



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

U.S. Africa Command Academic Symposium held in Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – The U.S. Africa Command and the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) co-sponsored the second U.S. Africa Command Academic Symposium in Addis Ababa from August 17 to 20, 2009. Forty academics from Africa, Europe and the United States came to-

gether to enhance their understanding of Africa Command, and to offer their input on how the Africa Command can

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(L-R) Ambassador Roger A. Meece, the Charge d'Affaires of the U.S Embassy, Mr. Paul Saxton of the U.S. Africa Command, Colonel Mike Garrison, Deputy Director of the ACSS, and Ato Tesfaye Yilma of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Envoy Graton Takes Peace Mission to Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan Scott Graton travels to Southern Sudan to help complete an agreement between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the National Congress Party



Scott Graton

(NCP), which is part of a broader 2005 peace agreement, the State Department announced.

Graton is traveling to Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt August 17-24. His visit comes as the United States is nearing completion of a new policy on Sudan and the troubled

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U.S. Africa Command Academic Symposium held in Addis Ababa . . .

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best support peace and stability in Africa.

The symposium was designed to enhance understanding of Africa Command and its mission and objectives among the academic community in Africa, Europe and the United States. The symposium sought to engage academics with expertise in subject matter areas including history, political science, security studies, civil-military relations, and conflict management.

During the four-day symposium, participants assessed the ways that Africa Command can best support democratic civil-military relations in Africa and discussed the challenges ahead in Africa Command's efforts to assist in building security sector capacity in Africa. They also identified areas of further cooperation between Africa Command and the academic community.

Having listened to participants' recommendations, General William E. "Kip" Ward, Commander of U.S. Africa Command, appreciated the opportunity to hear scholars' views

and the fact that the conference had brought together academics from across the continent, Europe and the U.S.

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of its founding, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies is one of five U.S. Department of Defense regional centers that provide strategic-level education to international civilian and military personnel through a combination of multi-week courses, short-term conferences, seminars and workshops, and outreach. ♦



Participants at the U.S. Africa Command Academic Symposium held at Sheraton Addis from August 17 to 20, 2009

Envoy Gration Takes Peace Mission to Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt . . .

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Darfur region.

"I think we are getting close to the point where we will announce a new policy approach on Sudan," Assistant Secretary of State Philip Crowley said during the daily press briefing August 17. "I would expect that in the next couple of weeks. Also, I think you'll see the fruits of General Gration's labor emerge here very shortly."

Gration will travel to Juba, Southern Sudan, to complete an agreement on a bilateral action plan between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the National Congress Party, which is intended to complete implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Gration told Congress recently that the goal is to conclude an agreement that will allow the Sudanese to return to their homes and resume their lives in safety and security. Previous peace efforts have faltered, Gration testified, and the United States has learned from those experiences. He laid out for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee what he called a "whole-of-government approach" for Sudan.

President Obama has made enhancing the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement a significant U.S. foreign policy objective, Gration said, and that is part of the reason he named a special envoy to negotiate agreements and further the fragile peace process.

The United States is engaging with the fragmented movements in Darfur to bring them to the peace table with a single voice, is working with

Libya and Egypt to end the proxy war between Chad and Sudan, and is supporting the full deployment of the African Union–United Nations Mission in Darfur to protect Darfuri civilians, Gration said.

The second aspect of the emerging U.S. strategy involves sustaining peace between the North and the South, he said. In January 2005, the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, ending a 22-year war. However, Gration said, four and a half years after the agreement, peace remains fragile.

Sudan will hold national elections in April 2010 and referendums in Southern Sudan and the Abyei region in January 2011. Gration said the U.S. strategy calls for a functioning and stable Sudanese government, and one that will either include a government of Southern Sudan or coexist peacefully with an independent Southern Sudan. The United States is seeking to help the South improve its security capacity and become politically and economically viable if it chooses independence, he added.

Finally, Gration said the United States seeks increased and enhanced counterterrorism cooperation with the Sudanese, and to promote regional security.

On the trip, Gration will not go to Khartoum, but may meet with members of the government while in Egypt, Crowley said.

"In Egypt, he will meet not only with Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit, but also Sudanese Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salahud-

din, Libyan Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation Musa Kusa, and Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa," Crowley said.

"So General Gration, in the conduct of his duties, does meet with officials of the Sudanese government, as you would expect in terms of dealing with them on a range of issues, both what's happening in Darfur and with the North-South dialogue. He will not meet with President [Omar al-] Bashir," Crowley added.

Gration will also travel to Malakal in Southern Sudan to visit a Joint Integrated Unit regional headquarters to assess the capacity of these units to conduct security; he will continue bilateral discussions with the SPLM in Juba and with the NCP in Khartoum.

Crowley said he will then travel to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to resume talks with the leadership of key Darfuri armed movements on unification efforts in support of the Doha peace process. While in Ethiopia, Gration will also meet with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on Obama Today (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

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

Clinton Right to Push for Governance, Food Security in Africa

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's trip to Africa, where she is "talking truth to Africans about corruption and bad governance while emphasizing food security, is the right thing to do," says former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen.

Clinton's first official visit to seven African nations is "important because it indicates a strong strategic interest

by the Obama administration and a willingness to help Africans tackle problems that earlier proved very nettlesome to diplomats like me," Cohen told America.gov August 12.

Clinton voiced a major concern of the Obama administration to a gathering of business leaders and government officials at her stop in Johannesburg August 7, when she said, "Improving governance across Africa is one of the most important challenges we face."

The secretary echoed the "fundamental truth" noted by Obama in a speech he delivered to Ghana's Parliament July 11 condemning bribery and stressing that "development depends on good governance." The president added that "perpetual aid" is no solution to Africa's problems.

Cohen said, "The extent to which the secretary is hammering home



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, seen here with residents during a visit to the Victoria Mxenge Housing Project in Philippi on the outskirts of Cape Town. US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, has called for a broad alliance with South Africa as she basked in a warm welcome from everyone from President Jacob Zuma down to street children as she visited Africa's wealthiest nation. (AFP/Gianluigi Guercia)

the anti-corruption message is very important and something new by President Obama that has not happened before."

The retired diplomat was assistant secretary of state under President George H.W. Bush from 1989 to 1993. During his 38-year foreign service career, Cohen served in five African countries and was U.S. ambassador to Senegal. He also served as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan for African affairs in the 1980s.

The diplomat came to be called "Mr. Africa" because of his expertise and the close relations forged with African leaders during negotiations he facilitated on conflicts in Mozambique and Ethiopia. He is currently a consultant to several U.S. companies doing business on the continent.

Commenting on Clinton's August 4

-14 trip to Kenya, South Africa, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Liberia and Cape Verde, Cohen said, "I believe the secretary is handling herself quite well. She is very professional and articulate and her messages are well understood and the Africans are taking her seriously."

In South Africa, Clinton said: "There is so much that can be done if we can break the link of corruption and poor governance. ... It is a simple fact

that investors are not attracted to states with failed or weak leadership, crime and civil unrest or corruption that taints every transaction and decision."

Holding it up as a model, she said, "I think that the example of South Africa's entrepreneurs and business leaders can sell the idea that openness, transparency, adherence to the rule of law, a fight that is never-ending against corruption are the conditions that will benefit investment."

According to Cohen, "No American president or secretary of state has ever talked so forthrightly in terms like that to Africans, and this is in itself a very important point.

"Up until Obama," he said, "we all, including diplomats like me, were very delicate about these [governance] issues. We didn't

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African Diaspora Marketplace Program Receives 733 Business Plan Proposals

Washington, D.C. and Denver, Colo. – August 13, 2009 – The inaugural African Diaspora Marketplace (ADM) closed its call for proposals and has exceeded expectations by collecting 733 business proposals for Economic Growth in African Communities. The ADM is a business entrepreneurship program fostering economic development ideas from U.S.-based African Diaspora to create plans for sustainable start-up and established businesses in 19 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. A collaboration between Western Union and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the ADM aims to leverage the know-how and commitment of Diaspora communities to help address poverty and unemployment issues in the region.

“We are thrilled to have received so

many proposals for the launch of this pilot program,” said Alonzo Fulgham, Acting USAID Administrator. “The African Diaspora Marketplace provides a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs with great ideas and dedication to support economic development in Africa. This incredible response underscores the enormous demand for this type of partnership.”

“Through remittances, Diaspora are among the strongest and most consistent financial supporters of their countries of origin. By removing some of the barriers to job-creating investment, the ADM provides a new way for Diaspora entrepreneurs to generate more sustainable economic opportunity,” said Anne McCarthy, Executive Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Western Union.

The ADM will award matching grants of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to approximately 10-20 small-and-medium businesses with the strongest proposals for boosting economic opportunity and job creation in Sub-Saharan Africa. The initial business proposals will undergo review by a panel of independent reviewers, and finalists will be announced in late October 2009.

The grant pool is financed jointly by USAID, The Western Union Company and the Western Union Foundation, as well as through Western Union® Agent Giving Circles featuring Ecobank Transnational Incorporated (ETI) in Africa and Irv Barr Management in the U.S.

For more information and program updates, visit www.diasporamarketplace.org.

Clinton Right to Push for Governance, Food Security in Africa . . .

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want to be accused by the Africans of racism or colonialism. But the Obama administration came right out with it, and that’s something that should have been driven home a long time ago.”

In addition to the good governance message broached by President Obama in his Accra speech, Clinton also emphasized that the United States would continue to support Africa and would not diminish foreign aid, especially to improve agriculture, leading to better food security.

In Ghana, Obama reiterated the pledge he made at the G8 meeting

in Italy of \$3.5 billion for agricultural assistance programs in Africa focused on new methods, tools and technologies for farmers aimed at ensuring food security for the continent.

“The African farmer is a good farmer,” Cohen said, “but he needs fertilizer and good irrigation tools as well as more technical assistance. If he gets it, he can triple and quadruple his yields.”

Like governance, poor food security in Africa was also something previous administrations did not push because U.S. foreign aid programs did not emphasize agriculture, Cohen said. “There was no constituency in the United States to

promote Africans expanding their agricultural exports because U.S. farmers did not want the competition.

“So, the Obama administration’s emphasis on helping Africans improve agriculture is not only a departure from the past but is also the right thing to do. Unless Africa regains the greatness it once had in agricultural production, it will never make much progress,” Cohen concluded.

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

Liberia Is Model for Post-Conflict Transformation, Clinton Says

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says that after emerging from a 14-year civil war, Liberia is a model to other countries that are transitioning from conflict, praising the country's reform, reconstruction and reconciliation efforts, as well as the government's actions against corruption.

Speaking with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Monrovia August 13, Clinton praised the Liberian leader for being "dedicated to the betterment of the Liberian people" and "consistent in her leadership on behalf of solving the problems that Liberia faces."

In the three years since the end of the civil conflict, Liberia is now "a model of successful transition from conflict to post-conflict, from lawlessness to democracy, from despair to hope," Clinton said.

She praised the country's fiscal policies, including the way Liberia is decreasing its debt and has lately enjoyed a high rate of growth in its gross domestic product (GDP).

The secretary also said she is impressed with Liberia's steps against corruption, describing them as being more advanced than those of many other countries.

"We've seen a commitment by President Sirleaf and her government and the legislature which passed the [anti-corruption] laws," she said, adding, "Now they have to implement them."

Clinton said corruption "is a problem everywhere," and "a cancer that eats away at the strength of institutions and the confidence of people in their government and in each other."



Secretary Clinton praised Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for her consistent efforts to face her country's challenges.

She called on Liberians to continue to speak out against corruption and to demand change not only from their government but also "from themselves and their societies."

Economic progress is dependent on good governance and adherence to the rule of law, as well as economic policies, the secretary said. With Liberian elections coming in 2011, she said, the United States is proudly contributing \$17.5 million for programs to ensure that they will be free and fair.

President Sirleaf said her government is working to strengthen anti-

corruption institutions and implement the new legislation. "We now need for the public and the media to recognize the progress and to join us in this fight," she said. "Together, we will win, we will slay this monster."

Following her meeting with Sirleaf, Clinton spoke to the Liberian National Police Academy in Monrovia, where the United States is helping to train police recruits.

During the civil conflict, the police "instilled fear" in the population, she said. "Today you must fight fear," she told the recruits. Today, Liberia's men, women and especially its children need a good police force, she said.

"They need you not only to protect them and to provide security; they need you to help heal the wounds left by 14 years of conflict. They need you to help renew the promise of Liberia," Clinton said.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog Obama Today (<http://blogs.america.gov/obama/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

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Clinton Calls for Enhanced Political Reforms in Nigeria

By Merle David Kellerhals, Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton encouraged Nigeria to implement needed democratic reforms while also reducing corruption and graft in the most populous nation in Africa.

"It is critical for the people of Nigeria, first and foremost, but indeed for the United States that Nigeria succeeds in fulfilling its promise," Clinton said at an August 12 press conference in Abuja that followed a meeting with Nigerian Foreign Minister Ojo Maduekwe.

"We strongly support and encourage the government of Nigeria's efforts to increase transparency, reduce corruption, provide support for democratic processes in preparation for the 2011 elections," she added. Maduekwe and Clinton talked about how the United States might be able to help with enhanced electoral reforms.

Maduekwe said there is a national consensus for enhanced democracy, a deep commitment to the rule of law and electoral reforms.

Clinton also thanked Nigeria for being active on key international and regional issues, especially in providing peacekeeping forces, primarily for use elsewhere in Africa.

Ambassador Johnnie Carson, Clinton's assistant secretary of state for African affairs, who is accompanying her on the tour, said that Nigeria, which is the fifth-largest supplier of oil to the United States, has the largest single U.S. investment on the continent.

"The U.S. has had a very good relationship with Nigeria over a number



Secretary Clinton, left, and Nigerian Foreign Minister Ojo Maduekwe answer questions at an August 12 press conference in Abuja.

of years and appreciates greatly its contribution to returning stability to both Sierra Leone and Liberia," Carson said. Nigeria is a major contributor of military forces for peacekeeping operations around Africa, and has served as a base for training peacekeeping forces from other nations.

But Carson also said that Nigeria faces a number of major challenges: conflict in the southern Niger Delta, which has gone on for more than a decade, and tensions that frequently flare up between Muslims and Christians in the northern part of the country, where some 75 million Muslims live, giving it the second-largest Muslim population in Africa and the largest Muslim population in sub-Saharan Africa. Unrest and civil strife in the Niger Delta have hampered oil production and cost Nigeria an estimated \$1 billion a month in lost revenue. An amnesty was offered by Nigerian President Umaru Yar'Adua to curb the violence, and Maduekwe said it

has helped bring an end to the strife.

"Amnesty is working, the oil levels are gradually coming up again," Maduekwe said.

Carson said Nigeria "also faces challenges with respect to corruption. It has been described by a number of organizations as one of the most corrupt states in Africa. And we all know what corruption can do to public confidence, to the confidence of citizens in their government, and also to destroying the budget and the fabric of governmental operations."

Nigeria is the fifth country on Clinton's seven-nation tour of Africa, which began with the 2009 African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum in Nairobi, Kenya. She has actively promoted economic development, better treatment for women and good governance. She travels next to Liberia and concludes the 11-day tour in Cape Verde. ♦

United States Pledges \$17 Million to Aid Rape Survivors in DRC

By Kelly Daniel
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States will provide \$17 million to help survivors of rape and prevent sexual violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced during an unprecedented visit to the eastern city of Goma.

Clinton, the first U.S. secretary of state to visit the war-ravaged eastern Kivu region in the DRC, met individually August 11 with two rape survivors, and then attended a roundtable discussion with medical providers, health care activists and other Congolese now living in camps after fleeing the fighting in the DRC's long-running conflict. She said she was "overwhelmed" by what she saw in the camps and by meeting the rape survivors, and she strongly condemned the systematic use of rape as a weapon of war.

"The atrocities that these women have suffered, which stands for the atrocities that so many have suffered, distills evil into its basest form," Clinton said in remarks at the Heal Africa Hospital, where many rape victims are treated. "The United States condemns these attacks and all those who commit them and abet them. And we say to the world that those who attack civilian populations using systematic rape are guilty of crimes against humanity."

More than 5 million people have died during fighting in the DRC dating back to the mid-1990s; the conflict remains one of the longest-running, and deadliest, in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly 5,000 rapes have been reported in the Kivu region in 2009, although the actual

spent to train health care workers in the complex surgical procedures needed by survivors of rape, such as fistula repair.

Nearly \$3 million in separate funding has been approved to recruit and train more police officers, particularly women police officers, and to investigate sexual violence, Clinton said. The United States will also send teams of civilian, medical and technology experts to the DRC to help survivors of sexual violence, and send military engineers from the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) based in Stuttgart, Germany, to offer additional help for sexual violence survivors, Clinton said.

A senior administration official, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity, said the AFRICOM assistance would consist of medical and health care personnel, engineers to build sanitation and latrine facilities, and technical support for technology experts who are searching for ways to use mobile phones to document and report instances of sexual violence.

"Our commitment to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence did not begin today, and it will not end today," Clinton said. "As we provide this assistance, we are re-

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Residents of a camp for Internally Displaced People watch as US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton tours their camp on the outskirts of Goma. (AFP/Roberto Schmidt)

number is believed to be much higher, according to news reports. The soldiers of the chronically undertrained and unpaid Congolese military are often accused of being the worst perpetrators of systematic rape, while high-ranking Congolese government officials and members of the United Nations' peacekeeping force in the DRC also have been accused.

The United States, already a leading donor to the DRC, will use the \$17 million in new funding to provide medical care, counseling, economic assistance and legal support to 10,000 women in areas including North and South Kivu, the secretary said. Part of the money will be

Obama Says Iranians Taking Risks to Have Their Voices Be Heard

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama says the world is watching the Iranian government's response to peaceful demonstrations, and its response will send the international community "a pretty clear signal ... about what Iran is and is not."

Obama spoke to CBS News June 19 and his remarks were broadcast on CBS' The Early Show June 22. He said Iranians are peacefully trying to get their leaders to listen to them.

"This is not an issue of the United States or the West versus Iran. This is an issue of the Iranian people. The fact that they are on the streets, under pretty severe duress, at great risk to themselves, is a sign that there's something in that society that wants to open up," he said.

The demonstrations began in response to popular beliefs that there were voting irregularities in the June 12 presidential election. Official results declared incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad the winner with 63 percent of the vote. His nearest challenger, former Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi, received 34 percent. Mousavi and fellow presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi have

challenged the official results.

Despite a June 19 warning from Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, that protest leaders would be held "directly responsible" for any bloodshed, demonstrations and clashes with police and para-



A photo received on June 23 allegedly shows supporters of Iran's defeated presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi standing by a burning vehicle in Tehran on June 19. Iran will put on trial 25 more people arrested after the disputed result of the June presidential election, as fresh claims surfaced on Saturday that several protesters in jail were tortured to death. (AFP/RSF/File)

military forces have continued. According to Iran's state media, 10 people were killed June 20–21.

In his remarks, Khamenei also blamed "foreign powers" for interfering in Iran by questioning the election outcome.

Obama told CBS there are forces within Iran that "would love nothing better than to make this an argument about the United States," and said his administration is not playing into those efforts.

"There should be no distractions from the fact that the Iranian people

are seeking to let their voices be heard," the president said.

At the State Department, spokesman Ian Kelly said June 22 that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is "following the situation with great concern," and remains in contact

with her colleagues in the diplomatic community. "Right now, we're not really focused on the bilateral relationship," Kelly said, in reference to long-standing U.S. concerns over Iran's nuclear program and its support for terrorist organizations. "What we're focused on is what is going on inside Iran," he said.

The spokesman said U.S. officials are seeing "very dramatic and very distressing images" of clashes between demonstrators and security personnel. "Most distressing of all, the images of this young woman covered in blood," he said, referring

to the video of a woman identified as Neda who was shot on a street in Tehran. The video of her killing has been seen all over the world thanks to YouTube.

The United States is monitoring developments inside Iran, but Kelly said it is "frankly, very difficult ... to get good, hard, confirmable information about what's going on" because the media has been unable to "really cover" the situation, and diplomats in Iran have also had difficulty because of danger on the streets.

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United States “Ready to Lead Once More” at United Nations

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration recognizes that the well-being and security of Americans is “inextricably linked” to that of people everywhere in the world, and it is making “rather dramatic changes” toward multilateralism in its approach to the United Nations, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice says.

“The United States is back,” Rice said August 12 at New York University in New York. “We work with passion and resolve because we know that the change that has come to America can also change the world. The time for action is now. The challenges we face are vast. But the opportunities are even greater. And we will seize them.”

Extraordinary global challenges, such as the dangers of nuclear proliferation, climate change, pandemic disease and the global financial crisis, threaten U.S. security in the 21st century, she said.

“If ever there were a time for effective multilateral cooperation in pursuit of U.S. interests and a shared future of greater peace and prosperity, it is now,” she said. Cooperation requires a greater number of “capable, democratic states” with the political will to tackle transnational challenges.

But Rice, who served as a foreign policy adviser to Obama during the 2008 presidential campaign, said the administration acknowledges

the “simple reality” that if the United States wants other nations to cooperate on the threats it is most concerned with, the United States must also cooperate with them on their most pressing challenges.



Ambassador Susan Rice says the Obama administration is making “dramatic changes” in its approach to the United Nations.

“For many nations, those threats are first and foremost the things that afflict human beings in their daily lives: corruption, repression, conflict, hunger, poverty, disease and a lack of education and opportunity,” Rice said.

“When we manifest our commitment to tackling the threats that

menace so many other nations; when we invest in protecting the lives of others; and when we recognize that national security is no longer a zero-sum game, then we increase other countries’ will to cooperate on the issues most vital to us,” Rice said.

When at its best, the United Nations helps rebuild societies shattered by conflict and disaster, lays the foundations for democracy and development, and creates conditions where people can live in dignity and mutual respect, she said.

At the same time, the Obama administration is aware that the United Nations is imperfect, with divisions in the Security Council, which have affected responses to crises in places like Darfur, Zimbabwe and Burma; distracting “political theater” in the General Assembly, which sees Israel “unfairly singled out”; and a system with “waste and abuse” that must be confronted and still meet “daunting new responsibilities,” Rice said.

Rice outlined several approaches that distinguish the new approach of the United States to the United Nations under the Obama administration.

The administration is turning to the United Nations to promote U.S. core national security interests in areas such as nuclear proliferation, promoting stability and development in Iraq and Afghanistan and the use of peacekeepers around the

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world to prevent violent conflicts from flaring up and destabilizing surrounding countries, she said.

Second, it is now participating in the U.N. Human Rights Council after previously refusing to seek a seat on that body. Rice acknowledged shortcomings of the council, where “dictators were not called to account for their records of repression, abused citizens did not have their voices heard, obsessive, [and] unproductive Israel-bashing raged on.” But the U.S. refusal to participate had achieved nothing, she said.

“Real change does not come from sitting on the sidelines. Real change can only come through painstaking, principled diplomacy. So we will work hard to reduce customary divisions. We will demand fair treatment for Israel. We will amplify the voices of those suffering under the world’s cruelest regimes. And we will lead by example through our actions at home and our support for those risking their lives for democracy and human rights abroad,” Rice said.

Only seven months into its term, the Obama administration has re-

versed several previous U.S. policies by embracing the U.N.’s Millennium Development goals, allowing U.S. assistance to fund programs that support family planning and reproductive health services, contributing to the U.N. Population Fund, signing the U.N.’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, backing a General Assembly statement opposing violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, and ending opposition to language that mentions reproductive health or the International Criminal Court.

The United States will meet its obligations to the United Nations, Rice said. “Our dues to the United Nations are treaty obligations, and we are committed to working with Congress to pay them in full and on time,” she said. Congress is allowing the United States to clear its accumulated 2005–2008 arrears to the United Nations’ regular and peacekeeping budgets, and Rice said the 2009 peacekeeping obligations will be paid in full.

In the Obama administration’s pending budget request to Congress, it has made provisions to keep its payments current and “allow us to move toward ending the practice, started in the 1980s, of paying our

bills to the U.N. and many other major international organizations nearly a year late,” she said.

Through responsible leadership, a tone of decency and respect, “pragmatic, principled policies” and abiding by rules it expects other countries to follow, the Obama administration will build the political will of other countries to work with it in addressing global challenges, Rice said.

A transcript of Rice’s remarks (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/August/20090813164826eaifas0.287945.html&distid=ucs>) is available on [America.gov](http://www.america.gov).

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on [America.gov’s](http://blogs.america.gov/obama/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/) blog Obama Today (<http://blogs.america.gov/obama/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

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U.S., Egypt Working to Restart Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama says that he and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak are working to jump-start resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process.

“We obviously have a lot of great challenges that have to be dealt with, and we are continuing to work together to find those areas where we can find common ground and to work in concert to bring peace and security to the region,” Obama said August 18 after an extended meeting with Mubarak, who had not been to Washington for consultations since 2003.

“The Arab-Israeli situation is something that has been of ongoing interest, and we had an extensive conversation about how we could help to jump-start an effective process on all sides to move away from a status quo that is not working for the Israeli people, the Palestinian people or, I think, the region as a whole,” Obama said.

While the two leaders held wide-ranging talks, the Middle East peace process, a strategic goal of the Obama administration, was at center stage in the discussions. Obama met with Mubarak June 4 in Cairo when Obama delivered an address to Muslims worldwide from Cairo University, and again in Italy for the G8 talks.

“We discussed our common concerns about the potential proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region, including the development of nuclear weapons by Iran, and how we could work together on those fronts,” Obama said.



President Barack Obama meets with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in the White House in Washington, August 18, 2009.

The two leaders also discussed Iraq and focused on ways to strengthen Iraq as it emerges from a wartime footing in a transition to a more stable political and economic environment. Obama said the two also discussed working together to promote the interests of Americans and Egyptians on economic development issues, education issues and health issues.

“And just to take one example, we have agreed to work together with the Organization of Islamic States to eradicate polio, something that we’ve been able to successfully deal with here in the United States, but [which] still has an impact on populations throughout the Muslim communities around the world,” Obama said.

Mubarak praised Obama’s June speech to Muslims, saying that it eliminated all doubt about how the United States views the Muslim world. “The importance of the Cairo visit was very appreciated by the Muslim and Islamic world because

the Islamic world had thought that the U.S. was against Islam, but his great, fantastic address there has removed all those doubts,” Mubarak said through an interpreter.

“We have perhaps focused greatly on the Palestinian issue because it’s the pivotal issue, and the Palestinian issue has impact on the world, on the region, whether for the West or also for the United States,” Mubarak added.

Asked about reports that the Israeli government has not granted any permits for building new settlements in the West Bank territories, Obama said that there has been movement in the right direction.

“I came in from the start saying that all parties concerned had to take some concrete steps to restart serious negotiations, to resolve what has been a long-standing conflict that is not good for the Israeli people and is not good for its neighbors,” Obama said. “And I

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U.S., Egypt Working to Restart Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process . . .

(Continued from page 12)

think that the Israeli government has taken discussions with us very seriously."

Obama said he will be sending Special Envoy George Mitchell back to the region in a week to encourage talks on an array of issues.

And Obama said he is encouraged by reports that some checkpoints in the West Bank area have been removed, that Palestinian Authority security forces have improved and have been able to deal with security concerns in the West Bank, and that there has been some increased economic activity in the West Bank.

"This is creating a climate in which it's possible for us to see some positive steps and hopefully negotiate toward a final resolution of

these long-standing issues," Obama said.

"Everybody's going to have to take steps. Everybody's going to have to take some risks," he added.

Mubarak said he has had some discussions with Israeli and Palestinian officials. "We are speaking in a good manner, and we are moving into the right direction," he said.

But he added that negotiations of a final status agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians will not be easy. "That's why I came today," he said, "to talk to President Obama and to see that if we move forward on this issue, we will give more hope and more confidence to the people about this issue."

Mubarak also met for about an hour on August 17 with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in

preparation for the White House meeting. Their talks ranged from bilateral issues to regional security and a number of global issues in which Egypt and the United States are engaged, Assistant Secretary of State Philip Crowley said.

See the transcript of Obama's and Mubarak's remarks (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/August/20090818170341eafas0.3256451.html&distid=ucs>).

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog Obama Today. (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>) ♦

Obama Says Iranians Taking Risks to Have Their Voices Be Heard . . .

(Continued from page 9)

President Obama said he was not in a position to say if the June 12 presidential vote was fair or unfair because Iran did not allow international election observers. "But beyond the election, what's clear is that the Iranian people are wanting to express themselves," he told the Pakistani newspaper Dawn in remarks that were published June 21.

"We respect Iran's sovereignty, but we also are witnessing peaceful demonstrations, people expressing themselves, and I stand for that universal principle that people should have a voice in their own lives and their own destiny." The president added that he hopes oth-

ers in the international community recognize the "need to stand behind peaceful protests and be opposed to violence or repression."

The president also released a statement on Iran June 20 in which he said the United States mourns "each and every innocent life that is lost" and said that if the Iranian government seeks the respect of the international community, "it must respect the dignity of its own people and govern through consent, not coercion."

Obama quoted American civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Martin Luther King Jr., who said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

"I believe that; the international community believes that," Obama said. "And right now, we are bearing witness to the Iranian peoples' belief in that truth, and we will continue to bear witness."

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

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

Obama Awards Medals of Freedom to “Agents of Change”

By Michael J. Bandler
Special Correspondent

Washington — There are men and women who — in President Obama’s words — believe that “our lives are what we make of them; that no barriers of race, gender or physical infirmity can restrain the human spirit; and that the truest test of a person’s life is what we do for one another.”

Sixteen such individuals, defined by the president as “agents of change,” received Presidential Medals of Freedom in an East Room White House ceremony August 12 — the first contingent to be honored by the 44th U.S. chief executive.

Each medalist, passionate and persistent in professional pursuits ranging from athletics to the arts, from politics and law to science and religion, represented “the difference we can make in the lives of others,” Obama said.

“At a moment when cynicism and doubt too often prevail, when our obligations to one another are too often forgotten, when the road ahead can seem too long or hard to tread, these extraordinary men and women — these agents of change — remind us that excellence is not beyond our abilities, that hope lies around the corner, and that justice can still be won in the forgotten corners of this world.”

The celebratory occasion was adorned by the presence of every living honoree (two awards were posthumous) except for the ailing Senator Edward M. Kennedy. The diverse group included Americans and non-Americans, Hispanics, African Americans and an American

Indian chief, gay activists and a world-class scientist with a profound physical disability.

The 2009 honorees are:

Nancy Goodman Brinker, who created the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure fund for breast cancer research, an organization that also has educated the public and removed stigmas relating to the disease, from which Susan Komen died.



President Barack Obama places the medal around the neck of Nancy Goodman. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

Dr. Pedro Jose Greer, whose chance encounter with a comatose homeless man led to the founding of Camillus Health Concern, a Miami clinic that offers care to more than 4,000 poor and homeless patients annually.

Professor Stephen Hawking of Great Britain, who battled back from a rare disease to live and become one of the great theoretical physicists of contemporary science.

Jack Kemp, the late Republican U.S. congressman, who was known for his bipartisanship as a legislator and as an advocate for and defender of civil rights.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, whose four-decade-plus career in the U.S. Congress has been marked by tireless efforts in the fields of education, law and civil rights and health care, and as an advocate for the concerns of senior citizens, the military, workers and refugees.

Billie Jean Moffitt King, tennis champion, who advanced globally the struggle for greater gender equality in an age of male-dominated sports.

The Reverend Joseph E. Lowery, “a giant of the Moses generation of civil rights leaders,” in the president’s words. As an ally of Martin Luther King Jr., Lowery co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Joseph Medicine Crow, the first member of his American Indian tribe to earn a postgraduate college degree, who, after serving valiantly in World War II, became a leading contributor to cultural and historical preservation.

The late Harvey Milk, who, as one of the first openly gay Americans elected to public office, changed the landscape of opportunity for America’s gay community by fighting against discrimination.

Sandra Day O’Connor, the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, who Obama said, “forged a new trail and built a bridge behind her for all young women to follow.”

Sidney Poitier, film actor and director, the first African American to win a “best actor” Academy Award. In films such as *The Defiant Ones*, *Guess Who’s Coming to*

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Obama Awards Medals of Freedom to “Agents of Change” . . .

(Continued from page 14)



Sidney Poitier is one of those who received a 2009 Presidential Medal of Freedom. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

Dinner and Lilies of the Field, the citation said, he brought to black and white audiences alike “the common tragedy of racism, the inspiring possibility of reconciliation and the simple joys of everyday life.”

Chita Rivera, Hispanic-American theatrical actress, singer and dancer, who inspired a generation of women to follow in her footsteps, not only as a performer, but also because — in the aftermath of a car accident that shattered her leg — she returned to the stage and won new honors for her craftsmanship.

Mary Robinson, a pioneering crusader for women’s rights, who was the first woman elected president of Ireland, later going on to serve as U.N. high commissioner for human rights.

Dr. Janet Davison Rowley, a trail-blazing scientist who made a crucial

medical breakthrough on leukemia and other cancers that advanced genetic research and understanding of the world’s most devastating diseases.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu of South Africa, who



Desmond Tutu, a leading anti-apartheid activist in South Africa, was awarded a 2009 Presidential Medal of Freedom.

helped lead his country through a turning point in modern history, sounding the rallying cry against apartheid, and later serving in a healing role as chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, “with an unshakable humility and firm commitment to our common humanity,” the citation read.

Professor Muhamad Yunus, the Bangladesh-born Nobel economics

laureate, who revolutionized banking by enabling citizens of the world’s poorest countries to create profitable businesses, support their families, and help build sustainable communities.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the highest civilian award in the United States. It was established in 1945 by President Harry S. Truman to honor civilian service during World War II, and first presented a year later. More than 250 individuals have received the honor.

A transcript of Obama’s remarks at the ceremony (http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-the-Medal-of-Freedom-ceremony/) is available on the White House Web site.



Professor Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh receiving the medal during a ceremony in the East Room at the White House. (AFP/Jewel Samad)

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

Diversity, Faith Define Evolving Identity of Muslim Americans

By Howard Cincotta
Special Correspondent

Washington — Two attributes connect individuals like professor Zareena Grewal of Yale University, writer and blogger Wajahat Ali, Congressman André Carson, fashion designer Nyla Hashmi, boxing coach Victor Perez, and California artist Dalah Faytrouni.

They are Muslim and American — and constitute part of a remarkable community that, in large measure, mirrors the diversity of the United States itself.

Muslims in the United States come from 80 different countries and tend to be younger, better educated and in more highly skilled or professional careers than the general population, says Zahid Bukhari of the Georgetown University-based Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding.

Along with their varied ethnic identities, they are Sunni and Shiite — and range from orthodox to secular in their beliefs. They comprise recent immigrants as well as younger generations born in the United States, according to a 2007 survey by the Pew Research Center.

“We are the only country where you have a representation of the global Muslim community,” says Daisy Khan, executive director of the American Society for Muslim Advancement. “You can call us a mini-hajj — and an opportunity to be a model community for others.”

DIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY

Faced with such a range of backgrounds, is it possible to speak of a

specific identity for Muslim Americans? For most, the answer is yes — even though the precise contours of that identity are still evolving.

“American Muslims are defined by the saying that ‘home is not where your grandparents were born but where your grandchildren will live,’” says Salam Al-Marayati, executive director of the Muslim Public Affairs Council.

Khan sees no contradiction between the foundational values of Islam and the demands of American democracy. “In fact, Islam demands the kind of approach that reconciles these values,” she says.

She sees a very significant process under way that is typical of how religions become “Americanized.” Historically, what was once an overwhelmingly Protestant Christian country grew to accept Catholic and Jewish faiths into what is termed a “Judeo-Christian ethic.”

That viewpoint is now evolving into a new “Abrahamic ethic” that encompasses the three monotheistic faiths of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, according to Khan. “Over time, as Muslims are accepted into the larger Abrahamic ethic, they will be seen as an authentic part of the American experience,” she says.

DIALOGUE AND COMMUNITY

Ingrid Mattson, Canadian-born convert to Islam and head of the Islamic Society of North America, sees her job chiefly as making connections and negotiating differences in ways that not only reduce conflict but lead to positive growth and understanding with the larger American society.

“We represent a Muslim identity that flourishes in democracy,” she said in a recent interview on the American Public Radio program Speaking of Faith.

Mattson states that many European governments now are looking to American Muslims as a kind of model community.

“People [who criticize American Muslims] need to recognize the flaws in an approach that is confrontational, oppositional and does not engage in the patient work of consensus-building and conceding the rights of other parties,” says Mattson.

A new survey on the “state of faith relations” in nine North American and European countries seems to substantiate Mattson’s view. American and Canadian religious groups are more likely than Europeans to be classified as “integrated” into their societies, according to the U.S. Gallup Poll organization and British-based Coexist Foundation.

Muslim Americans may follow the classic integration pattern of other minority groups in the United States, but they also face the unique legacy of the September 11, 2001, attacks, according to John Esposito, director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding.

“For many Muslims, there is an additional challenge of those who have not sharply distinguished between Islam and a minority of extremists in the world,” he says.

The answer is to empower a voice that is both mainstream and con-

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Diversity, Faith Define Evolving Identity of Muslim Americans . . .

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nected to the community, according to Marayati. "In my mind, engagement means working for authentic reform that doesn't depart from Islam — reform based on the Quran — not the isolated sayings that the extremists inflate and use."

For Reza Aslan, author of *No god But God*, the growth in global education and communications offers an unprecedented opportunity.

"It is up to those of us who are practicing and preaching a pluralistic, reform-minded, and more open ideal of Islam to get our voices out there and make sure we are part of the debate about the meaning and message of Islam," he said in an altmuslim.com interview.

MUSLIM AND AMERICAN

In her counseling work, Khan sees the process by which people reconcile their Muslim and American identities firsthand. "It's not enough to say you're accidentally here and happen to be American," she says. "You have to forge a new identity."

A critical step is to recognize the difference between cultural practices that can be shed and the core values of Islam, according to Khan. She frequently makes this distinction in her counseling work with young people about what may be traditional practice in a parent's home country — and what is "allowed or not allowed" in Islam.

First-generation Muslim Americans — in the same classic pattern of earlier immigrants — often choose to live and worship within their own ethnic and religious communities,

she observed.

But as younger generations become more secure in balancing their dual identities as citizens and as Muslims, they can reach out and become more invested in the American experience — also a classic process that other minority groups have experienced.

"This gives me a lot of hope," Khan says.

GOVERNMENT OUTREACH

Another critical factor in shaping Muslim-American perceptions is the response of government. A number of federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, have instituted vigorous outreach programs to the Muslim-American community.

"Here in the Justice Department, we are committed to using criminal and civil rights laws to protect Muslim Americans," declared Attorney General Eric Holder in June. "A top priority is a return to robust civil rights enforcement and outreach in defending religious freedoms and other fundamental rights of all of our fellow citizens."

Valerie Jarrett, one of President Obama's closest advisers and head of the White House Office for Public Engagement, spoke at the annual convention of the Islamic Society of North America in July.

"I will tell you, it is not always easy to identify American 'Muslim' business leaders, scientists, artists, athletes, and so on," Jarrett said. "Not because there aren't any, but because there are too many, and they are known for their talents and

character — not simply their religion. This is a great thing. It is a reflection of the American dream, which is ultimately rooted in these values that we all share — values that are common to all of humanity."

See also *Being Muslim in America* (<http://www.america.gov/publications/books/being-muslim-in-america.html>), an America.gov publication.

For more information, see the Web sites of the Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University (<http://cmcu.georgetown.edu/>), the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (<http://macdonald.hartsem.edu/default.htm>), the Fiqh Council of North America (<http://www.fiqhcouncil.org/>), and the American Society for Muslim Advancement (<http://www.asmasociety.org/home/>).

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

New York City Festival Showcases Muslim Art and Ideas

By Ahmed Mohamed
Staff Writer

Washington — A festival in New York City celebrating the extraordinary range of artistic expression in the Muslim world featured more than 100 artists from as far away as Asia, Africa and the Middle East and as near as the New York City borough of Brooklyn.

The festival, titled “Muslim Voices: Arts & Ideas,” was held June 5–14 at various locations throughout New York City. The events were sponsored by the Asia Society, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and New York University’s Center for Dialogues.

The festival featured music, theater, films, exhibitions, talks and other events, which ranged from traditional calligraphy, storytelling and Sufi devotional music to contemporary video installations and

Arabic hip-hop music. The popularity of this festival is viewed as a reflection of the interest that Americans have in religious and cultural diversity.

Festival presentations and programs offered multiple perspectives from Muslims from around the globe, and took place at various locations, such as the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York, the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Public Library.

During the festival, the Center for

Dialogues sponsored a two-day conference entitled “Bridging the Divide between the United States and the Muslim World through Arts and Ideas: possibilities and limitations.” This academic, cultural and policy conference brought together approximately 50 artists, producers, religious and community leaders,



New York City's First Muslim Arts Festival

scholars and policymakers from the Muslim world, the United States and Europe.

Participants discussed three broad themes: “The World of the Artist,” which examined the place of artists in the Muslim world and their access to audiences and venues; “Art and Social Commentary,” which considered art’s power to transform as well as to critique; and “Cultural Exchange,” which investigated how to harness cultural capital through cultural exchanges and suggested new arenas for U.S. cultural diplomacy toward the Muslim world.

The conference blended performance, panel presentations and group discussions to spark conversations about how the rich expressive arts of Muslim cultures might reinvigorate relations with the Muslim world.

The Brooklyn Academy of Music neighborhood was transformed into a vibrant souk, or open-air market, featuring food, arts and crafts from diverse Muslim cultures. The market also included craft demonstrations, hands-on workshops, exhibits and outdoor performances by local Muslim artists and artisans.

The Senegalese artist and humanitarian Youssou N’Dour also performed songs with his band that drew on his Islamic beliefs, African heritage and global experience. During the performance, 2,000 people were on their feet, waving their hands and moving to the music.

“The music brings them, and then you can deliver your message,” N’Dour said.

Both the Aissawa Ensemble and the Al Taybah Ensemble presented their vibrant musical traditions based on the mystical branch of Islam, Sufism. Sufi music seeks to unite listeners with states of transcendence to connect with the Divine.

The festival not only exposed new audiences to examples of contemporary Muslim creative culture, but beyond that, it also reaffirmed the value of artistic exchange as a means of building intercultural bridges. The festival attracted more than 10,000 people. ♦

U.S. Army Engineers Bring Sewage System to Fallujah, Iraq

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — In 2005, the U.S. government began building the first municipal sewage treatment facility in the ancient Iraqi city of Fallujah on the Euphrates River, 97 kilometers west of Baghdad.

By mid-2009, the system was three-fourths complete and is expected to go into operation before the end of the year, according to Schappi Marsh, an engineer working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers based in Fallujah.

Once in operation, the new system will improve the health of the people of Fallujah as well as those living downstream, because the Euphrates is the primary source of drinking water. The project is one of the highlights of U.S. reconstruction efforts in Iraq and employs many Iraqis from Fallujah and surrounding areas.

The project has 450 Iraqi workers building the system, with 35 engineers visiting various sites daily, checking quality of construction and monitoring safety procedures. Members of the Corps of Engineers meet regularly with several Iraqi construction firms that are carrying out 13 separate contracts, as well as Iraqi officials from the city and central governments, to ensure that issues are resolved and the project continues to completion. Both Corps engineers and Iraqi engineers, as well as Iraqi workers, have over-

come a host of difficulties — security threats, funding breakdowns, safety issues and quality controls — to bring the project within sight of completion.

“We feel that with all the problems that have been thrown at us, we’re in fact a \$100 million raging success,” said Peter Collins, who was chief engineer on the project from August 2006 to May 2009.

Marsh said the remaining work involves getting individual houses connected to the municipal system. “We can run

branch lines up to the property lines of houses, but because of liability issues, the homeowners are responsible for making the actual connections to the sewer system. We’re still looking at final connection and how to do that,” he said.

Chris Allen, another Corps engineer stationed in Fallujah, said it would be useful for wastewater engineers from the United States to come to Fallujah to work side by side with Iraqis for several months to provide training in new methods of system maintenance. “I’m optimistic that every time we turn a project over, it will be taken care of and we give the Iraqis another opportunity to impress us,” he said.

The system will collect the wastewater from 27 percent of the city’s

households and run it through a treatment facility that will produce fertilizer and pump decontaminated water into the Euphrates. The Iraqi government will install the wastewater collection system for the remainder of the Fallujah households.

FACING DANGERS

Collins said that Iraqi workers were threatened just for showing up at the work site. He said those workers showed commitment and exceptional courage.

“Several times equipment was hijacked on the road and had to be ransomed. Several times the drivers were shot and killed,” Collins said. “You have to admire these people, greatly admire them,” he said.

He added that security has improved and, since the end of 2008, the pace of work on the system has picked up as a result of the return of the Iraqi project manager to the work site. (The manager had left with his family for Syria because of earlier threats,

according to Collins.)

PERSONAL SATISFACTION

Despite the dangers and difficulties, Collins, Allen and Marsh say they have gotten high satisfaction from working on the Fallujah sewage project. “To think that in the last three years, we have actually brought this through to 80 percent completion gives me a big kick,” Collins said. ♦



Iraqis work on constructing a municipal sewage system for Fallujah, Iraq.



Peter Collins (left) and Schappi Marsh discuss wiring connections in the Fallujah waste water treatment plant.

Scientists Say Climate Change Could Harm Health

By Yasmine Alotaibi
Staff Writer

Washington — Climate change is happening faster than anticipated and is starting to negatively impact health, two scientists say.

Amanda Staudt, a climate scientist with the National Wildlife Federation, and Dr. Paul Epstein, associate director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School as well as a medical doctor trained in tropical public health, came together to discuss the situation at a Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars event, "Healthy Solutions to Climate Change."

Staudt said there is mounting scientific evidence that "climate change is happening faster than what we had anticipated even a few years ago." According to Staudt, these unanticipated changes are already affecting the lives of people around the world. "There's an increasing awareness that these changes are going to be irreversible and ... that we're already being impacted," she said. "In particular, the increasing severity of weather and climate extremes, drought, floods, rainfall, hurricanes and wildfires are all ways that I think we're experiencing global warming in our day-to-day life."

CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTING HEALTH

As these changes in climate occur, Epstein said, health risks will worsen. For example, the rapidly changing climate will help spread



Climate change is affecting daily life in the form of severe weather and droughts, a scientist says.

infectious diseases.

"The first signal we have in terms of infectious disease is in the mountains of Africa, Asia and Latin America," he said. "What we're seeing is the glaciers are retreating, plant communities are upwardly migrating and mosquitoes ... are circulating at higher altitudes."

As the mosquitoes move upward, so do the diseases they are carrying. Epstein said this results in higher rates of malaria and yellow fever as the mosquitoes cover more territory.

On June 16, the U.S. government released Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States, a comprehensive report that detailed how

climate change affects Americans. According to the report, the same weather conditions that lead to heat waves also increase ground-level ozone. Ozone decreases short-term lung function and can cause permanent cell damage in the lining of the lungs.

The report predicts that the number of extreme heat waves will increase, resulting in more heat-related deaths and illnesses. Because the severity of weather extremes is increasing, heavy rains and floods are also posing a health risk. Heavy rains often lead to flooding, which increases the incidence of water-borne diseases.

HEALTHY SOLUTIONS AND STABILIZATION

Epstein said the world must focus on healthy solutions. He said a variety of solutions must be combined to create a portfolio of options, with each lessening the damaging effects of climate change.

These options range from adopting renewable energy, like wind and geothermal power, to better managing forest resources.

Many of these solutions offer "no regrets" ways to stabilize global warming, which Epstein said are "really good and offer lots of promise." He said these no-regrets options can safely be used immediately. Other options, such as the use of biofuels and fossil-fuel-based energies, require further study before implementation in order to fully assess the potential health, ecological and economic consequences, he said.

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Telling America's story

Scientists Say Climate Change Could Harm Health. . .

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RETHINKING CLIMATE CHANGE

Staudt said irreversible changes have forced environmental conservationists to rethink their strategy in fighting climate change.

"The conservation community right now is actively wrestling with how global warming will affect their mission," she said. "For many years, perhaps the whole history of conservation, the emphasis has been on returning our land to some pristine state. That's just not a reality anymore. We're now dealing with completely new climate conditions. So, now we have to think in the conservation community about how we change everything we do to make sense in a changing climate."

Staudt said she thinks that although the situation is critical, the world has the opportunity to move forward.

"I just think this is a really historic opportunity," she said. "Everything's been coming together. We have increasing, surging awareness of the urgency, so we know we need to reduce global warming pollution. At the same time we have this opportunity to repower America, advance a clean-energy economy, and also protect wildlife for our children's future. That's really why I'm in this game at all. I just think it's so important that we be taking action now to provide a better world for our children."

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

United States Pledges \$17 Million to Aid Rape Survivors in DRC . . .

(Continued from page 8)

doubling our efforts to end the fundamental cause of this violence: the fighting that goes on and on here, in the eastern DRC. We will be taking additional steps inside our own government, at the United Nations, and in concert with other nations to bring an end to this conflict."

Clinton met with DRC President Joseph Kabila while in Goma, and described her "very frank discussions about sexual violence," which included urging the Congolese government to prosecute and punish all who commit such crimes. "That is particularly important when those who commit such acts are in positions of authority, including members of the Congolese military," she said.

Yet, in the end, it is up to the Congolese people themselves to demand and bring about the changes that will improve the country, Clinton said. "Just as President Obama said in his historic speech in Ghana, the future of Africa is up to the Africans," she said. "The future, ultimately, of the Congolese people is up to the Congolese people."

Reciting a Congolese proverb — "No matter how long the night, the day is sure to come" — Clinton spoke of the hope and courage she saw among the people of Goma, and pledged that the United States would continue to work hard with the Congolese government, private sector, civil society and individuals to help the DRC.

"You are all helping to hasten the days coming, when thousands of Congolese women will be able to walk freely again, to go to their fields, to play with their children, to walk with their husbands, to do the work of collecting firewood and water without fear," Clinton said. "We want to banish the problem of sexual violence into the dark past, where it belongs."

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley called Clinton's visit to Goma "the most powerful day" of her 11-day trip across Africa, which began August 4 in Kenya and includes South Africa, Angola, Nigeria, Liberia and Cape Verde in addition to the DRC. Clinton is scheduled to return to Washington August 14. ♦