



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

U.S. Embassy Employees Donate Blood, Help Ethiopian Red Cross Save Lives

On July 16, the Ethiopian Red Cross held a blood drive at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa for the second year in a row. Ambassador Yamamoto kicked off the drive, telling local media, "By giving blood, you help to ensure that blood is there when you or someone close to you may need it." He stressed that the blood donation procedure is sterile and safe and cannot give you HIV/AIDS or other infectious diseases. The Ambassador explained that, contrary to popular belief, most people can spare blood periodically, because blood cells continually regenerate.



Ambassador Yamamoto and Arega Hussien, Public Affairs staff (foreground), and other Embassy employees donate blood with supervision by Red Cross Nurse, Berhanu Arega.

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USAID Ecotourism Development Program Announced

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2008
Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy)
– Today the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched its new multi million dollar ecotourism program, which will contribute to the development of Ethiopia's unique and potentially very lucrative ecotourism sector. The five-year Ethiopia Ecotourism Development Program will protect natural resources and cultural heritage sites, as well as im-

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US Ambassador Donald Yamamoto and Minister of Culture and Tourism Mohamed Dirir discuss the importance of the travel and tourism industry in Ethiopia at the USAID Ecotourism Workshop.

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U.S. Embassy Employees Donating Blood



Experts Call for Expanded U.S.-Africa Agricultural Trade

*By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer*

Washington -- There is no better time than now -- in the face of record-high food and commodity prices -- to expand the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to further open and enhance U.S.-Africa agricultural trade.

Three specialists on AGOA, a preferential tariff program originally passed by Congress in 2000, made that point July 14 at the AGOA Civil Society Forum held on Capitol Hill in Washington. The annual three-day forum runs July 14-16. The theme this year is "Mobilizing Private Investment for Trade and Growth."

The three specialists are: Daniel Karanja, a senior fellow at the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa; Jayme White, legislative director in the office of Washington state Representative Jim McDermott; and Likando Mukumbuta, the chief executive officer of Zambia Agribusiness Technical Assistance Centre (ZATAC Ltd.) in Zambia.

Karanja argued for the agricultural sector in Africa to be more integrated into AGOA.

"If the purpose is to cut hunger and poverty in Africa and to promote economic growth and trade, then AGOA definitely needs to consider how its benefits can reach the rural poor, the small holder who are the foundation of African economies," Karanja said.

Heralding the trade legislation, Karanja said AGOA has resulted in tremendous growth of U.S.-Africa

trade, which now exceeds some \$80 billion annually.

"Our concern," he said, is that "only a few countries have benefited from AGOA and only a few sectors" of their economies have benefited, with oil and gas exports in the lead at about 90 percent of total U.S.-Africa trade, followed by textiles at less than 5 percent and agriculture less than 1 percent in 2005.

"This is a big concern for those people who understand the genesis of AGOA. This bill was introduced



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice addresses the 7th annual AGOA forum in Washington, D.C. July 15.

to promote trade and economic growth in Africa, but as many ... know, agriculture is the major sector of most of the economies in Africa and accounts for the largest share of gross domestic product, largest share of export earnings for African economies, largest share of population with three out of every four Africans living in rural areas and depending entirely on agriculture, and the largest share of employment."

With ever-higher prices for food and fuel, the issue of broadening AGOA is of "the utmost importance," he said.

Reinforcing that point, Jayme White, who has worked on the AGOA legislation since its inception on Capitol Hill, said AGOA is a trade program that spells out the U.S. tariff regime for goods imported from sub-Saharan Africa.

Speaking of the original AGOA legislation or AGOA I, which was passed in 2000, he said, "There were a lot of compromises that were made, but in effect, AGOA eliminated tariffs on over 95 percent of imports that come from sub-Saharan Africa," including some on apparel. "Where we fell short was on full tariff elimination on what we call sensitive agricultural goods -- sugar, corn, peanuts, some value-added agricultural products like chocolate and some syrups."

Since that time, he said, AGOA II in 2002 and AGOA IV in 2006 mainly focused on apparel. AGOA III, he said, did address the need for trade-capacity building in Africa and stipulated that 20 specialists be put in sub-Saharan Africa to help African farmers comply with U.S. laws on importing agricultural goods into the U.S. market.

"We have seen some improvements as a result," White said, but "we have fallen far short on agriculture because of our focus on apparel."

He cautioned against making the assumption that only the oil and gas sector is benefiting. The upside of AGOA, he said, is that "we are seeing some diversification" and an "explosion of apparel imports" under AGOA "which has created tens of thousands of jobs in countries

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Rice Highlights “Sea Change” in Africa

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington -- There has been a “sea-change” in the way Africans approach their own challenges, in America’s approach to the region and in the way the world sees today’s Africa, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told the seventh annual African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum.

“More and more African leaders and citizens are reflecting the dignity of high standards -- the respect and pride that comes with holding one’s self and one’s nation to the most ambitious goals of political, social and economic progress and meeting them by your own energy and your own efforts,” Rice said in opening remarks to African delegates meeting at the State Department July 15.

Rice said “a new spirit of responsibility is alive in Africa today,” among both the African people and their governments that are meeting their own challenges and “creating opportunity for all, connecting their citizens to the world, competing and succeeding in the global economy and doing it themselves.”

Rice told the forum, which is focused this year on “Mobilizing Private Investment for Trade and Growth,” that a “new enthusiasm” can be found across Africa today and a “renewed spirit of independence” that is magnificent to see.

“To be sure,” she said, “Africa faces profound challenges, from violence in places like Darfur and

Somalia, to rising commodity prices, to the disease and poverty that still rob so many of their God-given potential.”

But Africans “deserve not the world’s pity but our partnership,” which lies at the center of the Bush

trade increased more than 13 percent to more than \$80 billion.

Rice credited the “relentless drive of Africa’s entrepreneurs,” supported by AGOA, for a 7 percent growth in Africa’s wealth in just the past year. Non-energy trade between the



A Tanzanian farmer works in his maize field. Experts called for an expansion in U.S.-Africa agricultural trade July 14.

administration’s approach to Africa and at the heart of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Since 2000, AGOA has granted duty-free access to the American market for more than 6,500 African-made products, creating new economic opportunities for communities across the continent. The annual U.S.-Africa trade forum is a key component of AGOA. Since its inception, AGOA has dramatically increased trade between the United States and Africa. In 2007, AGOA

United States and AGOA nations has doubled since 2001, she said, and U.S.-African partnerships in health and education are helping more and more people share in the fruits of Africa’s economic growth.

Welcoming the two newest nations to the AGOA Forum -- Togo and Comoros -- Rice told her audience “the new partnership” that Africa and America are building together “touches on every field of human endeavor that is vital to human flourishing: ending conflicts, ex-

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USAID Ecotourism Development Program . . .

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prove the livelihoods and quality of life of local communities.

The announcement was made by United States Ambassador Donald Yamamoto at the USAID Ethiopia Tourism Competitiveness Workshop, which brought together the private sector, international donors, local and international conservation groups, and government leaders to highlight the important role the tourism industry can play in poverty alleviation and economic growth. Ambassador Yamamoto was joined by Minister Mohamed Dirir, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and USAID Acting Mission Director Nancy Estes.

"There is no time to waste for Ethiopia to take advantage of its vast tourism potential," Ambassador Yamamoto said. "The time is now to prioritize Ethiopia's travel and tourism industry, to improve tourism and ICT infrastructures, and

to protect the nation's natural resources."

The Ethiopia Ecotourism Development Program is part of the USAID Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance, which is using tourism development to reduce poverty, stimulate economic growth, promote natural resource stewardship, and conserve biodiversity. In Ethiopia, the Alliance will work with local stakeholders to design a program that will create job opportunities, respect social-cultural values and heritage, and protect the environment at the same time.

As part of the USAID Ethiopia Tourism Competitiveness Workshop held at the Sheraton today, the World Economic Forum led a discussion on the state of Ethiopia's tourism industry and unveiled its Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2008. The report, which is an in-depth analysis of factors for developing the travel and tourism industry within a specific country, shows

that Ethiopia's competitive advantages in the tourism industry include the number of World Heritage cultural and natural sites, as well as price competitiveness. Senior experts from the World Economic Forum will continue to meet with the Government of Ethiopia's Ministry of Culture and Tourism this week to discuss how a strong, sustainable travel and tourism industry can contribute to economic development.

Currently travel and tourism account for more than \$3 trillion in spending annually and 7.6 percent of the world's total employment. The United Nations World Tourism Organization forecasts that international travel will double by 2020. The USAID Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance hopes to channel a significant amount of this business to developing countries, like Ethiopia.♦

U.S. Embassy Employees Donate Blood, Help Ethiopian Red . . .

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After completing the required health checks, the Ambassador rolled up his sleeves and joined Ethiopian and American colleagues as one of the first to donate blood. The procedure was quick and easy, and within an hour, he and other donors were on their way to regular daily duties and meetings. As he recuperated after his donation, Arega Hussen of the Embassy's Public Affairs Section explained to journalists at the event, "This is a great

volunteer program and this is my fifth time donating blood. I am glad about this drive since it saves a lot of people suffering from lack of blood. Money may be lost, knowledge may be forgotten, but blood is life and I feel great joy at helping others."

At the blood drive, the Red Cross collected 58 units (approx. 34 liters) of blood. The blood will be used to help people in Ethiopia in emergencies and with cancer, blood disorders, and other illnesses. The

amount of blood collected at the U.S. Embassy today fulfills Ethiopia's blood needs for one day. Melissa Jefferson, the Embassy's Nurse Practitioner, summed up the day's results, "We are thrilled to do our part in encouraging voluntary blood donations in Ethiopia. My wish is that in the near future, no lives should be lost because of an inadequate blood supply."♦

African Countries Seek to Preserve Africa Growth Act Gains

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington -- African countries must be vigilant to ensure that gains made under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) are not undone in face of record-high food and oil prices worldwide, says Daniel Neo Moroka, Botswana's minister of trade and industry.

Providing an African perspective at the July 15 ministerial session of the seventh annual African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum, Moroka said African countries have done much to attract investment under AGOA by implementing new democratic reforms, removing administrative and regulatory barriers, and increasing production capacity. All are major themes at this year's forum, whose overall theme is "Mobilizing Private Investment for Trade and Growth."

AGOA was signed into law May 18, 2000, as Title 1 of The Trade and Development Act of 2000. The act offers incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets. Since its inception, AGOA has dramatically increased trade between the United States and Africa. In 2007, AGOA trade increased more than 13 percent to more than \$80 billion annually.

While much progress is being made, Moroka said, challenges still exist. "A lot needs to be done" to enhance the investment climates in AGOA-eligible African countries, "which need to adopt appropriate macroeconomic policies to support investment and trade."

Those policies, he said, must focus on streamlining taxation, inflation, interest rates, exchange controls, wages and labor productivity.

Moroka called on African governments to ensure that both their macroeconomic and microeconomic policies complement each other. "Quite often we find that governments focus at the macro-level to the exclusion of the micro-level," he said.

"Laws relating to individual property rights, intellectual property rights and the enforcement of contracts underpinned by a functioning judicial system need particular attention," Moroka said.

Educational systems as well need to be "reformed and aligned" to meet the needs of business, he said. Africa's export stance must shift away from raw commodities to value-added products, which can create greater revenue and economic diversification.

Moroka called for greater infrastructure development across Africa to further spur regional economic development that can help African nations achieve greater economies of scale and higher levels of prosperity.

While the private sector is considered the engine of growth in many African countries, he said, that same private sector in many of those countries lacks the capacity to deliver the quality and quantity of goods demanded by the markets that have opened up as a direct result of AGOA.

Greater integration is also needed, he explained, so that intra-region

and intra-Africa trade can be expanded. "Quite often, we ask for market access from developed countries, while our markets remain closed to one another and we trade as individual countries. Foreign investors and investors at-large prefer larger markets where economies of scale can be achieved," he said.

AGOA must be used to work for additional regional integration in Africa, he said.

Turning to the Doha round of international trade talks, Moroka called it "regrettable" that those talks have been stalled over agricultural production and subsidy issues.

"As developing countries," he said, "we should stay firm in our resolve to enjoy special and preferential treatment ... and insist on a level playing field, particularly in the agricultural sector."

"There is no way," he said, "that at a relative infancy stage, we can actually compete with the world where subsidies are enjoyed."

Moroka spoke following U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's opening remarks at the ministerial.

The July 14-16 AGOA Forum -- which is being held this year in Washington -- is made up of three key forums: a civil-society component, a ministerial and a private-sector forum.

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

Zimbabwe's Rulers Might Face Additional U.S. Sanctions

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration is seeking to expand its financial restrictions on Zimbabwe's leadership to include a greater number of individuals and corporations and government entities, according to the State Department's top envoy on African issues.

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer told U.S. lawmakers July 15 that the United States is encouraging other countries, especially those in Africa and the European Union, to adopt similar measures in the wake of the veto by China and Russia of a U.N. Security Council resolution that would have imposed worldwide financial pressure on the regime of President Robert Mugabe. (See "U.N. Security Council Fails to Pressure Zimbabwe's Government" (<http://www.america.gov/st/democracy-english/2008/July/20080714145807esnamfuak0.1835901.html>).")

Addressing the Senate Foreign Relations African Affairs Subcommittee, Frazer said the United States already has imposed financial and travel restrictions against 135 individuals and 30 corporate entities "who have undermined their country's democratic process," including members of Mugabe's inner circle and some of their family members.

Individual Americans or U.S. corporations who violate the sanctions face penalties ranging from \$250,000 to \$500,000, she said.

"We are looking to expand the category of Zimbabweans who are covered. We are also looking at sanc-

tions on government entities as well, not just individuals." She added that the U.S. Treasury Department also is looking into ways to target sectors of Zimbabwe's mining industry.

Subcommittee Chairman Russ Feingold (Democrat from Wisconsin) urged harsher worldwide sanctions against the Mugabe regime. "Now is the time to scale up, not give up on global action," he said. "We must not allow Zimbabwe to fall out of the international spotlight as it has many times before."

POLITICAL MEDIATION IS IMMEDIATE ISSUE

Zimbabwe's main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which won the majority of parliamentary seats in the March 29 election but whose candidate withdrew from the June 27 presidential runoff vote after weeks of violent attacks against its members and supporters, is discussing the terms of talks aimed at finding a compromise solution with the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party.

Frazer said the mediation process between the two sides is "probably the most immediate issue" in solving the violent political crisis and said the talks could succeed if they result in a "transitional government that could then prepare for an election so that we could get back to a democratic path."

She said that ZANU-PF faces internal divisions even though the 80-year-old Mugabe holds most of the power in the country. "We have an old man clinging to power who refuses to move aside," which she

said is presenting "a problem for his own party," which does not have a clear successor to Mugabe.

MDC also faces divisions from within, and Frazer urged the opposition to "stand strong" in any discussions "for the will of the people and not just a seat in the government."

U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL MISSED



Political violence has killed more than 100 opposition supporters, injured thousands and displaced more than 200,000.

AN OPPORTUNITY

Senator and former presidential candidate John Kerry (Democrat from Massachusetts) expressed displeasure at the lack of international action against Zimbabwe after the violence that swept the country and helped Mugabe hold on to power.

"There's really some sense that the world has lost its capacity for appropriate outrage," he said, referring specifically to the situation in the Darfur region of Sudan as well as Zimbabwe. In the months following Zimbabwe's March 29 election, government supporters killed more than 100 people, injured 10,000, unlawfully detained more than 2000 and displaced more than 200,000.

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U.S. Wants Accountability for Perpetrators of Darfur Genocide

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington -- Following the International Criminal Court's (ICC) decision to charge Sudanese President Omar El-Bashir with genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity over his government's alleged actions in Darfur, the United States says it will closely examine the charges and supports holding individuals accountable for their crimes in the region.

"[T]he United States has been at the forefront of holding those responsible for genocide accountable, whether those individuals are from the government or from rebel groups or other groups," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said July 14.



A survivor of the organized violence that the United States has called genocide, visits a mass grave in Darfur.

The United States is not a signatory to the Treaty of Rome that created the ICC due to concerns that the court would become a venue for politically motivated prosecutions. However, McCormack said the Bush administration will examine the ICC's case against Bashir.

"We are constantly looking at what information we have on our own that might help hold accountable

those individuals responsible for genocide or other atrocities," he said. He added that he expects the United Nations Security Council will continue to follow the issue.

The spokesman said despite the fact that the United States is not a member of the ICC, it will consider responding to information requests from the court, explaining it as "the fulfillment of our obligations as we see them." (See "State's Legal Expert Reiterates U.S. Devotion to International Law (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2007/June/20070607114415eaifas0.7869684.html>)."

He said there had been a recent request from the ICC for information on Darfur that is already under consideration, but that request "is not related to the request for warrants against President Bashir today."

SEEKING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ATROCITIES IN DARFUR

Since 2004, the United States has described what has taken place in Darfur as genocide. Then Secretary of State Colin Powell cited "a consistent and widespread pattern of atrocities" such as killings, rapes, and the burning of villages committed by Jingaweit militia and government forces against Darfur's non-Arab villagers.

"[W]e concluded that genocide has been committed in Darfur and that the government of Sudan and the Jingaweit bear responsibility -- and genocide may still be occurring," Powell told the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September 2004. (See "Powell Reports Sudan Responsible for Genocide in Darfur

(<http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2004/September/20040909115958JTgnilwoD0.5094873.html>)."

Speaking to reporters July 14, McCormack said "make no mistake, we are on the side of accountability" concerning the atrocities in Darfur.



The United States says it will examine the charges against President Bashir brought by the ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo.

Asked if the ICC charges against Bashir could provoke a backlash against the hybrid African Union-United Nations peacekeeping force in the country, McCormack said, "it certainly is a possibility," and added that U.S. personnel in the country have taken security precautions in the wake of the indictments.

The spokesman called for restraint and said there are "public statements coming from the government in Khartoum that give worry to some parties operating in Sudan."

"[W]e need to reiterate ... that violence serves no party's purpose and that we would urge restraint on all sides and not turn to violence for a means of coercion," he said.

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Rice Highlights “Sea Change” in . . .

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panding free and fair trade, investing in health and education, and strengthening good, lawful democratic governments.”

Rice said both she and President Bush are proud of the “dramatic increases” in support to Africa that the administration has achieved since 2001: quadrupling U.S. foreign assistance; providing billions of dollars of debt relief for Africa’s 27 poorest nations; launching the Millennium Challenge Initiative and signing nearly \$4.3 billion worth of Millennium Challenge compacts with 10 African nations; and forging historic partnerships to fight HIV/AIDS and malaria.

SUCCESS MEASURED IN IMPROVING AFRICAN LIVES

Ultimately, Rice said, “we measure the success of our partnership with Africa not in dollars but in the lives that we have sought to improve. We measure our success -- Africans and Americans together -- by the fact that by 2001, nine conflicts that long plagued the continent have now ended and we must remain vigilant to consolidate real peace.”

Success is also measured, she said, by the fact that freedom, equality, democracy and the rule of law are popular in Africa and growing more so, and by the fact that just in the past four years, millions of Africans have received life-saving information about HIV/AIDS prevention,

with more than 1.6 million Africans receiving life-enhancing medication. Nearly 6.5 million people, including orphans, now are receiving critical and compassionate care, she added.

Despite such progress, major challenges remain, such as the “heart-breaking plight” of the Zimbabwean people, Rice said.

“In the Mugabe regime, we see the page of history that Africa must turn, a leader for independence which inherited a nation full of promise but which has devolved into a tyranny that values nothing but power. It is hard to imagine how Africa will ever reach its full potential until all of its leaders are accountable to and respectful of the will of its people.

“Southern Africa will face perennial instability until the peaceful aspirations of all Zimbabweans are respected and reflected in their government. This is Africa’s challenge and Africa must succeed.”

But despite such challenges, Rice said she remains optimistic about Africa’s future.

In closing, she told the delegates that “perhaps more than any two peoples anywhere in the world, the American people and the people of Africa share a lasting common bond” that will enable all the people of Africa to achieve the hope, respect and justice they deserve.

The conference runs July 14-16 and will feature a forum of civil society leaders from across Africa, a meeting of senior officials among the 41 nations currently participating in AGOA, and a meeting of American and African business leaders to consider how the private sector can complement government-to-government efforts to alleviate poverty.

Rice’s remarks (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2008/July/20080715144855eaifas0.1998102.html?CP.rss=true>) are available from America.gov.

See also “African Countries Seek to Preserve Africa Growth Act Gains.” (<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/July/20080715140417WCyeroC0.1467249.html?CP.rss=true>)

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

Experts Call for Expanded U.S.-Africa Agricultural . . .

(Continued from page 3)

like Lesotho, Swaziland, Kenya, Madagascar and Mauritius.

"That is terrific," he said, while acknowledging that "the downside is that most of the benefits have been in southern Africa in the apparel sector."

Overall, "we have not seen the explosion of imports and trade and investment that I think the proponents of AGOA would have first liked to see," White said.

What has been learned over the years, he said, is the importance of both trade and aid and the transfer of agricultural skills and technology.

What is still needed, he said, is coordinated, long-term trade-capacity building, especially as much of AGOA is slated to expire in 2015. Also needed are public- and private-sector investment in Africa and the coverage under AGOA of all African agricultural products.

For all of this to happen, he said, those who work with Africa must "speak with one voice" on Capitol Hill to lobby Congress. "AGOA

would not have happened without the African diplomatic corps because they were organized behind the bill and they asked for it," and that same energy is needed today, he said.

Likando Mukumbuta -- who has more than 16 years of agricultural development experience in Africa -- reiterated that Africa needs both trade and aid, but what is more important is the active engagement and participation of U.S. business.

"The transactions and exports that are needed are not going to happen in meetings such as this one," he told his audience. "They are not going to happen at conferences and in legislation. It is actually businesses being able to actually transact, negotiate and to export to each other with facilitative legislation" that will create meaningful economic growth and development.

He praised the United States for doing so much in Zambia to help streamline the Zambian economy and stimulate private-sector growth and development. He said that while the United States has helped improve the investment environment in Africa, it has not always

been a participant in the actual investment.

"When it comes to taking advantage of that very environment that has been created," he said, "you tend to find that it is other players who are there who take advantage." He called for more American investment, and said he would like to see Americans "at the table when the deals are being done."

The AGOA Civil Society Forum began earlier in the day with digital video conferences linking American and African civil society groups in the United States with their counterparts in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Cameroon, Mauritania and Togo.

The forum also features a ministerial session, which will be addressed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and a private-sector forum. The event alternates its venue annually between the United States and Africa.

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

U.S. Wants Accountability for Perpetrators . . .

(Continued from page 8)

Fighting among armed groups has kept Darfur in a state of humanitarian emergency for more than four years. The United Nations estimates that more than 200,000 people have died in Darfur since 2003. Close to 2 million others were dis-

placed into refugee camps in the region and in eastern Chad.

The United States is the largest bilateral donor to Sudan and has provided more than \$3 billion in humanitarian, peacekeeping and development assistance to the people of Sudan and Eastern Chad since 2005, according to the U.S.

Agency for International Development. It also is providing funds and materials to support the joint United Nations–African Union peacekeeping force.

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

U.S. Elections Good Business for Washington Theater Group

By Michelle Austein
Staff Writer

Washington -- Political activists are not the only ones who get especially busy during election season. For a group of entertainers known as the Capitol Steps, 2008 is a demanding year.

"More people are interested in and focused on politics so we get more shows in an election year," said Elaina Newport, co-founder of the Capitol Steps, a theater troupe known for its musical acts about politicians. The Capitol Steps expects to perform about 700 shows during 2008.

In December 1981, Newport and other members of Senator Charles Percy's staff were planning entertainment for a Christmas party. They took the tunes of well-known songs and paired them with their own lyrics poking fun at the political events of the day. The show was a hit and the Capitol Steps was born.

Today, the Capitol Steps has about 25 members who perform in groups of five at a theater in Washington or in touring productions across the country. Although the size of the cast and the audience has expanded since its first performance, the Capitol Steps continues its tradition of writing and performing songs about politics and news of the day. The group has produced 28 albums, including their latest one titled Campaign and Suffering.

Newport told America.gov that the average show includes about 30

songs, meaning an actor who plays former Russian President Vladimir Putin in one skit might have to make a quick costume change to return to the stage as former U.S. presidential candidate Mike Huckabee.

The Capitol Steps typically produces one new song a week -- one of its newest recounts Starbucks' decision to close 600 coffee shops. As new songs are added to the pro-

It helps that many of the performers understand the topics they poke fun of quite well -- about half have worked in congressional offices or for other political organizations. "We're laughing at ourselves a little bit, we worked in the system and we still think it's funny," Newport said.

Many of the politicians the Capitol Steps targets have seen and complimented its work. Famous audience members include five U.S. presidents, among them President Ronald Reagan, who invited the Capitol Steps to the White House to sing songs about him.

"That was one of the surprises over the years, that politicians who we make fun of tend to like it," Newport said. "They want to see what you have about them."



Members of the Capitol Steps perform a song about Hillary Clinton.

duction, older songs are removed. This gives the performers the ability to "keep the show fresh on a continuing basis," Newport said.

"We're not like normal people," Newport said. "If an event happens we don't think 'Is this good or bad for the country?' We think 'Is it funny and what rhymes with it?'"

TARGETED, TOPICAL HUMOR

Cast members learn new songs quickly. "I might write up a song on Wednesday and e-mail it to someone" for use in the weekend's performance, Newport said. The performers have little time for rehearsal.

Newport said she does believe presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama have not seen the Capitol Steps perform. If they came to a performance, they likely would see themselves portrayed on stage.

"Everybody's interested in seeing what we have about McCain and Obama," Newport said. Recent songs have made fun of McCain's age and parodied the recent attempts by Democrats Hillary Clinton and Obama to unify their party.

Newport is unsure which candidate, if elected, would be better for the group's business.

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Presidential Candidates' Foreign Trips Matter

By Eric Green
Staff Writer

Washington -- Foreign trips by U.S. presidential candidates are more significant in 2008 than in previous American presidential campaigns, several political experts tell America.gov.

Andrew Bennett, professor of government at Georgetown University, said the trips are particularly important in this presidential cycle because of the perceived "gap in experience" between the presumed Republican Party candidate, Arizona Senator John McCain, and his presumed Democratic opponent, Illinois Senator Barack Obama.

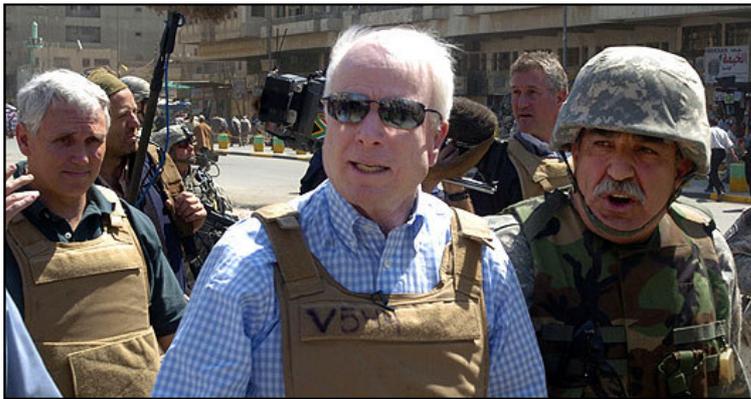
Even though the U.S. economy currently is ranked as the top issue for U.S. voters, "foreign policy could always leap right back" as the highest priority, he said. As evidence, Bennett cited the deaths of nine U.S. soldiers on July 13 in Afghanistan, the highest number of American military personnel killed in a single day in that country since 2005.

McCain used his trips to Iraq, Colombia, Mexico and Canada to "emphasize his long experience" dealing with foreign affairs in the U.S. Senate and his prior U.S. military service, Bennett said.

The downside of the trips for McCain, he said, were misstatements he made during his visit to Iraq, when he misidentified the Moslem sect Iran is accused of supporting in Iraq.

"That doubly hurts" McCain "because it cuts across the message that he's trying to send" on his experience and knowledge of foreign policy, Bennett said.

Bennett, who has worked on several Democratic presidential campaigns but is not involved in the



*Senator John McCain at Baghdad during his visit in Bagdad last April 2007
(File Photo: Sgt. Matthew Roe, U.S. Army, via Reuters)*

2008 race, said some saw McCain's timing for visiting Colombia and Mexico in July as "ill considered" because the troubled state of the U.S. economy then was dominating the news headlines.

"Obama was setting out to define himself and McCain might have been better served by staying in the United States at that point," Bennett said.

Bennett said some analysts attribute McCain's victory in the Republican presidential primaries, in part, to the December 2007 assassination of Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto. (See "Bhutto Assassination Condemned by World Leaders (<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2007/December/20071227123121idybeekcm0.6537897.html>).")

"It reminded people that you wanted somebody" with McCain's experience in foreign policy, Bennett said. He added that foreign policy was "way down on the agenda" in the 2000 presidential race but it rose following the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Bennett said Obama needs to show on his international travel "some more facility and experience in foreign affairs. So it's more important for him [than McCain] to get overseas and visit Iraq, in particular.

"There's a potentially bigger upside" for Obama if he does well on his trip, Bennett said. The downside is if he suffers a gaffe like that of McCain's in

Iraq. Such a mistake would be much more damaging to Obama because it would add to the idea he lacks foreign affairs experience, he said.

INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTIONS IMPORTANT TO U.S. VOTERS

Charlie Cook, of cook.political.com, said Obama and McCain are in "vastly different situations" politically "but sometimes that creates similar actions."

McCain wants to spotlight his strong suit in foreign policy and national security, as opposed to the economy and domestic problems, said Cook, the editor and publisher of the Washington-based Cook Political Report.

Regarding McCain's trips to Colombia and Mexico, Cook said McCain

(Continued on page 14)

National Conventions Show Appreciation to Host Cities

By Julie Hyman
Staff Writer

Washington -- As part of their national convention activities, the Democratic and Republican parties are creating and participating in community-service projects in their convention host cities.

The Republican National Convention (RNC) launched its American Neighbor Volunteer Program to give back to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, and the Democratic National Convention Committee (DNCC) is sponsoring monthly DNCC Service Days, a community-service initiative for Denver and its suburbs.

The American Neighbor Volunteer Program not only works to thank the host of the convention but also is meant to inspire Republicans across the nation to take action in their own communities.

"The thought behind the American Neighbor program is to make people realize that, 'Yes, I can help my neighbor. I can make a difference in my community,'" said Maria Cino, convention president.

Since the launch of the program on September 18, 2007, convention staff members have volunteered for several local organizations:

Volunteers from the RNC have been serving lunch to the area's homeless and helped pack and sort food at the Second Harvest Heartland Food Bank. Heidi Stennes, the food bank's director of communications and media relations, said her organization "could literally not do their jobs" without the help of volunteers.

Convention staff participated in the 14th annual Minneapolis Earth Day Watershed Cleanup to commemorate Earth Day 2008. During the cleanup, which focused attention on improving water quality in Minneapolis' lakes, volunteers picked up trash in and around the water.

In December 2007, volunteers helped organize and distribute gifts at The Salvation Army Toy Shop, which provided holiday toys for 36,000 children. In October 2007, volunteers

sorted, tagged and modeled truckloads of Halloween costumes at the Greater Twin Cities United Way and Arc Greater Twin Cities Value Village Halloween "Boo-tique." The proceeds helped fund programs and services for people with disabilities.

"Minneapolis-St. Paul is a vibrant, welcoming, and caring community. The spirit here is contagious -- and we want to give something back," Cino said.

DEMOCRATS IN DENVER

The Democratic National Convention also wants to give something back, specifically through nine DNCC Service Days, which will focus on key areas identified by Denver city leaders: youth, homelessness and hunger, and making environmental improvements to the city.

"This is truly a win-win-win. Through these activities, our staff will have the opportunity to engage with the community and learn more about Denver, answer questions and do a little bit of good along the way," said the DNCC's Leah D. Daughtry.

Convention staff members have helped with several activities aimed at the city's youngest citizens, including a soccer (called football outside the United States) camp with middle school students and the local major-league soccer team, the Colorado Rapids. They also helped to organize, sort and shelf items in preparation for their distribution to children across the city, cleaned up playgrounds and led a classroom activity at a local early learning center.

While helping paint Denver's Manual High School, DNCC Chair Howard Dean said, "We don't want to just be people who have a good time and blow into town for a week. We want to know this community and we want to contribute to this community."

To address homelessness and hunger, DNCC staff helped a local community health center prepare an application for financial assistance, sorted canned goods at a facility to assist the needy and served breakfast and presented warm clothes at a homeless shelter.

Other projects will focus on environmental stewardship. According to the convention Web site, the convention aims "to produce the most environmentally sustainable political convention in modern American history."

(Continued on page 14)

Presidential Candidates' Foreign Trips . . .

(Continued from page 12)

needs to increase his support among America's Hispanic voters "who have grown estranged from the Republican Party over the immigration issue, though McCain's own positions are not nearly as problematic with Hispanic voters as his party's," Cook said.

He said Obama "needs to address a



Senator Barack Obama

perception that foreign policy is his weakness and reassure voters that he is knowledgeable and demonstrate a competence" in that area.

"Americans seem more aware of and sensitive to how our country is perceived around the world than

any time in modern history," Cook said, adding that Americans "realize that we cannot go it alone and that a successful foreign policy is dependent upon close working relationships, cooperation and trust between nations."

FOREIGN TRAVEL LENDS GRAVITAS

Nathan Gonzales, editor of the Rothenberg Political Report in Washington, said both major candidates are "doing their best to appear presidential."

Gonzales said "traveling the world and meeting with world leaders" projects an "aura of the presidency that's different from walking" in a parade on the Fourth of July (U.S. Independence Day).

One potential pitfall of international travel, Gonzales said, is that extended stays overseas might prompt voters to "wonder why [the candidates] weren't focusing on what's happening within our borders."

But, with U.S. presidential campaigns "getting longer and longer, I don't think there are a lot of people crying" for the candidates to campaign more, he said.

Another risk is that foreign visits could be portrayed as being "too political. But I don't know if the casual voter is psychoanalyzing the trips," Gonzales said.

For additional information, see "How Will Candidates Explain Stances on Meeting Hostile Leaders? (<http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/June/200806041941271xeneerg0.9782678.html?CP.rss=true>)" and "Candidates on the Issues (<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/issues.html>)."

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

National Conventions Show Appreciation to . . .

(Continued from page 13)

Environment-related activities have included mulching trees at a local park and planting more than 400 trees around Denver in honor of Earth Day. Convention officials also have pledged to incorporate sustainability into all aspects of convention planning, and have instituted a "greening plan" that includes measuring the convention's "carbon footprint" and minimizing the convention's waste with resource recovery systems.

In addition, the DNCC is coordinating a Delegate Service Day at the end of the convention. The project will allow delegates and others attending the convention to thank, celebrate and contribute to the city of Denver. Projects will include sorting canned food contributions, cleaning up neighborhoods and parks and caring for trees.

"On Delegate Service Day, we hope all those who participate recognize the value of volunteering, and ideally go back to their home commu-

nities and states all across the country and get involved or recommit to similar projects in the weeks and months ahead," said the DNCC's Jenni Engebretsen.

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

Unorthodox U.S. Museums Show Off America's Lighter Side

By Lauren Monsen
Staff Writer

Washington -- Say the word "museum" and most people envision an art gallery or an institution full of dinosaur bones, historic dioramas and cultural artifacts. However, America also is dotted with museums that pay tribute to the idiosyncracies of a nation that prizes individuality, creativity and bold ideas.

Oddball museums are very much in the tradition of the odd roadside attractions that lend humor and character to towns all across the United States. (See "Road Trip USA: Discovering a Different America. (<http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/June/20080630134107GLnesnoM0.4604914.html>)")

Here, America.gov lists a few suggestions for tourists who are willing to stray off the beaten path.

AWFUL ART, MEDICAL QUACKERY AND VENTRILOQUIST DUMMIES

Billing itself as "a great monument to the work of unrecognized bad artists everywhere," the Museum of Bad Art (MOBA) in Dedham, Massachusetts, collects and displays examples of earnest artwork gone horribly wrong. Located in the basement of an old building, "MOBA is appropriately lit by one large, humming fluorescent light fixture," the museum's Web site proudly proclaims. Almost as diverting as the artwork is the museum's description of each piece, in language that parodies the pretentious prose often found in art criticism (for example, a painting called

Peter the Kitty is said to be "stirring in its portrayal of feline angst").

St. Paul, Minnesota, is home to the Museum of Questionable Medical Devices. Celebrated as the "Quackery Hall of Fame," it has an impressive collection of phrenology machines (which claim to analyze character traits by reading the bumps on a person's head) and hundreds of other contraptions, such as the Nose Straightener, the Battle Creek Vibratory Chair and the MacGregor Rejuvenator, a machine that attempts to reverse the aging process by blasting patients with magnetic waves. The museum -- which The New York Times

calls "a stunning testament to the myriad of ways people have tried to make money off the eternal ills of humankind" -- is nestled within its parent institution, the Science Museum of Minnesota.

The Vent Haven Ventriloquism Museum in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, houses more than 700 meticulously crafted ventriloquist dummies. Originally used in vaudeville acts, films and old television shows, the dummies can be manipulated to wink, roll their eyes, lift their eyebrows, wiggle their noses and ears, smile, cry, spit and salute. Among the many memorable characters inhabiting the museum are Champagne Charlie, a tuxedo-clad dummy that actually smokes a ciga-

rette; a rustic matron called the Farmer's Wife (also known as Rachel the Gossip Lady); Elmer Sneezeweed, a figure that appeared in cowboy movies from the 1930s to the 1950s; and Cleo, a glamour-



Discover the world of espionage and spies at the International Spy Museum in Washington DC.

girl dummy based on actress Marilyn Monroe.

IN PRAISE OF SPAM ... AND OTHER OBSESSIONS

The town of Austin, Minnesota, proudly bears the nickname "Spamtown U.S.A." -- not because of any association with junk e-mail, but because Austin is the birthplace of the other type of spam: a canned meat product manufactured by the Hormel Foods Corporation. Invented in 1937, Spam -- a processed food made from pork -- was fed to Allied troops during World War II, and Hormel officials boasted that their product thus became "the

(Continued on page 17)

Rice Receives Bulgarian Honor for Helping Free Medics

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice accepted Bulgaria's highest honor for her help in the 2007 release of six medics imprisoned in Libya for more than eight years.

"I'm glad and pleased to have played a role," Rice said July 9 after receiving the Stara Planina First Class Medal. "It was indeed a terrible ordeal but one I'm glad has ended."

A Palestinian doctor and five Bulgarian nurses were sentenced to death on charges of deliberately infecting more than 400 Libyan children with AIDS -- charges that the United States and others said were flawed.

The United States made release of all six a priority, and Rice repeatedly raised the issue with Libyan officials, urging them to let the medics go home to their families. Libya freed the medics in part to improve its relations with the United States.

Bulgarian President Georgy Parvanov presented Rice with the medal, thanking her for her "outstanding contribution" to resolving the situation. He said his initial meeting with President Bush

sparked immediate action -- the most important of which was the delegation of authority to Rice necessary for her to work toward a resolution.

"This has been a clear case of international solidarity and we're deeply grateful" to all the allies involved,

Bulgaria awarded the medal to several key participants in negotiations that led to the release, including former French first lady Cecilia Sarkozy, who declined an invitation to accept it in person.

After the ceremony, Rice spoke with the medics, who told of being beaten, sexually abused and deprived of food and sleep while in prison. One of the nurses, Snezhana Dimitrova, told Rice: "I'm very happy that I am able to touch you. You are an extraordinary woman."

"I'm very happy to be able to shake your hand after all you've been through. It's good to have you back," Rice said.

Libya has yet to drop the charges against the six medics, despite testimony from HIV/AIDS experts that the children were infected by unhygienic hospital conditions.

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



Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov explains how Secretary Rice made vital contributions toward the release of six Bulgarian medics detained in Libya for more than eight years. His remarks came after he bestowed Bulgaria's highest honor, the Order of Stara Planina - First Class, on Secretary Rice and presented her with a medal in a brief ceremony. Photo credit: Simeon Todorov

notably the European Union and the United States, the president said.

Unorthodox U.S. Museums Show Off America's Lighter . . .

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savior of civilization." To honor Spam's contribution to humanity, Hormel Foods built the Spam Museum. The facility offers vast quantities of Spam trivia, a world map indicating which countries consume the most Spam and a television screen broadcasting the famous skit by the English comedy troupe Monty Python's Flying Circus (featuring Vikings singing a rousing chorus of "Spam, Spam, Spam" that drowns out any attempt at conversation).

All that glitters may not be gold, but there's no shortage of sparkle at the Liberace Museum in Las Vegas. Dedicated to the memory of the flamboyant entertainer and pianist who called himself "Mr. Showmanship," the museum displays Liberace's ornate stage costumes (festooned with sequins, rhinestones and ostrich feathers), his jewelry, lavishly appointed cars (including a Rolls Royce covered in mirrored tiles) and gem-studded pianos. The museum occasionally hosts tribute concerts by Liberace-inspired performers, a concession to fans who still pine for the original. (Liberace died in 1987.)

Conspiracy theorists will want to investigate the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, New Mexico. Believers in UFOs -- unidentified flying objects -- insist they have spotted them flying over Roswell with surprising regularity over the years. Roswell also was the site of a famous incident in 1947, when an object that appeared to be a flying saucer crashed to Earth. The local Air Force Base, which was tasked with the cleanup of the crash site, maintained that it was a research balloon, but many

UFO proponents believe that story is a cover-up. At the UFO Museum, each room has been designed to evoke the feeling of 1947, with a recreated newsroom, a government "cover-up" room and information about alien sightings in general.

Those who harbor an inner James Bond should pay a visit -- surreptitiously, of course -- to the International Spy Museum in the nation's capital. The museum traces the

the Tree-Stump Listening Device (created by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in the early 1970s), a solar-powered mechanism disguised as a tree stump that was placed in the woods to capture secret radio transmissions.

Many other quirky museums await the adventurous tourist. From dog sleds to Barbie dolls to dead cockroaches dressed as celebrities and historical figures -- as in the Cock-



International UFO Museum and Research Center, Roswell, New Mexico
CREDIT: "International UFO Museum and Research Center, Roswell, New Mexico."
Photo courtesy of Rodden's Inc., for "International UFO Museum and Research Center," a New Mexico Local Legacies project

history of espionage through the stories of people who practiced the profession, and visitors are expected to adopt a cover identity, memorize specific details about it and learn firsthand the importance of keeping one's "cover." There is also a collection of authentic tools used by covert agents: the Lipstick Pistol, referred to as the "kiss of death" by Soviet operatives who used it in the mid-1960s; the Shoe with Heel Transmitter, produced by the Soviets during the Cold War to monitor secret conversations; and

roach Hall of Fame Museum in Plano, Texas -- there is truly something for everyone.

See Diversity (<http://amlife.america.gov/amlife/diversity/index.html>).

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

Good Governance Measures Reflect New Global Consensus

By Howard Cincotta
Special Correspondent

Washington -- With growing support from such disparate sources as the Group of Eight leading industrialized nations (G8), the World Bank, and the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation, many nations are making steady -- if sometimes overlooked -- progress in strengthening their democratic practices and successfully combating corruption.

ary/20080205152702AKllennoCcM0.9305841.html).")

They also agreed, at the urging of the United States, to issue an annual accountability report on their anti-corruption efforts.

"All of us need to be reminded that when we say we're going to do something, we've got to do it," President Bush said at the conclusion of the G8 meeting.

"Good government is an essential condition of development," President Bush said. "So the Millennium Challenge Corporation will reward nations that root out corruption, respect human rights, and adhere to the rule of law." (See "U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation Overview (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2007/May/20070531132811xjsnommis0.9933893.html>).")



Leaders of Group of Eight pose for photos Monday, July 7, 2008, prior to dinner at the Windsor Hotel Toyko Resort and Spa in Toyoko, Japan. From left are: Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; President Dmitriy Medvedev of Russia; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom; Japan's Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda; President George W. Bush; Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada; President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, and President Jose Manuel Barroso of the European Commission. White House photo by Eric Draper

At the recent G8 meeting in Japan, for example, member nations pledged support for good governance, including anti-corruption measures, as essential for economic growth in Africa and achievement of its Millennium Development Goals. (See "Millennium Challenge Corporation Reinforces Support for Africa ([Links between development and effective governance are central to the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation \(MCC\), which has provided roughly \\$6 billion in assistance to 16 nations since its founding in 2004. The MCC assesses each applicant on 17 indicators of good governance, including investment in education, anti-corruption efforts and management of natural resources.](http://www.america.gov/st/foraid-english/2008/Febru-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE

Although inefficiency, waste and corruption remain daunting issues, there is a growing international consensus that transparency and accountability are key to implementing governmental reform efforts throughout the world.

The United States is providing approximately \$80 million in anti-corruption funding through MCC to five African countries: Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, according to a statement issued at the G8 meeting, and on July 14, another compact was signed with Burkino Faso. ("Burkina Faso Signs \$480.9 Million Aid Compact with United States (<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/July/20080714164906idybeekcm0.4363062.html?CP.rss=true>).")

"REAL WORLD" BANKING

In a recent report, the World Bank seeks to bridge the gap between abstract pledges of good governance and actual governmental reform through a set of findings and best practices that have been tested in the "real world."

Instead of top-down mandates or directives, the publication *Governance Reform under Real-World Conditions: Citizens, Stakeholders, and Voice* points to communication and coalition-building as the keys to achieving meaningful governmental reform.

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Legal Empowerment Vital to Ending Poverty, Commission Declares

By Howard Cincotta
Special Correspondent

Washington – What would you call a group of people without legal identity, title to their homes, licenses to conduct business, ownership of their property, records of their work history, or even the ability to appear in court?



Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright

You would call them poor.

In the past, efforts to advance the rule of law and reduce global poverty have been seen as equally laudable but largely separate endeavors. No longer.

A report by the independent Commission on Legal Empowerment, co-chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and

economist Hernando de Soto concludes the basic protection and services of the legal system are essential for breaking the cycle of poverty and powerlessness for as many as 4 billion of the world's population.

"The rule of law is not merely an adornment to development; it is a vital source of progress," the commission's June report declares. "However, most poor people do not live under the shelter of the law and are far from the law's protection and the opportunities it affords."

COMMISSION CONSULTATIONS

Along with its co-chairs, the commission comprises a panel of senior government officials and former heads of state chosen for their real-world experience in the complexities of policymaking.

"The commission undertook an extensive national consultative process in 22 countries," Executive Director Naresh Singh told america.gov. "We also recruited local experts to write papers that were examined by local focus groups -- leading up to the national conferences."

In addition, the commission created an advisory board comprising major regional development banks and civil-society organizations.

"The political visibility of the commission's leadership was very empowering for these organizations," Singh said.

Although the commission will cease formal operations soon, the United Nations Development Programme will continue its work, and the World Bank has agreed to establish a legal empowerment trust fund.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Many of the commission's findings built on de Soto's pioneering research into the nature of the "informal economy" in his native Peru and other developing nations.

"At its core, the legal-empowerment agenda is about unlocking human potential," writes



Economist Hernando de Soto

commission member Lloyd Axworthy, former Canadian minister of foreign affairs.

The commission's recommendations fall into four categories, or pillars: access to justice, property rights, labor rights and business rights. Its findings also emphasize the importance of legal empowerment for women.

"Poor women often suffer the worst forms of discrimination in

(Continued on page 25)

Good Governance Measures Reflect New Global . . .

(Continued from page 18)

The report identifies such necessary steps as systematically reaching out to policymakers and legislators; supporting middle managers who are often the most resistant to change; building broad coalitions in support of change; transforming hostile or indifferent publics; and encouraging citizen demands for accountability to maintain public support.

"Communication links the constructive elements of the public sphere -- engaged citizens, vibrant civil societies, plural and independent media systems, and open government institutions -- and thus forms the framework for national dialogue," the World Bank report says.

Governance Reform presents nine case studies ranging from building consensus around water distribution in Kenya to reform of public enterprises in West Bengal and Orissa, India, to judicial reform in Georgia.

The World Bank now devotes roughly 16 percent of its lending and advisory support to governmental reform in the four areas of financial management, civil service reform, revenue administration and anti-corruption, according to another report issued by the bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG).

The IEG report, like Governance Reform, stresses that initiatives must be "realistic about what is politically and institutionally feasible." Technology and training alone are not the most critical factors, the report concludes. "The most crucial and difficult part is changing behavior and organizational culture."

Anti-corruption and transparency programs supported by World Bank lending have grown substantially since the late 1990s, the report states.

TAKING ON THE KLEPTOCRATS

The United States long has led international efforts to highlight the corrosive threat that public and private corruption poses. Corruption undercuts economic growth, facilitates crime

and terrorism, discourages international trade and investment, and attacks the foundations of democratic government itself. (See "Global Anti-Corruption Forum To Focus on Turning Words into Deeds" ([http://](http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/February/20070228134639saikceinawz0.1071588.html)

www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/February/20070228134639saikceinawz0.1071588.html).")

In 2007, the World Bank and United Nations estimated the cross-border flow of illicit proceeds from corruption, crime and tax evasion at between \$1 trillion and \$1.6 trillion each year.

President Bush pushed to make fighting public corruption a priority item at the 2006 G8 meeting in St.

Petersburg, Russia, and later in 2006 the United States announced a National Strategy to Internationalize Efforts Against Kleptocracy. The term kleptocracy refers to a government that extends the personal wealth and political power of the ruling class at the expense of the general population. (See "Combating Kleptocracy" (<http://www.america.gov/st/democracy-english/2008/May/20080601225742SrenoD6.73>



President George W. Bush and Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda speak with United States J-8 representative Manogna Manne of Pleasanton, Calif., a member of the J-8 young leaders from the Group of Eight countries, attending the 2008 G-8 Summit in Toyako, Japan. White House photo by Eric Draper

4866e-02.html).")

Major elements of anti-corruption initiatives include: denying any safe haven to kleptocrats and their illegally acquired funds, strengthening information sharing among nations and financial institutions and insisting on greater accountability and controls of development funds.

The United States also has urged the implementation of strong international agreements, such as the U.N Convention Against Corruption

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U.S. Law Promotes Religious Freedom Around the World

Washington -- Even though many countries have become more tolerant in recent years of individuals worshipping as they choose, there are still governments abusing religious freedom, President Bush said on the 10th anniversary of the International Religious Freedom Act.

The act was built on "a tradition that defined our nation," Bush said at the White House July 14, noting the right to worship freely was guaranteed by framers of the U.S. Constitution and continues to be a fundamental principle in the United States today.

The 1998 law established "vital diplomatic tools" that enable the U.S. government to promote religious freedom around the globe by empowering the secretary of state, under the president's authority, to designate nations severely violating religious freedoms as "countries of particular concern."

Once designated, countries can face economic sanctions or other U.S. actions deemed appropriate by the president in consultation with other governments and humanitarian organizations. The United States tries to work with designated countries to improve religious tolerance and provides funding for overseas programs that promote the freedom of worship.

"HOPEFUL PROGRESS"

In the act's 10-year history, there has been "hopeful progress" in many countries, Bush said. Among these accomplishments:

In Turkmenistan, the United States pressed for the release of Mufti Ibadullah, imprisoned for refusing to

teach state propaganda as a religious text. The mufti has since become an adviser to the country's religious affairs council.

Vietnam's government has taken "promising first steps toward religious freedom" by releasing dozens of religious prisoners and re-opening churches that had been shut down by the government.

Bush said the anniversary should serve as a reminder that many people still do not have the freedom to worship as they choose. He specifically cited:

Eritrea, where 3,000 are imprisoned for their religious belief.

Burma, where Buddhist monasteries have been raided and monks have been attacked during peaceful protests.

China, where a dissident was barred from visiting the United States and meeting with members of Congress when Chinese authorities detained him.

Uzbekistan, where members of religious minorities have been beaten and jailed, but where "recent agreements give us hope that these abuses will not be repeated," according to the president.

"Today we urge the leaders of all these countries to immediately end their abuses of religious freedom," Bush said.

Referencing the Chinese incident, the president said, "So long as there are those who want to fight for their liberty, the United States stands with them."

The act also established the State Department's International Religious Freedom office and created the position of ambassador-at-large "to ensure that religious liberty remains a priority of every administration," Bush said.

The office promotes religious freedom, monitors discrimination worldwide and recommends and implements policies designed to promote religious tolerance. It issues the annual International Religious Freedom Report, a detailed review of the status of religious freedom in more than 190 countries. (See "Executive Summary of the International Religious Freedom Report (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2007/September/20070914165208eaifas0.9316522.html>).")

Additional information is available on the Web site of the Office of International Religious Freedom's (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/>) Web site.

A transcript of the president's remarks on the 10th anniversary (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/07/20080714-1.html>) is available on the White House Web site.

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

Human Smuggling a National Security Threat, Scholar Says

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington -- Human smuggling is a national security threat, and it is only a matter of time before terrorists use the services of smugglers to enter the United States, says Sheldon Zhang, an author and an expert on human smuggling and transnational crime.

But smugglers and terrorists have vastly different agendas, and it is unlikely the two groups will form cooperative operations, Zhang told America.gov.

In his recently published book, *Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings: All Roads Lead to America*, Zhang, a professor of sociology at San Diego State University, explores the causes for and methods of human smuggling as well as possible links with terrorists and organized crime.

Human smuggling, Zhang told America.gov, "undermines legal immigration, and it undermines any sovereign nation's right to control its borders. From a U.S. point of view, it is dangerous for the government not to know who is coming to this nation."

But human smugglers and other types of crime groups, he said, are motivated by profits; terrorists and other extremists are driven by ideology.

"Criminal organizations in general do not have a political agenda other than protecting their financial inter-

ests," he writes in his book. The fundamental agenda of terrorist organizations, however, "is to overthrow the existing political system and drastically change the socio-economic environment, which they consider immoral.

"However, the reason organized crime exists is precisely because of



Sheldon X. Zhang (Donna-Marie Cruickshank)

the inadequacies or inefficiencies of the existing economic and political system. Any disruption," Zhang writes, "will threaten the profit-making activities of criminal organizations."

In other words, Zhang told America.gov, "Extremists can only mess up money-making opportunities for criminal enterprises." It is unlikely that human smugglers will form alliances with fringe groups.

"On the other hand," he said, "just because these two groups don't match [in their objectives] doesn't prevent one from taking advantage of the other. It does not take any leap of faith to realize that anyone

with the right contacts and money can acquire travel services from a human smuggling network that provides all services -- from documents to transportation -- to send fee-paying customers to their desired destinations. There is no reason why extremists cannot tap into the same smuggling market like everyone else."

Already there have been documented cases of illegal migrants from "countries rife with extremists" having used smugglers to help them enter the United States, he said.

HUMAN SMUGGLING A "NOT-SO-ORGANIZED" CRIME

Human smuggling, Zhang told America.gov, is "a huge underground economy." By some estimates, it generates billions of dollars each year. It flourishes because of labor demands in the receiving countries, the desire of people in the sending countries for better economic opportunities, and bureaucratic obstacles to entering a country to work via legal channels. Even though no one knows for sure how many illegal immigrants are successfully entering the United States, U.S. Border Patrol agents arrest about 1 million illegal immigrants a year along the southern border alone.

Despite its prevalence, human smuggling is not especially organized, according to Zhang. "I don't believe human smuggling businesses will ever be monopolized or

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What Is the Job of a Journalist?

When asked to describe the job of a journalist, news consumers likely would answer that journalists should provide reliable, factual and fair information to the public.

But when the question is posed to the journalists themselves, the answers are somewhat different. This graph shows responses to a 2007 survey 601 journalists in 13 Arab countries in North Africa, the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula.

The survey was conducted by Lawrence Pintak, director of the Kamal Adham Center for Journalism Training and Research at the American University in Cairo, and Jeremy Ginges, an assistant professor of psychology at the New School for Social Research.

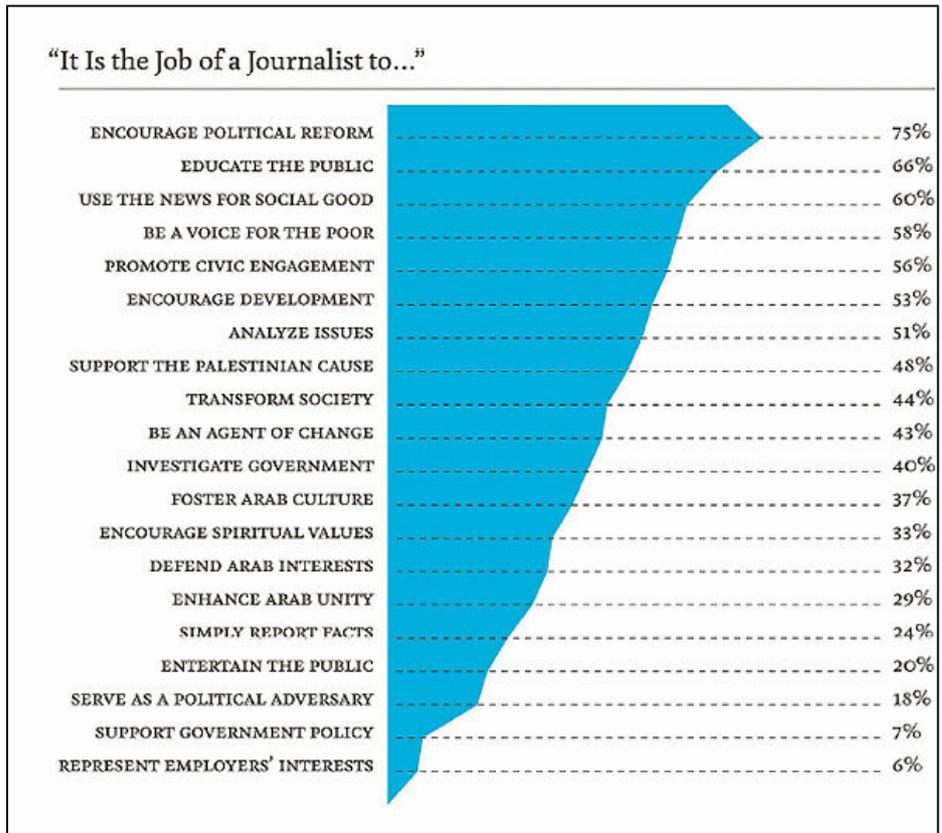
It shows many Arab journalists see themselves as working to promote political and social change in their countries, and to stand up to undemocratic regimes.

According to their research, among the top 10 cited missions of Arab journalism are political reform, human rights, poverty and education. Pintak and Ginges say these issues can outweigh even specific regional challenges such as the situation in Iraq and longstanding concerns such as the Palestinian issue.

The survey results also reveal a certain amount of self-criticism. Only 26 percent said they felt their fellow Arab journalists “act profes-

sionally” and only 11 percent said they were truly independent in their work, perhaps because many Arab news outlets are state-owned. But the researchers conclude that jour-

opinion/25pintak.html). An abstract of their related magazine article and information on obtaining the full text of the report is available on the International Journal of Press/



Researchers asked Arab journalists what the primary purpose of their job is.

nalists are “more powerful and free today than at any time in history.”

The full graph accompanies a May 25 op-ed by Pintak and Ginges that appeared in the New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/25/>

Politics (<http://hij.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/13/3/193>) Web site.

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The Global Internet Freedom Task Force

Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky said in December 2006, "An Internet that is accessible and can be freely used can expose corruption, encourage transparency, and foster participation in the political process. It can also advance education, health, and economic development. The Internet is, in short, a crucial means of empowerment."

Dobriansky made the statement in an update of the Global Internet Freedom Task Force, a reporting mechanism within the State Department established by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice the previous February. She described the department's three-pronged strategy to pursue online freedoms by:

Monitoring Internet freedom, reporting the findings in the State Department's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, and detailing the means and mechanisms by which governments attempt to restrict online activity.

Responding to Internet repression with a greater push for freedom on the world stage and in multilateral organizations. The State Department took a step in this direction in January 2007 by hosting a conference on combating Internet censorship around the globe. Over 120 representatives of corporations, socially responsible investment firms, NGOs, foreign embassies, and congressional offices participated.

Expanding access to the Internet with greater technical and financial

support for increasing availability of sophisticated international communication technologies in the developing world.

The United States supports many assistance programs to promote expanded Internet access and the availability of information and communication technologies in developing countries. Since 2004, the U.S. government has invested more than \$250 million in building information technology infrastructure in the developing world.

From the December 2007 edition of eJournal USA.

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U.S. Elections Good Business for Washington . . .

(Continued from page 11)

"You don't really know who will be funny," Newport said. She said that when President Bill Clinton ran for

re-election against Bob Dole in 1996, she thought Dole would be a funnier president to parody.

But then came the Monica Lewinsky scandal, one of the most joked-about political stories in American history.

"I had no idea what was to come. You just don't know what to wish for."

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Members of the Capitol Steps perform as Supreme Court justices.

Legal Empowerment Vital to Ending Poverty, . . .

(Continued from page 19)

property law," writes commissioner Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland, in an op-ed in the Madrid, Spain, newspaper El Pais.

The first pillar -- access to justice -- addresses several issues, including the need for legal registration, without fees, because approximately 40 percent of all children in developing countries are not registered at birth. That omission can deprive them of education or medical care.

Not only can the poor not afford lawyers or court fees, but in many instances, they often do not even speak the language in which the judicial system operates, according to the commission.

Bureaucracy, too, is an impediment. In India, more than 20 million civil cases are pending before the courts. The average Philippine judge has a backlog of almost 1,500 cases.

The commission calls for simplification of the legal system, stronger legal aid programs and expanded alternative dispute-resolution methods.

PROPERTY, WORK, BUSINESS

Property rights, the second pillar, allow the poor to protect and leverage their assets under the law.

"Poor people already have agreements among themselves," says de Soto. "What you have to do is professionally standardize these con-

tracts and create one legal system that everyone recognizes and respects."

Surveys in Russia and Eastern Europe, for example, have found that businesses that believe their property rights are secure reinvest as much as 40 percent more of their income than those do not, according to the commission.

Rural lands that received legal titles in Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand increased in value from 40 percent to more than 80 percent.

The third pillar, labor rights, covers nearly all of the world's 500 million working poor, who constitute more than half of all employment in developing nations. They spend their lives in the unorganized informal sector without the basic protections of old-age pensions, accident or medical insurance.

The commission recognizes that it faces a balancing act in eliminating the negative aspects of exploitation while "ensuring that opportunities for livelihood and entrepreneurship are not destroyed."

The fourth pillar of business rights addresses the barriers to starting or running a legal business.

In Egypt, for example, starting a bakery takes an average of 500 days, adherence to 315 laws, and approvals of 29 agencies. A study of 12 Latin American countries found that only 8 percent of enter-

prises are registered legally; 23 million operate informally.

Without the ability to gain bank loans or enforce contracts, these informal businesses cannot expand beyond a network of familiar customers and partners, much less participate in the global economy.

The challenges are daunting, but, as the commission concludes, "Making poverty history cannot be accomplished through legal empowerment alone, but it is hard to see how it can be done without it."

For more information, see the Web site of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (<http://www.undp.org/legalempowerment/>).

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Human Smuggling a National Security Threat, . . .

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highly organized," he told America.gov. "It lacks a stable market and clientele. The business most likely will remain opportunistic and haphazard."

Human smugglers, Zhang says in his book, are often legitimate business people with "fortuitous social contacts" who converge to offer services to one another to make additional money. "Many news reports still link human smuggling to traditional organized crime," Zhang writes. "In reality, transnational human smuggling has remained an enterprise largely dominated by entrepreneurs."

Each link in the smuggling chain -- recruiters, financiers, safe-house operators, fraudulent document vendors and guides -- operates largely independently from the other links.

In addition, according to Zhang, the challenge of recruiting people wealthy enough to pay the smuggling fees and the logistical problems of moving illegal migrants do not make for a regular, reliable flow of business.

OFFICIAL CORRUPTION AS THE GREAT ENABLER

Corrupt government officials, according to Zhang, are a vital part of the smuggling business.

"If you talk to any smugglers," he told America.gov, "having corrupt

officials involved as part of their smuggling network is sometimes the most efficient and most profitable way of doing business. It's also the most difficult to track. But if it does get interrupted, if that corrupt official got arrested, usually that means the end of the entire organization. The whole group will just fall apart, because these contacts with government agents are really difficult to cultivate and really

curity can help control human smuggling.

"The challenge is to find a proper balance between a totalitarian-type society and a total open-border country. We are all searching for a middle ground," he said.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web



Illegal immigrants cross the U.S./Mexico border.

difficult to maintain."

site: <http://www.america.gov>◆

Corruption, Zhang said, "undermines the legal authority of any government. It undermines the legitimacy of the government and the legitimacy of legal immigration. And also, of course, it undermines the peoples' faith in government agents."

Zhang said only "sensible" immigration policies and tighter border se-

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS
SECTION
AMERICAN EMBASSY**

P.O.Box 1014
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

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



See also

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

Telling America's story

Good Governance Measures Reflect New Global . . .

(Continued from page 20)

and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Anti-Bribery Convention, that clamp down on corruption and kleptocrats. (See "Addressing Corruption Via International Treaties and Commitments (<http://www.america.gov/st/democracy-english/2008/May/20080601212227SrenoD0.646084.html>).")

Nongovernmental organizations also have played important roles in the fight against corruption, especially Transparency International, which has succeeded in elevating the corruption issue to the top of the global agenda since its establishment in 1993.

For more information, see the World Bank publication Governance Reform under Real-World Conditions ([\[web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/EXTGOVACC/0,,contentMDK:21707692~menuPK:4859794~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:3252001,00.html\]\(http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/EXTGOVACC/0,,contentMDK:21707692~menuPK:4859794~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:3252001,00.html\) \) on the bank's Web site, as well as the Web sites of the Millennium Challenge Corporation \(<http://www.mcc.gov/> \) and Transparency International \(<http://www.transparency.org/> \).](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

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Zimbabwe's Rulers Might Face Additional . . .

(Continued from page 7)

"Frankly the details are much more horrifying than those statistics convey, because, as we know, women were burned to death, young men were tortured and dismembered, the elderly were savagely beaten, and Mugabe had the audacity to say to the world 'what do I care about an election? An X on a ballot means nothing against the power of the gun.'"

Kerry said international condemnations are inadequate. "The words are really beginning to fall flat, big time. The actions are just not there."

Frazer said that with the failure of the July 11 U.N. Security Council resolution, the council "missed the

opportunity to support the courageous efforts of the Zimbabwean people to change their lives peacefully through elections," by taking action against the political violence and demanding that the Mugabe regime reinstate humanitarian assistance and negotiate seriously with the MDC.

Asked if Russia and China vetoed the resolution for financial reasons, she replied "we should follow the money."

Russia's change from its previous support of a multilateral statement threatening financial action against Zimbabwe's government "was a bit of a whiplash for us," she said. "It's hard to explain."

Frazer also said China is still "finding its way in Africa" and urged the government in Beijing to side with the people of Africa instead of nondemocratic rulers. In Zimbabwe's case, given the popular support for the MDC shown by the March 29 vote, Zimbabwe's government largely was rejected by its people.

"A new day is coming in Zimbabwe and China would want to be on the right side of the forces of democratic change," she said.

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