



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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USAID Provides \$40 Million Grant to Prevent and Treat Malaria



U.S. Global Malaria Coordinator Rear Admiral Tim Ziemer speaking at the grant agreement signing between USAID/Ethiopia and UNICEF while (L-R) U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador Roger Meece, UNICEF Country Director Iqbal Kabir, Ethiopian Health Minister H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom, and USAID/Ethiopia Mission Director Thomas Staal are listening.

NOVEMBER 12, 2009 Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID), today announced a three-year, \$40 million grant to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to assist the Government of

Ethiopia's Federal Ministry of Health and the Oromia Regional Health Bureau deliver appropriate malaria

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United States Provides \$400 Million in Humanitarian Assistance

American People Respond to Needs of Ethiopians

NOVEMBER 5, 2009 Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), have provided US\$340 million in emer-

gency and humanitarian food aid -- more than 464,000 metric tons -- and more than \$60 million in emergency nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene, and similar non-food assistance

over the last year to support vulnerable families and communities in Ethiopia.

The Government of Ethiopia recently announced that

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United States Provides \$400 Million in Humanitarian Assistance . . .

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6.2 million Ethiopians are in need of emergency food aid relief as a result of the unexpectedly low rainfall in recent months. USAID is providing an initial contribution of US\$50 million to the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) and US\$25 million to a consortium of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to respond to these relief needs.

This most recent US\$75 million donation, representing 117,810 metric tons of food, has been ordered and should arrive in mid- to late-January 2010. This donation will support WFP contributions to the general relief program, and support emergency relief efforts undertaken by the NGO consortium. Lead organizations within the NGO consortium include Catholic Relief Services, CARE, Food for the Hungry International, the Relief Society of Tigray, Save the Children/US, Save the Children/UK, and World Vision. The bulk of USAID's contributions this year have already arrived and been distributed to beneficiaries. An August 2009 contribution of US\$90 million in food relief

commodities is scheduled to arrive in mid-November, allowing continued USAID support of relief needs.

"The U.S. Government remains committed to working in collaboration with other donors and the Government of Ethiopia to assist Ethiopians in need of food," said USAID Mission Director Thomas H. Staal. "These important, life-saving efforts are necessary to confront food insecurity in Ethiopia."

All American food aid meets U.S. food safety standards. The United States does not give food aid consisting of viable modified organisms, such as corn or soy grain which could be planted if distributed as aid. The United States does contribute Corn Soy Blend and vegetable oil (which currently contains soy oil) which are essential components of the relief ration. These processed foods may be produced from genetically modified corn or soy, however do not contain viable modified organisms.

In addition to ongoing relief efforts, USAID is also continuing to support the

Ethiopian Government's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), a public works program which helps more than 7.5 million chronically food insecure Ethiopians every year. The PSNP begins phase two in January 2010. The U.S. donation of nearly 158,500 tons of food aid will support the PSNP program by targeting chronically food insecure populations. The food will be distributed by USAID partners to more than two million beneficiaries of the safety net program in 58 woredas in Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, Tigray, and Somali regions. The United States remains the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia.

In addition to food assistance, the U.S. promotes growth in agricultural production consistent with market principles, increased access to markets and advancement of global policy solutions that foster trade and investment in agriculture. USAID also supports the Ethiopian people through health, education, agriculture, livelihoods, and water and sanitation programs. ♦

USAID Provides \$40 Million Grant to Prevent and Treat Malaria . . .

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prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services.

The program, called "Sustaining Malaria Reduction Interventions in Oromia," will increase access to effective diagnostic tests and medicines to manage malaria cases and promote household ownership and proper use of insecticide-treated bednets. Through UNICEF, USAID will procure

and distribute 3.7 million rapid diagnostic tests for use by health staff and health extension workers; distribute 9.4 million treatments of medicines to fully treat confirmed malaria infections in Oromia; and procure and distribute 3.9 million bednets and support the distribution of nets from other sources such as the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), the World Bank, The Carter Center and other partners.

"Ethiopia is making great progress in scaling up malaria prevention and control interventions," said USAID/Ethiopia Mission Director Thomas H. Staal. "The key to saving lives is to expand proven approaches and interventions until they reach people at risk of the disease."

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Obama Welcomes President of Botswana to White House

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington — Hailing Botswana as “truly one of the extraordinary success stories in Africa,” President Obama welcomed that country’s president, Ian Khama, to the White House for talks November 5.

Since the mid-1960s, Botswana has “moved on a path of good economic management and outstanding political governance,” Obama said. “And as a consequence, you have seen extraordinary improvements in living standards over the last 40 years in Botswana that really are an envy for much of the rest of the continent.”

Not only has Botswana shown itself to be an “outstanding success,” Obama said, but the southern Africa country has been “a great partner to the United States.” Both governments have cooperated extensively throughout the years, he said.

President Khama said he appreciated having the opportunity to meet with Obama and to share views on the bilateral cooperation between the United States and Botswana. The two countries have worked together on areas such as



President Obama (R) meets with President of Botswana Ian Khama in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, November 5, 2009. REUTERS/Jim Young

trade and health, and have consulted on “how both countries are tackling this current economic downturn.”

Khama said both leaders also discussed environmental issues, climate change and the December 7-18 Copenhagen conference. The two also reviewed regional issues “and how we can try and go about entrenching democracy both in the mind-set and the way we go about all our activities on the continent [and with] the African Union in particular.”

Obama praised President Khama for “showing his own extraordinary leader-

ship in helping to move his country forward on a range of issues, from how to deal with the HIV/AIDS crisis to addressing economic development to dealing with some of the regional problems that exist.”

“On each of these areas I think Botswana has been a real leader,” he said, “and so we just want to express our appreciation for the outstanding work that successive governments in Botswana have been to able to accomplish. We are grateful for the friendship between the people of the United States and Botswana.”

Obama said he is “looking forward to continuing that strong partnership in the years to come.”

A transcript of Obama’s and Khama’s remarks (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-obama-and-president-ian-khama-botswana-after-meeting>) is available on the White House Web site.

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

USAID Provides \$40 Million Grant to Prevent and Treat Malaria . . .

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Ethiopia is one of the focus countries under the U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI) (<http://www.pmi.gov>), an initiative which aims to reduce by half the number of malaria deaths in 15 African countries using proven malaria interventions. PMI is a collaborative U.S. Government effort led by USAID, in conjunction with the Department of

Health and Human Services (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), the Department of State, and others.

U.S. Global Malaria Coordinator Rear Admiral Tim Ziemer, Ethiopian Health Minister H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom, and U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Ambassador Roger Meece witnessed the grant

agreement signed today between USAID/Ethiopia and UNICEF.

Activities supported by PMI in Ethiopia primarily focus on Oromia Regional State, the country’s largest administrative regional state and the regional state bearing the brunt of the country’s malaria burden. ♦

African Migrants Invest in Their Home Countries

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — Investment in their home countries by migrants from Africa is contributing to economic growth on the impoverished continent. This business development has caught the attention of African governments, development agencies and the world's largest cash-transfer company, Western Union Company, which are working to facilitate such investment.

Liesl Riddle, a scholar of diaspora studies at George Washington University in Washington, said Ethiopia leads sub-Saharan Africa in opening its economy to investment by emigrants. The term "diaspora" historically has referred to the dispersion of Jews, but in recent years it has come to include the dispersion of any group of people to areas outside their traditional homeland.

"Ethiopia is growing its economy in large measure due to the constant pressure that the Ethiopian diaspora puts on the government. The Ethiopian government has recently opened an investment promotion agency. ... It is a one-stop shop for the Ethiopian investor. You don't have to go to dozens of offices here and there to get your business established. It is a clearer, more transparent type of system," she said.

In recent years, Ethiopia has had one of the best performing economies in Africa, growing at an annual rate of close to 8 percent.

The 1.5 million Ethiopians who are living in other countries are estimated to send about \$1 billion in remittances to the poverty-stricken country annually, according to Access Capital Services, an Ethiopian financial advisory company. Access Capital has worked with another Ethiopian financial company, Precise Consult International, to attract diaspora



Eleni Gabre-Mahdin, an Ethiopian economist who was educated in the United States and worked for the World Bank.

investment through annual Ethiopian business conferences in New York or Washington since 2006.

Riddle, who spoke at the 2008 conference, said there is creative tension between the Ethiopian government and the diaspora community that has led to favorable economic changes in Ethiopia, such as clearer tax and investment policies and less bureaucratic red tape. A great success story of cooperation between the Ethiopian government and the diaspora is the creation of the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange (<http://www.america.gov/st/econ-english/2008/October/20081031174240cpataruk0.134823.html>), according to Riddle. The brainchild of Eleni Gabre-Mahdin, an Ethiopian economist who was educated in the United States and worked for the World Bank, the exchange links farmers to a computerized national market, which is connected to international markets.

Yohannes Assefa, an Ethiopian-American trade lawyer in Washington, works closely with Gabre-Mahdin to transfer business and technology skills from

Ethiopians abroad back to local employees of the exchange. Ethiopian Americans with the needed skills are offered jobs at the exchange for specific time limits, typically three years. By the end of that time, their skills must have been transferred to a local resident for them to receive a bonus.

Ethiopian-American investors often create the same sorts of businesses in Ethiopia that they run in the United States, such as taxi companies, restaurants and hair salons. In many cases, they establish chains of businesses, which involve establishing brand awareness and protecting intellectual property, notions that



Yohannes Assefa, an Ethiopian-American trade lawyer in Washington.

have not achieved much acceptance in Ethiopia so far, according to Riddle.

OTHER WAYS TO INVEST

Many members of Ethiopia's and other African diasporas have the capital and desire to invest in their homelands but are unable to travel there because of obligations and responsibilities in their

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new home nations. To attract investment from such people, the Ethiopian government has created a diaspora bond. Other countries in Africa, including Liberia, Kenya and Ghana, also are at various stages of issuing bonds. A diaspora bond is a certificate of debt issued by the government of a developing country to its own migrants with a promise to repay the investment plus interest at the time of maturity. The funds raised by diaspora bonds are used to finance development projects.

World Bank economist Dilip Ratha estimates that African countries can raise between \$5 billion and \$10 billion a year by issuing diaspora bonds. He adds that an additional \$1 billion to \$3 billion could be raised by reducing the cost of international remittances from migrants.

Western Union Company, the world's largest cash-transfer company, has been encouraging diaspora investment in Africa. The company is devising new methods to help migrants invest in their homelands, such as installment payments for insurance, school tuition and business equipment. The company's development arm, Western Union Foundation (<http://foundation.westernunion.com/messageFromTheBoardCEO.html>), has contributed more than \$50 million to development and disaster relief projects since its formation in 2001.



Boston College students of African and African Diaspora Studies

The foundation, along with the U.S. Agency for International Development and other development groups, is sponsoring a competition for budding entrepreneurs among African migrants to the United States. The winners, who will be announced in early 2010, will receive grants of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to start businesses in their home countries.

Liberia, which also has a large diaspora community in the United States, is courting investment from its migrants through the creation of the Liberian Diaspora Advisory Board. In July 2009, the Liberian ambassador to the United States, Na-

thaniel Barnes, announced that the board will help the Liberian government shape its development policies. The ambassador said Liberian migrants send about \$90 million to Liberia annually. The board will be "infinitely more effective than the unilateral and isolated, although significant, contributions of ... individuals and groups within the diaspora," the ambassador said.

Riddle said the advisory board may deter corruption. In her survey of Liberian migrants' attitudes toward investment in their country of origin, she said, she heard people say repeatedly, "We're interested in investing. We have money. We have know-how. But we're not

going to go in until corruption abates in the country."

With about 2 million to 3 million people migrating to rich countries annually, the potential influence of diaspora communities on business growth in developing countries is immense, World Bank economist Lev Freinkman wrote in 2002. Seven years later, his view has turned out to be prophetic.

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

Obama Sudan Strategy Hailed by Africa Policy Specialists

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Staff Writer

Washington — Diplomats and Africa policy specialists are hailing the Obama administration's new policy toward Sudan as a practical approach to stopping violence in Sudan's Darfur region while preserving a peace accord that ended the nation's 22-year civil war in 2005.

At the October 19 unveiling of the new strategy, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said, "It reflects the administration's seriousness, sense of urgency, and collective agreement about how best to address the complex challenges that have prevented resolution of the crisis in Darfur and full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement [CPA]."

Key elements of the CPA include sharing power at the national level between the predominantly Muslim North and Christian South Sudan for six years, an equal distribution of oil wealth and a referendum in the South in 2011 on the question of secession from Sudan.

The Obama plan calls for a greater dialogue among the United States, international partners and Sudan to end the Khartoum government's support of attacks in Darfur and spur implementation of the CPA while pressing the Sudanese to get tougher on terrorism. The Obama strategy includes potential sanctions if certain benchmarks to progress that remain classified are not met.

Herman Cohen, former assistant secretary of state for African affairs in the administration of President George H.W. Bush, lauded the strategy, telling America.gov, "The Obama administration is implementing a very pragmatic policy toward Sudan."

The former career diplomat said the highest priority for U.S. strategy toward

Sudan now is to promote "the successful completion of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement between Khartoum and the [Sudan People's Liberation Army] in the South ... in order to have a free and fair referendum in the South in 2011."



U.N. Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes visits internally displaced Sudanese women and children in May 2009.

Cohen also said Obama was on the right track "to serve notice on Khartoum that it is being held responsible for making the CPA succeed. The U.S. government will continue to facilitate and mediate the transition process, but if Khartoum sabotages the CPA, the United States will escalate sanctions against the regime."

Terming the strategy "smart, tough and balanced," Susan Rice, U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations, said at an October 19 State Department briefing in Washington that she hoped the Khartoum government would appreciate the need for urgency because "for years, paths to peace have been littered with broken promises and unfulfilled commitments by the government of Sudan."

David Shinn, a U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia in the mid-1990s, also lauded the new strategy, telling America.gov it "properly recognizes several inescapable facts."

"First, progress on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between southern and northern Sudan is at least as important to the United States as ending the standoff in Darfur. In 2009, I believe, there have been more violent deaths in southern Sudan than there have been in Darfur," he said.

Second, Shinn said, "if you want to achieve any meaningful results, you must work with the government of Sudan in addition to the other parties. If the government of Sudan contributes to notable progress on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and ending the conflict in Darfur, it is important that the United States recognize that progress. If there is no progress, the

U.S. can always return to a negative policy of isolation."

On the question of progress, President Obama, in an October 19 statement on the new strategy, said, "If the government of Sudan acts to improve the situation on the ground and to advance peace, there will be incentives; if it does not, then there will be increased pressure imposed by the United States and the international community." (See "Statement by President Obama on Sudan Strategy (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/October/20091019095937eaifas1.632327e-02.html>).")

Shinn also said, "The new policy acknowledges the importance of cooperation on counterterrorism in the relationship, although it understates the government of Sudan's cooperation in recent years."

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United States Still Opposed to Israeli Settlements, Clinton Says

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton repeated that the Obama administration does not accept the legitimacy of Israeli West Bank settlements and wants to see the establishment of a Palestinian state with borders based on territory that Israel has occupied since 1967.

In remarks with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Ali Aboul Gheit following their November 4 talks in Cairo, Clinton said the United States would like all current and planned Israeli settlement activity to be halted. The U.S. policy opposing Israeli settlement activity has not changed, she said.

She also said Israel's offer to halt all new settlement activities, to end the expropriation of land and issue no permits or approvals, while "unprecedented," is "not what we would prefer."

"We would like to see everything ended forever," she said. However, she added that it is "at least a positive movement."

In a November 4 interview with Jackie Northam of National Public Radio, Clinton said the issue of settlements has been "a terrible flashpoint" in the region. Settlements never have been a precondition for negotiations in the past, she said, adding that the Israeli government has gone further than its predecessors in its offer. However, she acknowledged that Arabs and Palestinians have said "it wasn't far enough."

"What is so clear is that once borders are decided, the settlement issue goes away. The Israelis build whatever they want in their territory, the Palestinians build whatever they want in theirs," Clinton said.

With Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit, she said, "Our goal is a real state with real sovereignty with the kind of borders that will enable the people of Palestine to make decisions about where they live and what they do on their own," adding



Secretary Clinton says the United States continues to see Israeli settlement activity as illegitimate.

that "a state that is based on the territory that has been occupied since 1967" is "the appropriate approach."

The Obama administration has been working to get peace negotiations restarted in hopes of achieving a comprehensive peace and a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Clinton said the troubled history between the two sides should not be allowed to stand in the way of a more peaceful and prosperous future for both.

"We can maintain an allegiance to the past, but we cannot change the past. No matter what we say about it, it is behind us," she said, urging all parties to "help shape a future that will be vastly better for the children of both Palestinians and Israelis."

The resumption of talks that will discuss final status issues such as borders, refugees and the status of Jerusalem "will allow us to bring an end to settlement activity because we will be moving toward the Palestinian state that I and

many others have long advocated and worked for," Clinton said.

The United States wants to see both the establishment of a Palestinian state and a situation in which Israelis can live in security, and "we're not going to let anything deter us or prevent us from

working as hard as we possibly can" to move that process forward, Clinton said.

Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit said he and Clinton had held clear and candid talks on the U.S. position toward Israeli settlements, and he said that while the United States rejects settlements, "Israel has not been responsive to the desires of the United States."

"We feel that we need to focus on the end of the course," Aboul Gheit said. "We should not waste time."

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

Obama: Iraq Election Law an “Important Milestone”

By Paula Wolfson
VOA News

President Obama says the approval of a long-delayed election law by the Iraqi parliament is an important milestone. Obama says it helps clear the way for a planned withdrawal of American combat troops.

Shortly after the Iraqi parliament approved the new election law, Obama went before reporters at the White House. “This is an important milestone as the Iraqi people continue to take responsibility for their future,” he said.



President Barack Obama speaks in the Rose Garden of the White House about Iraq's new electoral law.

Obama says Iraqi lawmakers have demonstrated their commitment to their country. He says that sends an important signal to the world at a time when the Iraqi government is being tested at home. “Iraq has known many challenges. And in the past several weeks we have seen that there are still those who would kill innocent men, women and children to deny the Iraqi people the future they deserve. Today’s step forward is another

reminder that these enemies of the Iraqi people will fail,” he said.

The president acknowledges there will be more difficult times ahead. But he says the action taken by the Iraqi parliament is a significant breakthrough. “This agreement advances the political progress that can bring lasting peace and unity to Iraq and allow for the orderly and responsible transition of American

combat troops out of Iraq by next September,” he said.

The new election law sets the stage for national elections in January.

Passage of the law was delayed by an ongoing dispute about how to conduct balloting in the city of Kirkuk. Iraqi Kurds claim Kirkuk, which sits on significant oil reserves, but the city’s Arab and Turkmen residents say it must remain under the con-

rol of the central government.

This report was provided by VOA News (<http://www.voanews.com/>).

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

Obama Sudan Strategy Hailed by Africa Policy Specialists . . .

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Steve Morrison, senior vice president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and Jennifer Cooke, director of the CSIS Africa Program, in a recent policy paper, captured the sentiment of many in the nongovernmental organization community who like the new strategy’s focus on multilateralism.

This approach “places the United States in greater alignment with critical interna-

tional partners concerned with Sudan — the United Kingdom, the European Union, Canada, France and key African partners — and opens the way for greater collaboration and consensus building with China and other key global powers,” they wrote.

Morrison and Cooke say the collaboration, which fits with the Obama administration’s emphasis on a “smarter” more multilateral-oriented diplomacy, “also

has the benefit of strengthening the credibility and effectiveness of any pressures the United States might bring to bear...[on] key Sudanese actors.”

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

U.S.-Sponsored Program Aims to Fight Emerging Pandemic Threats

By **Bridget Hunter**
Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will spend millions of dollars during the next three to five years to combat emerging pandemic threats (EPT) worldwide. Details of the program were announced by the agency November 3.

USAID said the program, which builds on USAID's historical successes in disease surveillance, training and outbreak response, aims to pre-empt or combat, at their sources, newly emerging diseases of animal origin that could threaten human health. Examples of such diseases include HIV/AIDS, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), H5N1 avian influenza and the 2009 H1N1 swine influenza virus.

In addition, researchers believe the 1918 influenza pandemic, which killed more than 50 million people worldwide, was probably caused by a virus that jumped to humans from birds. In a modern-day global pandemic, scientists project that a quarter of the world's population could be infected and between 51 million and 81 million people could die.

The increasingly interconnected globe allows diseases to spread quickly, so the extreme threat they pose to public health, commerce and economic development must be countered with "a comprehensive, proactive approach that draws on a wide array of technical resources to build sound detection and response capacity," according to USAID, which manages the program with technical support from the U.S. Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The EPT program aims to focus resources on early detection of dangerous pathogens, creation of sufficient laboratory capacity to support surveillance, appropriate and timely responses, enhancement of national and local response ca-

capabilities to help identify and respond to outbreaks of newly emergent diseases quickly and sustainably. The five-year cooperative agreement, worth \$185 million, will be implemented by Development Alternatives Inc., the University of Minnesota, Tufts University, Training and Resources Group, and Ecology and Environment Inc.



Victims of the 1918 Spanish flu crowd into an emergency hospital in Kansas. Researchers believe that virus jumped from birds to humans.

pacities, and education of at-risk populations on how to minimize exposure to emerging diseases. USAID is implementing the program through five projects:

PREDICT will expand monitoring of high-risk wildlife such as rodents and nonhuman primates in geographic hot spots for the emergence of new infectious diseases. USAID has awarded a five-year cooperative agreement valued at \$75 million to a coalition of experts in wildlife surveillance from the University of California Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Wildlife Trust, the Smithsonian Institution and Global Viral Forecasting Inc.

RESPOND will focus on developing outbreak investigation and response training that merges animal and human health

IDENTIFY will support the development of laboratory networks and strengthened diagnostic capacities in likely points of origin for emergent diseases. USAID is working with the U.N. World Health Organization, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health through existing grants to support this project.

PREVENT aims to design and communicate how humans should behave in response to zoonotic dis-

eases and to describe practices that increase the likelihood a disease will spread from wildlife to people. USAID has awarded a five-year, multimillion-dollar cooperative agreement to the Academy for Educational Development to work in four high-risk geographic areas — the Gangetic Plain, the Amazon River Basin, the Congo River Basin and Southeast Asia.

PREPARE, being implemented under a three-year cooperative agreement with the International Medical Corps, will provide technical support for simulations and field tests of national, regional and local pandemic preparedness plans to ensure countries can respond to pandemics. The agreement's funding ceiling is \$6.65 million.

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First Lady Presents After-School Arts and Education Awards

By Jeffrey Thomas
Staff Writer

Washington — In Campeche, Mexico, children with Down syndrome attend two dance workshops each week to learn traditional and contemporary dances at La Chácara Children’s Culture Center.

In China’s Sichuan province, children from low-income families train in opera, dance and the visual arts at Green Path of Art, which provides its students with academic and financial assistance.

In Muqqatum, a community on the outskirts of Cairo, Egypt, students at Alwan wa Awtar (Colors and Strings) can participate in a wide range of after-school and summer arts activities in the performing, visual and literary arts.

These were among the 19 after-school programs to which first lady Michelle Obama presented a 2009 Coming Up Taller Award in a White House ceremony November 4.

“Each of your programs is using achievement in the arts as a bridge to achievement in life,” said Mrs. Obama, the honorary chairman of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH), which sponsors the Coming Up Taller awards in partnership with three federal agencies.

“You affirm that their contributions are valuable, and their success matters to all of us. You help them see beyond the circumstances of their lives to the world of possibility that awaits them. And for that, we honor you.”

Recipients of the Coming Up Taller Awards, the nation’s honor for after-school arts and humanities programs for

underserved children, receive \$10,000 each.

“This year’s Coming Up Taller Awardees exemplify how arts and humanities programs outside of the school setting can impact on the lives of our young people,” said Margo Lion, PCAH co-chairman. “By exciting imaginations and providing opportunities for self-expression through the disciplines of theater, dance, music

pas such programs as “Sirenas y Unicornios” (Mermaids and Unicorns), which features literature and songs from around the world.

China’s Green Path of Art over its 10-year existence has helped more than 2,000 young people discover and develop their creative potential. After the devastating 2008 earthquake, program participants offered free performances to young people.

Egypt’s Alwan wa Awtar, a non-profit organization established in 2005, exposes impoverished youth to art, workshops and field trips to museums, concerts and exchange programs and tries to inspire them to embark on their own voyages of artistic self-discovery.

The PCAH focuses on arts and humanities education, cultural diplomacy and economic revitalization through the arts and humanities. The committee includes both government officials and private individuals. It works primarily with the White House, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services to connect the people of the United States with each other and with the rest of the world through dance, music, literature, painting, sculpture, and heritage and cultural tourism.

The name for the award, Coming Up Taller, comes from a statement by Willie
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U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama sits with Jasmine Gross (L) and Iris Virgil (R) during a leadership and mentoring initiative at the White House in Washington November 2, 2009. REUTERS/Joshua Roberts

and literature, these exceptional projects offer their participants windows on possibility and a belief in a more positive future.”

Created in 1998, La Chácara Children’s Cultural Center offers organized training spanning the creative arts to more than 20,000 children each year, but it was honored at the ceremony for its dance group Estrellas con Ángel (Stars with Angel), which enables disadvantaged youth with a specific disability, Down syndrome, to get a taste of the performing arts.

Another honoree, Radiombligo, broadcasts throughout Mexico’s state of Chia-

Muslim American Creates Foundation to Save Children from Violence

By Ahmed Mohamed
Staff Writer

Washington — How does a father cope with his son's murder at the hands of a gang member? Muslim American Azim Khamisa, an international businessman in San Diego, found the answer by establishing the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (TKF) in 1995, a foundation named after his son that works to reduce community violence among youth.

"I wanted to do something for Tariq, to do something for my country, and to do something for myself," Khamisa said. "If I had not forgiven, I would have remained a victim myself, and there is no quality of life remaining for a victim."

It all began in San Diego on the evening of January 21, 1995, when 20-year-old San Diego State University student Tariq Khamisa was shot and killed by a 14-year-old gang recruit while Tariq was delivering pizzas. Azim Khamisa did not respond by demanding revenge and retribution. Instead, he saw two young American sons lost — one to death and one to the state prison system.

"What if I became a foe, not of the boy who killed my son, but of the forces which led him to kill my son? What if I reached out as far as I possibly could and devoted myself to fighting the plague of youth violence?" Khamisa asked.

Khamisa took a spiritual journey that led him to forgiveness. On April 7, 1995, 10 weeks after Tariq's death, he drove to Mammoth Mountain in Southern California to spend a few days in solitude and reflection. "I knew Tariq was at peace, even though I was not. I began to understand that to find peace for myself, I needed to find something that I could do for Tariq, for his journey," he said.

To turn his son's death into something



Muslim American Azim Khamisa found the answer by establishing the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (TKF) in 1995, a foundation named after his son that works to reduce community violence among youth.

meaningful and to honor Tariq's life, Khamisa reached out to the grandfather of his son's assailant. "I told him that I felt no animosity towards him or his family, and that I believed both his family and mine were victimized by this tragic incident," Khamisa said. "I was pleased to discover in him a faith as strong as my own, and a similar burning desire to end the plague of youth violence."

Together, Khamisa and the assailant's grandfather have spoken to tens of thousands of schoolchildren through TKF's Violence Impact Forum. This program focuses on the power of forgiveness in an effort to break the cycle of violence.

TKF has developed a number of other programs for reducing community violence and providing a peaceful environment for children. These include:

School Programs: TKF's school programs educate students about the effects of violence and empower them to make positive choices. For example, through the 16-week program Circle of Peace, elementary and middle school students learn skills such as anger management, sensitivity to cultural differences and public speaking. Students also dedicate themselves to promoting peace on their campuses by serving as positive role models. TKF also offers a 12-week program, Ending the Circle of Violence, that focuses on the story of Tariq Khamisa, his assailant, and the choices their families made.

Peace Empowerment Project (PEP): This three-year, privately funded grant program hires full-time PEP coordinators to implement comprehensive TKF programs in a selected cluster of schools. Each coordinator is based at a specific school site and incorporates TKF programs into the daily curriculum and culture of the school. TKF has teamed with the San Diego State University College of Arts and Letters to create an evaluation of the project. The intended outcome is to change the behaviors of students receiving TKF programs and shift the school climate toward a more peaceful environment.

Parent Peace Coalition: This 12-week curriculum gives parents a safe haven in which to discuss the ways violence affects their children and to uncover pathways toward its prevention. Members focus on a particular topic and then act as a group to help directly address the violence affecting their children and their communities.

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First Lady Presents After-School Arts and Education Awards . . .

(Continued from page 10)

Reale, founder of New York City's 52nd Street Project, which enables young people to create original theater works. "There is no way to fast forward and know how the kids will look back on this," he said, "but I have seen the joy in their eyes and have heard it in their voices and I have watched them take a bow and come up taller."

The 15 U.S. after-school programs represent a wide variety of settings, from the rural to the inner city, and from libraries and museums to juvenile detention centers.

The Harmony Project in Los Angeles, for example, provides intensive, year-round instruction on eight instruments, as well as choir and orchestra programs, to inner-city children from low-income families.

The Keshet Dance Company's Outreach Program with Incarcerated Youth uses dance to teach literacy, math and conflict-resolution skills to 250 youths at the New Mexico state juvenile detention center.

In rural West Virginia, the Old Brick Playhouse provides apprenticeships to 83 students who, through theater, learn collaboration, leadership, problem solving, character development and self-esteem.

"These awards remind us of what the power of arts and music and dance can do in the lives of our young people," Mrs. Obama said.

For more information see the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities (<http://www.pcah.gov/>) and Coming Up Taller (<http://www.pcah.gov/CUT.htm>).

A transcript of Mrs. Obama's remarks at the ceremony (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/November/20091104164752eaifas0.3055536.html>) is available on America.gov. ♦

U.S.-Sponsored Program Aims to Fight Emerging Pandemic Threats . . .

(Continued from page 9)

Of the 1,461 pathogens known to cause disease in humans, at least 60 percent are of animal origin. Many researchers believe the most effective way to prevent new pandemics lies in predicting where new diseases might emerge and detecting viruses and other pathogens before they spread to people, which is precisely the strategy USAID is support-

ing through the EPT program.

"Identifying emerging pandemics quickly is critical in protecting human populations from severe disease outbreaks," said Representative Nita Lowey, chairwoman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, which oversees funding for USAID global health efforts. "I am pleased USAID is supporting this collaborative project, and I am confident it will help

improve our ability to monitor and identify wildlife diseases like influenza strains that could affect humans."

Additional information on the EPT program (http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2009/pr091103_1.html) is available on the USAID Web site.

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

Muslim American Creates Foundation to Save Children . . .

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Hope Works: The Hope Works Mentoring Program is a pilot project designed to reduce gang involvement and community violence. This initiative uses a prevention strategy to address problems before expensive and harsh solutions are needed.

More information about the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (<http://www.tkf.org/>) is available on the organization's Web site.

See also the America.gov multimedia collection Alternatives to Violence (<http://www.america.gov/>

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

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

Fall of Berlin Wall Had Impact on African Continent

By Scott Bobb
VOA News

Johannesburg — November 9 marks the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall that preceded the collapse of the Soviet Union two years later. The effects of the event were also felt on the African continent, which for decades had been one of the arenas for the conflict between East and West.

Analysts say the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was primarily a symbolic event, but it marked the beginning of changes that would affect Africa and the developing world in many ways.

The deputy chairman of the South African Institute for International Affairs, Moeletsi Mbeki, says the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 ended the Cold War and East-West rivalries.

“Africa had been at the receiving end of the Cold War with great powers using Africa as a playground to fight its [their] proxy wars,” he said.

CHANGE OF POLITICAL CLIMATE

He says the ideological struggle for influence in Africa brought political assassinations and military coups. It contributed to the authoritarianism and political instability that characterized Africa’s early years of independence.

Mbeki says the Cold War also prolonged the struggle against colonialism in southern Africa.

“After Second World War the original noises that came from the United States in particular were that it wanted the co-



Berliners celebrating on top of the wall as E. Germans flood through the dismantled Berlin Wall into West Berlin, November 12, 1989.

lonial system to come to an end,” he said. “But once the Cold War started, the United States changed its position and supported the colonial powers in Africa. And it was the Soviet Union and its satellites that supported the struggle against colonialism.”

He notes for example that East Germany provided military training and arms to liberation movements in southern Africa, whereas West Germany had built up extensive business ties in the region. As a

result, some African leaders reacted with apprehension to the moves to reunite the two countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

But he says the end of the Cold War, aided by rising public pressure in the West, boosted the negotiations to end the wars in Angola and Mozambique and the apartheid system in South Africa.

DEMOCRATIZATION

Mbeki concludes the collapse of the Soviet Union also boosted democratization across much of the continent.

“A number of dictators that had been supported by the Soviet Union lost their patronage and started either to change into less authoritarian systems or collapsed,” he said.

Analysts say the demise of the Soviet Union encouraged democratization in many African countries, but say the extent of the reforms has varied.

An analyst with the Electoral Institute for Southern Africa, Ebrahim Fakir, says new forms of capitalism evolved that widened the gap between rich and poor.

“While 1989 may have signaled greater amounts of freedom, the inception of some kind of democratic regime, it also initiated greater amounts of inequalities, not just between states and regions of the world, but within states,” he said.

He says the rise of capitalism mainly benefited the elites in Africa or their

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Asia-Pacific Region Seen as “Key Driver” of Global Economy

By **Bridget Hunter**
Staff Writer

Washington — “The Asia-Pacific region has become a worldwide center of economic activity and innovation,” U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ron Kirk said November 5. “And it is a key driver of global economic growth and recovery.”

Kirk, addressing the U.S.-Korea Business Council in Washington, underscored the importance the United States attaches to its partnerships in Asia and the Obama administration’s commitment to opening markets and forging closer trade relationships in the region, which currently receives about 60 percent of U.S. exports.

“President Obama and I recognize that successful engagement with the Asia-Pacific is a critical part of U.S. trade policy,” Kirk said.

The USTR will be joining President Obama in Singapore for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders Meeting scheduled to begin November 13.

“As the region continues to grow, Asia-Pacific economies will only become more important to the United States,” Kirk said.

KOREA-U.S. TRADE PACT

Kirk also assured his audience that the Obama administration remains committed to implementing the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement, which was signed by the United States and the Republic of Korea June 30, 2007.

The agreement would be the United States’ most commercially significant

free-trade agreement in more than 16 years, according to the Office of the Trade Representative. The pact requires congressional approval to come into force, and some members of Congress have expressed concerns about the effect some of its provisions, particularly those governing automotive trade, would have on U.S. industry.



South Korea Ambassador Han Duk-soo met with U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Ron Kirk, right, November 4 to discuss the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement.

“As all of you know, the American auto industry is working through a period of difficult transition,” Kirk said. “Our market is open to Korean autos. All we are asking for is for our own auto companies to be able compete on a level playing field in the Korean market.”

Under the FTA, nearly 95 percent of bilateral trade in consumer and industrial products would become duty-free within three years of the date the FTA enters into force, and most remaining tariffs would be eliminated within 10 years.

“Korea is America’s seventh-largest trading partner. Last year, two-way trade in goods alone totaled \$83 billion, and that’s on top of \$20 billion more in services trade,” Kirk said. “And if that’s not

enough, we have also invested \$40 billion more in each others’ economies.”

The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates the reduction of Korean tariffs and quotas on goods alone would add \$10 billion to \$12 billion to the annual U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) and approximately \$10 billion to annual merchandise exports to Korea.

Kirk said the anticipated economic gains for South Korea are also significant, potentially boosting its GDP by up to 2 percent.

Noting that in four decades South Korea “made the transition from one of the world’s poorest countries to the world’s 15th largest economy by GDP,” Kirk praised the nation as “a bulwark for stability and security in Northeast Asia, and one of America’s most significant economic partners.”

Kirk particularly lauded South Korea’s recent steps to

strengthen intellectual property rights (IPR), saying the new laws boosting copyright protection on the Internet are already making a difference.

From November 4 to 6, South Korea hosted, in Seoul, the sixth round of negotiations on the proposed Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). Participants included Australia, Canada, the European Union (represented by the European Commission), the EU Presidency (Sweden) and EU member states, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland and the United States.

South Korea’s progress on protecting intellectual property has been so significant that the United States in April re-

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Business Conference Seen as Marker of New U.S.-Iraq Relationship

By Ahmed Mohamed
Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S-Iraq Business and Investment Conference, held in Washington October 20–21, is another marker of the transition in the U.S.-Iraqi relationship from a focus on security to an emphasis on development of the Iraqi economy, President Obama and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki say.

The conference was designed to promote investment and business opportunities in Iraq and to foster business-to-business engagement. It provided a venue for U.S. and Iraqi companies to meet and discuss opportunities, challenges and partnerships.

Al-Maliki attended the conference and also met with President Obama at the White House October 20. Obama, in comments to reporters with the Iraqi prime minister, said that what was “wonderful” about al-Maliki’s trip to Washington is “that it represents a transition in our bilateral relationship, so that we are moving now to issues beyond security and we are beginning to talk about economy, trade and commerce.”

Al-Maliki said U.S.-Iraqi relations “have moved along and [are] not only confined to the security cooperation, but today have moved to the economic development and to providing prosperity for the Iraqi people.” Obama pledged his administration’s “full support for all the steps that can be taken so that Iraq can not only be a secure place and a democratic country, but also a place where people can do business, people can find

work, families can make a living, and children are well-educated.” The president also repeated that the United States plans to remove all combat troops from Iraq by August 2010.

The conference covered development in a number of sectors: agriculture, banking

prosperous, peaceful future for Iraq.

Addressing the U.S. business people at the meeting, Clinton praised their expertise, ingenuity and capacity to innovate. “So even as we encourage financial investment in Iraq, we also seek to leverage these core strengths of American business,” she said.



Secretary of State Clinton and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki addressed the business and investment conference October 20.

The conference also provided opportunities for collaborations between U.S. and Iraqi companies. Panel discussions addressed the challenges of doing business in Iraq, and provided opportunities for U.S. companies to meet with senior Iraqi government officials and Iraqi business owners.

“There has never been a better time than now to invest in Iraq,” said Sami Al-Araji, chairman of the Iraqi National Investment Commission. “There is room for development in many areas of Iraq’s economy and opportu-

nities exist in all sectors and all provinces.”

and finance, defense, electricity, health, education, housing and construction, oil and gas, telecommunications, tourism, and transportation.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, joined by al-Maliki, opened the investment conference. The Iraqi delegation consisted of some 250 officials, businessmen and representatives from more than 100 private-sector firms. Clinton spoke of Iraq’s great potential because it sits at a “global crossroads” and because of its “religious and ethnic diversity.”

The secretary called Iraq a pivotal state for the stability of the region, and said that now is the time for Iraq and its friends, like the United States, to demonstrate how there can be a new, more

nities exist in all sectors and all provinces.”

The October 20–21 meeting was the first such business conference held in the United States since the signing of the Strategic Framework Agreement between the two countries.

A transcript of remarks by Obama and al-Maliki (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/October/20091020151506xjsnommis0.3308614.html>) after their meeting and a transcript of Clinton’s remarks at the conference (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/October/20091020130825xjsnommis0.8214794.html>) are available on America.gov. ♦

Diasporas Contribute to Prosperity in Homelands of Those Who Left

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — Diaspora communities are potent sources of investment in the countries of origin of people who migrate.

“Innovations in transportation and communication technologies now allow migrants to psychologically and physically connect with their countries of origin in ways that were virtually unimaginable in the past,” Liesl Riddle, a scholar at George Washington University in Washington, writes in an article titled “Diasporas: Exploring Their Development Potential.” The term “diaspora” historically has referred to the dispersion of Jews, but in recent years it has come to include the dispersion of any group of people to areas outside their traditional homeland.

Riddle writes that migrants tend to acquire new knowledge, skills, social contacts and financial resources in the countries where they take up residence. They often are wealthier than their compatriots who remain in the home countries, and many are motivated to help their less fortunate countrymen, she writes. Hence, diaspora investors may be more likely than other foreign investors to keep money in a particular country rather than repatriate the profits, even in times of crisis, according to Riddle.

In an interview with *America.gov*, she said that hard facts and figures about diaspora investment flows are impossible to calculate today because of lack of data. “Foreign direct investment flows into a country, in most cases, are not tagged as coming from ‘diasporan’ versus ‘nondiasporan,’ and remittances are not tagged as for investment or other purposes,” she said, but added that more detailed data are beginning to be collected.



Liesl Riddle

MENTALITY SHIFT

India and Ethiopia recently established visa categories for investors of Indian and Ethiopian origin, and Ireland asks whether a foreign investor is of Irish descent. “We are just now starting to get data to analyze diaspora versus nondiaspora investment in certain countries,” Riddle said.

In the past decade or so, emigrant investors have devised very creative ways to invest in microenterprises and small-scale service businesses, such as hair salons, taxi companies, restaurants and so on, according to Riddle. “People who have set up businesses here in the United States typically have gone back and set up similar businesses back home, typically family-based businesses,” Riddle said. “Some have set up chains of business, so they are bringing back the concept of branding and pushing for reforms of business laws to protect franchises.”

Until recently, governments in most de-

veloping countries did not pay much attention to small-scale investments by their ex-residents because the governments felt that the investment sums were not large enough to have an economic benefit.

“Unfortunately, in the past when they thought about diaspora investment, they thought about wealthy millionaires or billionaires coming back and bringing large-scale manufacturing. They were often disappointed,” Riddle said.

But if diaspora investment does not often bring in huge fortunes, it does offer the potential for many human-capital transfers, such as franchising, branding, business skills, cash management, customer relations and marketing. “These are hard to measure, but they are economically powerful,” Riddle said.

As governments in developing countries awaken to the economic potential of diasporas, they are beginning to partner with development organizations, businesses and diaspora groups to attract capital. For example, Vietnam, in partnership with the United Nations, has established a program called TOKTEN, a shorthand expression for “transfer of knowledge through expatriate nationals,” to bring professional expertise back to Vietnam from its overseas community. The TOKTEN office is the Vietnamese government’s interface point with Vietnamese diaspora groups, which pressure the Vietnamese government to clarify and reform its taxation procedures and to reduce corruption. Many diaspora groups say they are eager to invest in their countries of origin but are reluctant to do so if their money winds up in the pockets of corrupt officials, according to Riddle.

The Jamaican government plans to issue a bond in 2010 targeting investors in the Jamaican diaspora.

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**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

**Web site
[http://
ethiopia.use
mbassy.gov](http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov)**

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Telling America's story

Asia-Pacific Region Seen as "Key Driver" . . .

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moved the nation from its "Special 301 Watch List" of countries that do a poor job of protecting IPR.

All these factors suggest there is cause for optimism about the free-trade agreement, Kirk said.

"There is no question that the U.S.-Korea FTA has the potential to bring significant economic and strategic benefits to both countries," Kirk said. "I am committed to working together so that we can find the path to an even stronger, more robust trading partnership between the United States and Korea."

The full text of Kirk's remarks as prepared for delivery (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/November/20091106140537xjsnommis0.3027002.html>) is available on America.gov.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Depart-

ment of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Diasporas Contribute to Prosperity . . .

(Continued from page 16)

Representing the commercial world, the world's largest money transfer company, Western Union Company, has partnered with development organizations and governments to help make diaspora investment more effective. In one initiative, Western Union is co-sponsor of the African Diaspora Marketplace competition along with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The competition calls for entrepreneurial proposals from African immigrants in the United States, proposals for ways to develop new businesses in sub-Saharan Africa. The winners of the competition are to be announced in January 2010. Each of the 10 to 20 winners will receive a grant of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to finance his or her business project. ♦

Fall of Berlin Wall Had Impact on African Continent . . .

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business partners in the West who were better prepared to take advantage of the opportunities it presented.

HOPE AND DISTRESS

He says the fall of the Berlin Wall brought hope to some people, but also distressed others.

"There was lots of celebration of the political freedoms, even economic freedom, but for other people it was a breakdown of old certitudes, of relying on the state to provide, having some kind of social welfare net, basic as it was, that certitude was no longer there," said Fakir.

He adds rising technological advances and the advent of the Internet and elec-

tronic mail made businesses more efficient and communications more rapid. These may have even contributed to the demise of communism.

But he says African countries in many cases did not have the infrastructure, such as reliable electrical supplies, to take advantage of them. Fariq says the changes also affected African societies.

"It gave rise, particularly in the developing world, to greater amounts of conflict between tradition and modernity," he said. "The idea of the extended family becomes less important, the rise of the nuclear family, new social mores, ethics and so forth."

Analysts note that the demise of communism also left the world with a single dominant power, at least for a time. And this uni-polar world may have con-

tributed to excesses such as those that led to the banking crisis that affected economies everywhere.

But they conclude that the emergence of regional powers, such as China, Brazil and India among others, could signal that current geo-strategic politics are also evolving.

This report was provided by VOA News (<http://www.voanews.com/>).

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