



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

AFRICAN ISSUES

Admiral Kurta Assumes Command of CJTF-HOA (P 4)

CJTF-HOA reaches out to Ethiopians during Medical Civic Action project (P 5)

U.N. Peace Building Shows Progress in Sierra Leone (P 7)

AMERICAN NEWS

Secretary Clinton Honors Martin Luther King's 1959 Trip to India (P 8)

Biden Announces Selection of Disability Policy Adviser (P 10)

Language-Immersion Program Focuses on Teaching Through Play (P 11)

PEACE AND SECURITY

Economic Crisis Seen Posing Significant Threat to United States (P 12)

Analysis of Mumbai Terrorist Attack Shows Strategic Planning (P 13)

U.S. Special Representative Begins Consultations in Pakistan (P 14)

Obama Orders First New Troops to Afghanistan (P 15)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Foreign Policy's "Smart Power" Gives Science Diplomacy a New Role (P 16)

Web Site Contest Welcomes American, International Students (P 18)

New Peace Corps Volunteers Start Work in Ethiopia



Ambassador Yamamoto (R) and Health State Minister Dr. Kassa Kebede (L) with one of the Peace Corps Volunteer

Thirty Eight new Peace Corps Volunteers were officially sworn in for duty on Friday, February 13, 2009 after taking an oath that they will work with their Ethiopian partners in friendship and in peace. The volunteers will work in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and SNNP Administrative regions, focusing on the prevention, care and support and orphan and vulnerable children on HIV/AIDS.

In a ceremony at his residence, U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Donald Yamamoto administered the Volunteers' oath and commended their dedication to helping others. "You are all Ambassadors, and your service contributes to the partnership between the United

(Continued on page 2)

Abraham Lincoln "Made My Own Story Possible," Obama says

By Michelle Austein Brooks
Staff Writer

Washington — Marking the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth February 12, President Obama said he feels "a special gratitude to this singular figure who in so many ways made my own story possible and in so many ways made America's story possible."

Across the country and at U.S. Embassies abroad,

(Continued on page 3)



President Barack Obama speaks at the 102nd Abraham Lincoln Association banquet in Springfield, Ill., Feb. 12, 2009. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

New Peace Corps Volunteers Start Work in Ethiopia . . .

(Continued from page 1)

States and Ethiopia to create a more peaceful and prosperous future for all our citizens," he said. Ethiopian government officials, local dignitaries, and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who once served in Ethiopia attended the ceremony.

The East African nation of Ethiopia was one of the first countries to invite Peace Corps to establish its program in 1962, just one year after the Peace Corps was founded. The primary focus of the program was on education, with the goal of training skilled workers and promoting economic development. In addition, Volunteers worked in agricul-

ture, basic education, tourism, health, economic development and teaching English as a foreign language.

The Peace Corps remained in Ethiopia until 1977 and returned again in 1995 but suspended the program again in 2000 due to security concerns during the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. More than 3,500 Peace Corps Volunteers served in Ethiopia over those years.

Peace Corps re-entered Ethiopia to work in partnership with the Government of Ethiopia, specifically the Ministry of Health, in 2007. This is the second group to come to Ethiopia under the new program, funded

in part by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The Volunteers will be working on HIV/AIDS related activities mainly prevention, care and support; and orphan and vulnerable children services.

The Peace Corps is celebrating a 47-year legacy of service at home and abroad. Since 1961, more than 190,000 Volunteers have helped promote a better understanding between Americans and the people of the 139 countries where Volunteers have served. Peace Corps Volunteers must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age. Peace Corps service is a 27-month commitment. ♦



Peace Corps Volunteers pausing for a photo with Ambassador Donald Yamamoto (Center)

Abraham Lincoln “Made My Own Story Possible,” Obama says . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Americans celebrated the birthday of the country’s 16th president. Obama spoke about the first Republican president during a speech at the U.S. Capitol in Washington and in Springfield, Illinois, the town where Lincoln began his political career.

Lincoln, considered among the nation’s greatest presidents, is most known for his ability to keep the Union together during the Civil War and his decision to emancipate the slaves. While much attention has been given to his abilities as commander in chief, Lincoln was also a diplomat and lover of the arts.

Obama long has admired Lincoln and has read many of the former president’s writings. Obama arrived in Washington for his inauguration on a whistle-stop train tour similar to the one Lincoln took before he became president. Obama took his oath of office while swearing on Lincoln’s Bible.

In a 2005 writing, Obama said Lincoln’s biography, his “rise from poverty, his ultimate mastery of language and law, his capacity to overcome personal loss and remain determined in the face of repeated defeat ... reminded me of a larger, fundamental element of American life — the enduring belief that we can constantly remake ourselves to fit our larger dreams.”

Many U.S. media outlets have cited the similarities between Lincoln and Obama. Both lawyers got their po-



A couple shares a moment during their visit to the Abraham Lincoln Memorial after midnight in Washington February 12, 2009. The United States is celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Civil War president Abraham Lincoln on Thursday. REUTERS/Jason Reed

litical starts in Springfield, serving in the state government.

Lincoln and Obama were first-term U.S. senators representing Illinois when they launched unlikely presidential bids. In fact, both of them faced competition from U.S. senators from New York: William Seward for Lincoln and Hillary Clinton for Obama. Interestingly, both Lincoln and Obama chose these former rivals to serve as their secretaries of state.

“This president isn’t seeking to compare himself with I think what many believe is one of the two or three greatest presidents that this country has ever had,” White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said at a February 12 press briefing.

But the president did seek to demonstrate how Lincoln’s legacy carries on today.

“What Lincoln never forgot, not even in the midst of a civil war, was that despite all that divides us — North and South, black and white — we were, at heart, one nation and one people, sharing a bond as Americans that could bend but would not break,” Obama said at the Capitol February 12.

While not as divided as in Lincoln’s day, Americans con-

tinue to debate critical issues, sometimes fiercely, Obama said. As Americans debate, Obama said, “we are doing so as servants to the same flag, as representatives of the same people and as stakeholders in a common future.”

“This is the most fitting tribute we can pay, the most lasting monument we can build, to that most remarkable of men, Abraham Lincoln.”

The text of Obama’s remarks at the Capitol (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/February/20090212145808eaifas0.9306452.html>) is available on America.gov.

For more information on Lincoln, see America.gov’s publication Abraham Lincoln: A Legacy of Freedom (<http://www.america.gov/publications/books/lincoln.html>). ♦

Admiral Kurta Assumes Command of CJTF-HOA

CAMP LEMONIER, DJIBOUTI – Rear Admiral Anthony M. Kurta assumed leadership of the task force charged with building security capacity in the Horn of Africa, on Thursday, February 5.

Admiral Kurta took command of Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa from Rear Admiral Philip H. Greene during a time-honored military tradition, which transfers total responsibility, authority and accountability of the unit from one individual to another.

Admiral Kurta was previously the director of Navy Europe programs, resources, and support/director, transformation activities, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, Naples, Italy.

CJTF-HOA employs an “indirect approach” to counter extremism. Through a strategy of Cooperative Conflict Prevention the task force builds security capacity, promote regional cooperation, and protect coalition interests to prevail against extremism.

CJTF-HOA was established at Camp Lejeune, N.C., on Oct. 19, 2002. In November 2002, personnel embarked on a 28-day training



Rear Admiral Anthony M. Kurta, commander of Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), salutes while walking by a ceremonial honor guard before the change of command ceremony for Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, on February 5, 2009.

cruise aboard USS MOUNT WHITNEY, and arrived in the Horn of Africa on Dec. 8, 2002.

CJTF-HOA operated from the MOUNT WHITNEY until May 13, 2003, when the mission transitioned ashore to Camp Lemonier in Djibouti City, Djibouti. Since then,

CJTF-HOA personnel have used Military-to-Military mentorship as the cornerstone to building partner country security capacity. CJTF-HOA has supported development by building numerous schools, clinics and hospitals and conducted dozens of Medical Civil Action and Veterinary Civil Action projects. ♦

CJTF-HOA reaches out to Ethiopians during Medical Civic Action project

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW) Dustin Q. Diaz, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa Public Affairs

DIRE DAWA, Ethiopia – Service members assigned to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa made a series of house calls during a Medical Civic Action project in Ethiopia Jan. 28-Feb. 13.

Personnel from each military branch and several occupational fields worked with local government and volunteers to deliver free care to 5,097 villagers in four remote locations.

“Some of these people have never seen a doctor or dentist before,” said mission non-commissioned-officer-in-charge Army Staff Sgt. Scott Regiec. “That’s why we need to see as many as we can.”

Villagers speaking diverse tongues like Somali, Oromo and Amharic lined up for their chance. Physicians, corpsmen and medics brought medicine and expertise in 20-plus-vehicle convoys over miles of rough terrain.

“The three-hour drives were really rough, but we helped a lot of people,” said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (SW/AW) Mandy Plante, an Individual Augmentee from the Washington Navy Yard Branch Health Clinic. “I’ve been to foreign countries before, and I’ve had a good time doing that, but this is the first time I’ve gone somewhere and given them medical care. It meant a lot to me that I got to do that.”

With the help of force protection and civil affairs personnel, the team set up orderly working sites at Milo, Aydora, Dire Teyara and Germam. Village chiefs prioritized the patients

ahead of time.

“This is a proven method for efficiently improving the health of large numbers of people,” said Army Maj. (Dr.) Remington Nevin, a public health physician deployed with the 360th Civil Affairs Brigade.

ample, we brought multivitamins to help deal with the malnutrition that sometimes occurs in rural areas. These things take about a year to put together, so a lot of planning is involved.”

Garcia helped issue the vitamins



AYDORA, Ethiopia - U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Tammi Penhollow checks a woman's throat while a local medical provider looks on during a Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) in the village of Aydora, Ethiopia, February 4, 2009.

“Reaching as many people, in as many regions as possible, with a proven intervention is key to a successful public health mission.” From there, many saw providers, both those attached to CJTF-HOA and others on temporary assignment.

“I was asked to come here as a pharmacy tech and help manage the operation,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Rey Garcia, who works for the United States Air Force Reserve Command Surgeon General’s Office at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., as a medical planner. “With every MEDCAP we do, we tailor the medication we bring to the region. For ex-

and other medications including acetaminophen and antibiotics to about a third of the patients seen. Others received dental care from both experienced dentists and enlisted personnel training on the job. This team gave out antibiotics and performed tooth extractions, including multiple extractions for some people. Hospitalman Daniel Badillo, who was on his third MEDCAP, performed many of these extractions.

“Some of the most rewarding things I’ve gotten to do on these deployments are exercises like this. The people really want the help,

(Continued on page 6)

CJTF-HOA reaches out to Ethiopians during Medical . . .

(Continued from page 5)

and when you give it to them, their faces are just overwhelmed, which makes you want to do your job even more. This made my deployment very enjoyable – it's why I wanted to come to Africa," said Badillo, a resident of Pharr, Texas.

While it aided the health and welfare of the Ethiopian people, the MEDCAP was primarily a Civil Affairs Mission intended to demonstrate effective cooperation between the Ethiopian government, Ethiopian Ministry of Health and U.S. Africa Command, according to Army Maj. Michael Wheeler, mission commander. The physicians involved called it an effective way to improve stability in the region and enhance the Ethiopia-U.S. relationship.

"Poor health breeds insecurity, and insecurity leads to breakdowns in public health that threaten millions of lives," said Nevin. "While local governments continue to build on their successes in public health program oversight and management, the assistance of international partners, including the United States, will remain an important part of the solution, particularly in purchasing and supplying medications and in facilitating their delivery."

Garcia has spent the last two years traveling to MEDCAP sites around the world, and he agrees that this is one of the best ways to show con-

cern for citizens where they live. "These nations are in need, and we basically come to help them understand a better way of living," Garcia said. "You can touch thousands of people's lives by teaching them that something as simple as how washing their hands can help stop the spread of disease. And I think we did that very well here."

"There are no hospitals or pharmacies at these villages – we are bringing these things to them," said Tesfay. "I am happy to work with the Americans and help my people. I know it makes it easier for them to get help when they see us doing it with the Americans."

The team also coordinated with local government officials, like Hassan Ali Jama, Aydora tribal chairman, who ensured care went to those who needed it most, like sick children and the elderly.

"I really have to thank the Americans on behalf of my people," said Ali Jama. "This helps us so much. From the beginning, the Americans have done more than anyone else to bring us from darkness into brightness. We look forward to more help in the future."



AYDORA, Ethiopia - U.S. Navy Lieutenant Rob Worthing examines a child during a Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP) in the village of Aydora, Ethiopia, February 4, 2009.

As a way of maximizing that good will, every villager who entered one of the sites received a goodie bag containing toothbrushes, toothpaste, antibacterial soap and multivitamins. The goodie bag section, like the others, functioned smoothly thanks to both the military team and the local volunteers who helped at each site. John Tesfay, a sound technician from Dire Dawa, was one of these helpers who provided the labor and interpretation services that made the MEDCAP possible.

The military team members were also excited to see Ethiopia and interact with its people.

"The Ethiopian people are very warm and helpful to one another and welcoming towards Americans," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (FMF) Sheila Biag, an IA Sailor deployed from Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes.

"Ethiopia is awesome," added Plante. "The people are so friendly. When we were leaving one of the

(Continued on page 9)

U.N. Peace Building Shows Progress in Sierra Leone

By Crystal G. Ofori
Staff Writer

Washington — America applauds progress by the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone in building a durable peace in the once war-torn West African nation, says U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice.

“We’ve come a long way in the United Nations’ ability to help countries and regions resolve, recover from and rebuild after conflict,” Rice said February 9. She also commended the Sierra Leonean government for confronting corruption, enhancing respect for human rights and strengthening the rule of law.

Rice, the U.S. permanent representative to the international body, talked with reporters following a U.N. Security Council briefing from Germany’s Michael von der Schulenburg, the secretary-general’s executive representative for the U.N. Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). Rice said the mission’s success makes it “a new instrument for the United Nations to assist post-conflict countries as they make the critical transition from insecurity and violence to lasting peace.”

The road to peace and stability in Sierra Leone was never an easy one. Fighting between the Revolutionary United Front and the government from 1991 to 2002 claimed tens of thousands of lives, while thousands more were maimed

by the rebel forces’ practice of amputating limbs of innocent civilians. More than 2 million Sierra Leoneans — one-third of the population — fled the violence and were displaced during the conflict.

Both sides in the civil war became

them about elections, women’s rights, health concerns and other issues.

“The type of office that UNIPSIL represents is a new instrument for the United Nations to assist post-conflict countries as they make the

critical transition from insecurity and violence to lasting peace,” Rice said. “We will need to follow its progress ... to ensure that as member states we give the necessary support to help its efforts succeed.”

Rice urged nations to join the United States in supporting the UNIPSIL mission. She cited concerns that youth unemployment, poverty and illicit drugs threaten to unravel progress in the

country, which remains among the poorest in the world, according to the United Nations Development Programme.

“Sierra Leone reminds us not only of the difficulties of post-conflict transitions but also of the promise of the United Nations and the broader international community to assist a country and its people to build a better future,” Rice said.

What actions should President Obama consider to promote peace and security in Africa? Comment on America.gov’s blog (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>). ♦



The U.N. Peacebuilding Commission paid a five-day working visit to Sierra Leone in 2007

infamous for their use of child soldiers, as depicted in Ishmael Beah’s 2007 memoir *A Long Way Gone*.

U.N. peacekeepers operated in the country until 2006. Today, the civilian UNIPSIL mission works with the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council to help consolidate the peace and restore democracy in Sierra Leone.

Rice praised Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma for taking steps to confront corruption, enhance respect for human rights, and strengthen the rule of law. She also cited the importance of the Peacebuilding Commission in supporting the government’s reform efforts, as well as U.N. Radio, which helped connect Sierra Leoneans and inform

Secretary Clinton Honors Martin Luther King's 1959 Trip to India

By Louise Fenner
Staff Writer

Washington — “This is a very special journey for me personally,” said Martin Luther King III, son of the late American civil rights leader, a few days before embarking for India on the 50th anniversary of his father’s “incredible visit” to that country.

King is part of a cultural delegation sponsored by the U.S. State Department with the cooperation of the government of India. The delegation will retrace the 1959 journey made by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and his wife, Coretta Scott King. Several members of the delegation — including jazz musician Herbie Hancock — were welcomed to the State Department February 12 by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Clinton said King’s trip to India is not only a landmark of the civil rights movement, but also a testament “to the bonds of affection and shared history between our two nations.”

“As we celebrate Black History Month here at home, the 50th anniversary of Dr. King’s trip to India is a reminder that the struggle for civil rights and justice has always been and continues to be a global mission; it knows no borders,” she said.

King, who heads up Realizing the Dream, a humanitarian nonprofit foundation, said his parents traveled to India “to immerse themselves in [Mahatma] Gandhi’s nonviolence



Jazz musician Herbie Hancock (left) and Martin Luther King III, son of the late civil rights leader, meet with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at the State Department February 12 in advance of a trip to India by Hancock, King and other distinguished Americans to commemorate the 1959 visit of Martin Luther King Jr. to that country.

movement and to identify with and give support to the people of India who were struggling to overcome the evils of poverty and discrimination.”

“The impact Gandhi’s life had on my father was quite profound,” he said. The civil rights movement led by King in the 1950s and 1960s followed the techniques of nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience Gandhi used to end British colonial rule and improve the lives of India’s poorest and most vulnerable citizens. The delegation will visit many of the places King saw in 1959.

Also at the State Department event were Indian Ambassador to the United States Ronen Sen and two other members of the delegation

traveling to India in mid-February: John Lewis and Spencer Bachus, both members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Lewis, a former leader of the civil rights movement and now a Democratic congressman from Georgia, said King and Gandhi “believed deeply in the power of nonviolent resistance to injustice as a tool for social change.”

America was changed forever by their ideas, Lewis said, adding, “I don’t know where I would be if it hadn’t been for the teaching of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.”

Bachus, a Republican congressman from Alabama, acknowledged that Birmingham, the city he comes

(Continued on page 9)

Secretary Clinton Honors Martin Luther King's 1959 Trip to India . . .

(Continued from page 8)

from, had been a center of racist violence during the struggle for civil rights. "Birmingham is a better place today than it was because of Martin Luther King," he said.

Hancock said he looked forward to two special musical performances in Mumbai and New Delhi and to working with students at the Ravi Shankar Institute for Music and Performing Arts. Students from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz in New Orleans will be performing with Hancock in India. Bringing the Americans together with young Indian musicians will "prove again that the language of jazz knows no boundaries," he said.

The teachings of King and Gandhi "have really encouraged me to lead a life of peace, honesty, and filled with love for my fellow man," Hancock said. He got a laugh when he added that "their philosophies of cooperation, communication and harmony are also essential elements of every jazz band."

Clinton recalled hearing Martin Luther King Jr. speak in Chicago when she was a teenager. "I was deeply moved then, as I continue to be, by his timeless call to all of us, his dream for a world that is really worthy of our children. I remain inspired by his undying hope for a better tomorrow," she said.

Later, in response to a question

about the election of Barack Obama, the first African-American U.S. president, Clinton said, "We're very proud in the United States that our president represents, in great measure, the dream of Dr. King. And certainly, we all have to now continue that work, and I know that the president feels that responsibility acutely."

"But it's not just the work of a president or not just the work of diplomats or members of Congress. It is the work of everyone," the secretary said.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

CJTF-HOA reaches out to Ethiopians during Medical . . .

(Continued from page 6)

villages, all the people were clapping and singing for us, and two women came up to me and gave me a hug. I took a picture with them. That was really nice that they were so happy that we were there."

Provider Army Maj. Marc Raciti said he was pleased with the team's ability not only to accomplish the mission, but to adapt and overcome unexpected difficulties.

"When you have a complicated MEDCAP mission like this where there are so many moving parts, one of the big things is to maintain your 'hit marks' – time of departure, getting there on time and setting up on time, and we were very successful at doing all that, even though we had problems," said

Raciti, an orthopedic consultant.

"Our vehicles got flat tires, they would get stuck in soft sand, but we managed to do our mission and do it well. We just kept getting better and evolving as a team; we went from yielding a very small population the first day to seeing the most patients during the shortest amount of time the last day. You could really see how the team was pulling together in the spirit of the whole mission."

In addition to the medical assistance, the team gave out shower shoes collected by teachers from Isbell Middle School in Santa Paula, Calif. Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Johnson, a Reservist currently deployed with CJTF-HOA, asked for help in col-

lecting the shoes and gave them to the team to distribute them at the MEDCAP sites.

"The first time I went to Uganda on a mission, I saw so many people walking around without any shoes," Johnson said. "Flip-flops are cheap and wearing them can keep you from getting ringworms and other parasites, so it's a really easy way to help. I'm glad I got people back home involved – people who would normally never think about helping folks in Africa."

According to Nevin, CJTF-HOA conducts MEDCAPs in several countries in the area of responsibility, including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. ♦

Biden Announces Selection of Disability Policy Adviser

By Carolee Walker
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is committed to improving conditions for people with disabilities, says Vice President Biden, who announced the appointment of Kareem Dale as special assistant to the president for disability policy.

“What we’re trying to do,” Biden said February 12 at the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Boise, Idaho, “is make sure that not only do we deal with getting support for what you’re seeing happening at these Winter Games, but also to make sure that persons with disabilities are in a position to also be in the work force, so they don’t have to choose, like many have to do now, between staying in a job that’s a dead-end job that they don’t like, or else leaving a job that they like because it’s the only way to get health care.”

Dale, from Chicago, is visually impaired. He directed the handling of disability issues during President Obama’s election campaign.

The Special Olympics, founded in the United States in 1968, encourages people with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. Today, nearly 3 million people participate in more than 200 Special Olympics pro-

grams in 180 countries.

Biden joined Special Olympics Chairman Tim Shriver to watch the freestyle figure-skating pairs competition. Biden was accompanied by Special Olympics athlete Tim McConnell, a gold medal speed



Vice President Biden, with Olympian Michelle Kwan, left, congratulates Special Olympic medalists

skater from the United States; U.S. sports envoy Michelle Kwan, an Olympic medalist; U.S. figure skating Olympic medalist Scott Hamilton; and Arne Duncan, U.S. education secretary. At the ceremony following the competition, Biden presented awards to gold medalists Tobias Werner and Christin Ziebe of Germany; silver medalists I Han Pan and I Ju Wang of Chinese Taipei; and bronze medalists Jose Visiconty and Brenda Monreal of Mexico.

The 2009 World Winter Games, ending February 13, are the largest ever, with more than 2,500 athletes

and their coaches participating from 100 countries, according to Shriver, whose mother, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, is the organization’s founder.

Shriver said Special Olympics “represents the largest movement for tolerance and acceptance in the world,” and the appointment of Dale would help focus attention on some of the important issues, including health problems, faced by people with intellectual and physical disabilities.

For example, according to Shriver, one-third of Special Olympics athletes cannot see well and need new or different eyeglasses, and 6 percent of athletes have serious untreated eye diseases.

Biden acknowledged that there are barriers to improving the conditions of people with disabilities but added that the Obama administration is committed

to working toward removing obstacles faced by Special Olympics athletes and nonathletes.

“We’ve broken down barriers before,” Biden said.

For additional information, see the Special Olympics (<http://specialolympics.org/>) and 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games (<http://www.2009worldgames.org/>) Web sites.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Language-Immersion Program Focuses on Teaching Through Play

By Peggy B. Hu
Staff Writer

Washington — On a Saturday morning, when many of their peers are probably playing sports or watching television, six children listen to their teacher identify toy animals in Chinese. In a nearby classroom, others ask in Arabic for specific colors as they make paper flowers. Next door, a third group sings in French.

The children are students in the first language school in the Washington metropolitan area founded exclusively to teach young children.

In 2005, three Spanish-language teachers frustrated by the lack of language-immersion programs for young children started the CommuniKids Language School for Children. Today, the school offers language-immersion classes in French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese and Arabic to children 1 to 8 years old.

According to Jeannine Piacenza, CommuniKids chief executive and founder, she and her fellow founders chose to start with Spanish classes due to their own expertise. But after receiving calls and e-mails asking for other languages, the school added French and Mandarin Chinese, the most requested languages. The program later added Italian, Arabic and Portuguese.

As interest in learning multiple languages has grown, so has the number of facilities that teach young children. Today, many public and private elementary schools in Washington offer dual-language immersion programs — in which native speakers of a language other than English learn alongside native Eng-

lish speakers — as well as total or partial language immersion programs. Preschools too are adding language instruction.

Piacenza stressed the importance of early exposure. "If we are to be serious about language learning, we have to begin as early as possible,

their daughter, Sophia, in Spanish classes at the age of 2. The couple chose Spanish because of their background. Iliana is originally from Panama, and Michael's mother is half Spanish and half Filipino. Since they both speak Spanish, "it was the logical choice," Michael said, adding that they wanted Sophia "to



During a shape-identification exercise, Arabic-language teacher May Aoun, at left, points out that a chart is made up of rectangles.

and preschool is the natural place to start, as young children, especially under the age of 6, learn languages very naturally through regular interaction with people," she said.

PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Parents of CommuniKids students tend to have ties to other countries and enroll their children to help preserve their cultural heritage.

Iliana and Michael Beal enrolled

start learning at the youngest age possible."

Iliana said she speaks to her daughter in Spanish at home, but Sophia appears to speak more Spanish when she is with her classmates. The couple reinforces Sophia's language ability by having her listen to songs sung in Spanish. Sophia, now 3, is particularly fond of the singer Shakira.

LEARNING ABOUT OTHER

(Continued on page 20)

Economic Crisis Seen Posing Significant Threat to United States

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The most significant immediate threat to the United States is the continuing global economic crisis, National Intelligence Director Dennis Blair says.

“Time is probably our greatest threat. The longer it takes for the recovery to begin, the greater the likelihood of serious damage to U.S. strategic interests,” Blair said in prepared testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee on February 12.

“Roughly a quarter of the countries in the world have already experienced low-level instability such as government changes because of the current slowdown.”

The U.S. intelligence community makes an annual report to Congress on the most significant global threats facing the nation. Blair, who was appointed to the post and confirmed by the Senate in January, framed his analysis for the Senate Intelligence Committee by identifying key areas of risk, concern and opportunity that could affect the lives of Americans. Blair’s appearance before the committee is the first time that the national intelligence director has testified without other intelligence agency chiefs also testifying.

Blair testified that the bulk of anti-state demonstrations have occurred in Europe and in the nations of the former Soviet Union. While about two-thirds of the countries in the

world have enough funds and other resources to limit the economic recession’s impact in the short term, much of Latin America, the former Soviet states and sub-Saharan Africa lack enough cash reserves, access to international credit, or other



Director Dennis Blair, left, and President Obama speak with reporters.

means of coping with the mounting crisis, he said.

Sophisticated analysis shows that the risks of regime-threatening instability increase dramatically over a one- to two-year economic crisis, he said.

“Besides increased economic nationalism, the most likely political fallout for U.S. interests will involve allies and friends not being able to fully meet their defense and humanitarian obligations,” Blair said. And potential refugee migrations to the United States from the Caribbean region could impact U.S. homeland security, he said.

Industrialized nations are already in recession. Growth in emerging-market countries, once thought to be immune from financial crises in

industrialized countries, is faltering and many have gone into recession, he said.

China and India have seen their dynamic growth engines slow as they try to cope with falling demand for their exports, Blair said. Other nations are trying various economic measures to either jump-start their economies or lessen the impact of recessions.

“Recessions are a relative game, and historically the United States has proven more adroit at responding to them than most. The U.S.

tradition of openness, developed skills and mobility probably puts it in a better position to reinvent itself,” Blair said.

TURNING A CORNER ON TERRORISM

In 2008, foreign terrorist groups were not able to conduct another major attack on the U.S. homeland, Blair said. Where significant progress has been made in the struggle against international terrorism is in public opinion shifting against terrorist groups like al-Qaida, he said.

“Over the last year and a half, al-Qaida has faced significant public criticism from prominent religious leaders and fellow extremists, primarily regarding the use of brutal and indiscriminate tactics ... that

(Continued on page 20)

Analysis of Mumbai Terrorist Attack Shows Strategic Planning

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Those behind the terrorist attack in Mumbai, India, demonstrated a significant level of strategic thought that makes their group particularly dangerous, according to a recent study by the RAND Corporation, a public policy research organization.

“The defining characteristic of the Mumbai attack, and what makes it so alarming, is not just the ruthless killing, but the meticulous planning and preparation that went into the operation,” says Brian Michael Jenkins, a leading terrorism expert and senior adviser at RAND who worked on the study.

“The goal was not only to slaughter as many people as possible, but to target specific groups of people and facilities with political, cultural and emotional value. This indicates a level of strategic thought — a strategic culture — that poses a difficult challenge: not whether we can outgun the terrorists, but can we outthink them?”

The study’s researchers argue that the level of thought devoted to the attack, which killed at least 173 people and wounded another 308 people, demonstrates a strategic approach present in the planning, implementation and conduct of the attack that has not been seen before the attack by this group, and may indicate the development of an escalating terrorist campaign in South Asia.

“The Mumbai attack reflected precise planning, detailed reconnaissance, and thorough preparation, both physical and mental,” the study says. “It relied on surprise, creating confusion and overwhelming the ability of the authorities to

On November 26, 2008, terrorists struck at 10 locations across Mumbai, India’s financial and entertainment capital and its largest city, and were finally brought under control by November 29 by Mumbai police and India’s National Security Guards.



People light candles as they pay homage to the victims of the Mumbai terrorist attack.

SAFE HAVENS CONTINUE AIDING TERRORISM

The study — conducted by 10 RAND researchers and terrorism experts — argues that “safe havens continue to be key enablers for terrorist groups. Safe havens allow terrorist leaders to recruit, select, and train their operators and make it easier for terrorists to plan and execute complex operations.”

respond. And it required determined execution by suicide attackers who nonetheless were able to operate effectively over an extended period of time.”

Evidence collected by Indian authorities and others indicates that the group responsible for the attacks was Lashkar-e-Taiba. One lone terrorist attacker — Ajmal Amir Kasab — survived the attack and was captured alive by Indian authorities. Given the terrorists’ effort to maximize the psychological impact of the attacks, future attacks from this group of terrorists will aim for large-scale casualties and greater symbolic targets, according to the study’s key judgments.

At the strategic level, the Mumbai attack shows the urgent need for addressing the transnational sources of regional terrorism, the study says.

And there is a danger in this type of attack that the attackers had local assistance from segments of the population that have become radicalized, the study says, which remains a significant political and social challenge.

The attackers designed the assault to do what the authorities were not expecting: seek a high casualty count, go after significant local targets and cause economic damage, the study says. ♦

U.S. Special Representative Begins Consultations in Pakistan

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama's special representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan has launched consultations with Pakistani leaders in Islamabad on ways to work together more effectively to strengthen security and promote new economic opportunities.

"I am here to listen and learn the ground realities in this critically important country," Ambassador Richard Holbrooke said in a February 9 statement issued by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. "The United States looks forward to reviewing our policies and renewing our commitment and friendship with the people of Pakistan."

Holbrooke met with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, and General Ashfaq Kayani, the army chief, to seek their perspectives on supporting Pakistan's civilian government and working together to take action against a rising tide of militant violence emanating from Pakistan's tribal regions.

"Pakistan's situation is dire, not just the problems in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas but its economy, which has suffered grievous blows recently," Holbrooke said in a February 8 address to the Munich Security Conference. "It needs international assistance, international sympathy and international support."

Pakistani security forces are facing a tough fight against militants in the country's tribal regions, as well as in the Swat Valley, 160 kilometers (100 miles) from Islamabad. A Polish engineer is the latest victim of a rash of kidnappings and executions,



Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, right, and U.S. special representative Richard Holbrooke

while media sources report that Taliban militants who staged attacks on two Afghan government buildings February 11 operated from the border region.

"There is one theater of war, straddling an ill-defined border," Holbrooke said. "On the western side of that border, NATO and other forces are able to operate. On the eastern side, it's the sovereign territory of Pakistan."

Holbrooke is a key participant in one of the administration's top foreign policy priorities: enhancing security in Afghanistan by eliminating terrorist safe havens and delivering new reconstruction and development aid in the surrounding region. "What we haven't seen [in the border region of Afghanistan and Paki-

stan] is the kind of concerted effort to root out those safe havens that would ultimately make our mission successful," Obama said in a February 9 press conference. "I believe that the new government of Pakistan and President Zardari care deeply about getting control of this situation, and we want to be effective partners with them on that issue."

A veteran U.S. peacemaker best known for brokering an end to the Bosnian War, Holbrooke will bring regional leaders' opinions to a comprehensive White House policy review of challenges along the Afghan-Pakistan border. An expert on the region, Bruce Reidel, will head the review. The admini-

stration plans to complete the review before Obama travels to Europe for the NATO 60th Anniversary summit April 2.

Pakistani officials have offered to create an interagency committee to assist in the U.S. policy review.

Holbrooke's visit comes as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reviews a new U.S. aid package for Pakistan that could deliver as much as \$1.5 billion annually for the next five years to promote economic development along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Ideas under consideration include funding for reconstruction opportunity zones — industrial parks in the border region where manufacturers could create local jobs and benefit from duty-free

(Continued on page 15)

Obama Orders First New Troops to Afghanistan

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama has ordered 17,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan to stabilize deteriorating security conditions as his administration works with allies and regional partners to formulate a comprehensive recovery strategy for the shattered South Asian nation.

“The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan demands urgent attention and swift action,” Obama said in a February 17 statement. “This reinforcement will contribute to the security of the Afghan people and to stability in Afghanistan.”

The deployments will consist of an 8,000-strong Marine Expeditionary Brigade in the spring, to be followed by a 4,000-strong Army Stryker Brigade in the summer, along with 5,000 support personnel.

The deployments will constitute a nearly 50 percent increase in the 36,000 U.S. forces already on the ground in Afghanistan. Approximately half serve in the 41-nation NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, while others lead a separate mission dedicated to training Afghan security forces and con-

ducting counterterrorism operations.

During his presidential campaign, Obama identified the stabilization of Afghanistan as a top U.S. foreign policy priority. As a U.S. senator, Obama traveled in the region, where he witnessed an increasingly active insurgency operating from safe havens across the border in Pakistan, a burgeoning narcotics trade in the country’s southeastern provinces, and pervasive corruption in the new Afghan government. Combined, these problems threaten to roll back progress made in the South Asian nation since an international coalition toppled the Taliban regime in 2001.

The announcement came as Obama’s special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, veteran U.S. peacemaker Richard Holbrooke, was returning from his first rounds of consultations in the region. Security challenges facing the region were further illustrated by the Pakistani government’s announcement earlier in the day of a new truce with cross-border extremists targeting communities in the Swat Valley, about 150 kilometers from the Pakistani capital, Islamabad. The additional troops will be made possible by America’s drawdown in Iraq, Obama said, and

will allow more time for the White House to complete its comprehensive review of U.S. policy in Afghanistan. Obama seeks a new way ahead in Afghanistan that more effectively combines diplomacy and development with security efforts to help Afghans eliminate terrorist safe havens and emerge from decades of war and poverty.

“As we develop our new strategic goals, we will do so in concert with our friends and allies as together we seek the resources necessary to succeed,” Obama said.

The White House seeks to complete its policy review before Obama travels to Europe in April for the NATO 60th Anniversary Summit, hosted by France and Germany.

What actions should President Obama consider to help bring security and stability to Afghanistan? Comment on America.gov’s blog (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

U.S. Special Representative Begins Consultations in Pakistan . . .

(Continued from page 14)

entry of their goods into the United States.

Holbrooke also traveled to Pakistan’s tribal regions, where he met with government and military officials as well as community leaders and representatives from aid organizations, according to State Depart-

ment acting spokesman Robert Wood. Holbrooke will continue his consultations with visits to Afghanistan and India.

Qureshi welcomed Holbrooke’s trip as marking a “new beginning” in U.S.-Pakistani relations.

What actions should President Obama consider to support Pakistan

and help bring security and stability to Afghanistan? Comment on America.gov’s blog (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Foreign Policy's "Smart Power" Gives Science Diplomacy a New Role

By Cheryl Pellerin
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has called for a change in the State Department's approach to carrying out its foreign policy duties. This reformation will strengthen the role of science cooperation in international relations.

"American leadership has been wanting but is still wanted," she told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during her confirmation hearing January 13. "We must use what has been called smart power, the full range of tools at our disposal — diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal and cultural — picking the right tool or combination of tools for each situation. With smart power, diplomacy will be the vanguard of foreign policy."

Smart power is a balance of hard military power with the soft power of diplomacy, development, cultural exchanges, education and science. One of the most promising of the smart power tools is science diplomacy, the practice of supporting and promoting scientific exchanges, cooperation and research between the United States and other nations — sometimes nations that have no other diplomatic relations with the United States.

Through its Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science (OES), the State Department engages govern-

ments, private-sector businesses, universities, nongovernmental and international organizations and individuals from every region in the world to promote scientific cooperation and education.

"We have recently concluded S&T



The United States and Indonesia jointly launched tsunami and climate-monitoring buoys in the region.

[science and technology] agreements with Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Jordan," Jeff Miotke, OES deputy assistant secretary for science, space and health, told the House Committee on Science and Technology in April 2008. An agreement with Saudi Arabia was finalized and signed in December 2008.

"We've raised our S&T relationship with Pakistan to a higher level," he added. "With Pakistan and Egypt, we have the only two government-to-government S&T funds still in existence."

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS

In July 2008, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), an international nonprofit scientific organization based in Washington, announced the establishment of the Center for Science Diplomacy.

The center works with the science and foreign policy communities to communicate the value of science diplomacy and identify collaborative projects that could help strengthen civil society relationships among nations, especially when official relations are strained or do not exist.

"I view our activities as twofold," Vaughan Turekian, center di-

rector and AAAS chief international officer, told America.gov. "One is operational and the other is inspirational."

Operational activities include assembling delegations and working with international collaborators to visit other countries, and developing activities with countries bilaterally.

The center works with the Jerusalem-based, nonprofit and nonpolitical Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization, for example, to support its mission of fostering cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians

(Continued on page 17)

Foreign Policy's "Smart Power" Gives Science Diplomacy a New Role . . .

(Continued from page 16)

and promoting dialogue and interaction among scholars and scientists in those communities.

"The inspirational piece, which is critically important," Turekian said, "is to bring together experts from the different communities to think about opportunities for the types of engagement that might initiate connections or establish connections over the long term."

BUILDING BRIDGES

In November 2008, the Association of American Universities organized a tour of Iran for the presidents of six leading U.S. universities as part of an effort to identify ways to enhance science and education links between the United States and Iran.

On January 22, Iranian and U.S. scientists and senior academics met at AAAS in Washington in the latest of a series of exchange visits that comes at a time when U.S. policy toward Iran is undergoing a comprehensive review.

Another example of science diplomacy is the Iraqi Virtual Science Library, launched in 2006 to help rebuild the educational and scientific infrastructure in Iraq.

The library is a digital portal that gives 80 percent of Iraqi universities and research institutes access to millions of articles from more than 17,000 scientific and engineering journals, plus technical content and educational resources, through an Internet platform developed with Sun Microsystems.

A group of AAAS scientists began



NASA astronaut Sandra Magnus and Mr. J.P. Harrison interact with school children in Bangalore, India, on June 24, 2004. This program at the Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium was held in conjunction with the five-day Indo-US Conference on Space Science, Applications and Commerce.

the project, which is now an inter-agency collaboration funded by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the State Department, the Civilian Research and Development Foundation, donations from publishing companies and professional societies, universities and private companies.

"The U.S. government hasn't appreciated the full power of science diplomacy," Kristin Lord, a foreign policy fellow at the Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy, told America.gov.

"There's no substantial part of our government that's tasked with doing science diplomacy," she said. "At the State Department are people who are very committed to science diplomacy, but there are very

few staff there who do this ... and the budget is absolutely miniscule."

"Science cooperation has such great potential as a way to build bridges and because it's based upon mutual respect and understanding," Turekian said. "That is at the heart of the engagement."

More information about the Center for Science Diplomacy (<http://diplomacy.aaas.org/>) and the Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization (<http://www.ipso-jerusalem.org/>) is available at the organizations' Web sites.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Web Site Contest Welcomes American, International Students

By Louise Fenner
Staff Writer

Washington — Although only one person owned a computer and no one had a car, a team of students in Bulgaria managed to visit a nuclear power plant, conduct a community survey and create a Web site that won the grand prize in the annual Doors to Diplomacy competition in 2008.

“We didn’t have any vehicle to go to the power plant, and if it wasn’t for our teacher who drove us there, our project wouldn’t have started at all,” said the students in their project proposal. Another obstacle was their limited access to computers, since the school’s Internet room “was always full.”

Doors to Diplomacy challenges young people ages 13 to 18 to create Web sites that teach the importance of global issues and diplomacy. The 2009 competition is now open and registration ends February 28. Projects must be completed by March 15 and winners will be announced May 21.

During the 2008 competition, students from the Joan Ekzarh Language School in Vratsa, Bulgaria, competed against 190 other teams from 38 countries. The Vratsa team explored environmental and safety issues connected with the Kozloduy nuclear power plant. The students visited the plant and a local cancer center and conducted a public opinion survey, asking whether reactors 3 and 4 — which were closed as part of Bulgaria’s accession to the European Union — should be reopened.

The Doors to Diplomacy competi-



Bulgarian secondary school students and their teacher, winners of the 2008 Doors to Diplomacy competition

tion is sponsored by the U.S. State Department and the Global SchoolNet Foundation, a nonprofit, Internet-based education program in California. Each year, teams from the United States and another country share the grand prize.

In 2008, the American winners came from Florida. Their Web site raises awareness of the threats to dolphins and manatees from pollution and trash, fishing nets, collisions with boats and jet skis, habitat loss, disease and other dangers.

Each student on the two winning teams receives a \$2,000 scholarship. In addition, their coaches — usually teachers — receive \$500 cash for their schools.

“In the last two years, there have been a lot of projects about the environment and how the environment affects everybody, no matter where you live,” said Yvonne Marie Andres, president of the Global-SchoolNet Foundation. “There are also a lot of projects about the importance of the [United Nations] getting involved in solving controversial issues in a peaceful way.”

About half of the Doors to Diplomacy entries are from international students, a percentage that has increased over the years. In addition to Bulgaria, international winners have come from India, Macedonia, Mexico, Taiwan and Uzbekistan. All

(Continued on page 19)

Web Site Contest Welcomes American, International Students . . .

(Continued from page 18)

international entries must be in English, although many teams also create Web sites in their native languages.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD WEB SITE

The quality of entries keeps going up, Andres said. "That is understandable, since schools look at previous entries and they say, 'Well, I need to do at least that much,' and then they add more. And of course the Internet tools are getting better."

However, when asked what the contest judges look for, Andres strongly emphasized Web site content rather than flashy interactive elements. "There's original research, they back up their research, they describe research process, they state a point of view," she said. "We want them to present more than one point of view, but then take a position."

The best sites are created by "students who make it clear they've really researched, they really understand all aspects of the issue, and then they provide some insight from their perspective. That advances the whole concept of diplomacy."

Janice Clark, a public affairs specialist with the State Department and a contest judge, said the Bulgarian students' Web site shows that "environmental effects don't recognize country borders. There was thorough research; multidimensional analysis — nuclear, solar, wind, geothermal, hydro; they engaged the public with a survey. The project asked difficult, timely questions and presented meaningful an-

swers."

"We made people think about what nuclear energy does to the environment and if it could be replaced with an alternative energy source," the Bulgarian students reported. Most people they surveyed "do not feel sufficiently informed about the environmental and health issues" surrounding the Kozloduy nuclear power plant, the team said.



Yvonne Marie Andres of Global SchoolNet, which co-sponsors the Doors to Diplomacy contest with the State Department

Each Doors to Diplomacy team is required to evaluate entries from four other teams. The students and educational professionals do the preliminary judging, and final selections are made by the State Department.

Teachers say the peer review process is especially valuable, Andres said. If the student reviewers "don't understand what the message is or what the educational value is or how to navigate a site, they suddenly realize that creating an educational project is not just about content. It's also the ability to present a message that people can under-

stand and that's clear, and that people have to be able to get around on the Web site."

"I would love to see every school participate in this project," Andres said. "I really have great hopes with the new administration because I understand there's going to be a real emphasis on diplomacy."

"Starting with young people is a great thing to do so they understand that the way to solve the world's problems is through diplomatic approaches and understanding. I'm very excited about that."

More information about the Doors to Diplomacy competition (<http://www.globalschoolnet.org/gsndoors/>) is available on the Global SchoolNet Web site.

The 2008 winning sites can be viewed at Fight Against Radiation To Have a Good Wind (<http://greenimpulse.hit.bg/home.htm>) and Pier2Pier: Helping Wild Dolphins and Manatees (<http://www.pier2pier.net/index.html>).

Also see "International Students Attracted to Diplomacy Web Site Contest" (<http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/November/20071106125615xlrennef0.6753504.html>) and Technology and Education (<http://amlife.america.gov/amlife/education/technologyeduc.html>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS
SECTION
AMERICAN EMBASSY**

P.O.Box 1014
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Phone: 251-11-5174007
251-11-5174000
Fax: 251-11-1242454
Email: pasaddis@state.gov



See also

[http://www.america.gov/](http://www.america.gov)

Telling America's story

Language-Immersion Program Focuses . . .

(Continued from page 11)

CULTURES

Although some families have strong ties to other countries, others participate in language immersion programs out of a basic desire to learn more about other cultures. When Elizabeth Booker went to China for training, for example, preparations for the trip sparked her 5-year-old daughter Brooke's curiosity. Booker and her husband, Robert Booker, encouraged Brooke in her desire to learn Chinese.

"There is such a cultural difference between the United States and China," Brooke's father said. Chinese is "one of the more difficult languages to learn" for English speakers, he added. "Having [Brooke] exposed to those sounds at an early age will hopefully help her learn other languages" more easily.

Robert Booker hopes to find a Man-

darin-speaking friend for his daughter to play with to help her learn more quickly, since neither parent speaks the language fluently. For now, the Bookers reinforce Brooke's learning through podcasts, radio programs, CDs, language-teaching software and time with adult friends who are fluent in Chinese. The family hopes to live in China some day, and Robert Booker says their interest is due to a belief that China will have increasing influence in the world, both economically and politically.

"Since the 1980s, China has been coming into the world spotlight," he said. "The world will be different in 10 years."

The author's son studies Chinese at CommuniKids.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Economic Crisis Seen Posing Significant Threat to United States . . .

(Continued from page 12)

have resulted in the deaths of Muslim civilians," he said.

Al-Qaida today is less capable and effective than it was a year ago, Blair testified.

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

While climate change, energy, global health and environmental security are often intertwined and not traditionally thought of as threats, they will impact the United States in many ways, Blair testified.

"Access to relatively secure and clean energy sources and management of chronic food and water shortages will assume increasing

importance for a growing number of countries," he said. "Adding well over a billion people to the world's population by 2025 will itself put pressure on these vital resources."

And a significant percentage of the world's population will be migrating from rural areas to major urban centers to seek greater personal security and economic opportunity, he said. These actions will strain limited resources even further.

Blair said the already stressed resource sector will be further complicated and exacerbated by climate change, "whose physical effects will worsen throughout this period."

The complete text of Blair's remarks (http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/20090212_testimony.pdf) (PDF) can be obtained from the director of national intelligence's Web site.

What foreign affairs actions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog. (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>)

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦