



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

USAID/Ethiopia Contributes More Than \$500,000 for Fistula Prevention and Treatment in the Amhara Region



Ambassador Huddleston (left) and Dr. Asrat Guenet, Head of the Amhara Region Health Bureau inaugurating the Fistula Project in Woreta



Ambassador Huddleston is met by officials of the Amhara Region Health Bureau as she arrives at the Woreta Health Center

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) -- On June 27, Ambassador Vicki Huddleston, Chargé d'Affaires of the United States

Embassy traveled to Bahir Dar this week to officially inaugurate a Fistula Project funded by the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID/Ethiopia). USAID/Ethiopia has contributed more than \$500,000 (roughly 4.4 million birr)

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USAID Donates Refrigerators Worth Over One Million US Dollars to Oromiya, Amhara and SNNP Regions to Support Childhood Immunization in Ethiopia

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) -- On June 27, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/Ethiopia) has donated 717 refrigerators and spare parts to the Regional Health Offices in Oromiya, Amhara and SNNP Regions. The

refrigerators, valued at over one million U.S. Dollars (approximately 11.5 million birr), will be used to strengthen Ethiopia's childhood immunization program.

Refrigerators designated for the Amhara Region were officially handed

over on June 27, 2006 at a ceremony at the Amhara Regional Health Bureau in Bahir Dar in the presence of Ambassador Vicki Huddleston, Chargé d'Affaires of the United States Embassy in Ethiopia. Also present at

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State's Frazer Cites Danger of Somalia Attracting Terrorists

By Charles W. Corey
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- It is urgently important that all parties in Somalia stop any hostilities and begin a dialogue with one another, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer told reporters June 21.

Speaking at a press conference in Nairobi on her first official visit to Kenya as assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Frazer said she was there to deliver a message from the International Somalia Contact Group, which recently met in New York.

That message, she said, was one of support for Somalia's Transitional Federal Government and she urged peace and reconciliation in that nation. Frazer also expressed concern about the state of security in the Eastern Horn of Africa and about the possibility of Somalia becoming a "terrorist safe-haven."

The assistant secretary told reporters that while in Kenya, she held talks with the leadership of the Somalia's Transitional Federal Government: Speaker Sharrif Hassan, President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi.

She said she was "very much encouraged" that all three are on their way to Khartoum, Sudan, to have their first meeting with a delegation from the Union of Islamic Courts, which has claimed to have taken control of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, after weeks of fighting. She praised the three transitional government leaders for taking the initiative to bring peace and stability to Somalia.

Frazer said U.S. policy towards Somalia remains unchanged. "We are concerned about Somalia becoming a safe-haven for terrorists. We are particularly concerned about individuals in Somalia today who were responsible for attacking Kenya and Tanzania -- by bombing our embassies in both places -- for planning attacks against Kenya, the hotel in Mombasa and against the Israeli airliner."

For that reason, she said, "We will continue to pursue that objective to bring to justice those individuals responsible."

Asked about the Union of Islamic Courts and U.S. policy, Frazer said, "We will reserve judgment. They have certainly reached out to us. They reached out to the Somali International Contact Group. ... They indicated that they want to work positively for the future of Somalia. They do not intend to be a replacement government. They are not trying to threaten the Transitional Federal Government. In that regard, we are sort of in a wait-and-see posture. We have called specifically on them to enter into a dialogue with the Transitional Federal Government."

Frazer called the Union of Islamic Courts a "very heterogeneous group" made up of both moderates and hardliners. "So the important thing is for them to talk to the Transitional Federal Government to make their intention known."

Frazer made note of President Bush's East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative, which was launched to prevent the region as a whole from becoming a base for al-Qaida operatives. She described Somalia as a "classic failed state" and told

reporters, "We have to obviously help build the institution of the government" there. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Mar/15-904874.html>).)

Part of the global war on terrorism, she said, is about sharing information and bringing terrorists to justice. "So our policy remains and continues to be to focus those priorities," she said, naming "counterterrorism, support for the Transitional Federal Institutions in Somalia [that country's nominal government], assistance to the people of Somalia and the strengthening of regional cooperation against criminality, arms and terror."

While in Kenya, Frazer said she also met with Kenyan Foreign Minister Raphael Tuju to discuss the U.S.-Kenyan bilateral relationship, as well as issues concerning the whole region, Somalia and Sudan.

Frazer said she also met with the leader of the opposition in Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, and some of his colleagues to discuss the role of parliament and democracy. The assistant secretary said she had just come from Uganda and was traveling on to Djibouti and Ethiopia to "address, discuss and coordinate" on Somalia.

(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.-Africa Partnership Aims To Help "Poorest of the Poor"

By Elisa Walton
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The nongovernmental organization (NGO) Africare, working in close cooperation with Africans in 26 countries, has made significant progress in combating some of the continent's most urgent problems, such as poverty, famine and disease, said Julius E. Coles, Africare president, at a talk June 20 at the Woman's National Democratic Club in Washington.

Africare is a nonprofit organization that has provided aid to Africa for more than 35 years. Its late co-founder, Diori Hamani, as quoted on the group's Web site, describes its task as "immense -- as immense as the continent of Africa itself."

Africare's budget has grown significantly, from \$39,550 in 1971 to \$50 million per year now. The operation, which spans 26 countries, has disbursed \$540 million in aid, and the organization continues to pursue growth and improvement of their services, according to its Web site.

Africare seeks to help "the poorest of the poor" in Africa, said Coles. This means establishing many projects far from the capital cities. "Where the pavement ends is where [our work] begins," he said.

The organization distinguishes itself by focusing on partnerships with local communities. This philosophy stems in part from its founders, many of whom came from the Peace Corps. Ninety percent of Africare's employees are from the continent, with the remaining 10 percent coming from

the United States, said Coles. The United States contributes to African development through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, established in 2002, as well PEPFAR, the \$15 billion President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, announced by President Bush in 2003, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), which the president called for in 2002 and the U.S. Congress established in 2004. President Bush has requested \$3 billion in MCC funding for the fiscal year that ends October 1 and has pledged to increase annual funding to \$5 billion in the future.

American citizens contribute privately as well. "The American people are very generous people, and they have given generously around the world," said Coles.

The U.S.-Africa partnership realized through Africare's projects allows funding to reach those who best understand local needs, thus empowering the local community. At a refugee camp in Chad for refugees from Sudan's Darfur region, for example, Africare ensures proper food distribution, hygiene and sanitation, and provides safe water. To help create self-sufficiency among the refugees, the organization also teaches income-generating activities. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/21-952537.html>).)

Health is a pressing concern in sub-Saharan Africa, home to 64 percent all people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS, said Coles. Children are among those who suffer the most -- many live with HIV/AIDS, and 12 million children under the age of 17 in sub-Saharan

Africa have lost at least one parent to AIDS, he said.

Taking care of these children is one of the missions of Africare. A program under way in four countries -- Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda -- will help 2 million children by providing health care, education and legal services.

Africare also strives to make agriculture possible, said Coles. A project in Niger has helped farmers grow vegetables and cereals in arid regions -- even wheat, which previously was considered impossible, he said. The change was due to good agricultural practices and access to water. Africare's assistance helped boost production 35 percent in this region from 2001 to 2002, and the region suffered less than others during a recent drought, he added.

Despite Africa's many problems, Coles said he sees several reasons for hope. In 2005, he said, gross domestic product grew 4.9 percent on the continent as a whole. Some of this came from oil export profits and other natural resources, but also from growth in tourism and investment in telecommunications, manufacturing and textiles.

Coles described what he termed a "renaissance" in the African economy: meaningful reforms, deregulation and new leaders. He cited Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as one of the promising new leaders who can help Africans take charge of their own development.

Although he still sees many of the same problems that he noticed on his first visit to Africa 45 years

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China's Economic Focus on Africa is Mixed Picture, Scholar Says



Ambassador David Shinn (State Department Photo)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- China's rapid economic expansion in Africa is not a direct threat to U.S. interests but has led the economic powerhouse to do business with some unsavory partners "shunned" by the West, says diplomat turned scholar David Shinn.

Shinn, a former U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia in the mid-1990s, told his audience, "China's approach to Africa has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War" when a main preoccupation was countering the political influence of Taiwan on the continent. Currently, only six African nations -- Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe, and Swaziland recognize Taiwan diplomatically.

Shinn, who is now an adjunct professor at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Wash-

ington University in Washington, lectured on "China's Global Activism" in Africa at a National Defense University Pacific Symposium held at Fort Lesley McNair in Washington June 20.

China's main goal now, Shinn said, is "to ensure that Africa remains a secure source for oil and raw materials, a growing market for Chinese exports, and a base of support for China's expanding global interests."

This is not a bad goal and not one necessarily in conflict with U.S. interests on the continent, Shinn said. But one result has been that some African countries shunned by the West, like Sudan and Zimbabwe, are collaborating with China. These are countries with "poor human rights records, a sluggish record on democratization, and a propensity for corruption," he said.

"And many of them do not have to worry about sanctions or even unpleasant lectures when they interact with China," the former U.S. diplomat asserted. China's president recently made that point when he said his nation would do business "without any expectation that [African] governments will improve democracy, respect human rights, or fight corruption," Shinn said.

African oil is a big draw for China, the scholar told his audience. In 2004, China surpassed Japan as the world's second largest importer of petroleum after the United States. More than 25 percent of China's imported oil comes from Africa and "the percentage is growing significantly each year."

MINERAL IMPORTS FROM PROBLEMATIC PARTNERS

In addition, China also imports minerals from Africa to support its rapid industrial expansion. China is the world's largest consumer of copper and "imports a substantial part of its needs from Africa." It depends increasingly on African ferrochrome, platinum, cobalt, iron, gold, silver and timber, Shinn said.

As a result, China has embraced countries like Sudan and Zimbabwe with those products for sale but that have "especially poor relations" with the West, he added. The United States, European Union (EU) and United Nations have sanctioned both of those African nations for their continued abuse of democracy and human rights.

In April, a State Department spokesman said the United States would continue to work with the international community to press

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Bush Urges All Nations To Halt Illicit WMD Proliferation Trade

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – President Bush welcomed new supporters of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), including those in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, as 60 PSI partners gathered in Warsaw for a high-level political meeting hosted by Poland.

“I join President Lech Kaczynski in welcoming PSI supporters,” Bush said in a June 23 White House statement, commending all attendees for their readiness to deny terrorist and rogue states access to weapons of mass destruction and related materials.

He urged “all responsible states to join this global effort to end the WMD proliferation trade.”

Since PSI was launched in Krakow in 2003, the initiative has expanded “from a handful of nations to a global partnership of more than 70 countries from all around the world,” the president said.

“Together, we are working to disrupt the financial activities of networks that support proliferation, as called for in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1540 and 1673,” Bush said.

“Together, we are shutting down front companies and proliferation networks and interdicting cargo carrying these dangerous materials, whether transported by land, air or sea,” the President said.

PSI supporters are in Warsaw to network and identify ways to further enhance their ability to counter WMD proliferation, he added. (See related publication

(<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/proliferation/>).)

POLISH FOREIGN MINISTER HIGH-LIGHT'S PSI SUCCESS

Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Anna Fotyga welcomed the attendees, saying that WMD proliferation calls for “decisive and consistent international action.”

She said there is good reason for satisfaction with the initiative’s accomplishments since a meeting in Krakow two years ago to commemorate the first anniversary of PSI. The network of participating PSI nations “is steadily expanding across the globe,” the Polish foreign minister said. “They now come from every region of the world,” Fotyga said, “and, most importantly, from the regions of greatest concern for WMD-related trafficking.”

The national legal instruments and military and law enforcement capabilities of individual PSI nations have enabled successful interdictions to occur, the foreign minister said. Since 2003, “PSI participants have greatly improved their abilities to interdict suspected shipments”, according to Fotyga. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/May/03-622541.html>).)

The 60 nations gathered in Poland represent every continent, different political persuasions and economic systems, and varying cultures and religions. Their willingness to unite and work together on this particular issue, Fotyga said, “is a strong signal to any potential proliferator.”

The meeting’s agenda includes strategizing to increase the number of PSI supporters and planning additional outreach activities. Participants will review lessons learned from past PSI exercises and review the calendar of upcoming events. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/May/27-62150.html>).)

Fotyga said participants would discuss PSI-related legal and financial issues and look at ways to develop closer ties with the international business community as a way of ensuring the long-term success of the initiative.

AEI NOTES PSI'S FLEXIBILITY, VOLUNTARY NATURE

The Washington-based American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research issued a report in January describing PSI as noteworthy because “it has matched the global threat of proliferation with a truly global coalition.” The report’s authors, Thomas Donnelly and Vance Serchuk, write that instead of cleaving transatlantic and transpacific relations into separate spheres, PSI encompasses both Asian maritime powers like Japan and Australia and European nations such as the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom.

The flexibility of the initiative is reflected in its voluntary nature. Donnelly and Serchuk point to the various ways nations can participate -- ranging from sharing information to hosting meetings to participating in interdiction training. As an activity, PSI allows nations to do as much or as little as they choose.

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Survey of Muslim, Western Attitudes Portrays Mixed Picture

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Solid majorities of the American, French and British publics hold favorable views of Muslims even as real differences between Muslim and non-Muslim communities persist. The data appears in a 15-nation global attitudes survey released June 22 by The Pew Global Attitudes Project, which describes the overall picture as "more mixed than unremittingly negative."

Former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, former U.S. Senator and Ambassador to the United Nations John C. Danforth and Pew Research Center President Andrew Kohut analyzed the data at a Washington press conference.

A MIXED PICTURE

While majorities in nearly every surveyed country responded that relations between Muslims and Westerners generally are bad, more specific questions revealed a more nuanced pattern of inter-communal perceptions. Differences between European and non-European Muslims suggest that frequent contact between communities helps dispel negative stereotypes.

While Western publics were divided on the prospects for democracy in Muslim countries, solid and even overwhelming majorities of Muslim respondents both in Europe and in Muslim countries held that "democracy can work well" in most Muslim nations.

The survey revealed declining confidence in Osama bin Laden among most Muslim publics. The trend is

most pronounced in Jordan, where a November 2005 terrorist attack killed 63 and injured more than 100 people in Amman. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2005/Nov/10-803177.html>).)

Confidence in the al-Qaida chief declined from 60 percent a year ago to just 24 percent now. Majorities in Turkey, Egypt and Indonesia also express either "not too much" or "no confidence at all" in bin Laden.

Respondents in Pakistan and in Nigeria, whose Muslim community consistently expressed more radical opinions than publics in other Muslim nations, offered bin Laden plurality or majority support.

The percentage of Muslims answering that suicide bombings and other violence against civilian targets could be justified in some circumstances declined in Jordan, Pakistan and Indonesia, but increased slightly in Turkey. Even so, nearly three-in-ten Jordanian and Egyptian Muslims condoned suicide bombings, as did one-in-seven Turkish, French, Spanish, British and Pakistani Muslims.

And majorities in Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt and Jordan — and 56 percent of British Muslims — say they do not believe that groups of Arabs carried out the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Muslims also were less likely than non-Muslims to perceive a conflict between being a devout Muslim and living in what the poll framers called a "modern society."

The data revealed other differences between the two groups. Each tended to blame the other for perceived bad relations and disagreed over the root causes underlying the recent controversy over cartoons about the Prophet Muhammad in Denmark.

Majorities in the United States, France, Britain and Russia -- but not in Germany or Spain -- expressed favorable views of Muslims. Majorities of Indonesians and Jordanians -- but not Egyptians, Pakistanis or Turks -- expressed favorable views of Christians.

In every Muslim country surveyed, overwhelming or near unanimous majorities expressed negative views toward Jews. The figure reached 99 percent in Jordan, 98 percent in Egypt and 94 percent in Pakistan. Twenty-eight percent of Jordanians and 22 percent of Egyptians volunteered that "Jews" were to blame for bad relations between Muslims and the West, although Jews were not mentioned in the question.

European Muslims generally expressed more positive views toward Christians and somewhat less negative views toward Jews than did Muslims elsewhere. Senator Danforth called those figures "evidence that interaction helps. The more we know each other, the better off we are."

The recent controversy over publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad illustrated further differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. Majorities throughout the West blamed "Muslim intolerance" for the dispute, while even larger proportions

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USAID/Ethiopia Contributes More Than \$500,000 . . .

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for the prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula in the Amhara Region.

Under this project, the Addis Ababa Fistula

Hospital and IntraHealth (a U.S.-based non governmental organization affiliated with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) work together to institute a continuum of care for fistula patients in the Bahir Dar area. The Bahir Dar Fistula Center, opened in 2005, is focused on the repair of fistula. IntraHealth is supporting the work of the Fistula Center by providing communities with services at the health-center level that include fistula prevention, identification, screening, and pre- and post-treatment care.

The Woreta Health Center was recently renovated by IntraHealth. It now has room to house three patients at a time while awaiting fistula operations. In addition to the Woreta Health Center, IntraHealth has also renovated fistula pre-treatment areas for Health Centers in Dangla and Adet. Fifteen health posts in the area will also participate in community level work in the project.

The inauguration ceremony, held at Woreta Health Center in the Amhara Region, also included a visit to the Bahir Dar Fistula Center, to signify the importance of coordinated partnerships in tackling public health challenges. Speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador Vicki J. Huddleston recognized the successful collaboration between the Ministry of Health and the United States, through USAID/Ethiopia. She congratulated IntraHealth International and

the Fistula Hospital for their work in addressing the problem of obstetric fistula and for the successful start up of the program.

The program is designed to bring about behavioral change at all levels around maternal health, obstetric fistula care, and pre- and post-fistula treatment. This collaboration will contribute significantly to improving women's health and status in three woredas of Amhara region and in Bahir Dar by increasing access for fistula patients to treatment and care.

In Ethiopia, where about 2.9 million women give birth a year, about 8,700 mothers will develop obstetric fistula. Although the real figure is unknown, it is estimated that about 100,000 obstetric fistula patients in rural Ethiopia are living without treatment.)?

Survey of Muslim, Western Attitudes . . .

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of Muslims blamed "Western disrespect."

Secretary Albright suggested that policy differences over Iraq, Israel/Palestine and the general turmoil in the Middle East contributed to, but were not the sole cause, of difficult relations between Muslims and the West. She suggested that policymakers make better use of religious leaders both as resources for mutual understanding and as "validators" capable of building public support for diplomatic arrangements.

Danforth said Muslim dislike of perceived Western values was a bigger factor. He cited figures in which majorities of non-European Muslim respondents to the Pew poll concluded that Westerners were selfish, arrogant and violent - and suggested that television and other mass media contributed to the propagation of those views.

Co-chaired by Albright and Danforth, the Pew Global Attitudes Project is a series of worldwide public opinion surveys on a broad array of subjects from people's as-

sessments of their own lives to their view about the current state of the world and important issues of the day.

A report (<http://pewglobal.org/>) on the poll, entitled The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other, is available on the Pew Global Attitude Project 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/>)?

North Korean Threat Renews Interest in U.S. Missile Defense

By David McKeeby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Reports that North Korea is preparing to test a new ballistic missile has renewed interest in U.S. progress towards an effective, integrated missile defense system, as well as the expanding umbrella of international partnerships that are contributing to the project's success.

The U.S. missile defense program is a combination of systems that find, target and destroy ballistic missiles in any of their three flight periods – the initial boost phase, the midcourse phase and the descent phase – from defenses arrayed on the ground, at sea or in the air.

Not yet fully functional, these systems have been under development for many years, presenting engineers with the complex challenge of integrating computer, radar and missile systems in an effort commonly compared to “hitting a bullet with another bullet.” The system currently includes 11 long-range interceptor missiles; nine deployed at Fort Greeley, Alaska, and two at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

In May 10 congressional testimony, Air Force Lieutenant General Henry “Trey” Obering, director of the Missile Defense Agency, said that the United States and key partners are working to expand the existing umbrella of defensive coverage to prevent the United States and its allies from being coerced or threatened by ballistic missiles that could be carrying a weapon of mass destruction. (See related article ([http://](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/May/12-801688.html)

usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/May/12-801688.html).)

Over the past two decades, the United States has appropriated more than \$100 billion to the agency to lead the development of ballistic missile defenses, an average of \$4.7 billion a year. For 2006, Congress provided the Missile Defense Agency \$7.8 billion in funding; the agency is requesting \$9.3 billion for the fiscal year that begins October 1. The increase, said Obering, is due to “the robust phase we are entering in the development and fielding of the integrated layered capability.” (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=April&x=20060404165451adynned0.8707697&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).)

This year has seen several advances in missile defense, including three successful ground-based missile interceptor tests in New Mexico and Hawaii, as well as the successful takedown of a ballistic missile by a ship-based interceptor system installed on the Navy Aegis warship, the USS Lake Erie. Similar ships, equipped with sensors to detect a possible launch reportedly are patrolling in international waters off North Korea's coast.

The Missile Defense Agency says that another test currently under way off the coast of Hawaii has been scheduled for a long time and is not related to the tension with North Korea.

Missile Defense Agency spokesman Rick Lehner told Voice of America June 21 the Hawaiian exercise will not even test the type

of interceptor that would be used if North Korea ever launched a missile at the United States. According to a statement by the agency, this will be the first test of an improved version of its interceptor missile, which it says is scheduled for operational deployment aboard U.S. Navy ships later in 2006.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN MISSILE DEFENSE GROWING

In an April 4 speech sponsored by National Defense University, Paula DeSutter, assistant secretary of state for verification, compliance and implementation, said that international support continues to grow for missile defense, as evidenced by ongoing projects in Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom, Israel, Germany, Russia and elsewhere to develop various components of the missile defense system. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=April&x=20060404160654idybeekcm0.2211725&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).)

A number of NATO allies that already deploy the Patriot missile system are interested in expanding their engagement in anti-ballistic missile defense. Plans are under way to integrate a missile defense battle management command-and-control system in Europe and the Middle East, similar to the integrated network of sensors and interceptors developed for the Pacific area.

With its \$1 billion commitment, Japan has become the United

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Seven U.S. Terror Suspects Seeking al-Qaida Support Arrested

By David McKeeby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Seven alleged supporters of al-Qaida were arrested in Miami and charged with conspiracy to target the Sears Tower in Chicago and seven government buildings for attacks, the U.S. Department of Justice announced.

“Because of the fine work by law enforcement, these men were unable to advance their deadly plot beyond the initial planning stage,” said U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales in a June 23 press conference.

According to the indictment, the group, which calls itself the “Seas of David,” approached an informant posing as a member of al-Qaida with a proposal to launch terrorist attacks as part of what they described as “a full ground war” against the United States.

The group conducted surveillance of several federal office buildings in Miami and discussed bombing the Sears Tower, the tallest building in the United States. According to the indictment, they told the informant that their attacks – beginning with the destruction of the Sears Tower – would be “as good or better than the 9/11 attacks.”

The group pledged allegiance to al-Qaida, according to the indictment, and asked the informant to provide them with equipment including boots, uniforms, machine guns, radios, vehicles, as well as \$50,000 in cash.

Gonzales said that the men have been indicted on four counts: conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization;

conspiracy to provide material support and resources to terrorists; conspiracy to maliciously damage and destroy by means of an explosive; and conspiring to levy war against the U.S. government.

While under arrest and indicted, the men remain innocent until proven guilty, Gonzales said. Investigations of their activities are continuing and may result in additional charges. If convicted, the men could face decades in prison.

“This investigation reminds us that while we have made tremendous progress in combating terrorism, the struggle is far from over,” said FBI Deputy Director John Pistole, who joined Gonzales at the press conference. “We cannot afford to become complacent, as the threat is real and the stakes are high.”

Pistole acknowledged that while the group’s plans appeared to be “more aspirational than operational,” the arrests demonstrate the challenges faced by law enforcement against what the attorney general described as a “new brand of terrorism” created by “the convergence of globalization and technology.”

“Today, terrorist threats may come from smaller, more loosely defined cells who are not affiliated with al-Qaida, but who are inspired by a violent jihadist message and, left unchecked, these homegrown terrorists may prove to be as dangerous,” said Gonzales.

The group, which lived together in a small warehouse, consisted of five American citizens, one noncitizen national, and an individual from Haiti residing in the country illegally. Gonzales said their activi-

ties support experts’ concerns that terrorist cells are becoming smaller, harder to track and “self-radicalized.” (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Jun/13-475684.html>).)

Gonzales compared the Miami men to groups of native-born terrorists that killed their fellow citizens in bombings in Spain and the United Kingdom in recent years, as well as the 17 men recently arrested by Canadian law enforcement and charged with planning a terrorist attack.

The arrests were the result of an investigation led by the FBI’s South Florida Joint Terrorism Task Force in Miami. There are 56 JTTFs across the United States, comprised of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies whose primary work is to identify and disrupt terrorist cells before they can commit acts of terror.

The attorney general’s prepared remarks (http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/speeches/2006/ag_speech_060623.html) as well as a fact sheet (http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2006/June/06_ag_386.html) about the case are available from the U.S. Department of Justice Web site.

For more information, see Response to Terrorism (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism.html).

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

U.S. Defends Use of Bank Messaging System to Track Terrorists

By Elizabeth Kelleher
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. Treasury officials outlined a "terrorist finance tracking program" after press reports published specifics about it June 23. The program grew out of U.S. government efforts to map terrorist networks after the September 11 attacks on the United States.

The program allows the U.S. Treasury Department to get information on international money transfers from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT), a Belgium-based company that operates a messaging system used by 7,800 financial institutions in 200 countries.

Treasury officials said they informed the central banks of each of the G10 countries of the program and that those bodies raised no objections. In addition to the U.S. Federal Reserve system, those banks include the National Bank of Belgium, the Bank of Canada, Deutsche Bundesbank, European Central Bank, Banque de France, Banca d' Italia, Bank of Japan, De Nederlandsche Bank, Sveriges Riksbank, Swiss National Bank, and the Bank of England.

Treasury Secretary John Snow stressed that members of Congress who oversee the Treasury Department have also been briefed on the program.

Stuart Levey, Treasury under secretary for the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, said SWIFT captures roughly 80 percent of international financial transactions. He said the U.S.

Treasury has made queries on "tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands" of transactions and has been able to learn names, addresses and account numbers of those sending money. He said he could not break down the data to give the countries of citizenship of the targets of inquiries.

Snow said the program is not a data mining operation but one in which each search must be preceded with evidence that the targeted person or entity is under investigation elsewhere for terrorist activity.

Officials said searches require subpoenas and are based on statutory mandates and related executive orders.

Snow said the program is something he is proud of and that has made a real difference. "President Bush has made it clear that keeping Americans safe must be our number one priority," the secretary said. "This is a program that works, that makes Americans and the world safer."

The White House press secretary said today the finance-tracking program "helped capture Hambali, who was responsible for the Bali bombing which killed more than 2,000 people" and that it "helped identify a Brooklyn man convicted on terrorism-related charges last year." Press reports identified the man as Uzair Paracha, who agreed to launder \$200,000 for al-Qaida through a Pakistan bank.

Snow frequently speaks publicly about work Treasury does to interrupt terrorists' money transactions, but he called a breaking

news article by The New York Times detailing SWIFT's involvement "a great disappointment" because it gives terrorists information that could help them evade detection. Government officials asked Times editors not to publish the article.

"We have listened closely to the administration's arguments for withholding this information and given them the most serious and respectful consideration," said Bill Keller, executive editor of The Times. But he said administration access to such financial data "is a matter of public interest."

Snow said that, since its inception just after September 11, the program's scope -- both geographically and in terms of the amount of information requested -- has narrowed. Specifically, he said queries on "intra-country" transactions have declined in favor of country-to-country transactions.

In a statement, SWIFT said it "negotiated with the U.S. Treasury over the scope and oversight of the subpoenas" and that it had received assurances as to the confidentiality of any data produced as a result of the subpoenas.

Levey said auditors at SWIFT can stop any inquiry and that outside auditor Booz Allen Hamilton has reported only one instance of a search being done that should not have been done, a case that resulted in the removal of an employee from such work.

A statement (<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/js4334.htm>) by Treasury Under secretary Stuart Levey is available on the

(Continued on page 14)

U.S. Defense Official Says China's Military Buildup Raises Concerns

By Susan Krause
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A lack of transparency about China's military buildup and the intentions behind it has created concern for other nations, says Peter Rodman, assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs.

Rodman testified on "The Military Power of the People's Republic of China" at a June 22 hearing of the House Armed Services Committee.

Estimates by informed sources of China's military spending vary slightly, the assistant secretary said, but all are substantially higher than the official figures released by Beijing.

"What all this means is that, in some areas, the outside world has insufficient knowledge of the assumptions, purposes, resources, and desired end-states of the Chinese military buildup," he said.

China's rapid economic growth has supported significant defense sector investment, with double-digit percentage increases in expenditures every year for the last 15 years, Rodman told the committee.

In March, he said, the Chinese government announced an official defense budget of about \$35 billion for 2006, an increase of nearly 15 percent over the previous year.

However, that figure does not include total expenditures, he said. "Many items are not included -- foreign acquisitions, industrial subsidies, local contributions, and strategic forces."

The Defense Department estimates that China's military expenditures are actually two times to three times higher than officially published figures when such costs are included, Rodman said. The department has calculated the actual figure for China's military expenditures at \$70 billion to \$105 billion.

"At the high end, this would make China the largest defense spender in Asia," Rodman said. Other institutions, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the RAND Corporation have arrived at similar estimates, he added.

QUESTIONS ABOUT ARMS BUILDUP

At the Asia Security Summit in Singapore in early June, Rodman said, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld raised the issue of China's lack of transparency about its military expenditures, noting that it "understandably causes concerns" for neighboring states. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2006/Jun/04-228252.html>).)

"The Secretary has also questioned, in the past, the underlying reasons behind this growth and has sought to engage China in a conversation about outside perceptions of China's military modernization and doctrine," he said.

Rodman mentioned several areas of concern:

China is developing at least 10 varieties of ballistic missiles and modernizing its older intercontinental ballistic missiles. Almost 800 short-range ballistic missiles are

deployed on the coast facing Taiwan, and that number has been increasing by about 100 missiles per year in recent years.

China has five acquisition programs for modern submarines, including nuclear attack and nuclear ballistic missile submarines.

At least two land-attack cruise missile programs are in development, and China also is acquiring at least 12 different types of advanced anti-ship cruise missiles.

By increasing its air and amphibious lift capability, China is improving its capacity for expeditionary warfare. Ground forces based opposite Taiwan have new amphibious armor.

China has shown interest in developing an aircraft carrier and combat air wing.

In addition, Rodman said, Chinese defense officials have engaged in limited discussions of potential revisions in China's nuclear doctrine, suggesting that they are studying new options to accompany a changing force structure.

Some of these developments have immediate relevance to contingencies involving Taiwan, he said, while others have broader long-term implications.

The United States is trying to react in a balanced way, Rodman said.

"We are not attempting to prove or disprove a China 'threat,' " he said. "Our goal is to let the facts speak for themselves, and to contribute useful information to the public discussion."

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Bush Proclamation on Independence Day, 2006

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

June 26, 2006

INDEPENDENCE DAY, 2006

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

On July 4, 1776, our Nation's Founders declared "That these United Colonies are, and of Right, ought to be free and Independent States." This declaration marked a great milestone in the history of human freedom. On the 230th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, we pay tribute to the courage and dedication of those who created this country, and we celebrate the values of liberty and equality that make our country strong.

The patriots of the Revolutionary War acted on the beliefs that "all men are created equal" and "that they are endowed by their Creator



with certain unalienable Rights." By advancing these ideals, generations of Americans have unleashed the hope of freedom for people in every corner of the world.

As we celebrate our independence, Americans can take pride in our history and look to the future with confidence. We offer our gratitude to all the American patriots, past and present, who have sought to advance freedom and lay the foundations of peace. Because of their sacrifice, this country remains a beacon of hope for all who dream of liberty and a shining example to the world of what a free people can achieve. May God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W.

BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim July 4, 2006, as Independence Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe with all due ceremony our Independence Day as a time to honor our Founders and their legacy of freedom and remember with thankfulness the sacrifice of our men and women in uniform.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-six day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

(end text)

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

Bush Urges All Nations . . .

(Continued from page 5)

The AEI report, "Transforming America's Alliances," states that PSI "is important in its application and interpretation of international law." Its authors write that, rather than create a new elaborate legal architecture, the initiative builds upon "existing treaties, controls, and regimes against WMD proliferation that are currently being circumvented and violated." PSI's most visible success to date

has been its interdiction of the BBC China in October 2003. The freighter was intercepted en route to Libya with parts for uranium enrichment centrifuges onboard. This development has been credited with leading to the rollup of the A. Q. Khan nuclear network and to Libya's decision to ultimately abandon its WMD programs. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/May/19-196901.html>).)

For more information, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html).

The full text of the president's statement (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/06/20060623.html>) on PSI is available on the White House Web site.?

Death Penalty Debate Continues in United States

By Carolee Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled unanimously that inmates on death row may challenge the use of lethal injection as a method of execution.

The Supreme Court's June 13 ruling in *Hill v. McDonough* did not address whether the chemicals used in lethal injections might be unconstitutional because they might cause pain; instead, the ruling permits inmates to challenge the method of execution as a civil-rights issue and sends the case back to the lower courts to rule on the inmate's claim.

Clarence E. Hill, who has been on death row in Florida since 1982 for murdering a police officer, argued that death by lethal injection would violate his civil rights because the U.S. Constitution's Eighth Amendment bans cruel and unusual punishment. Florida's method of executing inmates, which uses combinations of chemicals in sequence, could subject him to undetected pain, Hill claimed.

The most common methods of execution in the United States are lethal injection and electrocution. In 2003, for example, lethal injection was used for 64 of the 65 executions performed; one was carried out by electrocution. Federal prisoners are executed by lethal injection.

In February, a U.S. federal court postponed indefinitely the execution of a California man by lethal injection after prison officials were unable to find a way to administer

legally the drugs designed to kill him.

Michael Morales, on death row in California since 1983 for the rape and murder of a teenage girl, argued that death by lethal injection violated his civil rights. Citing an article in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, Morales' lawyers said there was no way to ensure that sedatives given to Morales prior to the execution to dull any pain from the lethal mixture of drugs would not wear off.

DNA EVIDENCE ADMISSIBLE AFTER CONVICTION

The Supreme Court ruled June 12 that death-row inmates can challenge their convictions if DNA evidence found after their trials have ended shows that they might be innocent.

In the 5-3 ruling, the justices held that evidence, including DNA evidence, raised enough doubt to merit a new hearing in U.S. federal court for Paul Gregory House, who has been on death row for 20 years in Tennessee for the rape and murder of his neighbor.

The Supreme Court's decision marks the first time the justices have considered DNA in re-examining a death-sentence conviction. As a result, House can seek a new trial.

In an unrelated ruling in February, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned an Oregon Supreme Court decision that would have allowed additional evidence to be considered by a sentencing jury.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer wrote for the court

that "the Eighth Amendment does not deprive the state of its authority to set reasonable limits upon the evidence a defendant can submit and to control the manner in which it is submitted."

NO DEATH PENALTY FOR MENTALLY RETARDED, UNDERAGE KILLERS

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned sentences in 19 states when it ruled that the death penalty, or capital punishment, could not be imposed on convicted murderers who were under the age of 18 at the time they committed their crimes. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2005/Mar/01-985703.html>)).

However, the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled June 15 that the mental age of an inmate on death row does not prevent execution.

The attorney for Thomas Clyde Bowling, who was convicted in 1990 of killing two people in Lexington, Kentucky, argued that Bowling had the mental capacity of an 11-year-old when he committed his crimes.

The Kentucky court wrote that the U.S. Supreme Court intentionally established chronological age not mental age in its 2005 ruling.

Bowling's attorney also attempted to block his client's execution because he said Bowling is mentally retarded. The Kentucky Supreme Court denied the claim, saying no conclusive evidence, including IQ tests, showed Bowling to have mental retardation.

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China's Economic Focus on Africa. . .

(Continued from page 4)

the Sudanese government to stop the violence in Darfur, rein in the Janjaweed militias, and "hold accountable all who are responsible for crimes against the people of Darfur."

(See [Darfur Humanitarian Emergency](#).)

Nonetheless, China helps manage Sudan's oil industry and receives about 7 percent of its total oil imports from Sudan now and Sudan has described China as its "most important partner," Shinn said. When questioned in 2004 about its relationship with Sudan, China's deputy foreign minister responded "'business is business. We try to separate politics from business.'"

In 2005, Beijing "warmly welcomed" Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe -- a man who has also been "shunned by the West," Shinn said. Plus, he said, China imports significant quantities of minerals from Zimbabwe and has become its second largest trading partner after South Africa.

In February, the State Department called on the government of Zimbabwe "to repeal its repressive media laws and to end the harassment of civil society groups and human rights activists."

The spokesman pointed out that the deterioration of the human rights environment in Zimbabwe was underscored by a December 2005 resolution of the African Union's Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Another tactic China uses, said Shinn, is aggressive diplomacy. "All African governments like high level attention from the world's most important countries."

For example, Shinn said, it has become a tradition that each year China's foreign minister visits Africa first. In January 2006, the foreign minister went to Cape Verde, Senegal, Mali, Liberia, Libya, and Nigeria. President Hu Jintao made well-publicized and substantively significant visits in April to Morocco, Nigeria and Kenya.

There are, however, potential grounds of conflict between the Chinese and Africans, Shinn said, especially among African environmental advocates about China's "generally dismissive approach to good environmental practices."

China is the world's largest importer of forest products. Many of its purchases in Africa are from unlicensed loggers or from companies that do not engage in environmentally sound logging practices, Shinn charged.

There are other interest groups in many African countries that "tend to be wary of China," he added. They include human rights activists, outspoken advocates for democracy and "those concerned about China's export of arms to the continent." Also, some governments, such as South Africa, have expressed concern about China's arms policy on the continent, he said.

While "access to African resources is China's primary interest ... it does not yet have the influence across the continent that is exercised by the United States or the European Union -- but it is fast reaching that point," Shinn said.

(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. Defends Use of Bank . . .

(Continued from page 10)

department's Web site as is the statement (<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/js4332.htm>) issued by Treasury Secretary John Snow.

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

Death Penalty Debate Continues . . .

(Continued from page 13)

In 2005, the Supreme Court upheld the right of individual U.S. states to establish their own guidelines for determining whether a defendant facing the death penalty is mentally retarded and therefore ineligible for execution. A Supreme Court ruling in 2002 abolished the death penalty for mentally retarded offenders and directed states to develop ways to enforce the ban.

Among states that permit the death penalty, 18 allow a judge to determine whether a defendant is mentally retarded. In nine states, the burden of proof of mental retardation is on the defendant, not the prosecution.

NEW JERSEY'S MORATORIUM ON EXECUTIONS

In January, New Jersey suspended executions for a year for capital crimes in that state while a commission studies the fairness and financial costs of the death penalty as well as alternatives to capital punishment. New Jersey is the first state to enact a law mandating a moratorium on the death penalty; Illinois banned the execution of death-row inmates by executive order in 2000.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

More than 1,000 people have been executed in the United States for certain federal crimes and by some states for murder and violent crimes since the death penalty, or capital punishment, was reinstated in 1976.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1976 that the death penalty is not

a violation of the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, which bans cruel and unusual punishment. That ruling came in the wake of a 10-year moratorium on executions.

Arguments in favor of the death penalty in the United States include deterrence and retribution. Opponents say that the risk of executing the innocent should preclude use of the death penalty. They also question the fairness in the way the death penalty has been applied.

At a press briefing on December 2, 2005, just after the 1,000th inmate was executed, then White House press secretary Scott McClellan told reporters that it is important that the death penalty be "administered fairly and swiftly and surely and that helps it serve as a deterrent." He added that President Bush supports initiatives to expand the use of DNA evidence to prevent wrongful convictions.

The executions "have resulted in immeasurable human costs -- for the victims of violent crime, for the families of those who were executed, and for those who participated in these state-sanctioned killings," Amnesty International, a group that opposes the death penalty, said in a statement after the December 2, 2005, execution of Kenneth Lee Boyd in Raleigh, North Carolina. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2005&m=December&x=20051202144236bcrek-law9.620303e-02&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).)

A June 2006 Gallup Poll reports that two out of three Americans support the death penalty for convicted murderers.

In North Carolina, House Speaker Jim Black appointed a Death Penalty Study Commission in October 2005 to examine how the death penalty is carried out in the state. Also in October 2005, the Florida Supreme Court urged state legislators to require capital-case jurors to be unanimous in recommending death sentences or at least unanimous in deciding what aggravating factors support a death sentence.

In December 2005, former gang leader Stanley "Tookie" Williams was executed in California. His case inflamed the national debate over capital punishment versus rehabilitation. While in prison, Williams, who was convicted of murdering four people in 1979, negotiated truces between gangs in California and wrote children's books with anti-gang themes. His supporters said he turned his life around. At the final hour, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger rejected Williams's bid for clemency, saying Williams failed to show remorse for the killings.

Federal legislation concerning death penalty appeal laws is pending, including the Streamlined Procedures Act, which would limit appeals by those sentenced to the death penalty.

Amnesty International reports that 122 countries have abolished the death penalty worldwide in law or practice.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, 38 STATES ALLOW DEATH PENALTY

(Continued on page 18)

U.S. Reducing Number of Overseas Military Bases

By David McKeeby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Thousands of U.S. troops will be repositioned and several overseas bases will be closed over the next five years as part of the military's transformation agenda, defense officials told a congressional committee June 20.

"[W]e are reshaping our ability to support diplomacy and build stronger partnerships to contend with uncertainty," Ryan Henry, Defense Department under secretary for policy, told members of the House Armed Services Committee.

Henry, joined by Philip Grone, deputy under secretary of defense for installations and environment and Rear Admiral William Sullivan, vice director for strategic plans and policy, briefed committee members on the progress of a comprehensive evaluation of U.S. forces around the globe and how best to redeploy them to meet future security threats.

Henry said that the process, known as the Global Defense Posture Review, was the result of combatant commanders' extensive analysis of current and future security conditions. "[W]e seek to transform our defense relationships, our presence and footprint overseas to better deal with the post-9/11 strategic landscape," Grone said.

Changes in the global strategic picture, in addition to revolutions in military technology, transportation and logistics, mean that U.S. forces no longer need to maintain the numerous large bases and sup-

ply hubs across Western Europe and northeast Asia.

It is now possible for U.S. forces to do more with less, the officials said, by maintaining fewer, smaller military bases overseas, minimally staffed "forward operating sites," and "cooperative security locations," sites operated by allied countries that could be activated for use by deployed American forces should the need arise.

While approximately 70,000 troops currently stationed in and around Germany will be shifted to bases in the United States, Henry said they would be refitted to serve as rapid response units.

Gradually, the U.S. military is reducing its forces in Western Europe and shifting them toward Southern and Central Europe, leaving behind a lighter, more easily deployable force that can better support its NATO allies. Most U.S. bases in Europe eventually will be replaced by simpler, nonpermanent installations, said Sullivan.

"These posture changes, many of which are in motion already, will allow for a more rapid deployment to the Middle East, Africa and other potential hot spots," Henry said.

In Asia, troop-realignment changes will result in base relocations in Japan and South Korea, and expansion of facilities in Guam, Alaska and Hawaii. Forces in Seoul, South Korea, for example, will shift to smaller bases outside of the capital, while 8,000 Marines and their dependents will be transferred from Okinawa, Japan, to facilities in Guam by 2014.

The U.S. military also will continue

efforts to help regional allies further strengthen their military capabilities, solidify relationships with newer partners who can help in the prosecution of the global war on terrorism and conduct regional humanitarian aid operations.

The Global Defense Posture Review, the officials said, also serves as a catalyst for two other key elements of the Defense Department's transformation agenda: base realignment and closure within the United States, and the Army's transformation from the massive, slow-moving divisions of yesteryear to a more agile, brigade-based modular force that can mobilize and deploy more rapidly into a combat zone.

As a result of these changes, said Grone, nearly one-third of the U.S. Army will be relocated from their current stations. He added that through the global repositioning and domestic base closures, the United States would shed more than \$45 billion worth of facilities, located mostly overseas.

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

Gulf Coast Musicians Celebrate Black Music Month at White House

By Elisa Walton
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- On a rainy, dreary June 26, three renowned jazz musicians lit up the room and set toes tapping with a performance at the White House in celebration of Black Music Month. This year's event, featuring artists B.B. King, Patti Austin and Irvin Mayfield, honors the music of the U.S. Gulf Coast: soul, blues and jazz.

President Bush, in a speech before the event, underlined the importance of black music for the United States. "[It] is a really important part of our nation's history and culture, and that's why we're celebrating it here today," he said.

The legendary B.B. King, dressed in a glittery black tuxedo and surrounded by his ensemble, treated the audience to four songs, including *The Thrill is Gone* and *Why I Sing the Blues*. The audience clapped and swayed to the music, and snapped photos with cell phones and cameras.

Afterward, King, 80, presented the president with a copy of his guitar, "Lucille."

"Lucille," Bush had explained earlier, was a woman who inspired a brawl at one of King's performances. The fighting men knocked over a kerosene stove, setting the place on fire. King escaped, but then realized that he had forgotten his guitar. He ran back into the flames, risking his life, to rescue it.

Ever since, he has called his guitars "Lucille."

Irvin Mayfield, 28, and already an accomplished trumpet player, per-

formed an emotional rendition of *Just a Closer Walk with Thee*, a song his father taught him. His father died in the rising waters caused by Hurricane Katrina. After the hurricane, Mayfield performed the song once in his memory, and then retired it. Monday at the White House, he played it one last time.

The song is part of the New Orleans tradition of the jazz funeral, where a sorrowful song accompanies a funeral procession to the cemetery. Once the mourners leave the cemetery, the music speeds up and becomes more joyful, in a celebration of life.

Now the jazz funeral has taken on a new relevance. Through this music, Mayfield is trying to rescue the culture of his hometown and boost its spirit after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Mayfield is the cultural ambassador of New Orleans, and the artistic director of the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra.

He said he hopes his music will help people "get past the mourning and get on with the celebration."

Patti Austin has performed for every president since Ronald Reagan, according to President Bush. This time, she sang two songs. She began with *How Do You Keep the Music Playing* and continued on to Ella Fitzgerald's *How High the Moon*.

In the audience was Dorothy Height, who has a lifetime record of promoting civil rights, women's rights and education. In 2004, she received the Congressional Gold Medal from President Bush for her role in the civil rights movement.



President George W. Bush with basketball Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul Jabbar at the White House performance (White House Photo)

Also present were Alphonso Jackson and Don Powell. Powell is the coordinator for the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast, and Jackson is secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Representative Chip Pickering of Mississippi and Representative Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee attended as well.

First lady Laura Bush could not make it, said the president, but she had a "good excuse." She was attending the American Library Association's annual conference in New Orleans.

The June 26 event follows a long tradition of black singers at the White House, beginning in 1878 with President Rutherford B. Hayes and a performance by soprano Marie Selika. Some other past performers at the White House include Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Aretha Franklin.

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

Death Penalty Debate Continues . . .

(Continued from page 15)

Today, criminals in 38 states and those convicted of federal crimes could face the death penalty in the United States. Twelve states and the District of Columbia have abolished the death penalty. Death-penalty statutes in New York and Kansas were declared unconstitutional in 2004; however, in a 5-4 ruling on June 26, the U.S. Supreme Court let the death penalty stay in Kansas

State prosecutors in the 38 states with a death penalty "by and large believe in it as a deterrent and believe it should be used wisely, sparingly," according to Paul A. Logli, an Illinois prosecutor and president of the National District Attorneys Association, who was quoted in the Washington Post after Boyd's execution in 2005.

Federal laws providing for the death penalty include such homicide-related crimes as murder committed during a drug-related shooting, civil rights offenses resulting in murder, murder related to sexual exploitation of children, murder related to a carjacking or kidnapping and murder related to rape. Crimes not related to homicide that may result in a death sentence include espionage, treason and trafficking of large amounts of drugs.

The reauthorized USA Patriot Act signed by President Bush in 2006 extends the federal death penalty to individuals involved in deadly terrorists attacks, including those who transport materials used in a terrorist attack, those who help plot an attack on a mass-transit system, and those who participate in an attack on ships and maritime facilities.

Individual states have guidelines for imposing the death penalty. In general, criminals convicted of first-degree murder under certain circumstances face the death penalty in all states with capital punishment on the books. In California, for example, the death penalty also can be imposed for wrecking a train, committing treason and committing perjury that results in death.

RACIAL FACTOR UNDER SCRUTINY

Even though more than half the inmates currently on death row are white, President Bush has expressed concern about racial fairness and adequate representation in death penalty cases.

"Because one of the main sources of our national unity is our belief in equal justice, we need to make sure Americans of all races and backgrounds have confidence in the system that provides justice," Bush said in his February 2 State of the Union address to Congress. "In America we must make doubly sure no person is held to account for a crime he or she did not commit -- so we are dramatically expanding the use of DNA evidence to prevent wrongful conviction."

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 59 men and 1 woman were executed in 2005; 41 were white and 19 were black.

Statistics (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cp.htm>) on capital punishment in the United State are available on the Department of Justice Web site.

For additional information, see Capital Punishment (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/capital_punishment.html).

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

U.S.-Africa Partnership . . .

(Continued from page 3)

ago, Coles said, "I'm still an optimist when I look at the African continent."

For information on how U.S. foreign assistance is affecting lives, see Partnership for a Better Life (<http://usinfo.state.gov/partnerships/index.html>) and U.S. Aid to Africa (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/aid_to_africa.html).

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

U.S. Defense Official Says China's . . .

(Continued from page 11)

U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS SHOW IMPROVEMENT

Despite continuing uncertainties about some of China's actions, Rodman told the committee, the Defense Department's annual report on Military Power in the People's Republic of China 2006, submitted to Congress in May, reflected improvement in overall U.S.-China relations.

"We remain focused on encouraging China to play a constructive, peaceful role in the Asia-Pacific region and to serve as a partner in addressing common security challenges, including terrorism, proliferation, narcotics, and piracy," the assistant secretary said, citing the Defense Department's recent Quadrennial Defense Review report. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2006&m=February&x=20060203180753mvyelwarc0.4041559&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).)

In pursuit of improved understanding, the United States has sought to expand its contacts with China in the military field, Rodman said. Following Rumsfeld's visit to China in October 2005, the assistant secretary said, the two countries agreed to increase senior-level contacts, military academy exchanges, and other interactions. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Oct/24-590851.html>).)

"We believe these exchanges have the potential to reduce miscalculation and contribute, over time ... to 'demystifying' each other," he said, adding that he had just returned from Beijing, where he participated in annual consultations on how to improve U.S.-China defense relations.

The goal for the United States in dealing with China, Rodman said, is to "increase the common ground between us and expand those areas where the U.S. and China act responsibly together to advance peace, prosperity, and stability throughout the world."

"Both the U.S. and Chinese leadership must be -- and are -- realistic over our differences, but conflict between our two nations is not foreordained," he said. "With statesmanship on both sides, we can manage this relationship in a positive and constructive direction. This is our commitment, our aspiration, and our task."

For more information on U.S. policies, see The United States and China (http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/china.html).

The full text of Rodman's statement (<http://armedservices.house.gov/schedules/6-22-06RodmanTestimony.pdf>) (PDF, 7 pages) can be found at the Web site of the House Armed Services Committee.

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

USAID Donates Refrigerators . . .

(Continued from page 1)

the ceremony were Ato Ayalew Gobeze,

President of Amhara Region, Dr. Asrat Genet, Head of the Regional Health Bureau, and USAID/Ethiopia's Acting Mission Director, Dr. Kevin Rushing. The hand-over ceremony followed the inauguration of USAID's Fistula Project with Bahir Dar Fistula Hospital and

Woreta Health Center in the South Gondar zone.

Ethiopia is one of six countries that account for 50% of under-five child deaths worldwide. About 90% of mortality in young children is caused by pneumonia, neonatal complications, malaria, diarrhea and measles. The majority of these deaths are preventable through access to and use of basic primary health care services, including im-

munization. The donation of these refrigerators will support the Ethiopian Government's innovative program for community health — called the Health Services Extension Program (HSEP) — which seeks to expand healthcare outreach activities and increase access to preventive and promotive health care at the kebele and household levels.)?

Muslim Sorority Opens New Doors to American University Women

By Steve Holgate
Washington File Special
Correspondent

Washington -- Fraternities and sororities are an important part of student life on most American university campuses. These privately run clubs organized around common interests and activities provide students with leadership experience, social outlets, support groups, community service opportunities and housing options.

They offer a home-away-from-home for the roughly half million students who seek admittance and are selected by current members. Fraternity and sorority members are often active in campus affairs and maintain a lifelong social and professional network with other former members after graduation.

In some people's minds, the "Greek system" – so called because the houses are typically named with some combination of Greek letters – is synonymous with partying, but the system includes a huge variety of organizations, many of which encourage academic excellence and promote community service. A new national sorority founded on the principles of Islam seeks to build itself on that model.

Founded little more than a year ago, the Gamma Gamma Chi sorority has dedicated itself to giving young women the positive aspects of a sorority experience while maintaining Islamic traditions. While the group's core principles are Islamic, it opens its membership to all women, Muslim and non-Muslim, who support its mission.

Gamma Gamma Chi is the inspiration of Imani Abdul-Haqq, a young Muslim woman who was dissatisfied with the sorority scene at her university in North Carolina. Instead of dismissing the entire system, though, Abdul-Haqq decided to form her own sorority based on Islamic values. Abdul-Haqq's mother, Althia Collins, a former college president and sorority member, threw herself into the dual role of president and executive director. Since then she has spent more than \$50,000 of her own money and in-kind assistance to launch the sorority.

One of the most challenging tasks for Gamma Gamma Chi has been raising awareness of its mission on American campuses. Collins and other supporters have visited many universities, hosting informal information sessions. Students dressed in everything from chadors to blue jeans and t-shirts have attended and taken an interest.

GIVING MUSLIM WOMEN A VOICE ON CAMPUS

A student at the University of Kentucky, where a chapter of the sorority is being founded, told NPR (National Public Radio), "This is exactly what Islam is about." Christine Ortiz, a graduate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Gamma Gamma Chi board member, noting the important status of sororities at American universities, told USA Today, "It will give Muslim woman a face and a voice on campus."

Collins told NPR, "This sorority, I thought, is an opportunity to help Muslim women to be able to develop leadership skills and

... to help each other through networking."

Gamma Gamma Chi makes its commitment to Islam clear in its motto: "Striving for the pleasure of Allah through Sisterhood, Scholarship, Leadership and Community Service." Its six goals, or Golden Pillars, include Islamic awareness, education, support for the indigent, as well as health, social and environmental awareness. Chapters will follow Muslim practices and observe Islam's holy days. Collins says no alcohol will be served at sorority events and that while members may work together with men on specific projects, there will be no men at their social gatherings.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Other students apparently agree with the leaders of Gamma Gamma Chi that this sorority fills a void among diverse student organizations on campus. Young Muslim women in 20 states have expressed interest in forming chapters of an organization where they can enjoy the company of women like themselves and show the best face of Islam.

Members of other sororities have also welcomed the new organization. Some have noted that a number of Christian-based sororities have succeeded using similar models. Susan West, an administrator with the University of Kentucky, has championed the establishment of a Gamma Gamma Chi chapter at her campus, saying that the university welcomes women of all faiths. She told the Voice of America, "I think that GGC will give women a new opportunity...

(Continued on page 27)

Young Muslims Work To Improve Muslim-Western Understanding

By Judy Aita
Washington File Staff Writer

New York -- On the first anniversary of terrorist bombings in the London subway system, two U.S. organizations dedicated to bridging the divide between Muslims and the West will bring together 100 young Muslim leaders from 14 nations to discuss what they can do to improve Muslim-West relations.

The American Society for Muslim Advancement (ASMA) and the Cordoba Initiative will convene the "Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow" forum in Copenhagen, Denmark, July 7 to July 9 for young Muslims from Australia, Canada, Belgium, Bosnia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The forum hopes to build a constructive movement of young Muslims to reject and marginalize extremism and foster positive Muslim identities in the West.

ASMA Executive Director Daisy Khan started her organization after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to help young Muslims discuss being American and Muslim. But after terrorist attacks in Spain and London and the tensions caused by cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in Denmark, she realized that the conversation must be expanded because all Western Muslims were facing similar challenges.

Discussing the forum at a press conference June 15, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, founder of the Cordoba Initiative, said that Muslim youth "are deeply frustrated by what's going on in the name of Islam."

"They feel they are paying a price for actions done by a very, very negligible minority, but which capture the attention of the media," Rauf said. "Terrorism done in the name of Islam has hurt Muslims as much, if not more, than it has hurt Westerners."

But West-Islamic relations "can be rapidly improved" and it is the youth who will make the difference in bridging the divide, he said.

Sayyeda Mirza of the East West Institute is looking forward to the conference because, she said, she wants to talk with other young Muslims about the key issues and challenges they face as members of Western society.

Of an immigrant family but born and raised in the United States, Mirza said that she feels "fully integrated in my identity as an American, as a Muslim, as a woman, as someone who votes, who is active and engaged in society."

"I don't think of the dual loyalty issue that a lot of people bring up. I'm comfortable in my own skin," she said. But she still encounters a "you're the other" mentality.

Mirza said she wants to reclaim her place in American society and not be seen as "the person connected with that terrorist," but accepted as one whose beliefs and practices are "totally in line with Western values."

Omar Amanat, who also will be attending the conference, said that prior to 9/11 he was seen first as a student or entrepreneur or philanthropist, not as a Muslim.

But after the terrorist attacks, "a sense you're Muslim, therefore your primary identification is Muslim" prevailed, he said. "There is a certain sense within the community -- rightly or wrongly -- that the media has just gotten our story wrong, marginalizes us, pigeonholed us."

Amanat and Mirza are members of a new generation of Muslims who were born in the United States but tempered by 9/11. They are, he said, part of "the ever evolving story of the immigrant in the Western world and how we get woven into the fabric of the society."

Other faiths had difficulties, Khan said. "We know that the Catholics had a hard time in this country until [John F. Kennedy] became president. They weren't immediately accepted. The Jews had to be invited to the party as well. It took them a great struggle. They had to create great institutions, had to literally force a Judeo-Christian ethic to be accepted as full citizens. We know the Japanese went through a very difficult time."

"We are going through a difficult time right now, but we will emerge," she said. "We feel that we will pass the test because we have a very healthy Muslim community."

There are almost 8 million Muslims in America and 25 million in the West, Khan said. But it is a diverse community, particularly in New York where almost 1 million Muslims come from every country in the Muslim world.

(Continued on page 25)

Where AIDS Galloped, Lessons in Applying the Reins

By Celia W. Dugger

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Kenya is a rarity in Africa, a nation where experts say the AIDS epidemic shows signs of easing. So this land of safaris has become a hunting ground of a different sort, attracting policy makers and researchers looking for keys to slowing the relentless spread of AIDS elsewhere on the continent.

The trends are heartening. Medical experts here estimate that the number of new H.I.V. infections has plummeted over the last decade from a peak of more than 200,000 a year to fewer than 90,000.

And changes in sexual habits seem to be contributing to the decline. Men say they are having sex with fewer partners, and women report losing their virginity later. Many teenagers, once sexually active, say they are abstaining entirely.

Such shifts, documented in large-scale surveys, suggest that abstinence programs championed by Congressional Republicans in Washington have some chance of success. Critics of the Republican approach say it has overemphasized abstinence at the expense of condoms and other prevention strategies. Kenyan health officials frankly acknowledge that evidence is lacking on the effectiveness of programs that promote condoms or abstinence.

According to the United Nations AIDS agency, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe are the sub-Saharan countries with documented declines in H.I.V. prevalence. Re-

searchers agree that the fall is partly because AIDS deaths have reduced the population of H.I.V.-positive people. But they also say it is likely that behavior change has helped. In Uganda, increased use of condoms has been important.

Health officials here say the spread of knowledge about how to prevent infection and a rising tide of death have been catalytic. Three out of four Kenyans now know someone who has become sick or died from AIDS, up from 40 percent a decade ago. "That is a shock treatment," said Godfrey M. Baltazar, an epidemiologist who oversees monitoring of the Kenyan government's AIDS programs.

As donors have ratcheted up financing of anti-AIDS programs, the landscape for prevention has changed. Since President Bush's global AIDS plan was enacted in 2003, the United States has become the dominant donor in Kenya, spending \$208 million this year to combat AIDS -- more than all other donors combined.

More than half that money is financing the feverish drive for diagnosis of AIDS and treatment of infected people here. The number tested in Kenya, with a population of 32 million, has more than tripled since 2003, to 1.5 million last year. The number of AIDS patients receiving drug treatment has rocketed to 70,000 from fewer than 10,000 in 2003.

Paradoxically, the explosive growth in testing and treatment may be Washington's most important contribution to preventing the spread of the disease. Once people know that AIDS is not a death sentence, they are more willing to be tested, and once they know their H.I.V. status they can protect

themselves and their sexual partners.

This knowledge is critical in light of the experts' judgment that more than half the new infections in Kenya are with couples in which one partner is H.I.V.-positive.

The United States is also paying for programs aimed at changing behavior. This year, it will spend \$15.7 million on programs that promote abstinence and faithfulness, and \$7.8 million to prevent sexual transmission of H.I.V., including distribution of condoms to high-risk groups.

Seen from Kenya, the debate that rages in Washington over AIDS and sex sometimes seems more a reflection of American culture wars than African realities.

Conservative Republican leaders in the House of Representatives successfully included a provision in the 2003 law requiring that a third of AIDS-prevention money go to programs that promote abstinence.

Under the guidelines, United States funds can be used in schools to educate children 14 and younger about abstinence and faithfulness, with condom education added for those 15 and older. The rules permit teachers and volunteers to answer children's questions about condoms, though not to introduce the topic.



(Continued on page 27)

U.S. International Engagement on Avian, Pandemic Influenza

(begin fact sheet)

Fact Sheet:

United States International Engagement on Avian and Pandemic Influenza

The United States is working with countries around the world and key international organizations such as the World Health Organization and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to assist in preparedness for, surveillance against, and response to the threat of avian influenza and a human pandemic. Following are the highlights of international actions taken by various agencies of the U.S. Government to address this challenge.

PREPAREDNESS

- The United States is funding activities to develop and support national task forces and preparedness plans in at least 46 countries in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other partners.

- U.S. Government agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and the Interior, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), have sent scientists, veterinarians, public-health experts, and emergency managers to affected and at-risk countries to advise and support the development and implementation of emergency plans and procedures for responding to both avian and human influenza outbreaks.

- The U.S. is also coordinating efforts through regional mechanisms. For example, the U.S. is collaborating with Canadian and Mexican counterparts on a comprehensive North American pandemic influenza strategy through the Security and Prosperity Partnership.

- USAID is supporting communication campaigns in 34 countries to inform the general public, as well as high-risk groups such as poultry farmers, about how they can reduce their risk of exposure and infection.

The U.S. contribution of \$334 million was the largest cash pledge at the Beijing donors' conference in January 2006, where the global community pledged \$1.9 billion to combat avian influenza worldwide. Our contribution is being used for overseas programs to:

- Develop national plans;
- Support development of diagnostics and laboratory capacity
- Stockpile protective equipment and emergency health commodities;
- Conduct international communications campaigns and public outreach activities;
- Support the work of the World Health Organization, the Food

SURVEILLANCE AND RESEARCH

- The United States is supporting efforts to develop animal-surveillance early-warning networks and to build diagnostic and laboratory capacity in at least 25 countries to strengthen the ability of at-risk countries to quickly recognize signs of an outbreak and confirm the presence of the H5N1 virus.

- USAID is supporting animal and human surveillance efforts in Asia, the Near East, Europe, Eurasia, and Africa. USAID is also supporting community-level, early warning networks in several countries to enhance the ability of affected countries to rapidly detect H5N1 outbreaks in animals and humans.

- In 2004, the United States launched the Influenza Genome Sequencing Project. As of April 10, 2006, genome sequences of 1053 human influenza isolates have been made publicly available. The United States is working with health research organizations around the world to enhance surveillance, detection, and treatment.

- Veterinarians and poultry experts from AI-infected countries are being trained at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa to conduct safe testing of animal specimens.

- At the annual meeting of the Canada/Mexico/U.S. Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management (Trilateral Committee) in May 2006, representatives from all three countries met to coordinate surveillance efforts for the early detection of H5N1 in wild birds of North America. The Executive Table of the Trilateral Committee agreed to fund a proposal to hold a workshop to evaluate this year's surveillance efforts and to enhance field and laboratory capability for wild bird surveillance.

From its pledge of \$334 million made at the Beijing donors' conference, the U.S. has thus far

(Continued on page 25)

Tropical Ice Cores Show Two Abrupt Global Climate Shifts

Washington – For the first time, glaciologists have combined and compared sets of ancient climate records trapped in ice cores from the South American Andes and the Asian Himalayas to see how climate has changed – and is still changing – in the tropics.

The U.S. National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Ohio State University (OSU) funded the research, according to a June 26 OSU press release.

The conclusions indicate a massive climate shift to a cooler regime that occurred just over 5,000 years ago, and a more recent reversal to much warmer temperatures in the last 50 years.

The evidence suggests that most high-altitude glaciers in the planet's tropical regions will disappear in the near future, and shows that in most of the world, glaciers and ice caps are rapidly retreating, even in areas where precipitation increases. This implicates rising temperatures, not decreasing precipitation, as the most likely culprit.

The researchers from OSU's Byrd Polar Research Center and three other universities combined chronological climate records retrieved from seven remote locations north and south of the equator. Cores drilled through ice caps and glaciers have captured a climate history of each region, in some cases providing annual records and in others decadal averages.

"Approximately 70 percent of the world's population now lives in the tropics," said OSU geological sci-

ences professor Lonnie Thompson, "so when climate changes there, the impacts are likely to be enormous."

In the past 30 years, Thompson has led nearly 50 expeditions to remote ice caps and glaciers to gather climate records. The current study includes cores taken from the Huascarán and Quelccaya ice caps in Peru, the Sajama ice cap in Bolivia, and the Dundee, Guliya, Puruogangri and Dasuopu ice caps in China.

For each of these cores, the team extracted chronological measurements of the ratio of two chemical forms of oxygen, called isotopes. The ratio is an indicator of air temperature at the time the ice formed.

All seven cores gave clear annual records of the isotope ratios for the past 400 years and decadal averages dating back 2,000 years.

"We have a record going back 2,000 years and when you plot it out, you can see the Medieval Warm Period and the Little Ice Age," Thompson said.

In the Medieval Warm Period, from about 1000 to 1400, global temperatures are thought to have been a few degrees warmer than those of the preceding and following periods. Its climatic effects were confined mainly to Europe and North America.

Following this period, the Little Ice Age, from 1400 to 1800, was characterized by the expansion of mountain glaciers and the cooling of global temperatures, especially in the Alps, Scandinavia, Iceland and Alaska.

"In that same record," Thompson said, "you can clearly see the 20th century and the thing that stands out – whether you look at individual cores or the composite of all seven – is how unusually warm the last 50 years have been."

He added, "There hasn't been anything in the record like it – not even the [Medieval Warm Period]."

The real story, he said, is that the unusual oxygen isotope values in the past 50 years means things are dramatically changing.

The isotope evidence is clear throughout all the cores, but Thompson said the more dramatic evidence is the emergence of unfossilized wetland plants around the margin of the Quelccaya ice cap, uncovered as the ice retreated in recent years.

Since their discovery in 2002, the researchers have identified 28 sites near the ice cap's margin where these ancient plants have been exposed. Carbon dating showed that the plants range from 5,000 to 6,500 years old.

"This means that the climate at the ice cap hasn't been warmer than it is today in the last 5,000 years or more," Thompson said. "If it had been, then the plants would have decayed."

The researchers say a major climate shift around 5,000 years ago in the tropics likely cooled the region since the ice cap quickly expanded and covered the plants. The fact that they are now being exposed indicates that the opposite has occurred

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Young Muslims Work . . .

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It is easier for Muslims to be accepted in the United States, Canada and Australia, because those countries have "a clear sense of being immigrant nations," Rauf added.

As a faith community, American Muslims "feel generally comfortable in America ... in the sense that America protects religions and allows Muslims to be themselves, to practice their faith in the way they want," Khan said.

"The areas that Muslims feel challenged by right now are the areas of civil liberties and citizenship and their rights as a citizen. They are viewed with suspicion getting on a plane or are being profiled," she said.

Khan said that Muslims must reach out to Americans to let them know that "we are part of the West; we are here as equal citizens, responsible citizens and they need to work with us in order to create change."

For more information on Muslim life in America, see Population and Diversity: (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population/population_and_diversity.html).

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

U.S. International Engagement on Avian . . .

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provided more than \$70 million for AI preparedness and response to affected and at-risk countries, the World Health Organization, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and private-sector partners.

U.S. Agency for International Development \$86.6 million;
Department of Health and Human Services \$35 million;
Department of Agriculture \$10.5 million;
Department of State \$1 million.

RESPONSE

To date, the United States has deployed over 55,000 sets of personal protective equipment for use by first responders to outbreaks in 22 countries in Asia and the Near East, Europe and Eurasia, and Africa.

The first stockpile of antivirals has been positioned in Asia for potential use in the region in response to a pandemic outbreak.

In cooperation with the WHO, U.S. experts have participated in investigations into human cases of AI in affected countries. We are also providing substantial technical assistance, in cooperation with the FAO, for influenza containment activities in 20 countries that have experienced animal outbreaks.

The United States is providing expertise and funding to assist the FAO to develop a Crisis Management Center that will facilitate its ability to mount and coordinate an international rapid response to AI animal outbreaks

worldwide, integrated with human surveillance efforts in conjunction with WHO.

The U.S. is working with the FAO to train first responders to contain animal outbreaks and enhance the capacity of affected countries to manage response efforts.

USAID and the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services are also providing material support to affected countries, including laboratory equipment, reagents, sample shipping containers, and personal protective equipment for veterinarians and field technicians.

The U.S. military is planning military-to-military training and exercises, and is assisting other countries in developing military preparedness and response plans.

(end fact sheet)

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

Young Football Players at World Cup Revel in Matches

By Jane Morse
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- It is a very tense time for many football players attending the World Cup matches in Germany.

But for a group of 30 young athletes from around the world, attending the football tournament (soccer in the United States) is the highlight of a two-week State Department program that emphasizes teamwork, intercultural understanding and respect, and conflict management.

These 30 boys and girls, all expert football players, represent 13 countries. They were selected by U.S. embassies in their respective countries to participate in the World Cup Sports Initiative, an innovative program sponsored by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the U.S. Soccer Foundation and Major League Soccer.

The program gave the young participants an opportunity to pick up new skills by meeting American coaches and playing against young American football players in New York City and Washington.

At the same time, the young athletes, aged 13 to 18, learned about the different cultures of the other program participants. Even President Bush took time out to greet the athletes at the White House June 12. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jun/15-641935.html>).)

"We have one language and that is soccer and that is very important," according to Gustavo Gutierrez, a



16-year-old striker from Santa Cruz, Bolivia. "But I think young players from other countries that they are not different, just the language [is] so it is very cool that everybody is the same and friendly." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jun/18-520117.html>).)

After nearly two weeks of scrimmages, seminars and meeting in the United States, the program participants are winding up their tour in Germany, where they visited Nuremberg then went to Frankfurt for the World Cup games.

At a June 23 press conference in Nuremberg, Karen Hughes, the State Department's undersecretary for public affairs, said the initiative made a point of reaching out to youths from Islamic countries and promoting dialogue between the United States and the rest of the world.

The World Cup Sports Initiative participants come from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bolivia, China, Indo-

nesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Uganda and Uzbekistan.

The game of football is becoming increasingly popular in the United States. According to a survey conducted by the Sporting Goods Manufacturer's Association (SGMA) in 2004, football is the only major sport that has seen its U.S. participation grow since 1987. The survey indicated that nearly 16 million Americans played the game in 2004. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Mar/23-557472.html>).)

The U.S. youth initiative reflects the theme of this year's FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) World Cup, "a time to make friends," with an emphasis on building international understanding and respect between young people around the world.

Germany is hosting the 2006 World Cup from June 9 to July 9.

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

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

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

Where AIDS Galloped . . .

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With United States financing, Population Services International, a nonprofit group, is organizing abstinence clubs for 10- to 15-year-olds here. P.S.I. does not teach the children about condoms, but answers their questions.

Terry Mathenge, 19, a P.S.I. volunteer in a Nairobi school, said she answered directly when, for example, a 10-year-old girl slapped by a parent for asking about condoms repeated the question at a club meeting.

"It's better to tackle it head-on," Ms. Mathenge said, adding, "Speak the truth and the truth will set you free."

But she also said abstinence was important. "In the past, the voice of condoms was louder than the voice of abstinence, and I'm glad that's changing," she said.

Among those listening to her one recent afternoon in Nairobi was Michael Gerson, an evangelical Christian and a close adviser to President Bush. He told the young people assembled that the American debate was polarized between those who favored abstinence only and those who said the promotion of abstinence was naive.

"It seems like you're saying it's neither," he told Ms. Mathenge.

Mr. Gerson later said the best programs set an ideal of sexual behavior, but were realistic about human nature "and deal with young people where they are, and sometimes that includes condoms." The Congressional earmark on abstinence funding was needed to correct an overemphasis on condoms, he said.

Dr. Lawrence Marum, who heads the global AIDS program in Kenya for the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said abstinence programs helped give girls the confidence to resist pressure for sex.

Since teenage girls are six times more likely to be H.I.V.-infected than boys, these programs are needed "to save their lives."

But Dr. Marum also noted that a minority of adolescents had sex by age 15 and needed education in human sexuality, including how to protect themselves with condoms, before they became sexually active.

Scholars say much work remains to be done to figure out which of the so-called ABC programs -- abstain, be faithful, use condoms -- are effective. "We don't know what works," said Michael Kremer, an economics professor at Harvard who is helping evaluate the programs, "and it's not at all obvious."

But efforts to prevent the spread of AIDS will not wait for definitive evidence. In societies where sex can lead to death, many people on both sides of the ideological divide agree that abstinence for the young should be embraced. It is also clear that many young people will have sex despite the dangers, and that abstinence programs alone will not protect them.?



Muslim Sorority . . .

(Continued from page 20)

I have talked with women who are in sororities now, and they are excited to have a new group on campus that will bring something different to their sorority community."

The sorority has already passed an important milestone, establishing its first chapter in Atlanta, where it serves women from a number of local universities and colleges. Two more chapters will open in July and chapters are forming in a number of other American cities. Given the initial interest, the sorority's goal of establishing chapters in every region of the United States seems achievable.

Collins speaks with confidence about the prospects for the work she and her daughter have started. "I can say how pleased I am with the interest and enthusiasm we've received," she told the Washington File, adding, "Imani, my daughter ... and I are honored that we could be the ones to give shape and life to an idea whose time has clearly come."

For information on student life in the United States, see Study in the U.S. (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/education/study_in_the_us.html) and Muslim Life in America (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/muslimlife/>).

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Tropical Ice Cores Show Two . . .

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– the region has warmed dramatically, causing the ice cap to quickly melt.

Tropical glaciers are a warning system for the global climate system," Thompson said, because they integrate and respond to most of the key climatological variables – temperature, precipitation, cloudiness, humidity and radiation.

"What this is really telling us is that our climate system is sensitive, it can change abruptly due to either natural or to human forces," he added. "If what happened 5,000

years ago were to happen today, it would have far-reaching social and economic implications for the entire planet."

Text of the press release (<http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/lonniepnas.htm>) and graphics are available at the OSU Web site.

For additional information, see Climate Change (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/climate_change.html).

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

North Korean Threat Renews . . .

(Continued from page 8)

States' largest international partner in missile defense.

The Japanese government has been engaged in joint research with the United States since 1999, has contributed to the design of interceptor missiles and is currently working to install an X-band radar, a key component of a future missile defense system, to protect both countries from a possible ballistic missile attack. The United States and Japan also have agreed to work together to develop a more capable sea-based interceptor that would improve the defense of both nations. (See related article ([\[Archive/2006/Mar/10-570522.html\]\(http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2006/Mar/10-570522.html\) \).\)](http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/</p></div><div data-bbox=)

According to press reports, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer June 21 said the United States has, "greater technical means of tracking [missiles] than in the past and we have options that we have not had in the past, and all those options are on the table." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Jun/19-689259.html>).)

But the U.S. Department of Defense has declined to comment on media reports that it has activated the system under development for use against a possible North Korean launch.

"We don't discuss any kind of alert status," said Pentagon spokesman Eric Ruff June 20. "We have a limited missile defense system. It's in the development phase. But that's about all we really discuss," he said.

For more information, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html).

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