



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

American Cultural Envoy Presents "Faces of Mercato" Photo Exhibit

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – Deborah R. Malac, U.S. Embassy Chargé d’Affaires a.i., opened "Faces of Mercato," a photo exhibit by American Cultural Envoy Frank Hallam Day in the Mercato on March 25.



Chargé Malac said at the opening of the exhibition, "Perhaps no other place in Ethiopia highlights the rich diversity of Ethiopia as the Mercato does, and Frank Day’s images convey that rich diversity very well."

Struck by the beauty of the people and the rich visual contrasts in the market environment, Mr. Day started photographing merchants in Addis Ababa's Mercato

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Chargé d’Affaires Deborah Malac (R), Frank H. Day, American Cultural Envoy, and Dr. Sólomon Ali, Head of Information and Public Relations of Ministry of Culture and Tourism, cutting the ribbon at the exhibition

Ambassador Presents "International Women of Courage Award for Ethiopia" to Meaza Ashenafi

Addis Ababa, U.S. Embassy – U.S. Ambassador Donald Yamamoto presented the "International Women of Courage Award for Ethiopia" to Woizero Meaza Ashenafi, founder and former director of the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association, in a ceremony at the U.S. Embassy on Friday, March 21.



U.S. Ambassador Yamamoto awarding Woizero Meaza Ashenafi with certificate of the "International Women of Courage Award for Ethiopia

Amb. Yamamoto, quoting the U.S. Secretary of State, said, "Women of courage are standing up for freedom and human dignity, and the United States stands with them. We must not forget that the advance of women's rights and the advance of human liberty go hand in hand."

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American Cultural Envoy Presents "Faces of Mercato" Photo Exhibit . . .

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in November 2006. He shot hundreds of portraits and shared copies with the subjects. The resulting exhibit depicts not only an American view of Addis Ababa's famous market, but also the beauty and diversity to be found in Ethiopia's everyday life.

Mr. Day is a fine art photographer based in Washington, DC. He has traveled in and out of Ethiopia since 1978 and speaks Amharic. In his role as a Cultural Envoy, he will present two photo exhibits and host four photography workshops in Addis Ababa.

Mr. Day has taught photography at several venues including the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. His photos are in numerous museum and private collections in the United States and abroad, including the State Museum of Berlin, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Portland Art Museum and the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

The U.S. Department of State's Cultural Envoy program enables ambassadors of the performing and visual arts to travel abroad and share experiences and insights with international counterparts and audiences. Chargé Malac said at the exhibit opening, "We all look forward to seeing how Frank Day's work will be further enriched by contact with Ethiopian photographers, as well as how his work will influence them in their recording of Ethiopian life and society." ♦



Some of the merchants in the photos were present at the opening ceremony

Main Religious Affiliations in the United States

Almost all the world's religions are practiced today in the United States. The American tradition of religious tolerance and constitutional safeguards for freedom of worship has made religious life in the United States one of most diverse and vibrant in the world. In a new study by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 78 percent of the more than 35,500 respondents classified themselves as Christian, 5 percent belonged to other faiths, and 16 percent were not affiliated with a specific religion. Members of evangelical Protestant churches constitute the largest religious group in the United States (26 percent of the population), followed by Catholics (24 percent) and mainline Protestants (18 percent).

Evangelical Protestants

Evangelical churches and religious groups have roots in the 18th-century Protestant revival movement, a period of heightened religious activity, especially in the United States and England. The Pew Forum's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey states that "churches within the evangelical Protestant tradition share certain religious beliefs (such as the conviction that personal acceptance of Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation), practices (such as an emphasis on bringing other people to the faith), and origins (including separatist movements against established religious institutions)." Evangelicals emphasize personal religious experience, individual conversion, Bible study, the role of the laity in

spreading the tenets of the faith and the need to practice faith-based morality in public life. The largest evangelical groups in the United States are evangelical Baptists, Pentecostals and nondenominational evangelicals.

Catholics

The United States has the third-largest Catholic population in the world (after Brazil and Mexico). Catholicism is the traditional religion of most Americans with Latino, Italian, Irish and Polish roots. The Landscape Survey states that "the Catholic share of the U.S. adult population has held fairly steady in recent decades, at around 25 percent." Approximately one-third of survey respondents who were

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Ambassador Yamamoto Presents "International Women of Courage Award . . .

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As part of the celebration of International Women's Day and Women's History Month, American Embassies around the world nominate "women of courage" in their respective countries each year for this prestigious award. The award celebrates exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for women's rights and advancement.

In nominating Woizero Meaza, the Embassy recognizes her contributions to advancing human rights in Ethiopia through her work as a legal advisor to the Ethiopian Constitution Commission of the transitional government in 1993, and her founding and administration of the Ethio-



Public Affairs Counselor Michael McClellan introducing Woizero Meaza Ashenafi at the ceremony

pian Women Lawyers Association since 1995.

The awarding of the Africa Leadership Prize by the Hunger Project in 2003 recognized Woizero Meaza's contribution to advancing women's rights throughout Africa. In presenting the IWOC Award for Ethiopia to Woizero Meaza, Ambassador Yamamoto said, "We are very pleased to present you today with this award for your exemplary work in advocating and advancing the rights of women in Ethiopia and your efforts to build a more just society that gives all of its members equal opportunity to contribute to peace, democracy, and justice for all."

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Main Religious Affiliations in the United States . . .

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raised Catholic no longer practice that faith. These losses, however, have been offset partly by Catholic immigrants, particularly from Latin America. The church traces its origin to Jesus and the Twelve Apostles. It sees the bishops of the church as the successors of the apostles, and the pope in particular as the successor of St. Peter. The primary mission of the Catholic Church is to spread the message of Jesus Christ, found in the four Gospels of the Bible, and to administer church rituals called sacraments. Roman Catholicism today is the largest single church in the United States.

Mainline Protestants

The Landscape Survey, emphasizing the diversity of American Protestantism, describes churches in the mainline Protestant tradition as sharing "a less exclusionary view of salvation" than the evangelicals' strict emphasis on personal acceptance of Jesus Christ. Mainline Protestant churches, which developed as a result of the 16th-century Reformation movement in Europe, have "long-established religious institutions" and place "a strong emphasis on social reform," the survey said. The most numerous mainline Protestant churches in the United States are the Methodists, Lutherans, mainline Presbyterians and mainline Baptists. These churches tend to embrace the ecumenical position (belief in Christian unity) and often participate in interdenominational and interfaith organizations such as the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Approximately half (51 percent) of the members of U.S. mainline Protestant churches are age 50 or older.

Historically Black Churches

After slavery was abolished in the United States in the mid-19th century, African-American Christians started to establish their own churches to strengthen their communities, escape discrimination and worship in their own, culturally distinctive ways. Those churches quickly became the main social, cultural and political institutions of the African-American community. Black pastors and preachers, like Martin Luther King Jr. and others, played a prominent role during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Today, many historically black churches continue to combine religious and community functions and cultivate unique forms of worship and spiritual expression. The most numerous among the black Christian churches are black Baptists organized in the National Baptist Convention, USA, and black Methodists.

Jews

Although Jews have been settling in America since Colonial times, most came from Germany and Eastern Europe in the 19th century, bringing in diverse religious customs and forms of piety characteristic to those regions. Today, most American Jews follow the Reform stream of Judaism developed in the United States in the 19th century. Two other main streams of Judaism -- Conservative and Orthodox -- take, respectively, the second and the third place. More than 40 percent of American Jews live in the Northeast, although significant Jewish communities also exist in Florida, California and most large American urban centers.

Mormons

The Mormon Church, officially known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was founded in New York state in 1830. According to its founder, Joseph Smith, angel Moroni revealed golden tablets containing the Book of Mormon, which along with the Bible is the foundation of the Mormon faith. After Smith was assassinated by a mob in 1844, his closest associate, Brigham Young, took church members across the continent to Utah, which is still the main site of the Mormon community. As a result of active missionary efforts, the church has spread throughout the United States and abroad. Mormons make up about 61 percent of Utah's population and 1.7 percent of the total U.S. population.

Buddhists

Americans first were exposed to Buddhism after the California Gold Rush, when large numbers of immigrants from China started arriving in the United States. The first Buddhist temple was built in San Francisco in 1853. Today, Buddhism remains the traditional religion of a large portion of Asian Americans but it also has developed a significant following among non-Asian converts. It has been studied by a number of American philosophers, writers and artists. Today, most American Buddhists still live in the West, especially along the West Coast, where several prominent American Buddhist schools and universities are located. Three-fourths of Buddhists in the United States are native-born; many are converts from other faiths. They constitute 0.7 percent of the population.

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Iranian Americans Observe Persian New Year Traditions

By Afzal Khan
Special Correspondent

Washington -- Some 2 million Iranian Americans -- and other immigrants from neighboring countries that were once part of the Persian Empire -- are celebrating Nowrouz, the Persian New Year, on March 20 with rituals that go back thousands of years.

The rituals find their symbolic roots in Zoroastrianism and its dualistic struggle between the forces of good and evil, but with the advent of Islam 14 centuries ago, many of the traditions were modified.

A few days before the New Year, Persians observe a Zoroastrian festival known as Chahar Shanbeh Suri. The evening's rituals include a symbolic purification by fire in which people jump over bonfires to rid themselves of illness and misfortune.

The New Year celebration then begins with the spring equinox, and the Nowrouz festivities continue for 13 days. Iranian community and student groups throughout the United States observe the traditional Persian holidays.

A highlight of Nowrouz celebrations in the United States will be the fifth annual Persian Parade, scheduled for March 30 in New York City. Every year it has become more elaborate and more popular -- in 2007, more than 10,000 people saw the parade, according to organizers. Led by Iranian actor Parviz Sayyad, the parade featured Iranian flags, 11 floats and numerous dancers representing different styles and traditions.



Dressed in Armenian outfits, members of the Antranig Dance Ensemble of Fairlawn, New Jersey, perform an Armenian dance as they participate in the 2006 Persian Day Parade on New York's Madison Avenue. (© AP Images)

This year Jimmy Delshad, the first elected Iranian-American mayor of Beverly Hills, will be the parade grand marshal, and Sayyad will also be on hand.

The New York Persian Parade is also sponsoring Chahar Shanbeh Suri on March 18 in Woodbridge, New Jersey, with food, music, and fire jumping.

Some other groups refrain from bonfire jumping because of the potential hazard, but all of them celebrate Nowrouz with Persian music, dancing and a traditional dinner.

The traditional dinner at Nowrouz features an herbed rice and fish dish called sabzi palau ba mahi accompanied by a hearty noodle soup. As always the meal is rounded out with sweet Persian pastries.

Families then greet the New Year in

a purified state with a bath and a new set of clothes. The first few minutes of the New Year are spent around a traditional table setting known as the Haft Seen, or "Seven S" with seven items that begin with the letter "S."

Haft Seen goes back to the pre-Islamic traditions of Zoroastrianism with each item representing one of the seven creations and the seven holy immortals protecting them.

Among the seven "S" items on the table is sabzeh, or green shoots, which are seven wheat or lentil seedlings symbolizing resurrection and the new life to come. Other "S" items may include samanu or sohan, sweets representing joy; sib, an apple representing health and beauty; senjed, lotus fruit symbolizing love; sir, garlic to ward off evil; sekhe, coins for prosperity; sonbal,

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Kennedy Center to Showcase Artistic Traditions of Arab World

By Michael Bandler
Staff Writer

Washington -- "The best way to learn about other people," says Michael Kaiser, president of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, "is through their culture."

Kaiser practices what he preaches. In cooperation with the League of Arab States, Kaiser has spent the past four years shaping a major three-week festival highlighting the arts and culture of the Arab world. The festival will take place at Washington's Kennedy Center early in 2009.

Called "Arabesque: Arts of the Arab World," the event will be a panorama of creativity -- embracing



A Arabesque handblown glass

dance, music and theater and encompassing such specialized presentations as oud (Arabic lute) music and the sacred 13th-century mysti-

cal art of the whirling dervishes.

An arabesque -- the term derives from the word "Arab" -- is a ninth-century Islamic decorative element utilizing intricate floral and geometric patterns. The term also commonly defines a ballet position, but more generally, it describes visual, dance, theater or musical styles that emerge from Arab culture or are influenced strongly by the Arab world.

"Arabesque" -- both in depth and breadth -- is the largest program of its kind to date in the United States.

As the program's schedule reveals, the visiting artists and their presentations largely are specific to a par-

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Main Religious Affiliations in the United States . . .

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Muslims

The first Muslim in North America recorded by history is the early 16th-century Spanish explorer of Berber descent, Estevánico of Azamor. Historical records also show that many African slaves brought to America were probably Muslims. Over the last hundred years, the Muslim population of the United States has been growing steadily, as the result of immigration and conversions. An estimated one-third of American Muslims are African Americans who have converted to Islam, and most of the rest are immigrants. Muslims account for roughly 0.6 percent of the U.S. adult population, according to

the Landscape Survey. The survey found that Sunnis make up half of the total, while the rest are Shiites and those who do not specify a denomination. Most American Muslims live in the South and in the Northeast.

Hindus

Prior to the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965, Hindu immigration to the United States was difficult to estimate, but it probably was very limited. Today, Hindu communities exist throughout the United States, and numerous Hindu religious leaders live in or visit America. The first Hindu temple in North America was the Sri Venkateswara Temple in Penn Hills,

a suburb of Pittsburgh, consecrated in 1976. It receives up to 100,000 pilgrims every year. Another prominent Hindu temple is Malibu Hindu Temple, built in 1981 near Malibu, California. Elements of Hindu lore have entered into mainstream American culture, as shown by the popularity of yoga, meditation and other techniques of self-awareness and self-improvement rooted in Hindu philosophy. Hindus are 0.4 percent of the U.S. population, and 86 percent are foreign born.

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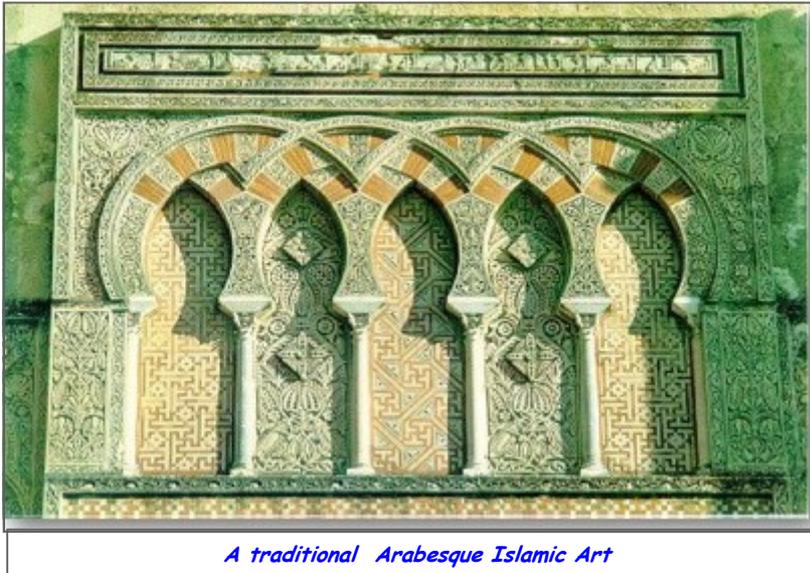
Kennedy Center to Showcase Artistic Traditions of Arab World . . .

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ticular culture or country, such as Lebanese composer Marcel Khalife's original oud music, the Whirling Dervishes of Damascus (Syria), and Khamsoun (Fifty) -- an acclaimed contemporary stage drama focusing on a half-century of Tunisian history, from Tunisia's independence in 1956 to 2006. Al Kabsaba Theater, based in Ramallah on the West Bank, has created a dramatic oral history collage, *Alive From Palestine: Stories Under Occupation*. And there are collective tributes, as well -- including an evening of sacred music drawing on instrumentalists and choruses from across the Arab landscape, and *Golden Age of Arab Music*, an assemblage of leading singers from Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

Complementing these presentations are several cross-cultural productions that offer new insights and perspectives. One is *Richard III: An Arab Tragedy*, adapted from Shakespeare by Kuwaiti theater director Sulayman Al-Bassam. Originally commissioned by Britain's Royal Shakespeare Company, the play explores tribal allegiances, family feuds, absolute power and questions of leadership, religion and foreign intervention within the context of the social customs, musical heritage and mystical rituals of the Gulf region.

Blending East and West, award-winning Broadway director/choreographer Debbie Allen is creating *Dancing on the Sands of Time*, a dance-driven work featuring original American and Arab music, performed by young artists from both



A traditional Arabesque Islamic Art

the Arab world and Los Angeles and Washington.

"Arabesque" is a festival spanning the centuries. Contributions from the world of dance, for instance, will range from the traditional belly dances of the Ghawazee gypsies of southern Egypt (performed by Tunisia's Leila Haddad) to Moroccan choreographer Khalid Benghrib's cutting-edge work presented by his all-male contemporary dance company, and Lebanon's Caracalla Dance Theatre, whose repertoire fuses Oriental tradition with the athletic properties of Western modern dance.

Even multimedia visuals and hip-hop, combined with North African movement and musical influences, will make appearances in the pro-

gram of Compagnie La Baraka, founded by French native Abou Lagraa, who is of Algerian descent.

"Arabesque" -- which will also include a weeklong festival of films from across the Arab world -- is slated to unfold in virtually every performance space at the Kennedy Center, and even in a few unlikely spaces that are being repurposed. Throughout the three weeks of "Arabesque," visitors are expected to flock to the roof-level corridors, converted for the occasion into a traditional souk (an Arab bazaar or market), where literary readings, photography exhibitions and standup comedy performances will take place.

Kaiser, speaking at a March 11 press briefing, said the arts "create peace and provide a window onto understanding people." Now that "Arabesque" is poised to become a reality, said Kaiser, he hopes it will serve as "a catalyst toward achieving both [peace and understanding] between the Arab and Western worlds."

"Arabesque: Arts of the Arab World" will run from February 25, 2009, to March 15, 2009.

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Right to Dissent a Cherished American Freedom

By Lea Terhune
Staff Writer

Washington -- Families and school tours visiting the nation's capital during spring vacation were treated to an example of direct political action as protestors against the Iraq War mingled with throngs of tourists and residents March 19.

Demonstrators young and old dispersed throughout the city to mark the fifth year of the conflict by publicly voicing their concerns.

Equestrian police sat placidly on their horses as a group bearing a large orange sign that read "Iraq get out, Iran stay out" crossed McPherson Square. Peaceful groups chanted anti-war slogans and songs near the White House and other federal buildings.

President Bush, speaking at the Pentagon the same day, acknowledged the "understandable debate over whether the war was worth fighting, whether the fight is worth winning, and whether we can win it."

But he maintained his support for the Iraq war, saying the troop buildup, or surge, is working. "The battle in Iraq has been longer and harder and more costly than we anticipated -- but it is a fight we must win," he said, lauding soldiers' courage and determination and calling the military action noble, necessary and just.

Nearby on the Capitol Mall and on surrounding city streets, Americans from various parts of the country disagreed.



Masked protestors -- some wearing the names of those killed in Iraq -- march to voice their objections to the war. (© AP Images)

Veterans for Peace intoned responses to the military cadence call "Sound Off" with words tailored to the peace march, rather than the drill field. Member of the group held signs aloft and flashed peace gestures. Some were in wheelchairs. Stopping in front of the White House, a member of the group delivered a speech condemning the war.

"Support our troops -- bring them back" was a sentiment expressed by many.

Mike Ferner, a Navy hospital corpsman, or medical specialist, during the Vietnam War, told America.gov, "I'm here because this president apparently is not interested in listening to the will of the majority of people in this country, and we need to get out and demonstrate more ... what we really need to do is stop business as usual." He said delivering that message peacefully was the goal of the demonstrators.

More theatrical were groups of black-swathed protesters wearing

white death masks who silently threaded their way through the city. They called their protest a "Death March."

FREE SPEECH GUARANTEED UNDER THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Although the Washington demonstration was not as large as some in the past, it was earnest. Protesters

tried to blockade the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the U.S. tax office, to symbolize a call to halt the flow of U.S. taxpayers' money to fund the Iraq War. Some groups held up traffic. A few dozen were arrested across the city.

"Protesting is not illegal. It is our right. It's in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution," Officer Josh Aldiva, spokesman for the Metropolitan Police, told America.gov. But when protesters break laws by blocking traffic, crossing a police barrier or trying to enter a restricted building, they may be arrested.

In those cases, Aldiva explained, people are taken to the local police station and their police records are checked. If they have no recorded offenses, they may be asked to pay a fine, after which they may leave.

Various law enforcement agencies, local and federal, policed the protests, which were calm despite arrests. According to Federal Protective Service press officer Ernestine Fobbs, "It was peaceful at the IRS,

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Right to Dissent a Cherished American Freedom . . .

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but you are still required to charge people with failure to comply.”

Countering anti-war protesters were a group of people at a military recruiting center with signs stating “We support our brave military and their just mission.”

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE DEEPLY ROOTED IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Civil disobedience is an old weapon in the American arsenal of dissent, dating back to the 1773 Boston Tea Party, when Colonists dumped a British vessel’s tea cargo overboard into Boston Harbor to protest against an unfair British system of taxes and tariffs.

Writer Henry David Thoreau’s fa-



protesters waved peace signs and chanted slogans

mous 1849 essay on civil disobedience still resonates to Americans: “The authority of government ... is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed.”

Nonviolent protest was used in the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, and in the movement

against the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s. Both employed marches and sit-ins, a form of passive resistance.

Organizers such as the group United for Peace and Justice offered training in nonviolent protest and political activism ahead of the peace march. Similar events were staged in cities around the country.

Anti-war protester Diane Rosen told America.gov why she was there: “I

want to just take part in letting people know there are people who think like this.”

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Iranian Americans Observe Persian New Year Traditions . . .

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a hyacinth flower; sumac, a Persian spice; or serkeh, vinegar.

The table setting also should include painted eggs to represent fertility, a goldfish bowl to represent the world’s oceans, and candles with reflecting mirrors to represent the eternal fire -- the ultimate purifying symbol of Zoroastrianism. Some families also include a book of poetry by the Persian masters

Hafez or Ferdowsi and a holy book, often used for recitations.

On the 13th day of the New Year, known as Sizdeh-be-dar, Iranians traditionally leave the cities for picnics in the countryside. The wheat or lentil sprouts are tossed into running water to symbolize the throwing away of everyday cares.

Nowrouz ceremonies have become more diverse through the years, particularly as the traditions have

spread through Afghan, Tajik, Uzbek, Azerbaijani, Kurdish and Parsee cultures, but all of those who observe the celebration today carry forward a timeless expression of ancient Persian culture.

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

African-American Architect Paul Williams Dazzled Hollywood

By Lauren Monsen
Staff Writer

Washington -- Much of the distinctive cityscape of Los Angeles was shaped by a visionary whose career was as cinematic as those of many of his film-star clients: architect Paul Revere Williams, an African American who surmounted racial prejudice to achieve extraordinary success in a white-dominated profession.

Williams (1894-1980) confronted hurdles from the outset. Orphaned at age 4, he was raised by foster parents who encouraged him to pursue his interest in architecture, even though his teachers scoffed at the idea. At the time, black architects were virtually unheard of, but Williams persevered, gaining admission to the Beaux Arts Institute of Design and the University of Southern California.

Determined to make a name for himself, the 20-year-old Williams entered and won an architectural competition in 1914. He was appointed to the first Los Angeles City Planning Commission in 1920 and became a certified architect in 1921, establishing his own firm the following year. According to Theodore Landsmark, professor of architecture at Boston Architectural College, Williams' talent and tenacity helped dispel the initial skepticism of prospective clients and peers.

"His example underscores the fact that, despite barriers, highly creative individuals have been able to overcome race-based expectations," said Landsmark. "Today, Paul Williams is viewed as a hero by young architects of color because of the quality of his work and because he was able to succeed at a



Paul Williams became one of the most celebrated American architects of the 20th century.

time when blacks were subjected to overt bias."

Williams constantly faced discrimination, but he dealt with it matter-of-factly. A superb draftsman, he developed a technique for rendering drawings upside-down, so that clients who might have been uncomfortable sitting next to an African American would be able to see his drawings right-side-up as they sat across a table from him.

Williams commented on the bitter irony of segregation, which prevented him from living in the restricted neighborhoods where he designed and built spectacular homes for others.

"Today I sketched the preliminary plans for a large country house which will be erected in one of the most beautiful residential districts in the world," Williams wrote in a 1937 *American Magazine* article. "Sometimes I have dreamed of liv-

ing there. I could afford such a home. But this evening ... I returned to my own small, inexpensive home ... in a comparatively undesirable section of Los Angeles. Dreams cannot alter facts; I know ... I must always live in that locality, or in another like it, because ... I am a Negro."

He and his family eventually moved into Lafayette Square, a prosperous Los Angeles neighborhood, but meanwhile, Williams was busy with lucrative commissions.

Until his retirement in 1973, he designed some of the most important public buildings in greater Los Angeles -- notably, the Beverly Hills Hotel, the MCA (Music Corporation of America) Building, the Los Angeles County Courthouse and the space-age Theme Building at Los Angeles International Airport (in collaboration with colleagues from two other firms).

Williams also designed private homes for celebrity clients such as Tyrone Power, Anthony Quinn, Barbara Stanwyck, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Lon Chaney Sr., Bert Lahr, Danny Thomas, Frank Sinatra, and Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, earning him the nickname "architect to the stars."

Although a master of various architectural styles -- Tudor Revival, Georgian, Spanish Colonial, French Chateau, Regency, Mediterranean -- Williams was known for his elegant simplicity. He avoided excessive ornamentation, preferring clean lines and stylized elements that suggested historic references with a restrained use of period detail. Because of his classical training, Williams has been described as a tradi-

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African-American Architect Paul Williams Dazzled Hollywood . . .

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tionalist, but “there’s an interesting reassessment going on within architectural circles,” said Landsmark. Williams just as easily can be classified as a modernist, he argued.

Landsmark cited several of Williams’ iconic mid-century structures (including the Sinatra bachelor pad, the Palm Springs retreat owned by Ball and Arnaz, and the Los Angeles Airport Theme Building) as evidence of a streamlined aesthetic that embraced contemporary design.

Yet for all his high-profile commissions, Williams was equally proud of his work creating moderately priced housing for returning World War II veterans and build-

ing complexes that served the needs of low-income residents in Los Angeles, according to his granddaughter, Karen E. Hudson.

Other famous architects -- including Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright -- also were involved in designing affordable housing, “but, of course, their projects for wealthy clients received the most attention,” said Landsmark.

As “a man who challenged prevailing views of African Americans during his lifetime, Paul Williams



A poolside view of entrepreneur Jay Paley's home, designed by Williams in 1937, evokes Hollywood glamour. (Tim Street-Porter)

stands as a role model” for young minority architects, Landsmark said. Williams often expressed a hope that more blacks would follow him into architecture. While African Americans still are underrepresented in the field, there are signs of change.

In an increasingly global economy, the profession is becoming more reliant on “architects who develop skills in new technology,” Landsmark explained.

“One trend that has appeared in the

last five to eight years is the integrated practice, which has a digital format,” he said. With this type of practice, members of a team -- for example, a project manager in India, an architect in Brazil, an interior designer in New York and a landscape architect in Jamaica -- can be scattered all across the world, yet coordinate their efforts online to complete an overarching design scheme. “An integrated practice creates opportunities for a more diverse group of professionals to work together on a single project,” Landsmark said.

As the integrated practice becomes an industry standard, there inevitably will be greater participation among people of very different backgrounds, he pre-

dicted.

Landsmark praised several institutions -- the University of Arkansas, the University of Maryland, Boston Architectural College and the New School in San Diego -- for their commitment to recruiting minorities into their architecture programs. Much more remains to be done, he said, but today’s young architects recognize that “Williams’ heroic entrepreneurial activities during the 20th century have opened doors” for his 21st-century successors. ♦

Bush Calls Success in Iraq a Strategic Victory Against Terror

By David I. McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- Five years ago the United States led an international coalition into Iraq to topple a brutal dictator and free 27 million people. Many challenges remain in building a new democracy, but the United States will stand with the Iraqi people because Iraq's success will be a strategic victory against extremists, says President Bush.

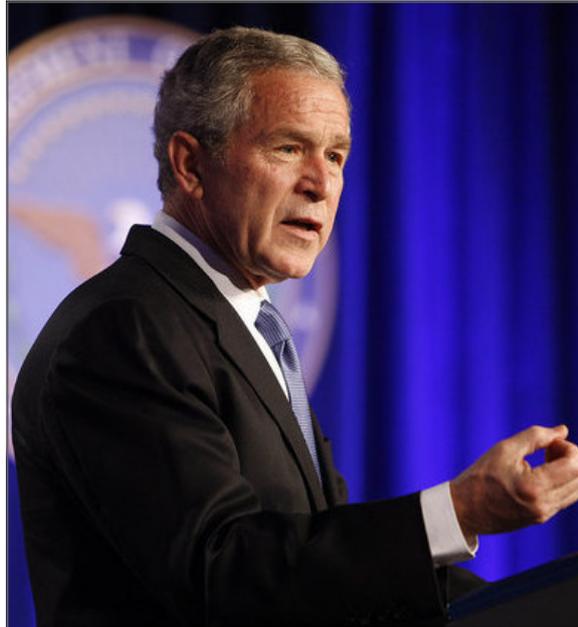
"A free Iraq will be an example for others of the power of liberty to change the societies and to displace despair with hope," said Bush. "By spreading the hope of liberty in the Middle East, we will help free societies take root -- and when they do, freedom will yield the peace that we all desire."

Bush marked the anniversary of the coalition's action in a March 19 speech at the Pentagon. The president acknowledged that the fight has been longer, more difficult and more costly than expected. "There is an understandable debate over whether the war was worth fighting, whether the fight is worth winning, and whether we can win it," he said.

"The answers are clear to me," he added. "Removing Saddam Hussein from power was the right decision -- and this is a fight America can and must win."

Iraqis drafted and voted on a new constitution, Bush said, then returned to the polls to elect a new, democratic government, marking a dramatic turn from the lives they led under the old regime.

"Because we acted, Saddam Hussein no longer fills fields with the remains of innocent men, women and children. Because we acted, Saddam's torture chambers and rape rooms and children's prisons have been closed for good. Be-



President Bush delivers remarks on the fifth anniversary of coalition forces' entry into Iraq.

cause we acted, Saddam's regime is no longer invading its neighbors or attacking them with chemical weapons and ballistic missiles. Because we acted, Saddam's regime is no longer paying the families of suicide bombers in the Holy Land," Bush said.

As Iraqi and coalition forces work to improve lives through reconstruction and development projects across the country, they have faced numerous threats -- from former Saddam loyalists, from militants supported by neighboring Iran and from the foreign insurgents from al-Qaida in Iraq, whose campaign of suicide bombings targeting mosques and markets appeared calculated to provoke a wave of sectarian vio-

lence that threatened to tear apart the new Iraq.

The United States responded with its 2007 "surge strategy," sending more than 20,000 additional troops to aid the Iraqi government, which has added more than 100,000 new soldiers and police officers, along with 90,000 Iraqi tribal members, who have formed "concerned local citizen" groups to take back their communities from extremists seeking safe haven.

The surge already has delivered results, Bush said. Violence has decreased, security has improved and U.S. troop reductions are under way.

"For the terrorists, Iraq was supposed to be the place where al-Qaida rallied Arab masses to drive America out. Instead, Iraq has become the place where Arabs joined with Americans to drive al-Qaida out," Bush said. "The significance of

this development cannot be overstated."

But Iraq's gains remain "fragile and reversible," Bush warned, and military progress must be followed with improvements in the daily lives of Iraqis. Provincial reconstruction teams composed of diplomats, soldiers and civilian experts are another essential component of America's long-term strategy to help Iraqis rebuild, promote new economic opportunities and strengthen local and national governance.

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

Somali Extremists Added to U.S. Terrorist List

By David I. McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- Al-Shabaab, a Somalia-based extremist group with known ties to the transnational terrorist group al-Qaida, has been named as the latest addition to the U.S. State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations.

"Al-Shabaab has used intimidation and violence to undermine the Somali government and threatened civil society activists working to bring about peace through political dialogue and reconciliation," the State Department said in a statement released by the Office of the Spokesman March 18.

Founded in 2004 as the youth wing of the Islamic Courts Union, Al-Shabaab is described by counterterrorism experts as a radical splinter group that gained notoriety for staging several attacks against Somali civilians, government officials and African Union peacekeepers.

"Unchecked, terrorists will continue to undermine and threaten stability and the lives of civilians inside Somalia and throughout the region," said Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer, America's top Africa diplomat, in recent congressional testimony.

Several of Al-Shabaab's senior leaders trained and fought beside al-Qaida in Afghanistan and have known links to operatives involved in both the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the 2002 attack on a tourist resort in Mombasa, Kenya.

(See "Somalia: Ensuring Long-Term Peace and Stability (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/102435.pdf>).")



U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer

Al-Shabaab members have kidnapped journalists, targeted foreign aid workers and threatened to stage attacks against Somalis participating in the 2007 conference aimed at helping the country put an end to years of conflict.

"Fighting terrorism in Somalia is not our sole priority," says Frazer, "but rather is part of a comprehensive strategy to reverse radicalization, improve governance, rule of law, democracy and human rights, and improve economic growth and job creation."

The United States views action to identify and list "foreign terrorist

organizations" as an effective tool for denying them financial support, blocking their international travel and criminalizing support for them. (See "Terrorist Group List Highlights Why Terrorism Is Unacceptable (<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/Janury/20080117140140dmslahrellek6.440371e-02.html>).")

Every year, the State Department issues its Country Reports on Terrorism, which includes the foreign terrorist organization list, designed to cut off funding to terrorist groups, block their immigration into the United States and authorize deportation of any members found in the United States.

Al-Shabaab is the 43rd organization to be added to the list.

"Given the threat that al-Shabaab poses, the designation will raise awareness of al-Shabaab's activities and help undercut the group's ability to threaten targets in and destabilize the Horn of Africa region," the State Department statement said.

See the text (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2008/March/20080318160307xjsnommis0.5855829.html>) of the statement.

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

United States Seeks Negotiations on Weapons Treaty

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is seeking agreement in the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a treaty that would ban production of fissile material used to make nuclear weapons and other explosive devices.

In 2006, the United States introduced a draft Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). Now, almost two years later, the U.S. ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva says it is time for those negotiations, and they should begin without preconditions.

Ambassador Christina Rocca, the U.S. permanent representative to the disarmament conference, says a treaty banning fissile material for nuclear weapons "is a non-proliferation and disarmament measure that enhances international security." All but a handful of nations in the conference support the immediate beginning of negotiations.

Such a treaty would create a new obligation for states that have nuclear weapons, the ambassador said during a March 12 Ask America webchat, moderated by the State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs. For starters, Rocca said, countries that still are producing fissile material for nuclear weapons should stop.

The United States halted such production in 1988. Once a new treaty is concluded, she said, "we believe that all states should adhere to such a moratorium."



A South Korean protests 2006 North Korean nuclear test preparations with a Proliferation Security Initiative banner. (© AP Images)

An FMCT, as it is referred to in shorthand, would serve to codify the existing voluntary moratorium observed by the United States, Russia, France and the United Kingdom, and, according to Rocca, "create a new norm for other states possessing nuclear weapons." Nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons derive power through the splitting of uranium or plutonium atoms, a process that releases large amounts of energy. These fissile materials are used for a variety of civil and military purposes.

U.S. OBSERVING A 20-YEAR MORATORIUM ON NUCLEAR TESTING

Rocca also was asked why the United States does not support the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. She pointed out that the U.S. Senate did not give its consent to the treaty because of verification concerns. The Bush administration op-

poses it for this and other reasons and will not pursue it further.

Nevertheless, Rocca said, the United States still observes a nuclear testing moratorium and encourages other nations to do the same. The United States has no plans to conduct a nuclear explosive test and relies on the Energy Department's Stockpile Stewardship Program to ensure the safety and reliability of the nuclear stockpile.

Even though the United States has chosen to remain outside the treaty framework, it still supports the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization's Preparatory Commission working groups as appropriate, as well as the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the International Monitoring System and related activities.

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Independent Journalists Struggle to Survive in Cuba

By Eric Green
Staff Writer

Washington -- Five years after Cuba's communist regime arrested and sentenced 27 journalists to prison, a small, brave force of independent journalists continues to work in the Caribbean nation.

The global press advocacy group, Reporters Without Borders, says in a new report that the "sad" fifth anniversary of what was dubbed Black Spring brings "some good news: independent journalists, who are more numerous, braver and better organized, have not given up the struggle."

The Paris-based group adds, however, that Cuban prisons "still hold 23 journalists among the some 240 jailed prisoners of conscience" in the country.

The group said in a March 14 press release that the report stresses that those journalists not in prison face "extreme difficulties" in working in a country "in which the state has a monopoly on news, printing and broadcasting." Reporters Without Borders calls Cuba the world's second-largest prison for journalists, after China.

The press release stated that the Cuban regime of Raúl Castro is taking a "first step" toward allowing more freedom for independent journalists following Cuba's February 15 release of an independent journalist and three other dissidents. Reporters Without Borders said that Cuba's March 13 announcement of the lifting of restrictions on individual acquisition of computer equipment "also represents a very positive step."



Independent journalists in jail in Cuba

Several Cuba experts contacted by America.gov had varying reactions to these developments.

Jaime Suchlicki, director of the University of Miami's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, is decidedly negative on the possibility of press freedom in Cuba.

"I would see any openings" for press freedom if the Cuban regime allowed independent newspapers or independent radio stations to function, and if the Catholic Church was allowed to have an independent newspaper, said Suchlicki.

Suchlicki said the Cuban regime maintains a cynical policy of arresting one independent journalist while allowing three others to be freed from jail, or vice versa -- arresting three journalists and freeing one from jail. The release of a few journalists "doesn't mean anything" for press freedom, he said.

The Cuban regime is releasing journalists, he said, to improve its image abroad. Sometimes journalists are released after they become very ill in prison or have completed a long prison sentence, Suchlicki said.

Such limited steps in releasing a few dissidents are "just to keep the masses quiet," Suchlicki said. Terming the report by Reporters Without Borders "premature," he added that he saw no evidence press freedom is improving in Cuba.

Suchlicki said the Cuban government's allowing its citizens to have access to computers, but no access to the Internet or to short-wave radios, has little significance. An individual working on a computer without access to the Internet is like "working on an electric typewriter," he said.

Cubans are allowed to access an internal Cuban online network called the "intranet," which is tightly controlled by the Cuban government, Suchlicki said. "Not only is it expensive to get on the Internet," even if the Cuban regime allowed such connections, but very few Cubans can even afford to buy computers, said Suchlicki.

FORMER U.S. OFFICIAL DISCUSSES CHANCE FOR ALTERNATIVE PRESS

Vicki Huddleston, a visiting fellow on foreign policy for the Washington-based Brookings Institution, said Cuba now is a one-party state opposed to democracy but that "it will evolve." Huddleston said it is unclear to what extent the Castro regime will permit an alternative

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Business Experts Call for Intellectual Property Protection

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington -- Protecting intellectual property (IP) does not benefit only Bill Gates, one of the world's richest men, or Time Warner, a global media giant, or pharmaceutical companies that hold patents on drugs to treat HIV/AIDS, cancer, heart disease and other dire illnesses, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Future economic growth in China and India, for instance, where intellectual property theft is rampant, or better medical treatment for HIV/AIDS sufferers in, say, Thailand, where the former military government "expropriated" drug patents, will depend, in large measure, on how well those countries safeguard IP, according to the chamber.

David Chavern, the chamber's vice president; Murray Hiebert, of the chamber's Southeast Asia division; David Hirschman, president of the chamber's Global Intellectual Property Center; and Caroline Joiner, the center's executive director, spoke recently on the common interest of producers and users to protect IP. The key point, in the chamber's view, is that without IP protection, there is no incentive for innovation and, without innovation, there is no economic growth.

They made their case in Washington before their departure for the chamber's annual global forum on innovation, creativity and intellectual property, held this year February 26-27 in Mumbai, India.

Chavern said the fundamental challenge facing the chamber is growing theft, not only by criminals who make counterfeit name-brand hand-



Pirated compact discs confiscated in Beijing during a crackdown on piracy

bags and fake digital video discs, but also, and more disturbing, by governments.

"A broader and more disturbing trend is essentially the expropriation of intellectual property by governments with the support of NGOs [nongovernmental organizations], with noble-sounding reasons why they're doing it, but ultimately with the same effect -- crush the innovative engine, not only of our economy, but ultimately of the worldwide economy," Chavern said.

China was the site for the chamber's 2007 forum on IP protection. The chamber considers China and India, the host country for this year's forum, as countries posing challenges to IP protection and believes both nations stand to reap economic rewards if they tackle the problem.

China, owing its current economic growth to its advantage as a low-cost manufacturer, will be restricted

to low profit margins so long as IP protections remain weak, in the chamber's view. As China transitions into a more developed economy, it will want to move beyond making products designed abroad to producing goods designed domestically, the chamber says. "If China is after big margins in terms of future growth, it is in innovation. IP is where economic benefits are highest. To move up the value chain, China must better protect IP and communicate effectively about IP protection," a chamber member said.

In the industry of online video games, Chinese companies are global leaders. Those companies are working to export their products, and they are demanding that the Chinese government clamp down on copyright and patent piracy, according to the chamber. "I think you'll see an increasing number of industries in China begin to join and support IP," a chamber

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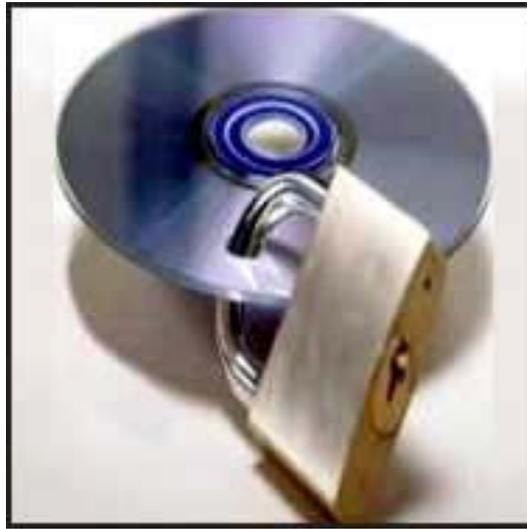
Business Experts Call for Intellectual Property Protection . . .

(Continued from page 16)

member said.

The chamber says the Indian government "buys in" to the need for IP protection and understands its link to innovation and economic growth. The Indian Department for Industrial Policy and Promotion, the government agency responsible for IP protection, was a co-sponsor of this year's global forum on innovation, creativity and intellectual property. The Indian Institutes of Technology have emerged among the world's best educational institutions for engineering. For India to develop a domestic information technology sector commensurate with the talent of its engineers, the government will have to stop IP piracy, the chamber says.

In the case of Thailand, where the former military government encouraged IP "expropriation" of drug pat-



ents, the chamber says it has seen signs of improvement since civilian rule returned in February. The military government authorized drug patent "expropriation" on the grounds that it did not have money to buy the patented drugs for HIV/AIDS and heart disease at market prices. The chamber calls that a short-sighted policy leading to long-term worsening of health care because "Thailand would not be able

to acquire the next innovative drug if it stole the last one," a chamber executive said.

The chamber is encouraged by statements by the new Thai prime minister and health minister that they are going to launch consultations on the issue.

In Brazil, another country where the debate over the ethics of patent infringement is ongoing, pharmaceutical companies support IP protection. The chamber says it is not an "either-or" scenario.

Health care advances require that patients have access to drugs and that pharmaceutical companies be able to profit from the drugs they develop, the chamber says.

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

United States Seeks Negotiations on Weapons Treaty . . .

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Rocca also drew attention to U.S. efforts to advance the overall disarmament agenda. In 2004, President Bush announced a dramatic phased reduction in the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, projecting it would drop by 2012 by half of what it was in 2001.

But by December 2007 that goal was achieved -- five years ahead of time. Consequently, Bush directed officials to cut the overall U.S. nuclear stockpile by another 15 percent by 2012.

Additionally, the United States has worked with other nations, including Russia, to reduce their nuclear stockpiles. For example, Rocca said, the United States "has given billions of dollars in assistance to Russia, not only to help it dismantle its nuclear weapons safely, but also to provide meaningful employment to thousands of employees in its nuclear complex."

TRANSPARENCY IN OUTER SPACE

Asked about weapons in space, Rocca expressed U.S. support for four core space-related treaties: the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1968

Rescue Agreement, the 1972 Liability Convention and the 1974 Registration Convention. Beyond this international legal framework, she said, the United States is opposed to any new, binding space arms control agreements.

The United States takes its existing treaty obligations relating to space seriously, and, Rocca said, "it is transparency of actions by space-faring nations that can make the single most important contribution to strengthening security and cooperation in outer space." ♦

Entrepreneurship Spreads Across U.S. University Campuses

By Andrzej Zwanecki
Staff Writer

Washington -- Syed Hussain started his business in 2007, prompted by a desire to fight extortion. That is what he calls \$60- to \$70-per-hour fees he had been asked to pay for tutoring when he was an undergraduate student.

The torment of not being able to afford tutoring led Hussain to develop uProdigy.

Through this firm, 120 English-speaking tutors in South Asia and the United States offer affordable online help to America's college students. Not only is uProdigy prospering, but the business plan Hussain crafted for it was selected a winner in a major business competition.

That contest -- the \$100K Business Plan Competition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) -- is one of many ways an increasing number of U.S. colleges and universities promote entrepreneurship among students and faculty members. The competition awards prizes in cash and business services to student entrepreneurs, who devise best business plans for new ventures.

Purely technical training does not suffice any more, says Tina Seelig, executive director for the Stanford Technology Ventures Program. With advances in biotechnology and in-



Helen Greiner with a robot developed by iRobot, a company she incubated and co-founded at MIT

formation technology, "we need engineers and scientists who can get ideas out of lab into the marketplace," she told America.gov.

In the past, entrepreneurship programs were available only to business school students. This started to change in the 1990s when educators realized that students in science, engineering and other disciplines had to have entrepreneurship and leadership skills to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

In 1970, no more than a handful of such programs existed. By the early 2000s, about 1,600 universities and colleges offered 2,200 entrepreneurship courses, according to a

2003 study. And those courses have grown in popularity among students.

Edward Roberts, the chairman of the MIT Entrepreneurship Center, says that because of growing demand for graduates who can lead, negotiate and push new ideas and products, even MIT, which had a long tradition of entrepreneurship, had to change.

Roberts started the center in 1996 to couple technical expertise with management skills across different departments and schools within MIT.

Other initiatives such as a center for technological innovation and a venture mentoring service followed, creating what Roberts calls a "positive feed-

back loop." MIT's strong entrepreneurial reputation attracts students with entrepreneurial ambitions who in turn reinforce MIT's reputation.

"In the last 10 years, we have seen a rapid growth in MIT-related startup ventures," Roberts said.

About 150 MIT-related companies are founded each year, according to the center. The institute, along with its neighbor and competitor, Harvard University, takes credit for creating Route 128, a cluster of science- and technology-based companies around Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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Entrepreneurship Spreads Across U.S. University Campuses . . .

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Syed, now a graduate student at Harvard University, said he and his company thrive in the entrepreneurial culture nourished by the two schools. He views access to business incubators and networking opportunities as particularly valuable advantages.

"I can just pick up a phone and call someone I met last week for money, connections or advice," he said.

Stanford University, the main force behind the world's best-known high-technology hub, in the so-called Silicon Valley in California, was another school that changed its approach to entrepreneurship in the mid-1990s. It developed the Stanford Technology Ventures Program when it realized the need for a cross-campus, structured approach to entrepreneurial training and laying solid foundations to entrepreneurial activities.

The program takes great advantage of the intellectual, entrepreneurial and financial resources of its high-tech business environment.

"Our students get plugged directly into the entrepreneurial community and Silicon Valley [business] ecosystem," Seelig said.

The program includes a less formal entrepreneurship week, with opportunities for networking, and an international innovation tournament at its center. In the 2007 tournament, participants were asked to

find creative uses for ordinary rubber bands.

In contrast to MIT, Stanford does not measure business-venture creation related to its entrepreneurship program. Seelig said counting the number of companies started by the university's graduates is a superficial measure.

"Our program's graduates are in great demand because it is about the entrepreneurial mindset, not necessarily about starting a company," she said.

But there are more similarities between MIT and Stanford entrepreneurship efforts than differences.

"Visitors to MIT, Stanford ... are often struck by the intense relationships between university researchers and the high-tech companies of their hinterlands," observed a reporter of the British Guardian newspaper in 2002. "Prominent academics are founders or directors of companies. ... Their graduate students work in company labs. ... As far as research goes, it is often difficult to determine where the university ends and industry begins."

Both schools spread the entrepreneurship gospel across the world. Stanford, which helped India develop entrepreneurship education, hosts international round tables on the topic in North and South America, Europe and Asia. MIT, which assisted similar efforts by British and Danish governments, runs an entrepreneurship development program for educators from around the

world. It also hosts a workshop each year in a different country to encourage creating a contest similar to its \$100K competition.

More information on the MIT center (http://entrepreneurship.mit.edu/who_we_are.php), its \$100K competition (<http://www.mit100k.org/>) and the Stanford program (<http://stvp.stanford.edu/about/>) is available on their respective Web sites. The Educators Corner (<http://edcorner.stanford.edu/>) of the Stanford program's Web site contains hundreds of mini-lectures and podcasts featuring prominent business and financial leaders. These resources can be used for free for noncommercial educational endeavors (see more detailed rules (<http://edcorner.stanford.edu/termsOfUse.html>)).

For information about the history of entrepreneurship, see "What Is Entrepreneurship? (http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/entrepreneurship/part_01.htm)" from the Bureau of International Information Programs publication Principles of Entrepreneurship.

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

U.S. Exports to Arab Countries Soar to New Highs in 2007

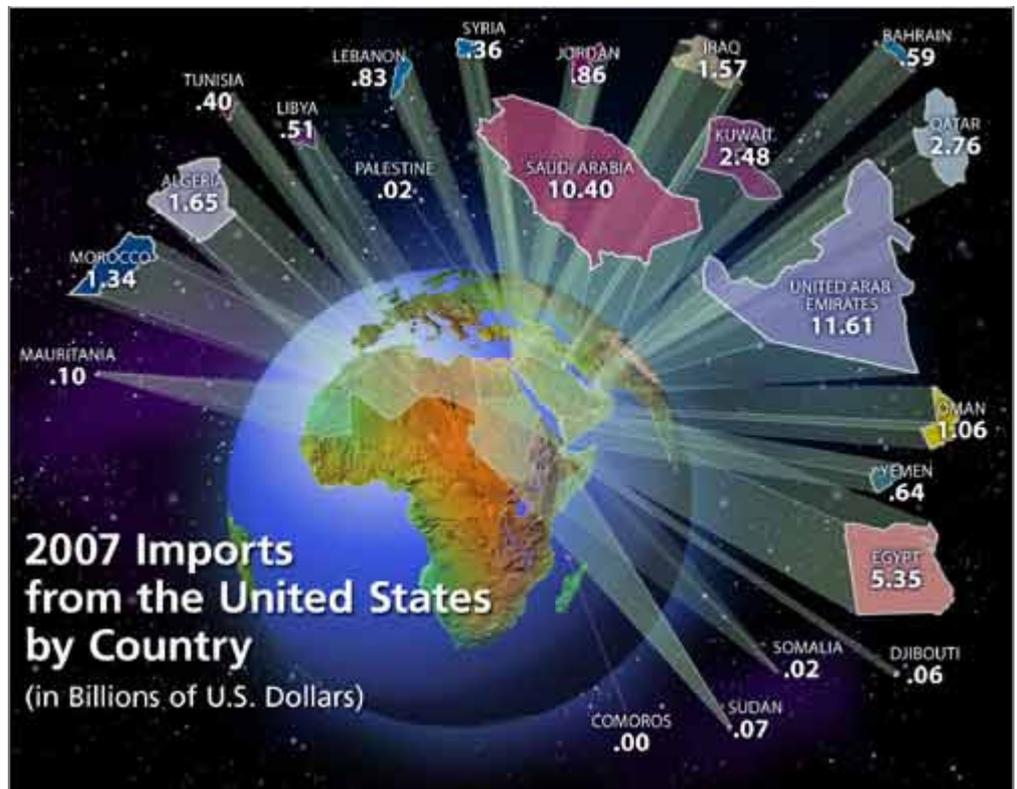
By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. exports to Arab countries are soaring to new highs as a result of U.S. trade policy, the low value of the dollar and greater liquidity in the region tied to rising oil prices, according to the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC).

"U.S. exports have been breaking records in terms of sales to the Middle East," said David Hamod, president and chief executive officer of NUSACC. "Part of that success is due to the Bush administration's strong support for U.S. goods and services in overseas markets." U.S. exports to the Arab world exceeded \$42 billion in 2007, up from \$35 billion in 2006, and Hamod predicts that the figure may rise to more than \$50 billion in 2008.

Another important legacy of this administration, Hamod suggested, is the commitment by President Bush to keep the doors open for foreign investment into the United States. He said that nowhere was this more apparent than in the case of the DP World imbroglio, when the Bush administration did the right thing to promote foreign investment in U.S. companies.

DP World, wholly controlled by the Dubai government of the United Arab Emirates, owns, operates and manages container terminals and other port facilities around the world. DP World won the Bush administration's backing to run six U.S. ports, but congressional opposition in 2006 forced a cancellation



U.S. exports to Arab countries in 2007 (National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce)

of the deal. In the aftermath, the Bush administration worked hard to contain the damage from the incident and promote trade between the United States and the Arab world. Those efforts have helped U.S. exporters position themselves for their record-breaking sales to Arab countries, according to Hamod. He added that the undervalued dollar has helped make U.S. exports more competitive around the world, despite the fact that inflation has taken a bite out of profits and consumers' pocketbooks.

Despite the glowing export figures, the U.S.-Arab trade picture remains darkened by shadows cast by the September 11, 2001, events.

"The biggest single setback since [September 11, 2001] has been that traders and investors from the

Arab world no longer feel welcome in the United States. Arab business leaders are now looking east toward China, India, Vietnam and other markets," Hamod said. "That will be a loss to American workers and the U.S. economy."

The U.S. tourist industry has seen a decline in revenues from Arab travelers as a result of post-September 11 measures, including difficulties securing visas to visit the United States. U.S. Commerce Department figures show that travelers to the United States from Arab countries are a fraction of what they were before September 11. In contrast, the tourist industry in the Arab world is booming as Arabs travel to each other's countries in "unprecedented" numbers, according to Hamod.

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Independent Journalists Struggle to Survive . . .

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press to operate in Cuba.

Huddleston, principal officer of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana from 1999 until 2002, also said the Cuban government's recent comments and actions "seem to indicate that the regime may take the risk and allow a more open Internet" in the country because that action could generate revenue.

Huddleston said Spain has admitted into its country a number of dissidents, after they were released from Cuba's prisons. She expressed hope that more Cuban dissidents would be released if the European Union (EU) and other groups open talks with Cuba.

A group called Project Syndicate, led by Vaclav Havel, the former president of the Czech Republic, wrote a newspaper article published March

11 calling on the EU to "denounce human rights violations in Cuba" and to demand "immediate release of all prisoners of conscience."

Benoît Hervieu, head of the Americas section of Reporters Without Borders and author of the report, says dissidents face the problem of Internet access because there are few Internet cafes in Cuba. Another obstacle is the very high price of an Internet connection there, he said.

Hervieu said he based his report on the findings of a special correspondent that Reporters Without Borders sent to Cuba. The Castro regime bars the press group from entering the country. ♦

U.S. Exports to Arab Countries Soar to New Highs in 2007 . . .

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"People are building hotels like they are going out of style. There is a massive expansion of leisure facilities," Hamod said. Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates are among the leaders creating attractive destinations for the influx of Arab tourists.

A spinoff from the Arab tourism boom and soaring revenues in the oil-producing states is the appearance of numerous startup, low-cost airlines led by the private sector. Jazeera Airways in Kuwait, Bahrain Air, Air Arabia in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates), NasAir in Saudi Arabia and Menajet in Lebanon are a few of them.

"Oil revenues and the economic boom in the region have helped make these possible. Consumers want to travel, and they have the disposable income to do so. Moreover, when it comes to the government-run airlines, they have funds to buy the best planes for the fleet, and some can even afford to subsidize fuel," Hamod said.

NUSACC is a vigorous advocate of free-trade agreements (FTAs) and is the only business entity in the United States that has been invited by the U.S. Congress to testify on the three most recent FTAs with the Arab world (Morocco, Bahrain and Oman). FTAs provide broad access to the signatories' markets, including protections of intellectual

property rights, labor and the environment.

"When a country signs an FTA with the United States, it raises the bar. It means the country has met the 'gold standard,' and other nations take notice. It is not just a function of how much trade they do with the United States; the FTA also enhances their ability to attract investment from our country and other countries," Hamod said. "That's part of what we're seeing in the Arab world today. There is more investment within the Arab world, going from one country to another, than at any time in recent memory. In our view, this is a win/win opportunity for everyone involved." ♦