



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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Bush Warns Failure in Iraq Would Be "Grievous and Far Reaching"

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- There is still time for the United States to help to shape the outcome of the conflict in Iraq, President Bush said, adding that allowing extremists to seize control of the country would be tantamount to ignoring the lessons of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks upon New York and Washington.

Bush, speaking in his annual State of the



President George W. Bush delivers his State of the Union Address Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2007, at the U.S. Capitol.

Union Address to the U.S. Congress in Washington on January 23, said "the consequences of failure [in Iraq] would be grievous and far reaching."

"We did not drive al-Qaeda out of their safe haven in Afghanistan only to let them set up a new safe haven in a free Iraq," he said. "To allow this to happen would be to ignore the lessons of September 11th and invite tragedy."

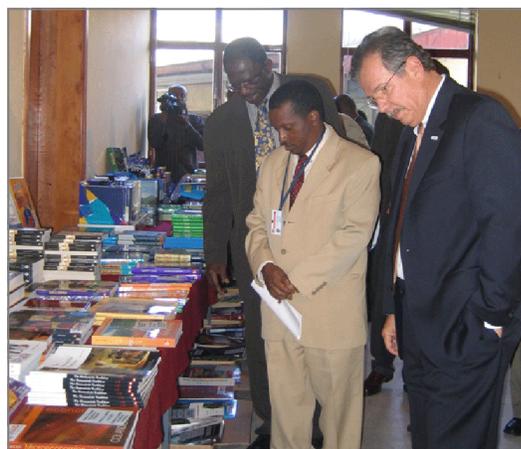
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USAID Donates 30,000 Books to Teacher Education Institutions

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Ethiopia donated nearly 30,000 books to the Ministry of Education today as part of its Basic Education Program on Tuesday January 23, 2007. The reference books, worth more than US \$1million, will be distributed to the 22 Teacher Education Institutions throughout the country.

"The American people, through USAID, have helped support the education system in Ethiopia since

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USAID Director Glenn Anders (R) and Minister of Education Dr. Sintayehu Woldemichael looking at the donated books.

Bush Warns Failure in Iraq Would Be “Grievous and Far Reaching” . . .

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The president said the United States is engaged in a “generational struggle” against terrorism, and others in the world are looking to see whether it will help moderates and reformers build free societies.

“Free people are not drawn to violent and malignant ideologies – and most will choose a better way when they are given a chance,” he said.

He urged U.S. lawmakers to back his new strategy designed to support Iraq’s democratically elected government.

“This is not the fight we entered in Iraq, but it is the fight we are in. Every one of us wishes that this war were over and won. Yet it would not be like us to leave our promises unkept, our friends abandoned, and our own security at risk,” he said.

Bush reminded Congress that the United States is not alone in the struggle against extremism. Working with the United Nations, NATO, and partner countries in the Middle East and around the world, he said there is international cooperation to bring peace between Israel and Palestinians, achieve a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, and confront threats such as Iran’s efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, and the resurgence of Taliban forces in Afghanistan.

ENERGY POLICY

President Bush prepares his State of the Union address January 23. On energy, Bush proposed lowering the U.S. consumption of gasoline by 20 percent within 10 years by replac-

ing current fuel sources with alternatives, such as corn ethanol, and increasing the efficiency of cars, light trucks and sport utility vehicles (SUVs).

He called for a mandatory fuels standard to require the production of 35 billion gallons (133 billion liters) of renewable and alternative fuels, and modernized fuel economy standards for cars that would conserve up to 8.5 billion more gallons (32.3 billion liters) of gasoline by 2017.

The United States is “on the verge of technological breakthroughs” in energy that “will help us become better stewards of the environment – and they will help us to confront the serious challenge of global climate change,” he said.

GLOBAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Bush also discussed U.S. efforts to combat HIV/AIDS through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The \$15 billion program is supporting treatment for 2 million people over five years, and especially targets countries in Africa and Asia.

In addition, he urged continued funding for the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI), a five-year, \$1.2 billion joint program with the private sector that seeks to cut the mortality rate from malaria by 50 percent in 15 of the hardest-hit African countries.

“To whom much is given, much is required. We hear the call to take on the challenges of hunger, poverty, and disease – and that is precisely what America is doing,” he said.

The president also renewed his call for comprehensive immigration reform, including the creation of a temporary worker program for some non-U.S. residents who are already in the country.

“We need to uphold the great tradition of the melting pot that welcomes and assimilates new arrivals. And we need to resolve the status of the illegal immigrants who are already in our country – without animosity and without amnesty,” he said.

The president’s speech marked the first time he addressed a Congress controlled by the Democratic Party. In congratulating the Democrats, Bush called for bipartisan cooperation, saying “we can work through our differences, and achieve big things for the American people.”

Full Text of the President’s Address is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070123-2.html>

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

Former Envoy Says U.S. Policy on Africa Aid Has Been Consistent

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Even though the American public's attention to Africa has wavered at times, help provided by the United States for the continent's many humanitarian and development challenges has been remarkably consistent, says former U.S. Ambassador David Shinn.

Shinn, an adjunct professor at George Washington University in Washington, made his comments at a meeting of the Chinese Association for International Understanding (CAFIU) in Beijing. The organization was established in 1981 by social and political activists to promote international understanding through civil society contacts and receives some Chinese government funding.

The former U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia in the mid-1990's, was in China as part of a research project on China-Africa relations. His speech in Beijing focused on past and present interaction between sub-Saharan Africa and the United States.

The result of the United States' stated goals of democratic and economic reform for the continent may be "mixed," he told his Chinese audience January 8, "but the commitment of total financial resources devoted to Africa is surprisingly good."

In 2005, the United States provided more than \$1.2 billion in food assistance to Africa. Altogether, the Bush administration tripled humanitarian and development aid to Africa from \$1.4 billion in 2001 to more than \$4 billion in 2006, which

is "a significant achievement," Shinn said.

The Bush administration's focus on Africa is not unique, he added. Since the end of World War II, he



Ambassador David Shinn

said, the United States has "consistently been the first with the most emergency food aid for Africa." Now, of the 20 nations receiving the bulk of U.S. aid, half are in Africa, Shinn said.

Much of the most recent development aid has focused on business-driven programs like the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which extends duty-free and quota-free access to U.S. markets for African textiles. Thirty-seven of the 48 sub-Saharan African countries now are eligible for AGOA.

Since signed into law by President Clinton in 2000, AGOA's favorable tariff provisions were expanded twice by the Bush administration. That helped spur trade between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa to more than \$60 billion in

2005, a 37 percent increase over the previous five years, Shinn said.

Another private-sector approach to spurring homegrown development is the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), "an innovative and well designed" mechanism for awarding grants based on the willingness of countries to institute open-market reforms, Shinn said.

Over the past few years, MCC has signed agreements (called "compacts") worth a total of \$1.5 billion with five countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Madagascar, Cape Verde, Benin, Ghana and Mali. The most recent compact is with Mali -- a five-year, \$460 million effort to reduce poverty and increase economic growth by supporting irrigation, airport improvements and an industrial park. (See related article

(<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=October&x=20061026170224WCyeroC0.9784815>).)

On the health front, Shinn said efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria are also essential aspects of America's assistance program to Africa. The President's Emergency Plan for HIV and AIDS Relief provides "substantial" funding -- \$15 billion over five years -- for this purpose, he told the Chinese audience. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/30-290183.html>).)

While challenges remain in foreign policy -- especially in the area of conflict resolution -- Shinn said the Bush administration "deserves enormous credit" for playing a key role in brokering an end to the north-

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U.S. Optimistic on Direction Somalia Is Taking, Official Says

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer gave an upbeat assessment of the progress Somalia is making toward forming a national unity government aimed at providing security and stability for the nation, which has been ravaged by clan fighting and warlordism.

Despite the turmoil Somalia has undergone over the past 16 years without a functioning central government, Frazer said January 17 she now sees a "glimmer of hope" and "reasons to be optimistic" for a lasting peace following the defeat of the radical Council of Islamic Courts (CIC), the jihadist-influenced movement that came to dominate most of the country.

Frazer, who is the assistant secretary of state for African affairs, commented on "Somalia's Future" at a seminar co-sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington.

Following a visit in early January to Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen and Uganda to drum up regional and international support for conflict resolution measures in Somalia, Frazer said, "If there was one lesson I took away from the trip, it is this: Somalis are ready for peace, they are tired of war."

Frazer's optimism was tempered by Senator Russell Feingold, who told the seminar's participants: "The U.S. needs to move quickly to prevent a return to large-scale violence in Somalia. More than ever, Somalia's instability matters to the region and to our own national security."

After years of intermittent conflict, a struggling central authority called the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was established in 2004 and backed by the United Nations, the European Union and the United States. It was unable, however, to exert authority much outside the provincial capital of Baidoa. Mogadishu continued to be ruled by squabbling warlords and clan leaders.



Jendayi Frazer
Assistant Secretary of State

In 2005, the religion-based CIC began to confront the warlords in the capital and eventually chased them out of the city. The CIC, however, became increasingly dominated by anti-Western jihadists and failed to come to terms with the TFG later at talks held in Khartoum.

Frazer referred to the isolation of the TFG in Baidoa and the subsequent takeover of most of the country by CIC forces in 2006 by noting: "How different things looked then ... We have come a long way."

That summer Somalia again became a large-scale battleground as the CIC -- progressively more under the influence of jihadists and al-Qaida sympathizers -- began consolidating power throughout Somalia and advanced on the TFG center in Baidoa.

In a move that confounded many Somalia experts, however, the TFG, with the help of Ethiopian troops, routed CIC forces and forced them out of Mogadishu in December 2006.

Now, said Frazer, "we have been presented with a real opportunity to rebuild Somalia and restore effective governance representing all aspects of Somalia society."

Professor Ken Menkhaus, a Somalia expert from Davidson College, agreed that "extraordinary" changes occurred "over the course of a single year [2006]. The TFG, once moribund, is now active." He also noted that the CIC brought on its own demise through its "radicalization" and "calls for jihad against Ethiopia."

Ethiopian Ambassador Samuel Assefa assured forum participants that the Ethiopian military's presence in Mogadishu and other parts of the country would be temporary, and that a phased withdrawal of forces would begin immediately.

Since the defeat of the CIC, Frazer said, "I believe we have made significant progress supporting the TFGIs [Transitional Federal Government Institutions] and moving toward the rapid deployment of an African peacekeeping force, which is our immediate objective."

The United Nations sanctioned a

(Continued on page 5)

USAID Donates 30,000 Books to Teacher Education Institutions . . .

(Continued from page 1)

1995. The thousands of books we are donating today will help enhance the quality of basic education by improving the classrooms of future teachers," USAID/Ethiopia Mission Director Glenn Anders said. During the ceremony, Mr. Anders handed over a sample book to His Excellency Dr. Sintayehu Woldemichael, Minister of Education. The ceremony took place at the Ministry of Education office in Addis Ababa.

Through its Basic Education Program, USAID has helped strengthen the pre-service teacher training program in all Teacher Education Institutions. In the last five years alone, USAID technical and financial assistance provided to these institutions has exceeded US\$2.3 million, or Birr 20 million.

USAID contributions to improve the quality and equity of Ethiopian primary schools also include expanding alternative basic primary education for out-of-school children and functional literacy education for

adults in remote areas of the country. The program has helped develop and install computerized personnel and material management systems that are now being used in regional state education bureaus. Another accomplishment of the USAID Basic Education Program has been the strengthening of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Kebele Education and Training Boards, making family and community members an integral part of basic education. ♦

U.S. Optimistic on Direction Somalia Is Taking, Official Says . . .

(Continued from page 4)

peacekeeping force of up to 8,000 troops for Somalia, and Uganda has offered to supply 1,500 troops for that purpose. (See related story (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=December&x=20061206185711atiayduj0.6654016>).)

During her visit to Nairobi, Frazer pledged nearly \$17 million to support peacekeeping operations in Somalia -- a portion of the \$40 million the United States has committed for short-term help. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. government has devoted \$95 million for humanitarian relief and development programs in 2006 and 2007 in Somalia. (See related story (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=January&x=20070104121331esnamfuak0.0111658>).)

Theresa Whelan, deputy assistant secretary of defense for African

affairs, told the seminar's participants that it was important "to get some Arab nations and North African nations of the African Union involved" in the peacekeeping efforts. The North Africans, especially, have "considerable resources they can bring to bear," she said.

With respect to press reports that 70 civilians were killed in a U.S. air attack on suspected al-Qaida terrorists in southern Somalia in early January, Whelan said emphatically: "I can assure you they were fighters. There were no civilians killed in the U.S. strike.

"The individuals were all militia members," she added, "believed to be part of the Shebab" -- a faction of radical jihadist fighters within the CIC -- who served as personal security details for its leadership.

Whelan said the Shebab had been "instrumental in sheltering the three al-Qaida-affiliated terrorists whom we are interested in bringing to jus-

tice for the [1998] bombings [of U.S.] embassies in Kenya and Tanzania."

Ismail Bubaa, TFG foreign minister, stated that his government had requested the air strike against "jihadists and terrorists," whom he claimed were bent on destabilizing the whole Horn of Africa region.

For additional information on U.S. policy see Peace and Security in Africa (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/peace_security.html) and U.S. Aid to Africa (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/aid_to_africa.html).

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

Rwandan Genocide Survivors Weave Baskets for Better Life

A recently expanded Rwanda Path to Peace project is helping thousands of survivors of the country's 1994 genocide lead more successful lives through the sale of hand-made peace baskets.

Founded in 2005 by U.S. businesswoman Willa Shalit, the project aims to develop a U.S. market for Rwandan women's crafts through a partnership with its sponsor, retailing giant Macy's. It began at Macy's Herald Square store in New York and will be extended across the United States on Macy's Web site and in select Macy's stores.

"The Macy's Rwanda Path to Peace project has given thousands of women the opportunity to show their strength, talent and pride in ways they never thought possible," Shalit said in a Macy's press release.

"These amazing women are rising to the occasion by providing the Rwandan culture hope for a better future," she added.

The Rwanda Path to Peace project was established to create a viable, sustainable export business that provides economic stability and promotes an environment of peace that will positively influence Rwanda's future for its 8 million citizens. Its basic concept is that women helping each other can change the way Rwanda rebuilds its society, empowering women and sustaining economic development beyond traditional development assistance.

The project is the only source of income the basket-makers have, and possibly the sole source of income for their families, since 90 percent of the people are subsis-

tence farmers who "grow what they eat. So it has brought a lot of income to rural women in particular," said U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda Michael Arietti. The United States is providing incentives for small business growth like the Rwanda Path to Peace project.

Arietti said women often make their baskets individually but then come together to sell them to the female-

holds. The project has the potential to generate millions of dollars for the country, positively affecting the millions of Rwandans who normally live on less than \$1 a day.

Thousands of children have become direct beneficiaries of the basket program as basket-derived income provides funding for food, clothing, school uniforms and supplies that previously were unattainable.



A group of Rwandan women weave traditional baskets using papyrus reeds and sisal fibers in Kabona, Rwanda. (AP Images)

The baskets are made from papyrus, banana leaf, sweet-grass and sisal leaves, depending on the region in which the basket is made.

Reinterpreting traditional Rwandan designs with bright, bold colors, the Gahaya Links Association organized 500 weavers in the Gitarama region of Rwanda to weave the baskets bound for Macy's. Their creations, in different sizes and shapes, retail for between \$8 and \$110.

The baskets evoke many traditions of Rwanda; since ancient times, they have been used as containers of secrets, as wedding presents from a bride to her mother-in-law or as lasting symbols of friendship between women.

Increased revenue from the expansion of Macy's "peace basket" sales will benefit Rwandans through education, HIV/AIDS treatment, medical care, anti-violence programs and housing, according to the company.

In addition to the baskets' availability on Macy's Web site, special shops will be created in Macy's stores in Chicago and Atlanta to call attention to the baskets and to the story of the Rwandan weavers. ♦

President Bush Discusses Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

The following fact sheet was released by the White House as a companion document to President Bush's 2007 State of the Union Address:

(begin fact sheet)

The White House
Office of Communication
January 23, 2007

Fact Sheet

Leading The Worldwide Fight Against HIV/AIDS

Tonight, President Bush Will Discuss How The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Is Meeting His Commitment Of \$15 Billion Over Five Years To Support Treatment For 2 Million People, Prevention Of 7 Million New Infections, And Care For 10 Million People. PEPFAR is the largest international health initiative in history dedicated to a single disease. PEPFAR works worldwide, but targets 15 focus countries that are home to approximately half of the world's 39 million HIV-positive people: Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zambia.

Since First Providing Antiretroviral Treatment In January 2004, PEPFAR Has Supported This Life-Saving Treatment For Approximately 822,000 People Living With HIV/AIDS. This is taking place through bilateral programs in PEPFAR's 15 focus countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Of the 822,000 individuals receiving treatment through PEPFAR, 61 percent are women and 9 percent are children age 14 and under.

PEPFAR Is Supporting The Leadership Of Local Communities. PEPFAR works with partners in host nations to build local capacity in order to sustain prevention, treatment, and care efforts long after the initial five years of the Emergency Plan. Over 80 percent of PEPFAR partners are indigenous organizations.



PEPFAR Is Supporting Innovative Partnerships To Train Local Health Care Professionals. For example, a PEPFAR initiative launched in May 2006 places health care professionals from the Ethiopian Diaspora community in volunteer assignments in Ethiopia to train and work side-by-side with Ethiopian counterparts. This initiative will use a new database to identify qualified professionals from the Diaspora to help Ethiopia's HIV/AIDS campaign.

PEPFAR's New Partner Initiative (NPI) Has Awarded Its First Round Of Grants For HIV/AIDS Prevention And Care. President Bush launched the \$200 million New Partners Initiative on World AIDS Day 2005. On World AIDS Day 2006, the first round of 23 grants was awarded to organizations in the U.S. and Africa for up to \$72 million over three years. These organizations will

work in 13 of PEPFAR's 15 focus countries.

The NPI Is Identifying And Supporting Organizations Providing Health Care In The Developing World, Including Faith-Based And Community Organizations, To Achieve Local Ownership And Long-Term Sustainability.

The U.S. Supports The Most Diverse Prevention Portfolio Of Any International Partner. In addition to the ABC (Abstain, Be faithful, and the correct and consistent use of Condoms) approach, the U.S. supports programs that focus on prevention of mother-to-child transmission, on blood safety and safe medical injections, on injecting drug users, on HIV-discordant couples, on alcohol abuse, and on other key issues, including gender-specific programs.

The U.S. Leads The World In Its Support Of The Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, And Malaria. President Bush made the Fund's founding contribution, and the United States has pledged over \$2 billion through 2008 – far more than any other nation.

The Administration Is Working To Help The 1 Million Americans Living With HIV/AIDS

The Administration Is Working To Address Americans Living With HIV/AIDS And To Prevent New HIV Infections. Of the approximately 40,000 new transmissions occurring annually in the United States, about half are spread by individuals unaware they are infecting others. The number of AIDS cases is especially high in the African-American, Hispanic, and gay communities, as well as among intravenous drug

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President Bush Discusses Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

(Continued from page 7)

users and prisoners.

The President And Mrs. Bush Have Called For HIV Tests To Become A Routine Part Of Care So All Americans Know Their Status. The HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have released guidelines to physicians recommending routine voluntary HIV testing as a part of regular medical care for all people between the ages of 13-64, and annual screening for those at high risk.

Between 2001 And 2006, The Administration Has Devoted More Than \$74 Billion To Treatment And Care, Increasing Annual Treatment Funding By 37 Percent. In addition, the Administration has devoted more than \$15 billion to HIV/AIDS research to help develop new methods of treatment and prevention, increasing annual research funding by 20 percent. The President's 2007 Budget requested an additional \$15 billion for HIV/AIDS treatment and care and \$3 billion more for research.

The President's 2007 Budget Requested \$93 Million To Purchase And Distribute Rapid HIV Test Kits That Will Facilitate Testing Of Approximately 3 Million Additional Americans. Of the approximately 1 million people infected with HIV, an estimated 250,000 are unaware they carry the virus. Rapid HIV test kits will be directed at communities with the highest rates of newly discovered HIV cases, including prisoners and intravenous drug users.

In December 2006, President Bush Signed The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act Of 2006 Into Law. This important legislation reauthorized the Ryan White CARE Act and provides life-saving and life-extending services to people living with HIV who would otherwise have little or no access to care. It also provides more flexibility to direct funding to areas of greater need, and expands resources for women, infants, and children with HIV/AIDS.

The President Is Dedicated To Ending Discrimination Against People

Living With HIV/AIDS

The President Has Directed The Secretary Of State To Request And The Secretary Of Homeland Security To Develop A Categorical Waiver For HIV-Positive People Seeking To Enter The United States On Short-Term Visas. The President considers the participation of people living with HIV/AIDS a critical element in the global HIV/AIDS response. A 1993 law prohibits HIV-positive people from receiving visas to visit the United States without a waiver. A categorical waiver would enable HIV-positive people to enter the United States for short visits through a streamlined process.

More Information On The Administration's International And Domestic Response To HIV/AIDS Is Available At: www.pepfar.gov and www.AIDS.gov.

(end fact sheet)

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

First Female Speaker To Preside at State of the Union

By Jeffrey Thomas
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- When President Bush delivers his annual State of the Union address on January 23, sitting behind him will be a female speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, for the first time in American history.

The speaker is one of the most powerful positions in the United States government, according to Karlyn Bowman, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. The speaker is next in line of succession to the presidency after the vice president and controls the flow of legislation in the House. Because any bill related to funding must originate in the House, the speaker, in effect, controls the purse strings of the U.S. government.



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., right, shakes hands with President Bush during his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2007. (AP Photo/Larry Downing, Pool)

Pelosi, a Democrat from California, took over as speaker, the top post in the House, on January 4 when her party assumed control of the chamber as a result of the November 2006 midterm elections. Shortly after those elections, President Bush, a Republican, said Pelosi's ascension to the post of speaker is "historic for our country. And as the father of young women ... I think it's important."

When Pelosi, 67, accepted the gavel as speaker and convened the 110th Congress, she shared that historic moment with some of her six grandchildren and the children of

other House members at the podium. "For our daughters and our granddaughters, today we have broken the marble ceiling," Pelosi said, referring to the fact that the top positions in Congress long have been dominated by men. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=November&x=20061117145152mlenuhret9.807986e-02>)).

Pelosi's first career was as a stay-at-home mother to five children, and she ran for Congress only after her youngest began college. Elected to the House at 47, she rose through the ranks and became minority leader of the House in the 108th Congress (2003-2004) before becoming speaker.

The speaker is a role unfamiliar to many outside the United States because in parliamentary systems the leader of the executive branch (President Bush) and the leaders of the legislature (Pelosi in the House,

and Majority Leader Harry Reid in the Senate) cannot come from opposing parties.

Even to many Americans, Pelosi remains a new and relatively unknown figure, despite her 20 years in the House, Bowman said recently in an article in Roll Call. In a survey released in December 2006 by the Pew Research Center, Pelosi received a favorable rating from a majority (54 percent) of Americans who could rate her, but more than 41 percent of those polled said they were unfamiliar with her.

However, this is very likely to change. Pelosi "is already well known among her colleagues, who have accorded her the high honor of the Speaker's position," Bowman told USINFO January 17 in an e-mail interview. "She will be very visible in the weeks and months to come, and more Americans will learn about her and

what she believes."

THE SPEAKER WIELDS MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF POWER

As speaker, Pelosi has three roles: representative of her congressional district in California, leader of her party in the House and leader of the House as a whole.

The speaker's responsibilities and powers are not specified by the Constitution but have evolved over the years and are affected by a particular speaker's personality and political skills -- with some speakers

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U.S. 2008 Presidential Election Campaigns off to an Early Start

By Michelle Austein
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The 2008 U.S. presidential election campaign season is off to an extraordinarily early start, according to the head of a leading public opinion polling organization.

Although the election is not until November 4, 2008, many of the expected contenders already have announced their interest in running for the highest office in the United States, said Frank Newport, editor in chief of the Gallup Poll. Those who have not publicly discussed their intentions likely will have to do so soon to be competitive, he said during a digital video press conference hosted by the State Department Foreign Press Center in New York January 18.

Despite the fact that Election Day is nearly two years away, local forums and debates with presidential candidates will begin as early as February.

Two early events with candidates that likely will receive attention are New Hampshire's April 4 and April 5 debates and South Carolina's April 26 and May 15 debates. In American politics, public debates are commonly held and allow candidates to present their views in response to questions from the media or members of the audience.

These events are notable because New Hampshire and South Carolina are among the first states to hold their primary elections -- that is, state-level elections in which voters choose a candidate from one political party to run against candidates from other political parties in a later general election. The 2008 primaries begin in January 2008, as do the caucuses. In this context, a

caucus is a meeting of local members of a political party to nominate candidates.

Additionally, advocacy groups have begun their television advertising campaigns for candidates they support.



Senator John McCain is among other Republicans who are interested in running for the presidential elections. (AP Images)

Newport cited several reasons for the early start. One is that it is the first presidential election since 1952 in which no incumbent president or vice president will be a party's nominee for president. This provides a large opportunity for candidates of both parties, as it is "truly open on both sides of the spectrum," he said.

Voters also have an increased interest in this race, which is due in part to their intense feelings on current U.S. foreign policy, Newport said. It is common in races where foreign policy issues are among Americans' chief concerns that voters have an increased interest in the presidential campaign, he said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=October&x=20061030111757mlenuhret0.6432001>).)

The war in Iraq was a predominant issue in the 2006 midterm elections, and Newport said it appears that it will continue to be the dominant issue during the next year. "There is no other issue that compares to it," Newport said. He acknowledged, however, that this could change over the next 18 months.

Among Republicans who are considering becoming presidential candidates are former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani; Arizona Senator John McCain; former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney; former Wisconsin Governor and former Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson; and former Virginia Governor Jim Gilmore. All have formed exploratory committees. On the Democrats' side, Illinois Senator Barack Obama also has formed such a committee.

Establishing an exploratory committee is often one of the first steps taken by those intending to run for president, though it is not required. Candidates use these committees to gather information that will help them decide if they want formally to become a presidential candidate. These committees also can raise funds for a potential candidate.

Some politicians already have announced their candidacy for president, and others are expected to follow shortly. Media reports state that Kansas Senator Sam Brownback will announce his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination on January 20. Connecticut Senator Christopher Dodd and former vice presidential candidate John Edwards are among those who officially have an-

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First Female Speaker To Preside at State of the Union . . .

(Continued from page 9)

wielding much more power than others.

One major source of power is the speaker's ability to control the legislative calendar and, in cooperation with the majority leader, to manage the agenda. When a bill is introduced by a member of Congress from either party, the speaker determines to which of the 21 House committees it goes -- a decision that greatly can affect the bill's fate because a bill almost never is passed by the House without the support of the committee that considers it.

If the bill makes it out of committee, the speaker decides whether and when to bring it to the floor (the full House) for debate and a vote. Of the more than 8,000 bills introduced and referred to committees each Congress, only a small fraction are brought to the floor.

As speaker, Pelosi presides over the House and can call on individual members to speak -- or not -- as she chooses, and can control the flow of debate through rulings and decisions. Pelosi also can delegate her powers as presiding officer to other members, thus distinguishing them from the more than 430 other members.

Another source of power relates to appointments. The speaker leads the appointment process for the chairs of the various committees and subcommittees in the House, including conference committees, which negotiate a compromise when House and Senate versions of a bill differ.

The speaker also approves the makeup and itineraries of congressional delegations traveling domestically and overseas and presides over joint sessions of Congress during special occasions such as the

State of the Union address, the inauguration of the president and addresses by invited foreign leaders.

Some have compared Pelosi's job to that of chief executive officer and chairwoman. Congress, however, is not a hierarchical organization like most corporations, but rather a political, collegial body with power flowing in many directions. Each member must work with the speaker but also his fellow members of Congress from both parties, and each member ultimately must face the most powerful force of all -- the American voter.

For more information, see The U.S. Congress (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/congress.html>).

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U.S. 2008 Presidential Election Campaigns off to an Early Start . . .

(Continued from page 10)

nounced their candidacy for the Democratic nomination.

One potential Democratic candidate who has not made any official announcement of her intentions nor formed any committee yet is former first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, who now serves as a senator from New York. Many political experts expect her to seek the presidency, Newport said.

Others may join the race as well,

Newport said, adding there is also the possibility of a candidate from a political party other than the Republican and Democratic parties.

While Gallup and other public opinion polling organizations routinely are conducting polls measuring Americans' preference for certain candidates, it is too early to determine who the front-runners will be, Newport said. For example, in February 1991, then-Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton polled in 11th place among potential Democratic candidates, favored by only 2 percent of

those questioned. In November 1992, he won the presidential election.

For more information, see Democracy Dialogues: Free and Fair Elections (http://www.democracy.gov/dd/eng_democracy_dialogues/elections.html).

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Congressional Black Caucus Champions Issues Concerning Minorities

By Michelle Austein
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- In 1969, 13 African-American members of the U.S. House of Representatives saw a need to unite in order to draw attention to issues that concerned African Americans and other minorities. Today, the group they founded, the Congressional Black Caucus, is considered by many political experts to be among the most powerful organizations in Washington.

The 43-member Congressional Black Caucus, representing a multitude of regions, officially is nonpartisan although it is currently composed entirely of Democrats, 42 of whom are from the House of Representatives (two are nonvoting delegates from the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and one from the Senate.

Representative Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, a Democrat from Michigan and chair of the caucus, said in a December 2006 press conference that the group, in the 35 years since its inception, has been the "conscience of the United States House of Representatives."

The original founding members, forming what was then a Democratic select (special) committee, believed they could be more powerful if they spoke with a single voice. According to the Congressional Black Caucus Web site, the group's goal was to "promote the public welfare through legislation designed to meet the needs of millions of neglected citizens." The organization changed its name to the Congressional Black Caucus in 1971.

Today, the caucus seeks to represent the interests of minorities by drafting legislation on issues important to these groups, working with African-American leaders in local governments and providing services to their constituents. It works closely with other minority caucuses, including the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

Along with the domestic political, social and economic issues the organization works on, the caucus has been active in international affairs as well. It led many of the United States' calls for South Africa to end its apartheid system. In 1986, the caucus played an influential role in getting Congress to pass a bill placing economic sanctions on that nation to press for the end of apartheid.

Today, the caucus continues to speak out against human rights violations throughout the world, particularly in the Darfur region of Sudan. "The Congressional Black Caucus have been in the forefront of the declaration of genocide in Darfur and pushing the United States government and those countries around the world to be more active in trying to end the genocide," said caucus member Congressman Donald Payne, a Democrat from New Jersey, in the December 2006 press conference.

The group has worked to end human rights abuses in the Sudanese region by meeting with influential leaders from the African Union and China who have been involved with the issue, as well as with U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios. Congressional Black Cau-

cus members were among those arrested protesting outside the Sudanese Embassy in Washington in May 2006, while trying to draw attention to the issue. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/May/17-752595.html>).)

In the 110th Congress, Congressional Black Caucus members head more than 25 committees and subcommittees. Among those being led by caucus members are the House Judiciary Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, the House Homeland Security Committee and the House Administration Committee. Because of this, a majority of legislation, which is reviewed through committees, will be under the purview of at least one Congressional Black Caucus member.

There are about 200 caucuses -- informal groups based on shared interests on an issue -- in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The term "caucus" refers to both the group and the meeting it holds. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=January&x=20070110151854HMnietsua0.3051264>).)

For more information, see The U.S. Congress (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/congress.html>).

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Pentagon Chief Cites Commitment To Helping Iraqis Fight Extremism

By Jacqui Porth
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, on his second visit to Iraq within one month, says that nation is at a “pivotal moment” and the United States will do whatever is necessary to help the Iraqis fight extremism.

Gates was in southern Iraq to hear what he called “the ground truth” from his commanders, including Army General George Casey, who said it will be summer before the results of a combined Iraq-U.S. security push to make Baghdad neighborhoods safer are clear.

Casey, who commands the multinational forces in Iraq, said it should be possible within the next 60 days to 90 days to evaluate the effect of putting additional Iraqi and U.S. forces into Iraq’s capital. Three Iraqi brigades are moving into Baghdad as planned, he said, and Iraq is moving forward to meet a range of security commitments.

“So far so good,” Casey said, adding that U.S. military officials continue to monitor the situation to be sure that Iraqi government commitments to eschew political interference with security raids and to deny safe havens to insurgents are met fully. Still, he said, there is a long way to go “before we’re done.”

Casey predicted that by late summer it will be possible to assess the outcome of the effort to make Baghdad more secure and whether the surge of additional U.S. forces to Iraq that is under way could be reversed. “I think it’s probably going to be late summer before ... the

people in Baghdad feel safe in their neighborhoods,” he said.

Gates said U.S. forces have been training and preparing Iraqi security forces, especially the army. An important element of the overall U.S. strategy is “standing them up,” he said, by providing Iraqis with training and equipment.



Secretary of Defense Robert Gates meets with General George Casey on January 19 in Basra, Iraq. (AP Images)

Casey said the number of Iraqi security forces has climbed from zero to 325,000 in three years even as a fight against a virulent insurgency swirls around them. The goal is to train the Iraqi security forces to “a higher level” in 2007 so that by year’s end they will be even more capable, he said.

Casey’s deputy, British Lieutenant General Graeme Lamb, said in a January 19 press conference in Baghdad that the coalition forces are working alongside and in support of their Iraqi counterparts and that 2007 will be a time of “active transition.”

MALIKI GOVERNMENT NEEDS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Gates expressed gratitude for the valuable support and contributions being made by 25 other nations in

Iraq and singled out the support of Romanian forces by saying, “We’re proud of them.” Casey said cooperation with the Romanians has been “terrific” and said a Romanian general officer serves on his Multi-national Forces-Iraq staff.

But Iraq’s security challenges cannot be solved by military means only, Gates said while he checked on the economic and social progress of provincial reconstruction teams in Basra and elsewhere in southern Iraq.

In comments made during an earlier stop in Afghanistan January 18, Gates said the Iraqi government needs even more economic help from other countries. “I think that anything that other governments -- both in the region and outside the region -- can do to help, particularly on the economic reconstruction and development side ... would be immensely helpful to the Maliki government and to the Iraqi people,” he said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=January&x=20070118143854sjhtrop0.885586>).)

For more information on U.S. policy, see Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).

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Nations Share U.S. Concern After China Space Missile Test

By Vince Crawley
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington - The United States and other nations have expressed concern to China about its January 11 test in which a Chinese missile destroyed an aging satellite, scattering debris and possibly threatening the peaceful use of outer space.

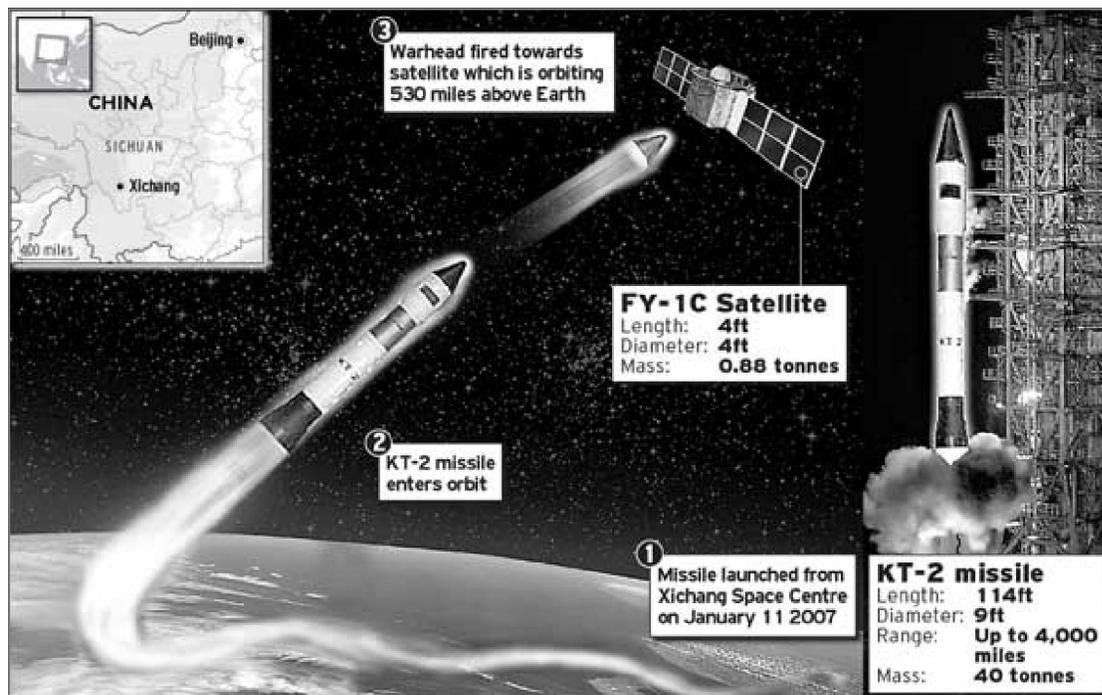
"We do have concerns about that," White House deputy press secretary Dana Perino told reporters January 19. "The Japanese and the Australians put out strong statements of concern as well."

News reports also said the British government has expressed formal concern to China about its test, details of which are now becoming public. In the test, China apparently fired a missile that destroyed one of its own aging weather satellites while in earth orbit. Debris from the destroyed satellite and missile still is orbiting and could pose a danger to other satellites and spacecraft.

"The U.S. believes China's development and testing of such weapons is inconsistent with the spirit of cooperation that both countries aspire to in the civil space area," National Security Council spokesman Gordon Johndroe said January 18. "We and other countries have expressed our concern regarding this action to the Chinese."

The United States performed a similar test in 1985, but State Department deputy spokesman Tom Casey said that test occurred in an era

fort, by any nation, that would be geared toward developing weapons or other military activities in space. ... We don't want to see a situation



Chinese missile destroys satellite in space

of Cold War tensions when far fewer objects were in Earth's orbit.

In the 22 years since the U.S. test, countries throughout the world have grown dependent on weather satellites, communications satellites, navigation systems "and other devices to be able to conduct modern life as we know it," Casey told reporters January 19.

"And so the consequences of any kind of activity like this are significantly greater now than they were at that time," Casey said of the 1985 U.S. test.

"U.S. policy is that all countries should have a right to peaceful access to space," Casey said. "We certainly are concerned by any ef-

where there is any militarization of space." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=October&x=20061025102809lcnirellep0.5205347>).)

For more information on U.S. policy, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html) and Science and Technology. (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/scitech.html)

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Egyptian Author Naguib Mahfouz Sought To Reconcile East and West

By Lauren Monsen
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- When Egyptian author Naguib Mahfouz was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988, he already was the most dominant literary figure in the Arab world, but suddenly his work began to attract a wider audience in the West.

A recent lecture on Mahfouz's life and work drew a capacity crowd to a World Bank auditorium in Washington. The event was sponsored by the Mosaic Foundation, a charitable group that aims to increase knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Arab culture.

Moderator Ronnie Hammad of the World Bank described the social context that shaped Mahfouz's work. Arab society, he said, is "adjusting to the forces of globalization, [and is] attempting to reconcile a religious culture with secularism, diversity and democracy."

The demands of modernization, combined with the weight of Egypt's history and traditions, are distilled in the novels, short stories, plays and screenplays Mahfouz produced throughout his lengthy career. Mahfouz died on August 30, 2006, at the age of 94.

Featured lecturer Roger Allen, a professor of Arabic and comparative literature at the University of Pennsylvania, said Mahfouz fused the traditions of the Arabic world and the West. Allen, who enjoyed a 39-year friendship with the author, described Mahfouz as "a highly organized bureaucrat. He kept a file on every character he wrote about," so he could reintroduce characters from earlier works into subsequent novels.

Most important, perhaps, "he was a profound humanist who studied humanity. And he was a skeptical but devout believer, [a Muslim] who tried to reconcile traditional religious



Naguib Mahfouz, Egyptian novelist and 1988 winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, December 8, 2004. (AP Images)

beliefs with 20th-century thought and reality. He was also a great humorist."

Mahfouz was deeply interested in politics, as well. "He expressed political views in some of his novels, though not necessarily his best ones," said Allen. But because of widespread censorship in Egypt, Mahfouz often conveyed his ideas symbolically, a technique that has been adapted by writers and filmmakers in many parts of the Muslim world.

Egyptian history and current events often fueled the young writer's imagination. When a team of British archaeologists unearthed the tomb of King Tutankhamun in Egypt's Valley of the Kings 1922-1923, the discovery sparked a

worldwide fascination with ancient Egypt's Pharaonic culture and also a surge in Egyptian nationalism. As a result, said Allen, Mahfouz's early short stories "were based on Pharaonic themes," and "his first three novels were set in the Pharaonic period."

As a young man, Mahfouz found a list of major European novels and read most of them. "He conducted a totally methodical search into what the novel is, what its techniques are, what its language is," said Allen. Mahfouz then decided that "he's going to write novels about the contemporary period," and in so doing, "he changes the course of Arab literature," Allen added.

In 1952, Mahfouz completed a series of novels collectively referred to as The Cairo Trilogy (Palace Walk; Palace of Desire; Sugar Street) -- the works for which he is best known by Western audiences. The trilogy, widely available in English and French translation, follows an Egyptian family over the course of three generations as its shifting circumstances mirror the changes that occur in Cairo during those years. His skill at depicting a traditional society gradually transforming itself to accommodate a more modern ethos is considered among his greatest achievements.

Mahfouz's famous trilogy represents only a fraction of his literary output, Allen said. Many of his writings have not been translated and are not easily accessible to Western readers. Scholars fluent in Arabic have debated whether Mahfouz wrote in imitation of European novels, but the consensus seems to be that his adaptation of European literary devices in service

(Continued on page 18)

Treasury Cautious About Terrorist Finance Data Collection Program

By Jaroslaw Anders
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. Department of the Treasury says that massive collection of data on cross-border electronic money transfers is technically possible and could help track down terrorist financing but requires more time for implementation and more analysis of its costs to businesses.

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 requires the secretary of the treasury to determine if reporting of such transfers is necessary and feasible.

One approach would require all cross-border transfers above a certain limit to be reported to the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). The Treasury estimates the measure could result in half a billion financial reports per year.

In a January 17 report to Congress, the Treasury Department says the completion of the data collection system would take approximately 3.5 years and cost around \$32.6 million. The report also raises a number of issues that need to be studied, including the cost to the financial institutions and U.S. agencies and the government's ability to use such data effectively.

The report further points to the program's possible negative effects on dollar-based global transactions, including a shift away from the dollar to other currencies, the creation of a mechanism for clearing dollar-based transactions outside the

United States and interference with the operation of central payment systems.

The proposed data collection program has been criticized by human rights organizations and some European officials, who see it as a po-



tential violation of privacy. It also is opposed by the banking community, which says the proposed program is burdensome and invasive.

"Our current anti-money-laundering program already suffers from overload of unnecessary data -- with over 14 million reports submitted in 2006," says a statement published by Wayne Abernathy, executive director of financial institutions policy at the American Bankers Association. The statement calls for "more effective policies to combat financial crime by looking at focused programs that provide materially useful information rather than pushing significant resources into a new mass data-gathering exercise."

If such a data collection system were implemented, the U.S. government would impose strict limits on the use and redissemination of the data provided to law enforcement and regulatory agencies, and to its foreign counterparts, the report said. It also would monitor closely people and organizations with access to the data.

But the report recommends an incremental process, during which the U.S. financial authorities would engage with law enforcement, regulatory and intelligence agencies, as well as with representatives of U.S. and foreign financial services in a cost-benefit analysis.

The full text (http://www.fincen.gov/cross_border/index.html) of Feasibility of a Cross-Border Electronic Funds Transfer Reporting System under the Bank Secrecy Act is available on the Treasury Department Web page.

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Potential Gains from Freeing Global Trade Are Substantial

*The following article appears in the January issue of the State Department's electronic journal Economic Perspectives (http://usinfo.state.gov/pub/ejournalusa/economic_perspectives.html). The entire issue, *Benefits of Trade, Costs of Protectionism*, can be viewed at <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/ites/O107/ijee/ijeeO107.htm>.*

(begin byliner)

Trade Holds Promise for Expanding Global Economic Growth
By Ambassador John K. Veroneau

Ambassador John K. Veroneau is deputy U.S. trade representative.

History and experience provide us with important insights as we look to the future of the international trading system. Particularly since the end of World War II, trade has been an integral engine of the world's economic progress. Successful rounds of multilateral trade liberalization under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and its successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO), have helped rebuild war-devastated economies in Europe, provided a proven path to development for independent and modernizing nations in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East, and lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty.

For the past seven decades, American presidents from Franklin D. Roosevelt to George W. Bush have steadfastly supported lowering trade barriers between the United States and our partners around the world. They have shared a belief in trade's central role in promoting rising standards of living, greater prosperity, and a broader range of choices for our citizens and those of other nations. As a result, the United States is the most open major economy in the world, and this

openness is a clear source of strength. According to the Peterson Institute for International Economics, U.S. annual incomes are \$1 trillion higher, or \$9,000 per household, due to trade liberalization since 1945.

We are now witnessing a period of rapid transformation in the global marketplace. Just in the years since the Cold War ended, roughly 2 billion more workers and consumers have joined the international economy as political and technological barriers to market participation have fallen away. In order to empower more individuals to pursue their dreams and provide for their families, we must unleash trade's potential to promote further global economic growth and fuel better jobs.

The World Bank estimates that the full elimination of trade barriers can lift tens of millions more out of poverty; hence, the moral imperative to find a way forward on trade is clear. Moreover, while debt relief and foreign aid can make an important contribution to development in poor countries, trade and trade liberalization are likely to be even more powerful tools for alleviating poverty and providing societies with the economic resources to address their most pressing needs. Again according to the World Bank, the annual income gain to developing countries from the elimination of trade barriers to goods alone is \$142 billion, conservatively measured. This amount exceeds the \$80 billion in foreign economic assistance by the major industrialized countries in 2005 and the proposed \$42.5 billion for developing country debt relief combined.

The potential gains from freeing trade in manufactured goods, services, and agriculture are truly substantial. The suspension of the

Doha Round of WTO negotiations in 2006 was disappointing for all who believe in the power of trade to promote economic development, to expand opportunities, and to facilitate peaceful cooperation among nations. That is why President Bush has directed the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to continue in the quest for an ambitious and balanced agreement that meets the development objectives of Doha.

The rapid pace of change in the international economy and its effects—both positive and negative—on regions, localities, and individuals breed understandable anxieties. Each society must find a way to address the needs of those who may be dislocated by change and cushion the transition. But backsliding and erecting walls and barriers to trade is not the answer: Trade barriers protect a few at the expense of the many, and countries that fail to resist protectionist actions risk slower growth, inefficient and noncompetitive sectors, greater unemployment, and increased inflation in the longer term.

Increased trade also has broad social benefits: Countries that are wealthier are more likely to devote resources to preserving their environment, and workers in export-related industries tend to earn higher wages than their domestic counterparts in non-exporting sectors. The gains from trade are real to the hundreds of millions of individuals today whose livelihoods and households depend upon it.

(end byliner)

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Former Envoy Says U.S. Policy on Africa Aid Has Been Consistent . . .

(Continued from page 3)

south civil war in Sudan and then supporting efforts to implement the comprehensive peace agreement. The United States also has devoted "considerable financial resources to the continuing conflict" in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, he added.

The point to remember, Shinn said, is that these programs along with "increased foreign aid and cancellation of debt," are examples of a pattern of aid to Africa that has been steady and consistent and most likely will move in the same direction regardless of which political party is in power in the United States.

For more information on U.S. policy, see U.S. Aid to Africa (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/aid_to_africa.html) and Millennium Chal-

lenge Account (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html).

More information (<http://www.agoa.gov/>) on the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is available on the U.S. Department of Commerce Web site.

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Egyptian Author Naguib Mahfouz Sought To Reconcile East and West . . .

(Continued from page 15)

to a distinctly Egyptian narrative reflected a desire to fuse elements of both East and West.

"The emphasis on the [Cairo] trilogy distorts our views of Naguib Mahfouz; his contribution is much more significant," Allen said. "After 1967, he came to be recognized as the great founder of the Arab novel. Mahfouz is like the proverbial iceberg: what you can see, thus far, is only a tiny part of what is there."

Mahfouz, Allen said, "was a man who straddled the line between tradition and modernity."

Mahfouz's celebrated trilogy may receive a disproportionate amount of attention relative to his other works, but that should not obscure the fact that "the trilogy is a wonderful piece of writing," Allen said. "It's the climax of a series of novels written in the European social realist style. Transferring that tradition into the context of Arabic society, at that time, is no mean feat."

Mahfouz's other works "are more firmly anchored in the traditions of Arabic culture, but now the trilogy has become a part of that culture," said Allen.

Responding to a question about Mahfouz's openness to the West,

Allen agreed that "he greatly admired Western civilization" and once described it as "the only viable one, since it incorporates influences from so many others."

For more stories on the influence of writers and other artists in society, see The Arts (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/the_arts.html).

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