cuba, Thailand and other tropical and subtropical countries.

Because infection by multiple dengue viruses one after another can lead to an increased likelihood of deadly infections, public health officials have developed a vaccine that was supposed to fight all four versions at once.

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New Vaccination Technique May Work for Dengue Fever . . .

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But doctors found that patients who got a four-component vaccine wound up only being protected against one or two versions at most, because of immunodominance.

A NEW TECHNIQUE

To find out why the vaccine did not protect against all four viruses, Deem and graduate student Hao Zhou developed a computer model of the immune system's biochemical scanning process to see if they could recreate the effect and find out what caused it.

They conducted trillions of calculations and gradually built up a bigger picture of what occurs in dengue immunodominance.

In a person who has been exposed to all four versions of the dengue virus, the immune system produces T-cells specific to each version.

But when the immune system is presented with more than one ver-

sion of the virus, Deem said, it might respond only against the version of the virus for which it has T-cells with the strongest affinity, or attraction, to the virus.

In this way, the immune system responds to only one (dominant) version of the virus, protecting against that version and none of the others. That is immunodominance.

Deem said giving the four vaccines at the same time at different places on the body could help overcome immunodominance by taking advantage of the relative isolation of lymph nodes in the body.

Each person has hundreds of lymph nodes at different places around the body. Deem believes that vaccinating someone at four different sites, served by four different lymph nodes, would allow the body to develop immune responses against all four versions of dengue at the same time.

"There may be other factors at work," Deem said, "but we appear

to be explaining a significant portion of the effect that occurs in dengue immunodominance."

Immunodominance is also a problem for researchers who work on vaccines for the AIDS virus and cancer, each of which mutate quickly and occur in multiple strains.

The full text (<http://media.rice.edu/media/NewsBot.asp?MODE=VIEW&ID=8381&SnID=376845526>) of the press release is available on the Rice University Web site.

For related information, see Science and Technology (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/scitech.html).

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U.S. Company, Centers for Disease Control . . .

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wide for sustained water remediation and emergency relief, Allgood said.

A drinking water fact sheet (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/healthywater/factsheets.htm>) is available at the CDC Web site.

Information about the filtration system (<http://www.pghsi.com/safewater/>) is available on the Procter & Gamble Web site.

Text of the press release (<http://acswebapplications.acs.org/applications/ccs/application/index.cfm?PressReleaseID=2615&categoryid=11>) is available at the American Chemical Society Web site.

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Rice in U.K. Defends U.S. Policies on Terror Detainees, Iraq . . .

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tion from the international community."

Asked about China, Rice took issue with the notion that conflict between the United States and that nation is inevitable. "We have our differences with China on human rights ... on some economic issues and trade issues," she said. "But it is a good relationship, it's a sound relationship, and it's one that ... is very much on track to see the peaceful integration of China into the international system."

Rice was in the United Kingdom on the third leg of a trip to Europe that began in Berlin on March 30 and included a stop in Paris to meet with French President Jacques Chirac.

Her visit to northern England accompanied by Straw mirrors Straw's visit to Rice's hometown of Birmingham, Alabama, in October 2005. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Oct/24-568562.html>)).

The transcript (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/63969.htm>) of Rice's speech is available on the State Department Web site.

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

United States Allocated \$3.8 Billion To Avian Flu Preparedness . . .

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which in close collaboration with the Departments of Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Homeland Security, Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development and other agencies leads the Department's international engagement on avian and pandemic influenza.

ASSISTANCE FOR AFFECTED COUNTRIES

At an international donors' conference in Beijing in January, the global community pledged \$1.9 billion to combat avian influenza worldwide. The United States pledged \$334 million, which will

help fund overseas programs to develop national plans, diagnostics and lab capacity, stockpiles of protective equipment, communication and other needs.

U.S. DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS

On November 1, 2005, President Bush unveiled his National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza, a plan to strengthen the Government's ability to safeguard the American people in the event of a global pandemic. The strategy is designed to meet three critical goals:

Detecting human or animal outbreaks that occur anywhere in the world.

Protecting our people by stockpiling vaccines and antiviral drugs while improving the capacity to produce new vaccines.

Preparing to respond at the federal, state and local levels in the event an avian or pandemic influenza reaches the United States.

All levels of government are currently formulating plans to implement the strategy.

(end text)

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