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Bush Urges Congress To Double U.S. Aid to Africa

Washington -- Since taking office in 2001, the Bush administration has doubled U.S. aid to Africa in a move viewed as the single largest development undertaking since the reconstruction of post-war Europe under the Marshall Plan.

But before leaving office, President Bush would like to see U.S. aid to the continent doubled again.

"Congress needs to make America's commitment clear by fully and promptly funding our development programs, and presidential candidates of both parties should make clear that engagement with Africa will be an enduring priority of the United States," Bush said in a February 26 speech, following his six-day, five-nation tour of Africa.

President Bush Discusses Trip to Africa at Leon H. Sullivan Foundation. (White House photo)

Since taking office, Bush has more than doubled U.S. development assistance from about $10 billion in 2000 to $23 billion in 2006. This funding, in the hands of a

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Ethiopian Exports to United States Nearly Double in Two Years

Exports have soared the past two years under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which offers tangible incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets.

USAID VEGA Ethiopia AGOA+, the only bilateral AGOA trade program in Africa, announced that Ethiopia has been making steady gains in its efforts to break into the U.S market. The AGOA+ project has been working directly with local businesses to increase Ethiopia's exports to the United States through the AGOA and has seen significant progress so far.

Since the project's inauguration two years ago, Ethiopian exports under AGOA/General System of Preference (GSP) have increase by almost 100% to US $8.9 million in 2007, much higher than the average national exports growth rate over the past five years. AGOA is a U.S govern-

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Photo Exhibition in Addis Ababa
"Building Islam in Detroit"

U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Deborah Malac and Mufti Hagi Omer, President of Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, opened a photo exhibition in Addis Ababa documenting the growth of Muslim communities in the American city of Detroit. The same exhibition was shown in Harar on February 6-8 at Amir Abdullahi Hall and in Dire Dawa on February 10-11 at the Municipal Library. The exhibit in Addis Ababa will remain open until February 29.

The President of Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Supreme Council Mufti Hagi Omer writing his comments on the exhibition.

U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Deborah Malac, accompanied by Cultural Affirs Officer, Patricia Johnson, and invited guests viewing the photo exhibition.

Ethiopian Exports to United States Nearly Double in Two Years . . .

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ment initiative that allows for a duty free and quota free access to the U.S market for over 6,000 items produced in selected African countries including Ethiopia. The AGOA+ project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

"The U.S. market, while very competitive and demanding, is also the largest in the world," explains Mr. Addis Alemayehu, Director of the AGOA+ project. "We are on the verge of a major breakthrough where companies in the U.S. and elsewhere are starting to recognize Ethiopia as a place to do business and our exporters are starting to open their eyes to the world of opportunities that exist in the export sector."

As the AGOA+ project starts to address the twin problems of a supply side weakness in Ethiopia and the inability to market Ethiopian products in the U.S., total exports to the U.S. have showed considerable gain. Total exports have risen from US $61 million in 2005 to US $88 million in 2007, an increase of over 30% over two years.

The prospects are very promising. Existing Ethiopian factories are starting to show signs of becoming globally competitive, while fresh new investments with an eye to the U.S. market have also increased in the key sectors of key textile, garments and leather industries. USAID's VEGA Ethiopia AGOA+ project in turn has been making progress in building the image of Ethiopia as a location for quality exportable products.

"This project has been unique in that it often comes up with out of the box solutions appropriate for the Ethiopian business realities to help us build our capacity and access the large U.S. market," said Mohammed Umer of Novastar Garments, an Ethiopian Diaspora owned company currently making headway into the U.S. market with help from the project. "I believe we have only scratched the surface and we are confident that we will make our presence felt in the U.S. soon."

Already planning ahead, the AGOA+ project has forged a close partnership with the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the International Labor Organization (ILO) office in Ethiopia to help increase Ethiopia's share of garment and apparel exports to the US.

The program's focus in the future will be to increase the market linkages between Ethiopian products and the U.S., promote more inward Diaspora and American investment and trade with Ethiopia, help to create new jobs and expand the product categories exported under AGOA to the U.S. There will be a special emphasis on flower exports as well as other products such as honey and spices.

USAID VEGA Ethiopia AGOA+ was initiated in January 2005 and has made tremendous progress in contributing to the growth of exports from Ethiopia to the U.S. market. The project works in close partnership with the Government of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Ethiopian Embassy in the Washington DC, the Ethiopian and Addis Ababa Chambers of Commerce and Sectoral Associations, and other development partners including the World Bank Country Office in Ethiopia and the ECA Trade Hub in Nairobi, Kenya.

USAID VEGA Ethiopia AGOA+ has in the past two years:

- Sponsored and provided support to over 30 Ethiopian firms in various industries to attend trade shows in the United States.
- Organized various training workshops using experts from the United States in the spices, textile/garments, and handicraft sectors.
- Facilitated VIP trips for buyers from the United States to come to Ethiopia and gain first hand knowledge of Ethiopian industries and build business relationships with exporters.
- Facilitated the first ever U.S. Investment in the garment and apparel sector with the potential to increase export revenue and creation of jobs in Ethiopia.
- Lead a major effort to engage the huge Ethiopian Diaspora in North America in trade and investment with Ethiopia and has played a critical role in communicating the message that "Ethiopia is open for business". ♦

U.S. Military General and Flag Officers Visit Ethiopia

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) Sunday, 24 February, 2008 -- Fourteen newly selected American military general and flag officers have concluded a three-day visit, February 21-24, to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. They are part of a program, called CAPSTONE, which provides seminars and field experience in national military strategies and how multinational operations support national strategic goals and objectives under the auspices of the National Defense University. The fourteen officers visited Egypt prior to their visit to Ethiopia, and will next travel to Djibouti and several southwest Asian countries.

While in Ethiopia, the newly selected American military general and flag officers had separate meetings with Ato Kuma Demeksa, Minister of Defense, General Samora Yunus, Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Force, and Ato Tekeda Alemu, State Minister of Foreign Affairs. They also met with the African Union and United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) officials.

In addition to their official meetings, the fourteen officers visited Entoto Raguel Church, the September 11 memorial on Entoto Mountain, as well as the National Museum. ♦

No Excuse for Further Delay in Kenya, Rice Says

Washington -- Amid continued deadlock and the threat of renewed violence in Kenya, the United States is joining the international community and the Kenyan people in urging President Mwai Kibaki and his political rival Raila Odinga to honor their pledge to conclude a power-sharing agreement.

A Kikuyu family displaced during post-election violence have their breakfast at their temporary shelter in Nairobi's showground. (AFP/Simon Maina)

"I am disappointed by the failure of leadership necessary to resolve all the remaining issues," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said February 26. "There can be no excuse for further delay. There can also be no excuse for violence, and those responsible must be held accountable."

More than 1,000 Kenyans have been killed in factional violence since a contested December 2007 election, and former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has been mediating between the parties for more than a month. Rice's statement came in the wake of Annan's February 26 announcement that he will be suspending talks between government and opposition representatives in favor of direct talks with Kibaki and Odinga in hopes of making progress and preventing renewed violence.

"It's important that the leaders themselves take charge," Annan said in Nairobi, Kenya. "This is not about the fortunes of political parties or individuals. This is about Kenya and the region."

While traveling with President Bush in the region, Rice stopped in Kenya February 18 to meet with Annan and the two Kenyan leaders, urging them to reach a political compromise desperately needed as Kenyans rebuild, to reconcile and to carry out institutional reforms.

"I want to emphasize that the future of our relationship with both sides and their legitimacy hinges on their cooperation to achieve this political solution," Rice said.

"We will draw our own conclusions about who is responsible for lack of progress and take necessary steps," Rice said. "We will also exert leadership with the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union and others to ensure that the political solution the Kenyan people deserve is achieved." ♦

Bush Urges Congress To Double U.S. Aid to Africa . . .

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new generation of African leaders committed to the ideals of freedom and justice, has helped cure diseases, educate children, and build new roads and infrastructure and has unlocked Africa's entrepreneurial potential by promoting new business opportunities.

When Bush visited the region in 2003, only 50,000 people were receiving medicine to treat HIV/AIDS, but thanks to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) -- a $15 billion investment to deliver anti-retroviral drugs and upgrades to health care services -- more than 1.3 million Africans are getting care today.

Bush also has asked Congress to double funding for PEPFAR as well, to provide $30 billion over the next five years to continue the delivery of medicine, health care services and education on how to prevent HIV/AIDS.

"This program is saving lives. There are tangible results," Bush said, recalling meetings with patients, their families and staff at PEPFAR-built clinics in Tanzania, which are also laying the foundation for improved health care systems across the region.

While in Tanzania, Bush also announced an expansion of his administration's $1.2 billion President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) with the distribution of more than 5.2 million mosquito nets -- enough to protect every child in the country under age 5. Locally manufactured, these nets also provide jobs for 1,200 local workers, he added.

In Zanzibar, PMI has helped shrink malaria infection among infants from 20 percent to less than 1 percent. While in Ghana, Bush also announced a $350 million initiative to target other, more neglected tropical diseases, such as river blindness and hookworm.

President George W. Bush is presented with an award by Ambassador Andy Young, Chairman of the Board, The Leon H. Sullivan Foundation, for his dedication and committed service to Africa, after speaking to The Leon H. Sullivan Foundation Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2008, in Washington, D.C. Joining them on stage is Ambassador Howard Jeter, president and CEO of The Leon H. Sullivan Foundation, far left, and Hope Masters, daughter of the late Rev. Leon H. Sullivan. White House photo

"Having the power to save lives comes with the obligation to use it," Bush said.

In Benin, Bush said, $307 million in supplementary aid from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is alleviating poverty and saving lives through improvements to the port of Cotonou, extending microcredit loans to small businesses and enabling the government to pursue judicial and land reforms.

"We're treating African leaders as equal partners," Bush said. "We expect them to produce measurable results. We expect them to fight corruption and invest in the health and education of their people and pursue market-based economic policies."

Bush concluded a $698 million MCC agreement with Tanzania and a bilateral investment agreement with Rwanda, and attended a USAID-sponsored trade fair in Ghana featuring companies benefiting from U.S. market access under the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

"Sometimes we take entrepreneurship for granted," Bush said. "The spirit exists, but sometimes people just need a little help, and that's what we're doing."

In Benin, Ghana and Liberia, President Bush and first lady Laura Bush visited schools that have received scholarships, school supplies, textbooks, even entire libraries through the administration's Africa Education Initiative, as well as ongoing support from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

"The best argument for our development programs is found in the people they benefit," Bush said. "You see it when you hold a baby that would have died of malaria without America's support. You see it when you look into the eyes of an AIDS patient who has been brought back to life. You see it in the quiet pride of a child going to school for the first time." ♦

New U.S. Military Command Responds to African Requests

Washington -– The head of the new U.S. Africa Command already has traveled to 30 African nations to hear requests from national leaders on how the United States can best support their efforts to achieve stability and prosperity. And African leaders have typically asked for U.S. assistance to establish systems to monitor coastal areas, improve maritime safety and security, and promote better maintenance and logistics.

What AFRICOM is not about is in any way militarizing the continent or its island nations, says its commander, General William "Kip" Ward. "It's not the case," Ward emphasized during a recent presentation at the Royal United Services Institute in London.

The command -- similar to ones that already exist for Europe, the Middle East and South Asia, the Pacific and the Americas -- has been created to work with sovereign African nations in support of mutual objectives.

"AFRICOM recognizes the essential interrelationship between security, stability, economic development, political advancement -- things that address the basic needs of the peoples of a region," Ward said, and works in a collaborative way that does not interfere with existing efforts in pursuit of those objectives.

What makes this command different is its organizational structure. One of Ward's deputies is a senior Foreign Service officer -- Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates, who has served as the U.S. ambassador to both Burundi and Ghana.

Yates' portfolio is civil-military activities. She says this is a logical time for a command focused exclusively on Africa, not in response to a series of crises on the continent, but because there is a mutual need for sustained U.S.-African engagement.

UCommader General William "Kip" Ward, right, visits Goree Island, just off the coast of Dakar, Senegal in July 2006, during duty as deputy commander of U.S. forces in Europe and most of Africa. AP Photo, Todd Pitman

Yates and Ward have been traveling to countries in the region listening to a growing list of African priorities. Back at their headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, they can then sort requests with representatives of the U.S. departments of Treasury, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security and Energy, as well the U.S. Agency for International Development, to assess what is doable in terms of resources and time. The uniqueness of this command is its effort to integrate and better coordinate interagency and nongovernmental involvement to meet security assistance and civil society needs.

Officials also have been visiting institutions such as the Economic Community of Central African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. It sets the stage for lending assistance to regional organizations identified as important by Africans.

Ward says the point of all the travel is seeking understanding about what is going on in Africa "from others' perspectives, not just ours."

Command activities promote what he calls "active security" that can cover a range of missions, including bilateral military exercises and efforts to build greater African military capacity so that individual countries can conduct independent missions more easily.

CONFLICT PREVENTION IS KEY TO DEVELOPMENT

Ward says it is important to help establish conditions in Africa that will aid in preventing conflict. It is all about creating partnerships leading to better security and long-term economic development, he says.

The United States, through this command, is listening, learning and adapting in response to solicitations, according to Ward. U.S. civilian and military leaders will work with their African counterparts in an open and transparent manner, he

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Bush Pledges 1 Million Schoolbooks for Liberian Children

Monrovia, Liberia -- On the final stop of his five-nation Africa tour, President Bush told the Liberian people that the United States stands with them and will help them recover from decades of civil war. As part of that effort, he pledged 1 million textbooks for Liberian schools and locally made school desks and seating for 10,000 Liberian schoolchildren.

President Bush is greeted by school children Thursday, Feb. 21, 2008, on his arrival to the University of Liberia. White House photo by Eric Draper

In remarks on the parade grounds at the Barclay Training Center in Monrovia February 21, Bush said, "The people of the United States will stand with you as you rebuild your country." The center is an operations and training base for the Liberian military.

The United States is working with the Liberian government to restructure and professionalize Liberian security forces. Since the end of the country's civil war, the United States has helped Liberia revitalize its economy, strengthen good governance and the rule of law and deliver basic services. The United States also has provided more than $750 million in direct support and funds a quarter of the costs of U.N. peacekeeping operations in Liberia.

Bush credited Liberia with making progress because of the "iron will" of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first freely elected woman president in Africa, who Bush said has "opened up a new relationship" between the United States and Liberia. Bush also thanked the Liberian people for their "courage, steadfastness and enduring faith in the power of freedom."

The American and Liberian people, Bush said, are fighting the scourge of diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, working to remove the burden of debt and to educate the children of Liberia. Additionally, Bush said the United States, in concert with others, is working to "build a new armed forces that will be a source of security for the Liberian people instead of a source of terror."

In her comments, Sirleaf thanked the people of the United States for their continued economic and technical assistance in the areas of roads, electricity, health, education and rural governance and for such initiatives as HIV/AIDS assistance under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), debt relief and education aid.

Sirleaf said she was deeply honored two years ago when a U.S. delegation headed by first lady Laura Bush attended her inauguration as president. "That show of support helped immensely in signaling to the world that our bilateral relationship is back on track. Indeed, Liberia is open for business with America and the world."

Sirleaf also pledged that Liberia will seek trade -- not aid -- to achieve its economic growth and will look to the private sector to be the engine of growth for its economy.

Earlier, at the Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bush told Sirleaf: "We want to help you recover from a terrible period. We want you to build lives of hope and peace." He added that under her leadership that recovery now is well under way.

Bush told his Liberian counterpart, "I loved all the smiles and enthusiasm along the route," in an apparent reference to the thousands of schoolchildren, dressed in a wide variety of colors identifying the schools they attend, who had lined

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U.S. and U.K. Agencies Agree To Coordinate on Poverty Reduction

The U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has reached an agreement with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development to increase cooperation on poverty reduction in developing countries, the MCC said in a press release issued February 19.

Following is the text of the press release:

(begin text)

London -- The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) signed a first-of-its-kind Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations which will increase coordination and make their poverty reduction efforts more effective in Africa and throughout the globe. MCC CEO Ambassador John J. Danilovich and the Secretary of State for International Development, Douglas Alexander MP signed the memorandum at DFID's London Headquarters as the culmination of a series of working-level meetings between the two agencies' officials.

MCC CEO Ambassador John Danilovich and DFID's Douglas Alexander MP sign an agreement that will increase coordination on poverty reduction efforts between the two organizations at DFID Headquarters in London February 18, 2008

Focusing initially on Africa, the memorandum identifies practical areas for cooperation on the ground in countries in which both the US and UK are engaging in poverty reduction, including Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. The agreement builds on existing cooperation to identify new areas where collaboration between the two organizations can better help partner countries and improve development practice, such as data and statistics sharing, coordinated approaches to issues such as environmental protection, infrastructure projects, transparency in large-scale procurements, rigorous evaluation of aid effectiveness, future staff exchanges, and others.

"As innovative donors, we believe that countries must direct their own development and that growth and good governance are critical if poverty reduction is to be long-term and sustainable. Our taxpayers have entrusted us to help make an improvement in the lives of the world's poorest people. Finding practical things we can do together, on-the-ground, to leverage our ideas, people and resources makes sense and is a smart way to do business. I am thrilled that DFID and the MCC have taken their friendship to a higher level which will benefit those who need it most -- our partner countries in places like Africa and around the globe," said Ambassador Danilovich.

The UK's International Development Secretary Douglas Alexander added, "It makes sense that donors working in the same developing countries to the same ends should collaborate where possible. That's why I'm pleased that we've agreed to combine the knowledge and strengths of DFID and MCC in areas such as education, anti-corruption and the environment in the countries where we both work. It will help ensure that our programmes are more effective, better organised and that donor presence is less burdensome on country governments."

The activities outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding are a strong signal of both organizations' commitment to the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and to helping the developing world achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These efforts will focus on helping developing countries build their own capacity – to

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Arabic-Language Project Connects Palestinian, U.S. Teens

Washington -- An online language skills program is bringing together American and Palestinian secondary school students. In the program, young Palestinians from the West Bank are creating online videos to help American students learn Arabic in their local schools.

The language videos are part of a program implemented by Relief International's Schools Online (RI-SOL) to help young people bridge social and cultural divides through language study.

Palestinian students from a West Bank Internet learning center prepare videos for their American contemporaries. (Courtesy RI-Sol)

Palestinian students are so excited by the project that they spend extra time thinking up vocabulary lists and trying to find new creative ways to teach their American counterparts, says Anna Mussman from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The bureau sponsors the Global Connections and Exchange Program, which RI-SOL implements by establishing Internet learning centers (ILCs) in countries across the world.

Several ILCs have been established throughout the West Bank -- in Jenin, Hebron, Nablus, Bethlehem and Ramallah. Collaborative projects are important learning tools of the program, and Palestinian students have created PowerPoint presentations on local agriculture and then organized tree plantings; studied English; and participated in online discussion forums with other students around the world.

The program also benefits Palestinian teachers who learn new applications and teaching tools. Some have come to the United States for training. In addition, the program aims to empower women by teaching computer skills for civic engagement.

The new Arabic-language exchange connects Palestinian students with their Arabic-learning American contemporaries. Many of the American students are Utah residents, though students from other locales -- including Washington -- also participate.

As Palestinian students try to come up with creative and fun ways of using video technology, youngsters in both countries are learning about each other's cultures and living conditions.

In December 2007 and January 2008, the American students asked the Palestinian students questions about the United States and if they would like to visit in the future, according to the RI-SOL Web site. The Americans also gave brief introductions and asked about music, television programs and sports teams. In January, six new reply videos were posted by Palestinian students from Jenin and Ramallah.

Arabic-language classes, once found only at the college level, are becoming increasingly available in U.S. secondary schools. In Utah, six schools in Salt Lake City, as well as schools in Provo and Lone Peak, have added Arabic to their curriculum.

In 2007, Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, was the site of an intensive summer language camp for American high schools students and teachers in Arabic and Chinese. The camp, one of several funded by the federal government as part of President Bush's initiative to increase foreign language expertise, attracted some of the students in the Palestinian language exchange program. ♦

End of U.S. Military Segregation Set Stage for Rights Movement

Washington -- African Americans have served in the U.S. military since the days of George Washington, but it took until July 26, 1948, for the country to begin living up the democratic ideals that they fought to defend.

The year 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of President Harry S. Truman's Executive Order 9981, issued July 26, 1948, declaring that "there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin."

As many as 5,000 African Americans, drawn largely from the population of free blacks living in the Northern states, but also from the slave-holding South, are estimated to have served beside whites in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. When America fought a devastating Civil War from1861 to1865, more than 100,000 African Americans served in the Union forces.

Although the Civil War ended slavery in the United States, the nation failed to address deep-rooted prejudices based on race and class in America, allowing bigotry and segregation to continue tarnishing the American dream.

Nevertheless, prominent 19th-century African American leaders, including civil rights pioneers Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois, encouraged black men to serve in the U.S. military, believing that by proving their loyalty and courage, they eventually could improve their position in American society in the face of discriminatory segregation laws and the ever-present threat of violence facing African Americans, particularly in the South.

"Let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S.," wrote Douglass. "Let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned his right to citizenship."

African-American and white soldiers at a base in Italy during World War II. Source: United States Army.

FROM BUFFALO SOLDIERS TO TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Although often confined in separate, white-led, noncombat labor units, African-American soldiers volunteered time and again for combat and field medical duties. They served with distinction during the Civil War in the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry regiment, immortalized in the 1989 film Glory; in the black cavalry units known as the "Buffalo Soldiers," who fought in the Indian wars and the Spanish-American War; and in the 369th Infantry, the "Hell Fighters from Harlem," who were awarded the French Croix de Guerre (Cross of War) for their heroism during World War I.

As World War II approached, the United States found itself opposed to fascist regimes and their racist ideologies, yet it had to reckon with the hard reality that many of its own 12.6 million African-American citizens -- about 10 percent of the population at the time -- were denied basic civil rights and human opportunities.

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End of U.S. Military Segregation Set Stage for Rights Movement . . .

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The bitter irony that President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" (freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear) set forth as U.S. war aims were largely unavailable to African Americans did not stop 2.5 million black men from registering for the military draft. More than 1 million eventually served in all branches of the armed forces during World War II. In addition, thousands of African-American women volunteered as combat nurses.

At the same time, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League and other organizations appealed to the White House and the military, winning the integration of officers' training and expanding opportunities for all-black units.

Among the best-known black units in World War II were the Tuskegee Airmen, a group of African-American military pilots, who distinguished themselves in Allied campaigns in North African and the Mediterranean, becoming the only fighter escort group never to lose an Allied bomber to enemy action during the war.

African-American truck drivers and mechanics were also the backbone of the "Red Ball Express," the massive effort to keep the Allies supplied as they moved across Europe to end the war.

"AND WHEN I SAY 'ALL AMERICANS'"

Toward the end of the war, in 1944-45, the military began experimenting with integrated units to meet personnel shortages during the Battle of the Bulge on the German-Belgium border and elsewhere. As a result, more than 80 percent of the white officers reported that African-American soldiers had performed "very well" in combat and 69 percent saw no reason why African-American infantrymen should not perform as well as white infantrymen if both had the same training and experience.

President Truman shaking hands with an African-American Air Force officer (Harry S. Truman Library)

But back home, old attitudes persisted. When returning African-American veterans became victims of violence in South Carolina and Georgia, President Truman took bold action, submitting a package of wide-ranging civil rights reforms to Congress and using his constitutional authority as commander in chief of the U.S. military to order desegregation of the armed forces.

"It is my deep conviction that we have reached a turning point in the long history of our efforts to guarantee a freedom and equality to all our citizens," he told members of the NAACP in a 1947 speech. "And when I say all Americans -- I mean all Americans."

By the end of the Korean War in 1953, the U.S. military was almost completely desegregated, including desegregation of buses and schools on military bases.

Sixty years later, it is evident that Truman's order transformed not only the armed forces, but broader American society as well, by serving as a powerful blow against segregation and opening the way to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

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

Immigrants Work Toward a Brighter Day

Washington -- My great-aunt Anna came to this country at the turn of the last century. She spoke half a dozen languages because she was from Istanbul, Turkey, the melting pot spanning East and West.

She landed a job as a translator at Macy's in New York City, where she stood behind a desk helping immigrants who didn't speak English do their shopping. Eventually, she saved up enough to send for her parents and five siblings. The youngest was Freda, my grandmother.

Almost a hundred years later, a similar scene is unfolding in service jobs around Washington. This time, it's the shoppers who speak English and many of the workers who don't. Nowhere is this multicultural community more evident than in the shoe department at the Tysons Corner Nordstrom.

Here are salespeople from Korea, China, South America, Africa –- all well-dressed and waiting on customers who don't blink at paying $200 for a pair of shoes. That's more than the yearly wage that some of these salespeople would earn back home.

The U.S. Census tells us that our society is becoming ever more diverse. It's common all over Washington to find people working behind counters and at gas stations struggling to speak the language.

I think about my grandparents: All four landed on these shores in their youth, not speaking English, with no skills and no safety net.

One of my grandmothers never went to school and was always ashamed she couldn't really read or write. One grandfather, who sold junk, walked with a limp because he'd wounded himself rather than serve in the czar's army. None of them assimilated, but they passed their dreams on to the next generation.

"Those from other countries deserve all the respect we can give them," says writer Judi Hasson, whose grandmother Freda emigrated from Turkey to the United States. (Courtesy of Judi Hasson)

My grandmother Freda dropped out of school in fifth grade, but both of her children went to college. My aunt became a teacher, my father a journalist. Her five grandchildren got college educations, too. Today, they are a social worker, a physical therapist, an emergency room nurse and two journalists -– my sister and me.

When Freda died at 82, hundreds paid their respects at her funeral.

I tell my children that those who came here from other countries deserve all the respect and help we can give them. They're the next generation of taxpayers –- teachers, doctors, lawyers. They're also our neighbors.

The language skills that helped my great-aunt Anna survive weren't passed down to me. I know only a few words in French, Spanish, Greek and Italian.

But my admiration remains strong for those who stand behind counters, their feet probably sore after so many hours. Their English may not be perfect, but they're working for a brighter day just as hard as my grandparents did.

(Judi Hasson is a Washington journalist. This article first appeared in The Washingtonian magazine in January 2003.)

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

Rematch Under Way in Pennsylvania 4th Congressional District

Washington -- In the 2006 midterm elections, Americans voiced their dissatisfaction with Congress and the war in Iraq by voting more than 20 Republicans out of office and giving the Democrats the majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate for the first time in 12 years.

But with the approval rating of Congress still low under Democrat control, some of those Republicans ousted in the Democratic sweep have decided to give it another try in 2008.

Among those fighting again for their former congressional seats is Melissa Hart, who lost her re-election bid after the opposing campaign stressed her ties to unpopular Republican leaders. Neither Hart nor the current congressman, Jason Altmire, will face competition in the April state primary and already have begun their general election campaigns.

Both Hart and Altmire are familiar faces to Pennsylvania 4th voters.

Hart, the first Republican in 20 years to win the Pennsylvania 4th, served the district from 2000 to 2007 and quickly rose through the Republican congressional ranks. Prior to that, she served in the Pennsylvania state Senate.

Altmire grew up in Pennsylvania and worked as a health care executive before seeking office. In Congress, he serves on the Education and Labor Committee and Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

More than half of the 42 Democratic freshmen, many from districts that traditionally favor Republicans, will face tough fights for re-election this fall. Both national parties have their eyes on the Pennsylvania 4th. Democrats see the seat as an important one to keep, while Republicans see an opportunity to win it back.

Hart faces an uphill battle. Not only do incumbents rarely lose -- more than 90 percent are re-elected in an average election year -- she is running in a district that has more registered Democrats than Republicans.

THE CAMPAIGNING BEGINS

Hart won re-election in 2002 and 2004 with little trouble, but the changing political landscape transformed what initially was expected to be another easy win into a close race and, ultimately, a defeat.

In 2006, Hart did not run attack ads against Altmire -- arguing that by doing so, she would provide the relatively unknown candidate with more name recognition. Many political analysts say that was her fatal error. Attack ads denigrate the opponent's platform (and sometimes character) by pointing out faults or contradictions.

Hart apparently has learned from that mistake. Residents in the Pennsylvania 4th watching Super Tuesday results come in on cable news channels February 5 may have caught her first ad of the 2008 election season.

"Jason Altmire has been in Congress just 12 short months, but that's all it has taken to learn what a big tax and spender he really is," says the narrator.

The narrator also says that during his time in office, Altmire has co-sponsored more than $37 billion in government spending and voted for hundreds of billions of dollars in higher taxes. "Now we know how liberal he really is," the narrator says.

The ad tries to appeal to the Pennsylvania 4th's moderate voters. While there are more registered Democrats in the district, many consider themselves conservative Democrats. Even though Pennsylvania voted for Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry in 2004, voters in this district in the western part of the state favored President Bush.

"It is the cookie-cutter Republican attack on any Democrat: that all Democrats are going to be 'tax and spend,'" Altmire told the Pittsburgh Tribune Review newspaper. Altmire countered the attack, saying that in Hart's six years in Congress, she voted for $3.5 trillion in additional national debt.

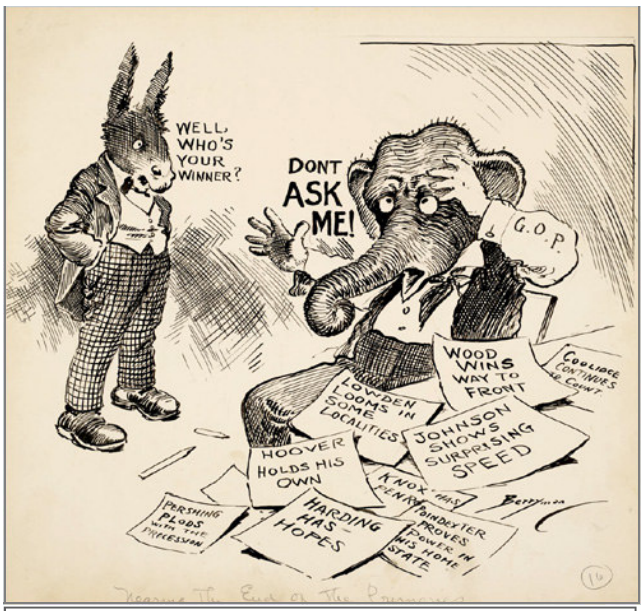
Expecting a hard-fought campaign ahead, both candidates have been raising funds, some of which will be used to run more attack ads.

Currently, Hart has about $330,000 to spend on her campaign and has received fundraising help from other Republicans.

Altmire has more than $911,000 to spend at this time. Of those funds, $2,500 came from a political action committee headed by presidential candidate Barack Obama. Although he has talked with Obama in recent months, Altmire has not yet endorsed a candidate. Pennsylvania holds its presidential primaries April 22. ♦

National Archives Shows Political Cartoons To Mark Election Year

Washington -- The National Archives has launched a two-pronged celebration of this U.S. election year, coupling an exhibition of early 20th-century political cartoonist Clifford Berryman's work with a panel discussion featuring four of his modern-day successors, all Pulitzer Prize winners.



The Republican primaries in 1920 failed to produce a clear winner. (National Archives)

Berryman, who worked for the Washington Post and then the Washington Evening Star from 1891 until his death in 1949, depicted presidents from Cleveland to Truman, winning his own Pulitzer in 1944.

Some 2,400 cartoons he created over that stretch found their way to the archives, repository of the nation's most important documents, in an unusual way: Stored in vermin-infested trash bags in the basement of the Washington home Berryman had shared with his daughter, Florence, they were discovered -- just before being discarded -- on her death in 1992.

The Charles Engelhard Foundation purchased them for donation to the U.S. Senate, which sent them to the archives to join other congressional records already housed there.

Forty-four of the drawings directly related to election campaigns and politics are on display in the current exhibition, Running for Office.

In a foreword to the exhibition catalog, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Democrat from Nevada, and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican from Kentucky, cite Berryman's role as he "tweaked some of the pretensions of those who led our nation through those trying times."

"His cartoons remind us that one of the greatest distinctions between a free society and a dictatorship is the ability to express political humor openly and candidly," they write.

Allen Weinstein, archivist of the United States, stressed the cartoons' continuing relevance after more than half a century. "From the decision to throw one's hat in the ring [declare one's candidacy], to the candidates angling for votes, and to election-day anxieties, the nation's political rituals have remained remarkably consistent," Weinstein said.

But while political processes may have changed little, cartoons by participants in the February 7 panel discussion, shown during that session, suggest that political cartooning has changed more markedly -- both in terms of the style of artwork and the approach of its practitioners.

Drawing techniques appear to have shifted more toward caricature from Berryman's meticulously realistic pen-and-ink output.

As for approach, Martha Grove, archivist for the exhibition, observed that Berryman was respected widely by politicians for his kindly and even-handed stance. A look through the exhibition shows nothing more aggressive that a por-

In all elections, candidates search for issues that will motivate voters. (National Archives)

(Continued on page 15)

National Archives Shows Political Cartoons To Mark Election Year . . .

(Continued from page 14)

trayal of a literally two-faced Henry Wallace, a third-party candidate for president in 1948, each face voicing diametrically opposed views on defense policy.

Today's cartoonists can be considerably more direct: A sample cartoon by Ann Telnaes, the 2001 Pulitzer winner, is captioned, "Spreading Democracy in the Middle East." It shows Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice executing a balletic leap above a curved horizon, strewing missiles in all directions as she goes.

Another cartoon, by Clay Bennett, who won while with the Christian Science Monitor in 2002, shows a ballot inscribed "Decision 2008" above a column of boxes marked with the names of six presidential primary candidates and a seventh choice, "A Root Canal." The voter has checked off the last box.

In interviews with America.gov, the cartoonists suggested they see their work as a vehicle for expressing themselves and consider any influence they might have on public opinion as simply a bonus.

Pat Oliphant, the most widely syndicated political cartoonist in the world and winner of the 1967 Pulitzer, acknowledged that he does hope his work carries some weight, but added, "I've never seen any great impact."

Matt Davies, syndicated by Tribune Media Services and the 2004 Pulitzer winner, confided, "I don't really have enough of an ego to think that I will influence."

He described his cartooning efforts as "something that's no different than a reader who writes a letter to the editor, and so my voice is heard, and that's almost icing on the cake. When it does influence, it's nice, but it's not a driving force."

Bennett had an unequivocal response when asked whether he seeks to sway opinion. "Is that my intent? Hell, yeah," he said. "I would love to convince everybody to think the way I think. So far, the proof of that is absolutely zero, but that doesn't mean I should stop trying. ... My intent is to encourage my point of view and to discourage the opposing viewpoint, [often] ... through ridicule."

Shifting into the verbal equivalent of cartoon mode, Bennett added: "To tell you the truth, my views aren't really doctrinaire. A lot of times, I think the Republicans are wrong, and at other times I think they're really wrong. But sometimes both the Republicans and the Democrats are wrong. It's not as though I think one party has the market cornered on truth. But I do, that's the difference."

During the panel discussion, Telnaes, a Disney animator before becoming a political cartoonist, described her new approach in producing two animated Internet cartoons weekly for Washingtonpost.com. Moderator Stephen Hess, a professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University, described the technique as "the wave of the future."

But Bennett told America.gov that while he sees animated cartoons as "part of the future," he remains optimistic about a continued role for print media. "Right now, you can't take your computer on the bus with you, or on the subway, and it's really hard to take it into the bathroom. As long as we have those places that are [inaccessible] to digital media, it'll be the salvation of print," he said.

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

Drastic Decrease Predicted in Number of Major U.S. Newspapers

This is the first in a two-part series on the future of newspapers.

Washington -- Most U.S. big-city daily newspapers will disappear in the next 20 years to be reinvented through the Internet and other "new media" forms, several journalism experts tell America.gov.

Internet users work at the computers at the public library in Philadelphia. (© AP Images)

Paul Gillin, a Massachusetts-based writer and media consultant specializing in information technology topics, said he expects the survival of only four or five major newspapers, which include the Washington Post, New York Times, Wall Street Journal and USA Today.

Those newspapers will continue to exist, he said, because they all made a wise business decision to invest money for national distribution of their publications to gain more readers.

Gillin, who writes a blog (online journal) called "Newspaper Death Watch," said major U.S. newspapers continue to offer valuable news.

"But their business models simply won't survive ... the economics are all working against them," Gillin said. By this, he means that papers are experiencing huge financial losses because of the high overhead for a large staff of reporters, and for those who design, manufacture and circulate the product.

The financial losses are made worse by demographic studies showing that people under age 30 do not read traditional print newspapers, Gillin said. The younger generation, he said, now gets its news largely on the Internet.

Gillin said he expects an "explosion" in what he called small journalism, involving free community newspapers that can be read for a 25-30 minute commute to work. The trend, he said, is typified by a company called Metro International, which publishes free newspapers in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and other cities around the world aimed at offering news that appeals to young, upwardly mobile professionals.

Gillin also expects corporations to take advantage of the void left by the demise of daily newspapers by using "cheap, online tools to become, in essence, corporate publishers."

"We're already seeing professional journalists move into the capacity of corporate publishers," he said. That means, Gillin said, "the need for professional communicators will continue to be high."

Journalists also will need training in becoming "multimedia" reporters, in which they learn to shoot video "in the field" to complement their story.

In addition, Gillin said, journalists will have to become "aggregators," meaning that a published story will continue to expand by using such new media tools as podcasts and videos.

"We have to get rid of this idea that once a story is published that's the end of it," Gillin said. The journalists will serve as the "funnel" in which updates constantly are being added to stories, the method employed by the online information service called Wikipedia.

Gillin wrote in his February 14 blog that if Thomas Jefferson (third U.S. president from 1801-1809) were alive today, "he'd be an active blogger." The new forms of media, Gillin said, represent "the most democratic process to hit the publishing industry in 500 years."

OBJECTIVE REPORTING SEEN AS OUTDATED

Steve Boriss, associate director of the St. Louis-based Center for the Application of Information Technology at Washington University, sees news becoming part of "one big industry of entertainment, ranging from the very serious to the whimsical."

Boriss, who also writes a blog called "The Future of News," said news reporters will be aggregators and packagers of news stories, who add their own opinion and analysis to articles.

He says a "myth" developed over the past 100 years that news stories were to be reported with total objectively and without the reporter's personal opinion.

But a reporter's selection of what are the relevant facts for an article also represents an opinion, Boriss said. "It's the opinion of what [a

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Drastic Decrease Predicted in Number of Major U.S. Newspapers . . .

(Continued from page 16)

reporter] thinks is important."

Boriss said the United States, at its creation, was supposed to be about people expressing themselves freely and debating issues. Offering your opinion was "sacred," he said.

Some 100 years ago, Boriss said, "attempts were made to turn journalism into a science and journalists into truth-tellers. It's a model that's lasted longer than it should have." The old "model is falling apart," he added.

Boriss said major newspapers such as the New York Times and the Washington Post traditionally have set the "national conversation," with the TV networks following their lead.

"But now the Internet is allowing many, many conversations and all the news doesn't have to be filtered through a [small] supply chain," he said.

Boriss wrote in his blog that "after a Darwinian struggle, Internet news will be the only news medium to survive."

FORMER REPORTER WOULD BE SORRY TO SEE NEWSPAPERS GO

Not everyone is thrilled by the predicted changes for journalism.

Former New York Times reporter Charles Kaiser, for instance, says that for him reading the printed newspaper is a "vastly better experience" than reading it on the Internet.

"There's just no way you can see as many stories in an hour [on the Internet] as you will flipping through the paper version," said Kaiser, also a noted author and former writer for Newsweek magazine and the Wall Street Journal.

Kaiser, who writes a blog called "Full Court Press," said he worries that the extinction of traditional printed newspapers will have negative unintended consequences.

Having fewer reporters, especially investigative reporters, Kaiser said, means "fewer things are looked at in depth, which is the essential role of the press in keeping democracy vibrant." ♦

Bush Pledges 1 Million Schoolbooks for Liberian Children . . .

(Continued from page 7)

the streets to welcome him. They cheered and waved American and Liberian red, white and blue flags, which look very similar in color and design.

On their arrival in Monrovia, the Bushes were greeted by Sirleaf, a military band and honor guard. Billboards bearing pictures of both the U.S. and Liberian presidents could be seen along the main streets, as well as Liberian and American flags hanging from lampposts along with framed portraits of President Bush.

The February 15-21 trip by the president and the first lady has taken them to Benin, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana and Liberia.

Before leaving for Washington, the president and first lady participated in a round table discussion on teacher training at the University of Liberia -- the nation's only public university.

Liberia, "land of the free," was founded by free African Americans and freed slaves from the United States in the 1800s. An initial group of 86 immigrants, who came to be called Americo-Liberians, established a settlement in Christopolis (now Monrovia, named after U.S. President James Monroe) on February 6, 1820.

Thousands of freed American slaves and free African Americans arrived in the years that followed, leading to the formation of more settlements and culminating in a declaration of independence of the Republic of Liberia on July 26, 1847.

From 1989 to 1996, one of Africa's bloodiest civil wars took place in Liberia, claiming the lives of more than 200,000 Liberians and displacing 1 million others into refugee camps in neighboring countries. The country endured many more years of uncertainty until November 23, 2005, when the Liberian Election Commission announced that Sirleaf had been elected president.

On November 5, 2007, the Harvard-educated Sirleaf was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award given by the president of the United States. ♦

Celebrated Editor Ben Bradlee Says Newspapers Here To Stay

This is the second in a series of two articles on the future of newspapers.

Washington -- World-renowned newspaperman Ben Bradlee says daily print newspapers are vital to the public and will continue to operate, despite doomsayers predicting their ultimate demise within the next 20 years.

Bradlee, who became famous for guiding the Washington Post's investigative reporting of the Watergate scandal in the early 1970s, tells America.gov that statements forecasting the end of newspapers are "ridiculous."

Bradlee, the Post's executive editor from 1968 to 1991 and now the paper's vice-president at large, says newspapers provide readers with information they consider very valuable -- such as "who won the ballgame ... [prize] fight ... an election ... or how your stock did" that day.

Other forms of media, including television and the Internet, provide that same information, he said, but the "guy who gives" the information first "won't always be the one who did it the best."

"The idea that any society, but especially this [U.S.] society, could function without a daily news update of some kind in some form" is not plausible, said Bradlee.

Bradlee's leadership in uncovering Watergate led to the Post winning a Pulitzer Prize in 1973 and to the 1974 resignation of then-U.S. President Richard Nixon. Bradlee is also the author of a best-seller memoir called A Good Life: Newspapering and Other Adventures.

Former Washington Post Executive Editor Ben Bradlee led his paper's coverage of the Watergate scandal.

"There's no question in my mind," said Bradlee, "that despite a declining number of newspapers, and despite the declining audience" for major television network news, Americans are "much better informed" than ever before because of the myriad types of media available to the public.

Bradlee said he agreed that fewer of today's young people (defined as those under 30) are reading printed newspapers -- instead getting their news from new media such as the Internet -- as opposed to his "crowd" from the older generation. Bradlee, now 86, said that as a child he learned how to read from going through the sports pages after his father had finished with that section of the newspaper.

Regarding the drop in the number of daily newspapers, Bradley said he understands how some observers think the United States eventually will have only four newspapers that "make any pretense of being national or international papers."

But Bradlee said local news will keep newspapers a must read. He cited, for example, residents of such U.S. cities as Frankfort, Kentucky, or Pittsfield, Massachusetts, who still are "going to want a newspaper that has a lot of local news in it."

Bradlee also said newspapers are much better than "anybody else" at doing "investigative reporting," which he defined as a "reporter or editor who gets a bee in his bonnet [becomes motivated] and decides to look into something in a major way."

Because of budget cuts or reductions in the number of staff reporters, Bradlee said the use of investigative reporting "maybe" will decline at some newspapers. "But it won't at" the Washington Post, he said.

NEWSPAPERS A GOOD PLACE TO ADVERTISE

Larry Kilman, director of communications at the World Association of Newspapers, which represents the newspaper industry, echoed Bradlee's reaction to reports that printed newspapers are dying out.

"I think that's absolute nonsense," Kilman told America.gov from his group's headquarters in Paris. The consumer market "still tells us that an enormous number of people continue to prefer print [newspapers] and will continue to do so for years

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Advances in Technology Position Biofuels for Clean Future

Washington – Biomass has been a reliable, simple source of power since early humans burned their first logs at least 400,000 years ago. Today, driven by an urgent need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, technology advances are bringing biomass into the future.

Many hail biofuels, an important subset of biomass, as clean, renewable alternatives to fossil fuels for transportation. Others say biofuels, like ethanol from corn, compromise world cropland and food availability, and that nonfood technology fixes for such problems are too many years in the future.

Biomass, defined as any organic material, includes sawmill waste, forest thinnings, agricultural byproducts, animal and human waste, the organic components of municipal and industrial waste and much more.

Depending on the organic material involved, biomass can be used to produce a range of common products, including plastics, polymers, carpets, fabrics, detergents, fabrics, lubricants and transportation fuels.

Unlike other renewable energy sources such as solar or wind power, biomass can be converted directly into liquid biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel. These are some of the fastest-growing uses of biomass.

World ethanol production was nearly 51.1 billion liters in 2006, according to the Washington-based Renewable Fuels Association, and production is accelerating as nations seek to reduce petroleum imports, boost rural economies and improve air quality. Increasing concerns about greenhouse gas emissions and dwindling world oil supplies also are expected to spur production.

"There's rapid growth in ethanol worldwide," Bill Holmberg, a board member for the American Council on Renewable Energy, told America.gov. "The United States has the biggest production capacity, Brazil is second and other countries are developing their ethanol industries."

Biofuels like ethanol from corn and sugarcane can help reduce global warming and dependence on fossil fuels.

Canada, China, India and countries in Latin America also are developing biofuels programs.

FOOD VERSUS FUEL

Ethanol is an alcohol fuel made from sugars found in grains like corn, sorghum and wheat, and in potato skins, rice, sugarcane and sugar beets.

"Brazil produces ethanol almost exclusively from sugarcane," Tom Foust, technology manager of the Biomass Program at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), told America.gov. "In the United States it comes almost exclusively from corn."

Europe is not pursuing ethanol as aggressively as the United States, Brazil and China, Foust said, mainly because that continent is moving rapidly to a diesel-powered transportation fleet, and ethanol is not a substitute for diesel. However, biodiesel, a fuel made from fats or greases like recycled restaurant grease, can be used in diesel engines without engine modification.

China rapidly is developing a biofuels program, Foust said, but it has "put a complete moratorium on food-based ethanol because of the concern about food versus fuel. Now they're developing what they call Generation 1.5 and Generation 2 technologies."

Generation 1.5 fuels are made from less critical food sources like sweet sorghum and cassava; Generation 2 fuels are made from nonfood sources like cellulose from plants, trees, grasses and waste. Cellulose makes up much of the mass of woody plants and crop waste, but breaking it down into liquid fuels currently is difficult and expensive.

At NREL in Golden, Colorado, scientists have been working on biofuels since 1978.

"The very good news," Foust said, "is that we've made a lot of progress over the years. As it stands right now, we're on the verge of making these Generation 2 technologies cost-effective for ethanol and gasoline at current crude oil prices."

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Advances in Technology Position Biofuels for Clean Future . . .

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GENERATION 2

In February 2007, DOE announced it would invest $385 million over four years for six biorefinery projects that will produce more than 494 million liters (130 million gallons) of celluosic ethanol a year. That funding, combined with contributions from six companies, represents an investment in biorefineries worth more than $1.2 billion.

The projects directly support President Bush's Twenty in Ten Initiative, one goal of which is increasing the use of renewable and alternative fuels in the transportation sector to the equivalent of 132.5 billion liters of ethanol annually by 2017.

In September 2007, the 20th meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Round Table on Sustainable Development considered the sustainable potential of biofuels and government policies to support them.

In their report, meeting participants concluded that "the potential of the current technologies of choice -- ethanol and biodiesel -- to deliver a major contribution to the energy demands of the transport sector without compromising food prices and the environment is very limited."

Manure from these dairy cows at Oak Bluff Dairy Farm in Maryland is a renewable source of biomass and methane gas. (© AP Images)

At the same time, it concluded, "according to Jacques Diouf, director-general of the FAO [U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization in the Financial Times, August, 15, 2007], bioenergy provides a chance to enhance growth in many of the world's poorest countries by bringing about an agricultural renaissance and supplying modern energy to a third of the world's population."

At NREL, scientists are working with their counterparts in Europe, Brazil, China, Europe and India to advance the technology and make sure it is sustainable over the long term, Foust said.

"We all need to work together to ensure that biofuels are developed," Foust added, "not in a way that's best for any individual country, but in a way that's best for the world as a whole."

More information about biomass and biofuels (http://www.nrel.gov/biomass/) is available on the National Renewable Energy Laboratory Web site.

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Hollywood Helping Rebuild New Orleans with "Green" Architecture

Washington -- When the levees broke after Hurricane Katrina, no New Orleans neighborhood suffered more than the Lower Ninth Ward, where floodwaters rose to nearly 30 feet and left houses shifted off their foundations, boats in living rooms and refrigerators on rooftops. For a community that had enjoyed the highest rate of home ownership among New Orleans neighborhoods, the loss was nearly impossible to grasp.

Help arrived in the unlikely figure of actor Brad Pitt, who answered the challenge of rebuilding the Lower Ninth with new, "green" architecture, materials and technology and a plan to raise money to subsidize construction of 150 new homes at about $150,000 each. When construction begins in a few weeks on the first five houses, the new Lower Ninth will be on its way to becoming one of the largest "green" neighborhoods in the nation.

Actor Brad Pitt worked with environmental group Global Green to develop environmentally friendly house designs. (© AP Images)

Pitt's first visit to the Lower Ninth after the storm left him stunned by the blocks of destroyed homes and personal possessions strewn over yards and streets. Government officials expressed doubt that this once-vibrant community could or should be rebuilt, given its vulnerability to flooding, but Pitt had a different view. The Lower Ninth, home of Fats Domino and Mahalia Jackson, enriched New Orleans' music and culture. Without the Lower Ninth, New Orleans was not the place Pitt had come to love.

The actor founded a nonprofit organization, Make It Right, and met with community groups and former residents to discuss obstacles to rebuilding. Residents expressed concerns about climate change leading to more and stronger hurricanes. Would money and time spent rebuilding be washed away again? Could the homes be designed to resist floods? Others cited rising energy and maintenance costs. Why rebuild if a family could not afford to operate and maintain their home?

DESIGNING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY HOUSES

Energized by the challenge, Pitt asked the environmental group Global Green USA to set up a competition among architectural firms to offer flood-resistant, energy-efficient ideas for rebuilding. Designs from 13 firms were offered to residents as potential house plans. William McDonough + Partners, an internationally recognized leader in green architecture, used its "Cradle to Cradle" philosophy to guide design and materials selection. That philosophy states construction should take from nature and return to nature without creating toxic, nonrenewable materials in the process.

One of the firms chosen for the project, Philadelphia-based KieranTimberlake Associates LLP, focused on durable buildings. "Our firm was asked to design a 1,000 square foot home [93 square meters], that could withstand flood conditions, that means it had to be raised five to eight feet [1.5 to 2.4 meters] off the ground," said Richard L. Maimon, senior associate at KieranTimberlake and the firm's project manager for Make It Right.

"[O]ne of our goals was to maximize natural light, yet screen solar [heat] gain," Maimon said. "So the south side of the house has, literally, a screen that is planted with local vines." The vines will keep the indoors cooler; provide privacy from the adjacent house, highlight New Orleans' garden tradition and also reduce electrical use, a design re-

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Hollywood Helping Rebuild New Orleans with "Green" Architecture . . .

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quirement for all Make It Right homes.

"Reducing electrical use in New Orleans means addressing the amount of air conditioning needed," Maimon said. "So we also designed higher ceilings, cross ventilation, and exhaust fans on the roof." These features should result in a 10 to 20 percent reduction in solar heat, and a corresponding reduction in electrical demand, he said.

An estimated one-fourth of household energy is used to heat water, according to Maimon. "A solar water heater reduces the cost of energy for the homeowner and passive systems do not require major technology, so they are inexpensive to purchase and maintain," he said. Passive systems use an insulated water tank coated with a heat-absorbent material. In New Orleans, where the temperature seldom drops to freezing, a passive system for as little as $2,000 for a 40-gallon (150-liter) hot water tank can be effective.

Most home designs include a rainwater-collection system. The untreated "gray water" can be used in flushing toilets, washing clothes and watering yards while the city's water system provides drinking water. An 11,350 liter (3,000-gallon) tank -- a storage capacity equal to a typical month's rainfall in New Orleans – would collect water for the home. "We expect this will cut water and sewer bills in half," Maimon said.

PROJECT ATTRACTS HOLLYWOOD SUPPORT

Make It Right already has raised the money to build 78 houses. Talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres has raised more than $900,000 for the project through her television show. Other contributors from the entertainment industry include Oprah Winfrey, Denzel Washington, Tim Robbins, Susan Sarandon, Martin Sheen, Barbara Streisand and Jimmy Buffett. Major funding also has come from clothing designer Donna Karan, aluminum manufacturer Alcoa Inc. and the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund.

The project appeals to many small contributors who want to "do something" to promote renewable energy and help those devastated by Katrina. Donors can earmark their contribution to pay for home systems, such as solar water heaters, and achieve both goals.

Residents chosen to participate are not given houses, but instead are steered through selecting a home design, securing a mortgage and grants and achieving home ownership. Donations to Make It Right provide "gap" financing, to cover the difference between the price of the house and what the prospective homeowner can pay. Five families have completed the entire process; three others have chosen their house designs.

Pitt remains ambitious, speaking now of moving beyond the first 150 homes. "There's no reason to stop here," he says, "the need is far greater."

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U.S. and U.K. Agencies Agree To Coordinate on Poverty Reduction . . .

(Continued from page 8)

collect and use data, to evaluate environmental risks, and to assess their constraints to growth. The memorandum provides a solid framework for in-country cooperation to take place between MCC and DFID in a number of sectors including education, water and sanitation, transportation and governance, especially related to transparency and anti-corruption.

About MCC: Millennium Challenge Corporation, a U.S. government corporation designed to work with developing countries, is based on the principle that aid is most effective when it reinforces sound political, economic, and social policies that promote poverty reduction through economic growth. For more information about MCC, please visit www.mcc.gov.

About DFID: The Department for International Development is leading the British Government's fight against world poverty. For more information, visit http://www.dfid.gov.uk.

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New U.S. Military Command Responds to African . . .

(Continued from page 6)

says, thereby developing trust and demonstrating America's reliability as a partner.

This is not about any kind of American invasion, Ward says: "We have not asked any African nation to host any part of this command."

The focus always will be on delivering programs, the commander says. In the future there may be a requirement for having a modest staff presence or a logistics hub in Africa to better facilitate program delivery, but Ward says, "It's not [about] combat forces running around, it's not [about] air wings being established."

Ward recently visited the USS Fort McHenry, which is traveling to Central and West African ports with a crew from Europe, Africa and the United States. The ship's visit is the heart of the Africa Partnership Station initiative, which provides maritime training while completing humanitarian projects.

He says the visiting vessel offers the opportunity to answer questions posed frequently in that part of Africa:

Can you help train sailors in basic lifesaving skills so that if they get hurt their buddies can deliver a higher degree of aid?

Can you help naval engineers better maintain small-boat motors?

Can some veterinarians tackle problems faced by herd animals?

Can your medics go ashore to address local health issues?

Ward's deputy for military operations, Vice Admiral Robert Moeller, says one of the early challenges for AFRICOM will be helping African partners deal with diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS. ♦

Celebrated Editor Ben Bradlee Says Newspapers Here To Stay . . .

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and years to come," he said.

Kilman acknowledged that fewer people under age 30 read printed newspapers than "perhaps they have in previous generations. But I think that's a vast oversimplification" to say young people are not reading print newspapers.

He said a new free printed newspaper distributed to mass transit commuters in more than 100 cities worldwide called the Metro is "bringing new readers to newspapers and that really goes to the point that people like print."

The Metro, he said, generally does well in cities with a good public transportation system, which is why the paper is read more widely in Europe than in the United States, where mass transit is not as available or popular.

The free Metro daily newspaper is passed out in Boston. (© AP Images)

Many of the Metros are paid for by newspaper companies, Kilman said. The newspaper companies find that the Metro is not "cannibalizing their product at all," but rather increasing their reach to consumers, he said.

Kilman said newspapers remain the world's second largest advertising medium, after television.

Reports by Internet journalists would have the world believe that the Internet is "killing newspapers, with vast amounts of advertising," Kilman said. Although "it is true that the Internet has a double-digit growth rate [in advertising] in dollar terms," said Kilman, "the amount is a tiny percentage of what print journalism generates" in advertising. "That is not going to change anytime soon."

"To say that newspapers are dead or dying has become conventional wisdom," said Kilman. "But it's based on a myth." ♦