



Weekly Special Report



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INSIDE

State's Frazer Carries Message of Urgency on Darfur to Sudan

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff
Writer

Washington -- Speaking on the eve of a trip to Sudan at the behest of President Bush, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer voiced frustration at the continued violence in Darfur, decrying "foot-dragging" by both the Sudanese government and the United Nations.

for Sudan, where she planned to meet with President Omar al-Bashir and top Sudanese government officials about the continued violence in Sudan's Darfur region, where the United Nations estimates as many as 200,000 civilians have been killed since violence first flared up in 2003.

of Sudan" in Khartoum about fulfilling its respon-



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

Frazer told journalists at an August 24 Washington Foreign Press Center news conference that she was leaving the next day

"My trip is not intended to go to Darfur," she told journalists. "My primary mission is to consult further with the government

sibility to protect the citizens of Darfur, who have been assailed over the years by renegade militias

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White House To Host Malaria Summit in December

Washington – President Bush and first lady Laura Bush will host a White House summit in December that will seek to mobilize more support for an administration initiative to reduce the occurrence of malaria, according to a statement from the White House spokesman August 25.

The summit will bring together parties from different quarters in government, the international community and the private sector to discuss and highlight measures for controlling malaria, a disease that kills close to 1.3 million people per year, and afflicts from 350 million to 500 million.

President Bush announced the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) in June 2005. It is a \$1.2 billion, five-year collaboration of several government agencies that attempts to take a comprehensive approach to preventing and treating malaria. The program aims to reduce malaria in Af-

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United States Pressing for U.N. Peacekeepers in Darfur

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations
Correspondent

United Nations -- Responding to dramatic reports of tragic conditions in Darfur, Sudan, U.S. Ambassador John Bolton said he is pressing the Security Council for a resolution to authorize and set a deployment date for a large U.N. peacekeeping operation by the end of August.

After a closed-door Security Council meeting on Darfur August 28, Bolton said that the United States has exerted considerable diplomatic effort to accommodate the concerns of Sudan and some members of the Security Council, but "there comes a time ultimately when you have to stand up and vote."

"Time for talk is over. It is time for action," Bolton told the council during the private meeting according to a text of his remarks released afterwards. "It is time for this council to uphold its responsibility and pass a resolution immediately. . . . every day we delay emboldens those who wish to undermine the fragile peace we have worked so hard to achieve."

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer is currently in Sudan to consult with the government. (See related article ([http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=200608241726051EJrehsiFO.4479181)

[p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=200608241726051EJrehsiFO.4479181](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=200608241726051EJrehsiFO.4479181)).

One of the reasons the United States is pressing for the resolution is to make it clear that the Se-

curity Council intends to implement the Darfur Peace Agreement and expects Sudan and all involved parties to do the same, Bolton said.

Bolton said that even without Sudan's agreement on the peacekeeping force, the Security Council must face its responsibility and adopt the resolution.

"We've made it clear that nobody expects the U.N. force to fight its way into Darfur, but at the same time, for us to simply withhold while the Darfur Peace Agreement itself becomes shakier and shakier . . . risks the situation simply getting out of control," the ambassador said.

The ambassador added that passing the resolution during Ghana's presidency of the Security Council would "show the determination of the council to support the efforts the African Union has already put into making this agreement work."

The draft resolution authorizes up to 17,300 military personnel, 3,300 civilian police personnel and 16 uniformed police units for a Darfur peacekeeping mission under U.N. control and command. Initial troop deployment would begin no later than October 1. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=20060817174011atiayduj0.8192713>).

"Every day that we delay in deploying a U.N. peacekeeping operation means more innocent civilians are slaughtered; it means more innocent women and children are raped; it means more people

will question the ability of the Security Council to take meaningful and decisive action," Bolton said in his remarks to the Security Council.

"Only a large, mobile, fast-reacting and robust U.N. force, with African forces forming its core, can legitimately and credibly protect civilians, ensure humanitarian access, and fully implement the Darfur Peace Agreement," the ambassador said.

In the meantime, the U.N. can strengthen the African Union peacekeeping mission (AMIS) currently deployed, thus saving hundreds of innocent civilians, Bolton said.

The African Union said that it cannot continue to field its 7,000-troop mission and agreed that the United Nations should take over operations. Sudan President Omar al-Bashir, however, continues to oppose a U.N. peacekeeping force and announced plans to send 10,000 Sudanese troops into the region.

The Security Council called the August 28 meeting expecting to hold talks with the African Union, Arab League and a senior Sudanese official. However, no representative of Sudan attended.

Bolton called the lack of Sudanese representation "disappointing and noticeable."

Giving the council an account of "the bleakest conditions since the spring of 2004" and warning that humanitarian efforts are "close to having a free fall," U.N. aid coordinator Jan Egeland said that it is

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called Jingaweit, actively supported in the past by the Khartoum government.

"We cannot let violence and atrocities continue. We cannot allow future Rwandas to happen," Frazer said, adding, "We must act now" to get a U.N. force in place in Darfur and have President al-Bashir and his government accept it.

"I will be carrying a message from President Bush," Frazer added, emphasizing those points and addressing sanctions the United States imposed against Sudan before 2003, caused in part by human rights violations by the government in Khartoum, later exacerbated by the genocide in Darfur.

Frazer said the Khartoum government has taken "very positive actions as far as the North-South peace agreement is concerned." But "as long as you have the crisis continuing in Darfur -- the humanitarian and human rights violations -- we cannot remove sanctions," she said.

The assistant secretary also voiced frustration with the United Nations' slow response in deploying a peacekeeping force of up to 18,000 troops to relieve the beleaguered African Union (AU) force now in Darfur, saying: "We cannot

delay. We cannot allow ... bureaucratic ... foot-dragging at the U.N."

While acknowledging that there is general agreement at the United Nations that such a force, including 3,500 police, is needed urgently, Frazer said the U.N. De-

partment of Peacekeeping Operations' January 2007 target date for deployment is "intolerable." She said the U.S. government is pushing urgently for a U.N. Security Council resolution that would mandate the force as soon as possible and holds out hope for its passage since that body has three African members now and is chaired by the Ghanaian representative.

Asked if the United Nations would deploy the peacekeeping force in Darfur over the objections of President al-Bashir, Frazer said: "This force is not going to fight its way in. We're not trying to deploy Western domination here [in Sudan]." The point, she said, is to protect Darfurians and relieve the AU peacekeepers, who are "sitting ducks" now.

For additional information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).



A child recently displaced by fighting in North Darfur (2006)
Photo Credit: Refugees International

partment of Peacekeeping Operations' January 2007 target date for deployment is "intolerable."

With the AU mandate ending September 30, an October target for a U.N. "Blue Hat" contingent is more realistic and would save more lives, among both civilians and peacekeepers, she said. In the previous week, two Rwandans in the AU force were killed, Frazer pointed out.

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Press Freedom Group Calls Journalist's Jailing "Disgraceful"

By Michelle Austein
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The international organization Reporters Without Borders has called on the Sudanese government to release U.S. journalist Paul Salopek, who has been jailed in Sudan since August 6.

The Paris-based group's August 28 press release called the charges, including spying, against Salopek and his driver Suleiman Abakar Moussa and his interpreter Abdulraman Anu, both from Chad, "ridiculous and disgraceful."

"Salopek and his assistants are media workers who were acting in strict accordance with the rules of their profession. They should be freed at once," the press release stated.

Salopek, a reporter for the Chicago Tribune, was arrested near the Sudan-Chad border while working on an assignment for National Geographic magazine in North Darfur. He appeared in court on August 26 and was charged with spying, using official information, publishing false news and entering Sudan without a visa. The judge adjourned the trial until September 10, at the request of Salopek's attorneys.

U.S. consular officials have met with Salopek in prison and are providing assistance. In addition, the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum has been in regular contact with Salopek's family and his editors. The State Department has emphasized to the government of Sudan that it expects Salopek to receive a fair and speedy trial.

In general, when Americans are arrested overseas, U.S. consular officials work to protect U.S. citizens' legitimate interests and ensure they are not discriminated against. Embassy personnel provide a list of local attorneys, visit American prisoners, inform those prisoners about local laws and

tivist Tomo Kriznar was sentenced to two years in prison for similar charges of spying, publishing false news and entering without a visa. His lawyer is appealing the case. On August 17, a Sudanese court convicted American college student Ethan Rafal of entering Sudan without a visa and ordered him de-



Journalist Paul Salopek (C) talks with unidentified persons inside a court in El Fasher, northern Darfur August 26, 2006.
(Candace Feit/Reuters)

contact family and friends. Consular officers can transfer money, food and clothing to the prison authorities from family or friends, and can try to get relief if Americans are being held under inhumane or unhealthy conditions.

State Department officials expressed concern that Sudanese authorities failed to notify the U.S. Embassy, as mandated by the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, for nine days after Salopek was detained.

On August 14, Slovenian writer, photographer and human rights ac-

ported. Rafal returned to the United States on August 19 after close cooperation between U.S. Embassy and Sudanese officials.

The full text (http://www.rsf.org/article.php?id_article=18674) of the Reporters Without Borders press release is available on the organization's Web site.

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White House To Host Malaria . . .

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rica by 50 percent by 2010. Seven high-risk African nations currently are targeted, and 15 ultimately will be included. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/09-960720.html>).

"The summit will call on the private sector, foundations, voluntary organizations and school groups to complement the PMI by matching the U.S. government's financial commitment and educating the public about malaria," the White House statement said.

percent of gross domestic product, with 39 percent of businesses in sub-Saharan Africa reporting that the disease severely impacts their business. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=20060801112833cmretrop0.3886682>).



President Bush and first lady Laura Bush

Recent studies suggest that the private sector has good reason to be concerned about malaria. The high disease rate undermines national productivity, studies have shown, and drains human resources in regions where the disease remains widespread.

Further, a study release in July concluded that malaria costs business 0.6

More information on malaria (<http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/>) is available on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control Web site. For additional information on U.S. policy, see Health (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/health.html).

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United States Pressing for U.N. Peacekeepers . . .

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"very clear we're heading for the abyss . . . now is the time for action."

"We have the worst security situation since 2004; the worst access since 2004 and some of the worst atrocities since 2004. The way it is now it cannot continue," Ege-land told journalists.

Many aid organizations are debating whether to leave the region because they cannot provide aid safely. The conditions are dangerous for the workers themselves and they are looking to the Security Council "to put an end to this by political and security measures," he said.

The U.N. official called the Sudanese government's plan to send troops into Darfur "a prescription

for complete disaster."

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America: Helping the People of Sudan

State Department Fact Sheet on U.S. Aid to the People of Sudan

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, DC
August 25, 2006

Sudan is one of the highest foreign policy priorities for President Bush and his administration. Implementation of the North-South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is moving forward. The Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), a fragile first step toward peace, faces many challenges but the U.S. remains focused on supporting the signatories on implementing its provisions. The CPA and DPA are being worked in parallel so that peace and democracy come to all Sudanese, the genocide in Darfur is ended, and refugees and displaced people can return home. Despite the obstacles, the United States remains focused on pushing for the full implementation of the CPA and DPA.

U.S. Diplomatic Action Through the UN - A Call to Re-hat

- The United States is working intensively with partners in the United Nations Security Council on a resolution authorizing the transition of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to a United Nations peacekeeping operation. The African Union has consistently called for transition of AMIS to the UN without delay.

- AMIS has played a vital role in curbing large-scale, organized violence in Darfur. Its current mandate ends on September 30, 2006, and the changing situation in Darfur requires a larger and more mobile force. Only a UN force can legitimately and credibly protect ci-

vilians, ensure humanitarian access, and fully carry out the extensive monitoring and implementation duties spelled out in the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA).

the long-standing economic and political marginalization of Darfur. It establishes a formal dialogue and other mechanisms to address the interests of groups that sign the agreement at a later date.



Displaced women and children gathered together at Sisi IDP camp in West Darfur. Photo: USAID

- The United States continues to call on the Sudanese Government of National Unity (GNU) to recognize the severity of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur and immediately agree to a transition of AMIS to the UN.

U.S. Support to the DPA

- The U.S. worked with the African Union (AU) to successfully broker an agreement between Sudan's Government of National Unity (GNU) and the largest rebel group, the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) led by Minni Minawi, who signed the DPA on May 5, 2006.

- The DPA establishes critical security, wealth-sharing, and power-sharing arrangements that address

- The U.S. and international partners are reaching out to those rebel factions that have not signed the DPA in an effort to quell the increasing violence and broaden support for the DPA. The DPA is in the interest of the people in Darfur.

U.S. Support to Peacekeeping

- The U.S. continues to work with key donors, NATO allies, and African partners to strengthen AMIS during the transition period to a UN force.

- The U.S. supports 34 AMIS camps, maintenance of its vehicles and communications equipment, pre-deployment training of Rwan-

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Niger Campaign Attempts To Fight Malaria and Polio at Once

Washington -- Niger's Ministry of Health has made some gains in efforts to prevent both polio and malaria, according to an analysis published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the techniques used may be instructive to other underdeveloped nations attempting to boost public health.



A long-lasting insecticide-treated bed net from Red Cross will help to protect this young family from malaria for up to five years.

Niger conducted the campaign in several phases from November 2005 to March 2006, says a report published in the August 25 edition of CDC's weekly Mortality and Morbidity Report.

Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a mortality rate for children under 5 of 259 per 1,000 live births. Developed countries of Western Europe and North America lose fewer than 10 small children per 1,000 births.

Infectious diseases are factors in the loss of these young lives. Niger is one of nine nations where polio has reappeared in recent years after a long period in which the disease was believed to have been eradicated. This crippling illness that strikes mostly youthful victims was likely carried across Niger's long border with Nigeria, one of four nations where poliovirus still occurs in the wild. A disruption in Nigeria's vaccination programs in recent years allowed a resurgence of the disease, which has since attacked other nations. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/12-895120.html>).)

Malaria causes at least 8 percent of the deaths of Niger's children, and perhaps as many as 50 percent, according to a study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2005. (See related article

(<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060728120811cmretrop0.4556391>)

In an effort to attack these health problems, Niger's Ministry of

Health, assisted by the WHO, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other donors, launched an effort to attack multiple problems at once. Health workers and volunteers spread out across the sparsely populated country delivering polio vaccine and vitamin A supplements to children less than 5 years of age door-to-door.

Vitamin A deficiency affects 140 million to 250 million children under five years of age, WHO estimates. These children suffer a dramatically increased risk of death, blindness and illness, especially from measles and diarrhea.

The families reached by the health workers also received a voucher to pick up an insecticide-treated bed net (ITN), used in the prevention of malaria, in a nearby village. Because of long distances between houses, and the bulk and weight of the nets, door-to-door delivery was not possible.

A follow-up survey of the effort found a 5 percent increase in the number of children who had received the polio vaccine. Bed net ownership went up sharply after the campaign, going from 6 percent to almost 70 percent of households.

However, having a bed net for protection against infectious mosquitoes and using it are two different things. The survey found that just over 20 percent of users were hanging the nets over their beds. An editorial note accompanying

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Tougher Border Security Showing Results, U.S. Official Says

By Jane Morse
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration's drive to secure U.S. borders is succeeding, says Michael Chertoff, secretary of homeland security.

Based on the number of apprehensions, fewer individuals -- from Mexico or other points of origin -- are crossing the southern U.S. border illegally, Chertoff said during an August 23 press briefing.

President Bush has made border security his top priority, according to Chertoff.

The administration implemented the Secure Border Initiative (SBI) less than a year ago, in November 2005. Since then, the effort has produced "real results that mark real progress," Chertoff said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Nov/03-285764.html>).

As part of SBI, he said, the Homeland Security Department set a goal of eliminating its earlier "catch and release" policy, under which apprehended illegal migrants from countries other than Mexico were released and allowed to live in the United States pending deportation hearings.

Virtually all undocumented non-Mexican migrants now are detained until they can be returned to their home countries, Chertoff said, noting that there has been "a real market decrease" in the number of non-Mexicans coming across the border, as measured by apprehensions.

As people from countries other than Mexico increasingly have be-

come aware that they will not be released, "there is really now a change in the incentive process that was previously drawing them in," the secretary said. In July, large groups of Chinese



This photo was taken by the Border Hawk M on Tuesday, August 22, 2006. It shows traffic backed up at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. ABP crew said traffic appeared to be backed up for miles. Photo was part of a survey of California border.

trying to enter the United States illegally were sent back to China. Chertoff said he found it "encouraging" that a significant number of individuals were returned over the summer.

"It was a positive step in terms of having the Chinese government be able to process the return of illegal migrants from China," he said.

Nonetheless, Chertoff said, such cooperative efforts with the Chinese government are still "a challenge."

"It's still not where we want to be in terms of the speed with which documentation is processed," he said. "But we're working with the Chinese government on that and we're optimistic. ... [I]t's something that we need to monitor very carefully to make sure we're continuing to move at a pace that results in a net outflow of illegal migrants rather than a net inflow of illegal migrants."

Chertoff said the successful reduction in illegal entries to the United States could be attributed to political will, the commitment of more personnel and resources, a comprehensive approach to issues such as border and interior security and "the underlying economic forces that drive a lot of illegal migration."

The secretary acknowledged that the criminals who smuggle people into the United States "are not going to walk away from the business."

"I expect that we will see efforts to try to end-run us or push back on us," he said. "And this is not meant to say the job is done or even substan-

tially done. It's meant to say we're seeing progress. We're beginning to be able to test that what we're doing is working. But this is a time to redouble our effort, not to slacken up."

U.S. border security has taken on more urgency after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. The proposed federal budget for the 2007 fiscal year, which begins October 1,

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Tougher Border Security Showing Results, U.S. Official . . .

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continues to emphasize anti-terrorist and border security requirements. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=February&x=20060206194249adynned8.355349e-02>).)

The Bush administration steadfastly has maintained that legal immigrants "should be greeted with open arms."

But in policy documents, the administration has cautioned that, "While we seek to improve the system that welcomes legal immi-

grants, the United States is a nation of laws and must act to combat illegal immigration."

For more information on U.S. policies, see Chinese Human Smuggling (http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/chinese_human_smuggling.html), Immigration Reform (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.html) and Response to Terrorism (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism.html).

The transcript (http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/press_release/press_release_0986.xml) of Chertoff's remarks and a

fact sheet (http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/press_release/press_release_0985.xml) on the Secure Border Initiative are available on the Department of Homeland Security's Web site.

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Niger Campaign Attempts To Fight Malaria and . . .

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the CDC article says low usage was not unexpected because the survey was conducted in the dry season when the risk of exposure to mosquitoes and malaria is lower.

The overall effectiveness of the Niger campaign is compared to a similar effort made in much smaller Togo where the combined delivery of polio vaccine and bed nets had demonstrated effectiveness in an earlier trial. The Niger effort brings a new dimension to this healthcare delivery approach because of its greater geographic scope and sparseness of the popu-

lation. Togo experienced some slightly higher effectiveness rates, but given the challenge of Niger's geography, the results are assessed positively in the CDC analysis.

"Although these concerns should be addressed, the successful integration of ITN distribution with an immunization campaign in Niger suggests that such national campaigns are feasible in other large African nations," concludes the CDC analysis.

The full text (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5533.pdf>) (PDF, 24 pages) of the report is available in the Mortality and Mor-

bidity Report on the CDC Web site.

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

Bush Welcomes France's Troop Commitment to U.N. Lebanon Force

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – President Bush welcomed the August 24 announcement by French President Jacques Chirac that France will be sending 2,000 troops to participate in the U.N. peacekeeping operation in southern Lebanon.

“This is an important step towards finalizing preparations to deploy the United Nations Interim Force of Lebanon,” Bush said in an August 24 statement.

U.N. Security Council resolution 1701, which brought an end to the month-long conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, calls for a 15,000-troop international force to help secure southern Lebanon alongside 15,000 troops from the Lebanese army. France, which helped draft the resolution, initially indicated that it would send a significant contingent to support the U.N. mission but refused to commit until it received assurances that the international force would be authorized to open fire in self-defense and to protect civilians from hostile forces.

The international troops will reinforce the existing U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a 28-year-old monitoring force that currently has about 2,000 troops in the area.

Bush also welcomed “the significant pledges from Italy and our other important allies.” Italy has said it is willing to send as many as 3,000 troops. Bush encouraged other countries to contribute to the force as well.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who met with European foreign ministers in Brussels, Belgium, August 25 to solicit additional troop contributions, announced later that “more than half the force has been pledged today.”

ment throughout the country and stop Hezbollah from acting as a state within a state.”

The French general who currently commands UNIFIL troops in Lebanon will retain his position until his term expires in February 2007.



Soldiers from France's Foreign Legion, second Engineering Regiment, sit atop armored personal carriers as they unload them from the Maltese ship 'Fast Independence' chartered by the French government, that docked the port of Beirut, Lebanon, Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2006, carrying engineering equipment, bridges and military vehicles that would help erect some temporary bridges that were destroyed during the 34-day long Hezbollah-Israel war.

(AP Photo/Dimitri Messinis)

“The firm commitments we have received from several governments in the last few days have given me confidence that we can begin to put together the kind of force that the Security Council has authorized,” Annan told reporters.

Bush indicated his desire to see a rapid deployment of the U.N. force “to help Lebanon's legitimate armed forces restore the sovereignty of its democratic govern-

ment. Afterward, the command will pass to an Italian commander.

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

United States Helping To Clean Up Munitions, Oil in Lebanon

By Lea Terhune
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The United States has promised emergency assistance to defuse unexploded mines and cluster bombs in Lebanon and to help clean up a Mediterranean oil spill – both legacies of the monthlong hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.

The State Department's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement plans an initial emergency grant of \$420,000 for the British charity Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to clear unexploded munitions endangering the lives of Lebanese citizens who have returned to their homes now that a cease-fire is in place, according to an August 23 State Department statement. An additional \$2 million will be allocated for unexploded ordnance removal later in the year.

The State Department is helping map locations of explosive ordnance through a partnership with the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA), the statement said. The foundation is a nongovernmental humanitarian organization that works in post-conflict situations throughout the world. Its Information Management and Mine Action Programs (IMMAP) help identify hazardous and safe transportation routes through conflict zones.

"Food and medical supplies are worthless unless they are delivered to those in need," VVAFA Vice President Joe Donahue said after an IMMAP was deployed to Lebanon in late July. "Our specialists improve the capacity of relief agencies to plot safe transportation routes to put food and supplies in people's hands," he said.

"Unexploded ordnance has turned into a massive problem in southern Lebanon," said Human Rights Watch analyst Marc Garlasco. Several civilians have been killed and others injured by cluster bombs left where people are trying to rebuild their lives. A United Nations assessment estimated that during the month of hostilities, the Israeli defense

unexploded ordnance and land mines.

OIL SPILL THREATENS LIVELIHOODS, ECOSYSTEM

Livelihoods and the ecosystem also have been compromised by a large oil spill along Lebanon's coast. In his August 21 speech pledging an additional \$230 million



A child plays in the streets of Aitta Shaaba, (Lebanon) a village riddled with cluster bombs.
Photograph: Scott Peterson/Getty

forces dropped hundreds of bombs and missiles and thousands of artillery rounds daily throughout southern Lebanon and along its border. Ground combat also left scattered munitions. A U.N. Mine Action Coordination Center team conducts controlled demolition of these munitions on a daily basis.

Land mines and abandoned munitions have posed a problem in Lebanon for 30 years, dating back to the civil war, which saw hostile activities on the part of numerous state and nonstate armed forces. Since 1998, the interagency U.S. Humanitarian Mine Action Program has contributed more than \$17 million to help the Lebanese government assess high-risk areas and train and equip the Lebanese armed forces to efficiently clear

for humanitarian relief and reconstruction in Lebanon, President Bush said, "I directed that an oil spill response team be sent to assist the Lebanese government in cleaning up an oil slick that is endangering coastal communities."

Since an Israeli missile struck a power plant on the Lebanese coast and caused the release of an estimated 17.4 million liters of fuel oil into the Mediterranean Sea, U.S. government agencies have been gearing up to help.

"The NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] Office of Response and Restoration immediately responded with spill trajectory analyses, seasonal wind statistics, information on the be-

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U.S. Must Remain "Committed" To Fighting Terrorism, Rice Says

By Carolee Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The world must stay united in fighting terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, particularly in Iran, Secretary of Rice Condoleezza Rice said in a radio interview August 29. Yet the “really devastating problem for the world would be if America loses its will or loses its nerve or loses its commitment,” Rice said.

“If America remains committed, we will meet these challenges.”

Rice said she encourages looking at events from a historical perspective before assessing success or failure in Iraq or the Middle East.

“I would ask that we think back on the times when it also seemed impossible and yet the success did

emerge,” Rice said. In the Cold War, for example, Rice said there was no reason to believe that the United States would stay steadfast and that 50 years later the Soviet Union would collapse peacefully. “There are people living today, among them the president's father, who fought Japan,” Rice said. “And yet when the president sits across from the prime minister of Japan, he sits across from a democratic friend.”

Rice was interviewed on the Doug Wright Radio Show before addressing the annual American Legion Convention in Salt Lake City, where she accepted the American Legion Auxiliary Woman of the Year award.

Each year, the American Legion Auxiliary presents a Woman of the Year award recognizing the signifi-

cant contributions of women in advancing the quality of life for others and making a positive impact on the men and women of America's armed forces, veterans and their families.

The transcript (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/71622.htm>) of Rice's radio interview and her remarks (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/71628.htm>) to the American Legion are available on the State Department Web site.

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United States Helping To Clean Up Munitions, Oil . . .

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havior of submerged oil and general information on natural resources potentially at risk,” NOAA's Scott Smullen told the Washington File.

Currently, the State Department's Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science, the U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA and the U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon are working with the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), European emergency response agencies and local Lebanese officials “to formulate a cleanup strategy and address impacts of the oil spill,” he added. The United States Agency for International Development and

the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also are assisting.

Thomas Callahan, from NOAA's Seattle office, told the Washington File, “We are ready to assist as needed.” He explained that the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Center for the Mediterranean Sea has a command-and-control structure in the region with which other groups network. “We've been monitoring the situation and are working closely with the State Department” and other agencies, he said.

According to an August 24 State Department press release, a U.S. team of oil-spill response professionals will work with the Leba-

nese government to clean up the coast, training cleanup crews and providing equipment. The effort also will address long-term remediation, wildlife protection and shipping protection.

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said, “We welcome this valuable assistance from the United States as a further important contribution by the international community for helping to restore the environment and livelihoods of the Lebanese people.”

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

Cheney, Rumsfeld Outline U.S. Counter Terrorism Strategy

Washington -- The United States never will back down in the face of terrorism or abandon its allies, Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declared in separate appearances at the national convention of a U.S. veterans organization.



Dick Cheney
U. S. Vice President

Cheney made remarks in the afternoon to the annual gathering of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on August 28 in Reno, Nevada. Rumsfeld spoke to the same group that evening.

In his remarks, the vice president enumerated the administration's four-point counterterrorism strategy:

Prevent attacks before they occur. This means pursuing terrorists both in the United States and around the world, Cheney said.

Deny terrorists safe haven. Since 9/11, Cheney said, "we've applied the Bush Doctrine: Any person or government that supports, protects, or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent, and will be held to account."

Stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and keep them from terrorists. In the post-9/11 world, said the vice president, "we have to confront such dangers before they fully materialize." To wait until attacked, he said, would not be self-defense but rather suicide.

Deny terrorists control of any nation. That is why, said Cheney, the United States continues to fight Taliban and al-Qaida operatives in Afghanistan, why it works with the Pakistani government to fight terrorists and why it fights the remnants of Saddam Hussein's regime and foreign terrorists in Iraq.

Those who criticize the U.S. liberation of Iraq on the grounds that it has "stirred up a hornet's nest" overlook the fact that the United States had no presence at all in Iraq on 9/11, but was attacked regardless, he said.

Cheney quoted President Bush: "The hatred of the radicals existed before Iraq was an issue, and it will exist after Iraq is no longer an excuse."

America is assisting Iraq, Cheney said, because democracy gives men and women "the power to determine their own destiny," and they will "turn their energies to the pursuit of peace" and "ideologies of violence and resentment will lose their appeal."

Rumsfeld stressed that the fight against terrorism is not and will not be cost-free. There will be setbacks in the War on Terror, he said, but that does not mean the United States is losing ground.

Rumsfeld also focused on Iraq, which he called "the epicenter of

the War on Terror." Great progress is being made there, he said, though the insurgents want the world to believe otherwise. The enemy in the War on Terror is ruthless, he said, and will lie constantly to advance its cause.

"A country that was once brutalized by a cruel dictatorship," said Rumsfeld, "is working to secure a future under a representative gov-



Donald Rumsfeld
U.S. Defense Secretary

ernment at peace with its neighbors."

Rumsfeld added that "we will not tell 50 million Afghans and Iraqis that because the going is tough ... we will abandon them to the beheaders, the terrorists, the assassins, and 21st century fascists who seek to attack us abroad and here at home."

"By standing with our friends, we are making a better day possible in the broader Middle East. By supporting democracy, we serve both the ideals and the security of our nation," Cheney said.

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U.S. Highlights Progress in Helping Troubled Nations Recover

Washington – The Bush administration, in a series of State Department fact sheets released August 23, highlights how it is helping vulnerable communities as they struggle to recover from violence and armed conflicts.

The United States “strongly supports international efforts to foster cooperation and interoperability to transform conflict and build peace,” according to the fact sheets, issued by the Office of the Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction.

Experts agree that failing and post-conflict states pose a major security challenge because they can become breeding grounds for a host of transnational threats capable of destabilizing entire regions, including terrorism, organized crime, drug and human trafficking, and widespread humanitarian catastrophes.

For many years, the international community approached post-conflict states in an ad hoc fashion, re-establishing relationships and relearning the same lessons about what techniques are most effective at supporting communities in crisis.

To help break this cycle, the Stabilization and Reconstruction Office was created in 2004 to bring together expertise from across the U.S. government and direct it into international partnerships. It seeks to defuse conflicts where possible and help failing and post-conflict states achieve peace, security, development, democratic practices,

market economies and the rule of law.

The coordinator, Ambassador John Herbst, supports the secretary of state in her role as the U.S. government lead for conflict management efforts under a December 2005 presidential directive. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Mar/21-317430.html>).

In recent years, the office has played a role in defusing conflicts in Sudan, Haiti, and Afghanistan. It also deployed personnel to Lebanon to assist in the departure of U.S. citizens from the recent crisis.

The fact sheets address several aspects of assisting nation states in conflict or recovering from conflict:

“A Whole-of-Government Approach To Prevent, Resolve, and Transform Conflict (<http://www.state.gov/s/crs/rls/71036.htm>)” details the elements of the Bush administration’s effort to shape peace building through focused, collaborative planning and robust, coordinated operations.

“International Partnerships To Build Peace (<http://www.state.gov/s/crs/rls/71035.htm>)” describes U.S. partnerships for crisis prevention and recovery, including bilateral cooperation with friends and allies; consultations with the United Nations, NATO and the European Union; and ongoing dialogues with international humanitarian aid organizations.

“State Department Stands Up Active Response Corps (<http://www.state.gov/s/crs/rls/71038.htm>)” documents the office’s progress in training seven diplomatic “first responders,” as well as a cadre of 250 volunteers who can be deployed rapidly to trouble spots with teams of U.S. government experts to help failing states re-establish security and the rule of law.

Managing conflicts through building effective democracies is an essential element of the President’s National Security Strategy, released in March. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2006/Mar/20-242143.html>).

Additional information (<http://www.state.gov/s/crs/>) about the Office of the Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction is available on the State Department Web site.

For more information, see International Security (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/>).

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Rice Defines "Successful Outcome" in Iraq

By Jane Morse
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Security, democratic institutions and the use of politics – not violence – to resolve differences, are the main criteria for a successful outcome of the war in Iraq, says Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Rice spoke with reporters from a variety of news outlets during her August 29 visit to Salt Lake City, where she addressed the 88th Annual American Legion Convention. The American Legion, chartered by Congress in 1919, is, with 3 million members, the largest service organization to aid wartime veterans in the United States.

"When Iraqis are able to secure themselves and to use their democratic institutions, their new institutions to work on their differences by means of politics not violence, that will be a very successful Iraq, and that day is coming," Rice said in a televised interview.

"You're never going to have a situation -- or not for a long time -- in which there is no violence in Iraq," the secretary acknowledged. "They're going through a huge historical change. There will be some violence. But the Iraqis need security forces that can secure them and we are helping them to build that. They need a unity government that represents all Iraqis. Twelve and a half million Iraqis went out and voted for that government. That government is now moving forward.

"Success in Iraq is that Iraqis are able to govern themselves and protect themselves," she said.

Rice expressed confidence that the Iraqis have both the desire and the capacity to hold together the country by democracy.

"Iraqis want their country to be held together. They're undergoing very great sacrifice in order to try to build a unified Iraq," she said. "I've met Iraqi leaders who have



Dr. Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Secretary of State

lost family members personally because they are part of this unified government. And so they will be able to do this through politics."

Under the regime of Saddam Hussein, unity in Iraq was accomplished either through repression or violence, Rice said, so "it is hard to learn to trust each other in a political process.

"But that has to be the future of a different kind of Middle East or we will never be able to defeat the ideologies of hatred that have caused us so much violence and so much destruction," she said.

U.S. PRESENCE IN IRAQ

Rice predicted that the United States "will be engaged with Iraqis for a long, long time, but that doesn't mean that we have to be militarily engaged for a long, long time.

"There's a difference," she explained, "in helping the Iraqis to create a secure environment, training their military forces so that they themselves can carry out their security mission and remaining engaged with them politically, economically in support of the changes that are going on there.

"The most egregious error that the United States could make," the secretary added, "is to leave Iraq before this task is finished. Because what we do not want to see is an Iraq that falls to the likes of Zarqawi, who we managed ultimately to eliminate, an Iraq that might go back to its old habits and its old ways." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2006/Jun/08-696552.html>)

Rice acknowledged that the ongoing reports of sectarian violence make it difficult for many to see how a future Iraq could be different. "But I would just ask people to recognize when you have big historic changes of this kind, when you have people trying to come to live together through politics not through violence, it does take time; it does take support; it does take commitment.

"But it will be a Middle East in a world that is much more secure for us as well. A secure Iraq will

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Fulbright Scholar Recalls Her Struggle To Empower Afghan Women

By Afzal Khan
Washington File Special Correspondent

Washington – The co-founder of a grassroots development organization in Afghanistan says women have come a long way since the fall of the Taliban regime in December 2001, but it has been an uphill struggle.

Nilofar Sakhi, who was executive director of the Herat-based Women Activities and Social Services Association (WASSA) until July 2005, recalled this struggle in a recent interview with the Washington File.

Sakhi said WASSA faced the daunting task of raising women's voices in a patriarchal, tribal society that was slow to change even after the removal of the fundamentalist Taliban regime that denied women education and jobs.

She said WASSA's aim is to promote women's rights in a democratic environment and provide women access to education and jobs. WASSA is active in the four western Afghan provinces of Herat, Badghis, Ghowr and Farah and focuses its programs primarily on rural areas.

"If we are going to change the situation in Afghanistan, we have to focus on the remote areas of the country," Sakhi said. She urged the country's urban-based women's organizations to replicate WASSA's work in the rural parts of western Afghanistan. She acknowledged that security remains a concern for WASSA's

programs in those remote areas, but said the results justify the danger. She said that she returned to one of these remote villages a year and a half after WASSA had established a literacy program to find 78 women who could read and write where previously there were none. She said those who originally at-

Another important task for the organization was to win the support of local religious leaders on women's rights. The mullahs are powerful voices in Afghan society, and while many still disapprove of women's education, some came forward in support of women's rights.



Fulbright Scholar Nilofar Sakhi
(© AP Images)

Whenever the organization went to a rural village to set up women's literacy centers and encourage schooling for girls, WASSA representatives had to meet with village elders and mullahs to overcome their objections to women's education.

Ultimately, WASSA found some strong allies among the clerics, and when the organization invited some of them to participate in radio and television programs on women's rights, several embraced the opportunity to explain women's rights in the context of Islam.

"Those mullahs who were won over incorporated verses from the Quran that proclaimed women's equal rights in rallies for democracy in the villages as well as in radio and television programs," Sakhi said.

Sakhi said that one of WASSA's most significant tasks was to address domestic violence against women and tackle the growing problem of female self-immolation. Forced marriages and lack of access to education and jobs lead some Afghan women to commit suicide by setting themselves on fire. In Herat alone, there were more than 100 such incidents re-

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Rice Defines "Successful Outcome" . . .

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make for a more secure America," she said.

Rice expressed her own admiration for Iraq's "great culture" and "great civilization." Iraqis, she said, "really do see themselves as an Iraqi culture" which is an important foundation for "a unified government in Iraq that will work."

Many Iraqis striving for a unified government have lost family members to terrorists; nonetheless, she noted, "they're willing to sacrifice for it."

American families, too, have lost loved ones for a unified Iraq, she said. "We're doing it in common cause with a people who deserve a better future than they've had in the past."

Responding to questions about American protesters against the war in Iraq, Rice said: "Protest is as natural a part of democracy as breathing and I think it is important that people recognize that protest is a wholly legitimate form of political expression."

She added: "I do hope that as people protest they recognize that they are protesting a war that actually has given people in places like Iraq or Afghanistan the right to protest."

The secretary said there is a difference between protesting a policy, which, she said is "anybody's right to do," and impugning "the motives or integrity of those with whom you disagree." President

Bush, she said, "did not go to war easily or lightly or eagerly."

As for the governments that disagreed with the U.S. decision to go to war in Iraq, Rice said: "I believe we've rebuilt most of those bridges. We have very good relations both in Europe and in the region, and there is an understanding now, broadly, that a stable and a more democratic Iraq is going to be a pillar of a different kind of Middle East."

"It's hard getting there, and people are concerned with the continuing challenges of Iraq, but there seems to me to be little disagreement now on what the future should hold for Iraq," she said.

U.S. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

Rice said that the United States successfully can engage with nations in the Middle East and support Israel at the same time.

"[W]e are going to be a defender and ally of Israel," she said. "Israel is a democracy. Israel is our friend, and we share values."

"And we also have very good relations with others in the region, with Egypt, with Saudi Arabia, with Jordan. And we all have, I think, a common vision of how the Middle East should look. It should be a Middle East in which there is a Palestinian state in which Palestinians can have their own aspirations met, one that is not corrupt, one that is democratic," she said.

"It's not easy to get there because the Middle East is in the midst of

huge historic changes. But the United States is going to remain committed to the president's vision of a more democratic and stable Middle East," Rice said.

CAPTURING OSAMA BIN LADEN

Rice acknowledged that finding al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden has been difficult, but added: "Eventually, we will. The United States will stay on his trail until we get him."

"But al-Qaida," she added, "is not one man and the terrorist threat to us is not one man." She mentioned the capture of terrorist leaders like Abu Zubaydah and Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and bin al Shibh and others.

The United States, she said, has "a tremendous intelligence network working with other countries to try and break up terrorist plots before they are actually carried out."

"[I]t's a tough job and it's not a fair fight," she said. "And it's why the United States can't win this war on the defense. You have to stay on the offense."

For more on U.S. policy in the region, see: Middle East and North Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/>)

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Fulbright Scholar Recalls Her Struggle To Empower . . .

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ported in 2003. Sakhi said that the prevention of female self-immolation is a long-term project because of its roots in Afghanistan's male-dominated, traditional family structure.

Although WASSA's success has been mixed, it opened the doors for abused women to file complaints, Sakhi said. Severe cases were referred to local government authorities or the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, while others were addressed through family counseling.

Sakhi said WASSA also conducted workshops to make women aware of their legal rights in a democratic state.

"At first even the educated women of Herat city could not express what their legal rights were," she said. "But after a year and a half of these workshops, even uneducated women from the provinces spoke up about their rights."

"Women now demanded to be educated and even get jobs in the business sector that was considered a man's domain. Some requested car-driving lessons," she added.

WASSA held workshops for female candidates and voters during elections and conducted poster and pamphlet campaigns to en-

courage women's participation at the polls. Sakhi said it was difficult for women to become politically active without the permission of their husbands or fathers but that the workshops provided an acceptable place for the women to gather and be trained because they were open to male relatives.

WASSA also promoted women's political participation through a women's radio station it helped establish in Herat in October 2003. Radio Sahar (Dawn) became instrumental in empowering women and promoting voter turnout during the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2005, she said. WASSA's allies among the clergy supported the organization's goals by making statements about women's rights on the station.

WASSA also seeks to help women become independent wage earners through income generation projects across the four western provinces.

"We offered vocational training in embroidery, quilt making and carpet weaving," Sakhi said. According to her, quilts are a lucrative market.

Sakhi is now a Fulbright Scholar completing a master's degree in the United States on conflict transformation and peace building. She expects to return to WASSA after completing her studies in May 2007.

She hopes to obtain funding to open a branch office in Kabul. She is also interested in extending WASSA's operations to Kandahar, but says the security situation currently prohibits that.

Sakhi said that women's empowerment in Afghanistan depends in part on improved security and the elevation of the minister for women's affairs to a Cabinet-level position. But most of all, she said it requires a long-term commitment to the issue. "It takes a long time to change minds," she said.

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

New Flu Test Will Expand, Speed Diagnoses

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – U.S. government and academic researchers have come up with a new method to identify influenza viruses that will speed the identification process and allow more labs to determine where viruses come from and how dangerous they are.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) August 28 announced the new test, developed in partnership with scientists from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The FluChip, a microchip-based test, distinguished among 72 influenza strains – including the H5N1 avian influenza strain – in fewer than 12 hours, according to a CDC press release.

Basic identification of a virus type and subtype can be conducted at many laboratories in the developed and developing world. But only a relatively small number of laboratories have high-level biosafety facilities that can determine if a virus comes from a human or nonhuman source and whether it is related to recognized viruses or is becoming more virulent.

“The ability to quickly and accurately identify strains of influenza would be invaluable to international flu surveillance efforts,” said Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health, the organization that funded the research.

The limited number of worldwide facilities capable of performing the complete array of complex tests has caused routine delay in confirming human cases of H5N1.

Days can pass as samples from an individual suspected to have H5N1 are transported from sometimes-remote areas to qualified laboratories.



Dr. Anthony S. Fauci
Director of the National Institute of
Allergy and Infectious Diseases

ries.

Accurate identification of a particular viral strain can influence other critical health policy decisions, such as quarantine or the distribution of anti-viral drugs to other vulnerable people, so timeliness in diagnosis is important.

The CDC and University of Colorado researchers are attempting further refinement of the methods to produce results in as little as one hour.

H5N1 CASE IDENTIFICATION GUIDELINES

The World Health Organization (WHO) is issuing guidelines for medical practitioners to follow

while identifying a person who is a suspected, probable or confirmed case of the H5N1 avian influenza strain.

The U.N. health agency took this step August 29 to ensure the use of standardized language for communication among health authorities dealing with the avian influenza outbreaks at different times and in different places.

The guidelines define a suspected H5N1 case as a person who has a fever and respiratory symptoms and also has had close contact with a person known to have H5N1, or contact with contaminated birds, or has consumed raw or undercooked poultry in an area where H5N1 has been confirmed or suspected in recent days.

A probable H5N1 case will meet all the criteria of a suspected case, but also will have evidence of acute pneumonia and respiratory failure.

Laboratory confirmation of the presence of an influenza type A infection, even though the subtype may be unconfirmed by more sophisticated tests, also will be considered adequate evidence to call a case probable, according to the new guidelines.

A case will be confirmed only with proper sample testing at a certified laboratory, according to the WHO guidelines.

MILD BIRD FLU IN WESTERN HEMISPHERE

The highly pathogenic avian influenza strain H5N1 has been de-

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Global Response to Ozone Hole Is "Unprecedented" Success

By Cheryl Pellerin
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- After 17 years of work to phase out the production and use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), chemicals that harm the Earth's protective ozone layer, ozone depletion has stopped, scientists say, but has not yet begun to reverse.

Experts predict that the ozone layer could be completely restored by 2060-2065 if releases are halted of manmade substances containing the chemicals chlorine (such as CFCs) and bromine, and if Earth's surface has not warmed by then -- a condition that could increase the damaging effect of CFCs on ozone.

"If you look at the ozone records from all over the world," said David Hofmann, a scientist from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), during an August 22 press briefing, "the data indicates that the reduction in ozone has stopped."

He added, "We have not seen what you might call the second stage of ozone recovery, where ozone begins increasing again in Antarctica."

A British Antarctic survey team discovered a hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica in 1985. Theories about the cause included solar activity that affected the magnetic field, atmospheric motions and chemical reactions involving CFCs, which had been used since the 1930s as refriger-

ants and propellants, such as aerosol sprays.

Hofmann, now director of the Global Monitoring Division, and NOAA senior scientist Susan Solomon were members of the first team, called the National Ozone Expedition, to arrive in Antarctica in August 1986 to determine the cause of a hole in the Antarctic ozone layer.

AFFECTING THE CLIMATE SYSTEM

The expedition, funded by NASA, NOAA and the U.S. National Science Foundation, which operates McMurdo Station at the South Pole, consisted of four teams of scientists from NOAA, NASA and two U.S. universities -- the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the University of Wyoming.

Their observations -- the first definitive demonstration that people and their activities could affect the planet's climate system -- helped determine the chemical basis for the ozone loss and formed the scientific underpinning for the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

The protocol is a 160-nation international treaty that entered into force in 1989 and phased out the production of ozone-depleting CFCs and other substances in industrialized countries and led to the current decline in these ozone-depleting gases. Since 1989, it has been revised five times -- in 1990 (London), 1992

(Copenhagen), 1995 (Vienna), 1997 (Montreal) and 1999 (Beijing) -- to speed up the phase out of CFCs and other compounds.

"These gases live for 50 to 100 years in the atmosphere," said Solomon, winner of the 2004 Blue Planet Award and the 1999 National Medal of Science for her work. "So they're going to remain present, depleting ozone long after we stop emitting them."

The observation that ozone destruction has stopped, she added, "certainly shows that the Montreal Protocol has been effective at starting us on the path to ozone recovery, so it's an unprecedented global environmental success story."

PROTECTIVE OZONE

Ozone is a relatively unstable molecule made up of three oxygen atoms (O₃), rather than the two oxygen atoms that make up the breathable oxygen (O₂) in the atmosphere.

Ozone is generated from some kinds of pollution and from natural sources. Depending on where ozone is in the atmosphere, it can protect or harm life on Earth.

Closer to Earth, in the troposphere -- the layer of the atmosphere from the surface to about 10 kilometers up -- ozone is a harmful pollutant that damages human health, vegetation and many common materials. It is a key ingredient of urban smog.

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Global Response to Ozone Hole Is "Unprecedented" . . .

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In the stratosphere, between 16 kilometers and 48 kilometers above the planet, a 24-kilometer-thick ozone layer acts as a shield to protect Earth's people, animals and plant life from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

The protective role of the ozone layer in the stratosphere is so important that scientists believe life on land probably would not have evolved -- and could not exist today -- without it.

OZONE AND CHLORINE

The chemical chlorine is the main problem in ozone depletion, and most chlorine in the stratosphere comes from human activity, specifically the release of CFCs.

Because of their low toxicity, valuable physical properties and chemical stability in the lower atmosphere, CFCs have been used heavily since the 1960s as refrigerants, industrial cleaning solvents, propellants in aerosol spray cans and in Styrofoam manufacture.

Once in the atmosphere, though, CFCs drift slowly upward -- it takes five years or six years for gases released on the surface to reach the stratosphere -- where they are broken up by UV radiation, releasing the chlorine that chemically destroys ozone.

First, UV radiation breaks off a chlorine atom from a CFC molecule. The chlorine atom attacks an ozone molecule (O₃), breaking it

apart and destroying the ozone. The result is an ordinary oxygen molecule (O₂) and a chlorine monoxide molecule (Cl + O).

Then, a single oxygen atom (O) attacks the chlorine monoxide molecule, releasing the chlorine atom and forming an ordinary oxygen molecule (O₂). The chlorine atom now is free to attack and destroy another ozone molecule (O₃). One chlorine atom can repeat this destructive cycle thousands of times.

OZONE AND GLOBAL WARMING

Ozone depletion and global warming are not directly related -- increasing concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are the main cause of climate change, and chlorine, bromine and other ozone-depleting chemicals in the upper atmosphere deplete ozone.

"What the two problems have in common, it's fair to say," Solomon said, "is that both are linked to the question of the long lifetimes of gases in the atmosphere."

CFCs last from 50 years to 100 years in the atmosphere, so it will take that much longer for the ozone layer to recover even after decreasing CFC emissions. The same is true for carbon dioxide.

"The carbon dioxide that's in our atmosphere today -- even if we were to stop emitting it tomorrow -- would live for many decades, centuries and beyond," Solomon said. "A fraction of the carbon dioxide that we've put into the

atmosphere today due to human activity would still be there in 1,000 years."

To monitor ozone-depleting gases in the atmosphere, NOAA has developed a new Ozone Depleting Gas Index (ODGI) -- a number based on NOAA's measurements of all the ozone-depleting gases that indicates the atmosphere's recovery toward pre-ozone-hole conditions.

Hofmann said the ODGI indicates that the ozone-depleting potential of the gases already has declined, in agreement with the early signs of leveling off of ozone loss and the success of the Montreal Protocol.

"I'm very optimistic that we will have a normal ozone layer sometime," Hofmann said, "not in my lifetime, but perhaps in yours."

More information about the ozone layer (<http://www.ozonelayer.noaa.gov/>) and the ozone hole (<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/stratosphere/polar/polar.shtml#plot1>) are available on the NOAA Web site. A history (<http://www.nsf.gov/about/history/nsf0050/arctic/ozonhole.htm>) of the ozone hole discovery is available on the National Science Foundation Web site.

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New Flu Test Will Expand, Speed . . .

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ected in wild and domestic bird populations in more than 50 countries but still has not appeared in the United States.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed August 28 that some wild mute swans tested earlier in the month showed no sign of the dangerous strain that has killed an estimated 200 million birds in the almost three years since it first appeared in Southeast Asia.

The USDA announcement says low-pathogenic strains of bird flu in wild birds are not unusual.

The "low-path" strains are much different from the other types of the virus, do not circulate as rapidly, and frequently have no adverse effects on wild birds.

The USDA and the Department of the Interior are working with state-level agencies to conduct rigorous testing of wild bird populations that are thought to be carriers of the virus.

For ongoing coverage, see Bird Flu (Avian Influenza) (http://usinfo.state.gov/global_issues/bird_flu.html).

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America: Helping the People of Sudan

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dan and Senegalese troops, and airlifts of Rwandan troops.

- The U.S. has contributed \$240 million for AMIS since 2004; this figure represents in part additional funding provided by Congress in the FY 2006 supplemental.

U.S. Support to the CPA

- The U.S. helped broker the historic CPA, which was signed on January 9, 2005, ending 21 years of civil war.

- The CPA provides the framework for addressing the grievances of those living in the South and in other marginalized areas of Eastern Sudan and Darfur.

- Sudan has witnessed the founding of the GNU; the naming of Salva Kiir, a Southerner, as First Vice President; establishment of the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS); the appointment of Southerners as GNU cabinet ministers; founding of many CPA-mandated commissions; and the return of more than half a million displaced people/refugees to the South. Revenue-sharing from Sudan's petroleum wealth is helping to establish nascent government institutions in Southern Sudan.

U.S. Support to Humanitarian Assistance

- The U.S. is the largest single international donor to Sudan, providing 50% of the food the UN World Food Program's (WFP) total 2006 requirements for Sudan and 72%

of confirmed contributions in Sudan overall. WFP relies on continued international support and the U.S. encourages all donor partners to maintain or increase contributions.

- Since 2005, the U.S. has provided more than \$300 million in non-food assistance to Darfur and \$1.3 billion in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance country-wide.

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