



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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U.S. Philanthropists Help Establish Ethiopia's First Post-graduate Dermatology Training Program

The lack of dermatologists and the high prevalence of dermatological illnesses such as leprosy and leishmaniasis in Ethiopia prompted a small group of philanthropists in the United States and doctors working at the African Leprosy/TB Education and Research Training (ALERT) Center, to combine their efforts to establish a post-graduate dermatology training program in Addis Ababa. The program they established seeks to dou-

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Ambassador Yamamoto met on May 15 with (Left to Right) Dr. Sarah Brenner, Mr. Calvin Kiiffner, Dr. Asqual Getaneh, Dr. Fuad Temam, Ambassador Yamamoto, Ms. Hiroko Kiiffner, Dr. Ruth Leekassa, and Dr. A. Bernard Ackerman.

Africa's Strategic Importance to U.S. Is Growing, Envoy Says

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- A senior diplomat says her recent appointment as the first full-time U.S. envoy to the African Union (AU) highlights a growing U.S.-African partnership aimed at pursuing political stability and economic prosperity on a strategic continent.



Cindy Courville, Ambassador to the U.S. Mission to the AU

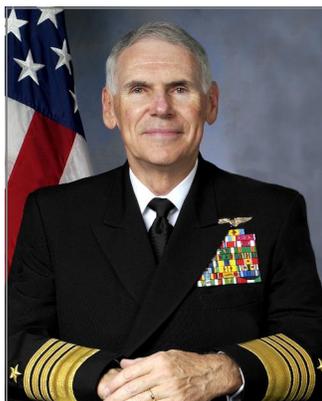
"This is an historic moment both for the African Union and the United States" as the focus of Africans' attention moves from a pre-occupation with the colonial era to today's globalization, Ambassador Cindy Courville said in a May 10 interview with USINFO.

In December 2006, Courville was named to represent the United States at AU headquar-

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Admiral William J. Fallon of the U.S. Central Command Visits Addis

U.S. Embassy, Addis Ababa, May 10, 2007: Admiral William J. Fallon, the new Commander of the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), visited Addis Ababa from May 10 to 11 while on a tour of several countries in the region. In March 2007, Admiral Fallon was appointed by President George W. Bush as commander of U.S. Central Command, replacing Army General John P. Abizaid.



Admiral William J. Fallon

While in Addis, Admiral Fallon met with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and other high-level officials to discuss bilateral issues, which include security and stability in the region. Also discussed were developments in Somalia, and the Horn of Africa in general.

Admiral Fallon will build his knowledge base with frequent visits to

the region to meet and establish relationships with leaders and senior officials of countries that are strategic partners of the United States. Through these partnerships and increased awareness, there is a better opportunity for a comprehensive effort to better address issues such as security and economic development.

CENTCOM oversees the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), based in Djibouti. The geographic region of the Combined Joint Task Force includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and the Seychelles. The Combined Joint Task Force conducts operations, training, and

humanitarian missions to assist host nations to combat terrorism and meet the needs of their citizens.

The United States currently provides approximately \$2.5 million annually in International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) assistance to Ethiopia. The U.S. provides only non-lethal military equipment and training to the Ethiopian military. U.S. assistance also supports operations and logistics training for the Ethiopian military which is a leader among troop contributors to United Nations peace-keeping operations. The U.S. and Ethiopian militaries have also cooperated in providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities in Ethiopia. Such assistance has included drilling wells for potable water, vaccinating livestock, and renovating rural health clinics and schools. ♦

U.S. Philanthropists Help Establish Ethiopia's First Post-graduate . . .

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ble the number of dermatologists in Ethiopia three years. In addition, dermatologists trained under the program will train general practitioners and mid-level health care workers (nurses and health officers), who provide dermatological care for the large majority of the population, including those in rural areas.

Dr. Fuad Temam is the first Ethiopian dermatopathologist to be trained at the Ackerman Academy of Dermatopathology. Dr. Fuad's training was funded through the generosity of its founder, Dr. A. Bernard Ackerman, and U.S. philanthropists Calvin and Hiroko Kiiffner. Dr. Fuad returned to Ethiopia in 2005 and is now training Ethiopian

dermatologists through the AAU-ALERT dermatology program. This program is a three year clinical training in dermatology that began in 2005 with six medical school graduates. Since 2005, ten additional trainees have joined, and each year, 8-10 additional trainees are taken on. The program is delivered jointly by the medical faculty of Addis Ababa University and the ALERT Center. At present, a limited number of training slots are available for general practitioners and mid-level health care workers.

At a ceremony at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence on May 14, U.S. Ambassador Don Yamamoto met Dr. Fuad Temam along with U.S. philanthropists Calvin and Hiroko Kiiffner, and Dr. A. Bernard Acker-

man MD, dermatopathologist and founder of the Ackerman Academy of Dermatopathology in New York City. They were accompanied by Asqual Getaneh, MD, MPH, a physician at Columbia University in New York City, who brokered the connection between Dr. Ackerman, the Kiiffner's and ALERT. Dr Ruth Leekasa, ALERT Director, also accompanied the group. Ambassador Yamamoto said during their meeting, that the efforts of this dedicated group of people is a wonderful example of U.S.-Ethiopian collaborative efforts to come up with lasting solutions for improved health care in Ethiopia. He said that programs such as this one, initiated and sustained by local experts, help to increase local capacity and respond to local needs. ♦

U.S. Singer Anthony Brown Stages Live Concerts in Addis Ababa

Internationally acclaimed baritone Anthony Brown gave a series of concerts in Addis Ababa during his visit from May 6-16, 2007 sponsored by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. Anthony Brown performed his music to varied audiences this week, and accompanied by local musicians and chanters.

On May 8, Anthony Brown sang folk ballads, spirituals and hymn from the 1800s, as well as several Broadway "show tunes" at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence for a group of invited guests. On Thursday, May 10 Mr. Brown performed at the Italian Cultural Institute along with Mohammed Awol, a well known menzuma performer. One local newspaper reporting on the event described the performers as "two singers from distinct cultural traditions, each possessing a faith based foundation." Mohammed Awol performed "Menzuma" (chanting) which is music from the Ethiopian Islamic Sufi tradition that contains remembrances of God, praises of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), advice on how to live one's life and

messages of peace and love. Anthony Brown sang melodies by African American composers Hall Johnson, Harry Thacker Burleigh, and Margaret Allison Bonds. This con-

Also included in Anthony Brown's program was a lecture on African American spiritual music to senior students and professors of the Yared Music School in Addis Ababa.

Brown's program culminated in a May 15 charity concert to raise funds for the Alliance for Life, an NGO that supports women and children living with HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia. Anthony Brown shared the stage with a "shebsheba" choir, and renowned Ethiopian pianist, Girma Yifrashewa. Anthony



Anthony Brown with Mohammed Awol and group who performed menzuma at the concert at the Italian Cultural Institute.

cert was a rare occasion for Addis Ababa, with Christian and Muslim musicians performing devotional music side by side. As Public Affairs Officer Anthony Fisher remarked when he spoke at the beginning of the event, "the concert was intended to be a bridge to understanding the diversity and at the same time the commonalities between various faiths."

sang old American hymns, spirituals and songs from his new CD "Each Other's light," and delighted the audience by singing one of Girma's compositions in Amharic. ♦

Africa's Strategic Importance to U.S. Is Growing, Envoy Says . . .

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ters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, becoming the first non-African envoy to be exclusively accredited to the 53-nation multilateral organization. Most other non-African envoys are accredited to the Ethiopian government and secondarily represent their countries at the AU, which was established in 2002 as a successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

"We are the only non-African mission at the AU," Courville pointed out. She said Africans welcomed her new assignment because "serving as President Bush's special assistant for Africa, they knew my appointment had the highest level of attention at the White House."

Courville, a former analyst with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), served most recently as Africa director at the White House National Security Council, where she developed and coordinated U.S. policy on engagement with Africa.

While the United States has an economic interest in Africa -- close to 15 percent of all U.S. oil imports come from the continent -- it also is interested in helping the continent achieve political stability and economic prosperity. The result is that foreign assistance to the continent has tripled in the past six years to about \$4 billion, Courville told US-INFO. (See U.S. Aid to Africa (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/aid_to_africa.html).)

"The United States recognizes the evolutionary change the continent is undergoing" and is partnering with Africans to find African solutions to problems with health care, conflict resolution and good governance, Courville said. A former university professor, she wrote her doctoral

dissertation on the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe.

In the critical area of conflict resolution, "the United States has provided over \$400 million to the AU for peacekeeping operations in Darfur in the last four years alone," Courville said. "We know the AU has the political will and heart to go into crisis regions" but lacks the resources to undertake these missions, she added.

With that in mind, the U.S. aim has been to buttress AU peacekeeping capabilities through initiatives like the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, which is working with a number of African militaries to build up an AU standby force of 25,000 troops to respond to emergencies.

To further that effort, Courville said, her small mission staff now includes two military liaison officers from the U.S. European Command (EUCOM), responsible for assistance to most African countries, and the Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), the 1,500-troop force centered in Djibouti responsible for anti-terrorism efforts and regional humanitarian outreach.

Another "major step" in that direction was the recent decision by the U.S. Defense Department, in collaboration with the State Department, to establish a new geographic military command for the continent, to be called U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), Courville explained. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=April&x=20070424163201MVyelwarCO.8415644>).)

Also, more than \$1.7 million in U.S. funding has been devoted to the

support of the AU political affairs directorate, with another \$250,000 going for the support of diplomatic initiatives by the organization, Courville said.

In addition, the U.S. mission is currently working with the AU to help set up a "strategic planning cell" to monitor the growing crisis in Somalia. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer is behind the effort and is giving it her full attention, Courville added.

These initiatives are all in line with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's transformational diplomacy, "based on a proactive rather than a reactive approach to international problems," Courville said.

"This means not only a high-level recognition of Africa's strategic importance as an integral part of the international community," she explained, but also a recognition of the continent's importance "as a partner across the board."

This is also a transformational time for the AU, Courville said, "as they look at restructuring their own organization: how commissioners interface, the leadership's responsibilities -- their role politically, economically, socially and on the security front.

In launching the new U.S. mission to the African Union in the past four months, Courville said, "we have been on the cutting edge of the AU's transformation and have had the most incredible access, and will continue to work with them in a 'hands-on' approach."

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

U.S.-Based Operation Smile Brings Hope to Children Around World

Each day around the world thousands of children are born with facial deformities that, left uncorrected, could affect their chances of having a productive and happy life.

This is the situation thousands of medical and nonmedical volunteers of Virginia-based Operation Smile are committed to improving.

Since 1982 the nonprofit organization has been repairing child and young adult cleft palates and cleft lips in countries around the globe. The group, as it says, is "changing lives one smile at a time."

Supported primarily by private donations, teams consisting of 35-50 volunteers each travel to countries for approximately two weeks at a time. Mission members include physicians, nurses, dentists, speech pathologists and medical support staff, as well as nonmedical workers.

Prior to each visit, which lasts approximately two weeks, mission members spend months to prepare, including arranging for clean and safe operating and recovery rooms at sites and sending medical supplies in advance.

Notified by local volunteers that medical help is coming to a community, hundreds of children and their family members are usually at the clinic site to greet mission members, said longtime volunteer Cindy McCain of Arizona.

Many children needing surgery for a cleft palate or lip have carried a



Operation Smile volunteers Janet Casabon Benowitz and Dr. Bill Pond anesthetize a young child before undergoing corrective plastic surgery on his cleft lip aboard U.S. Naval hospital ship USNS Mercy in Chittagong, Bangladesh, July 2. (Dept. of Defense photo)

As she was about to leave the orphanage, its director, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Mother Teresa, asked if McCain would take a baby living in the children's home to the United States for medical attention for a severe cleft palate.

On the trip back to Arizona, McCain decided she wanted the child to be part of her life and that of her husband, John, and that she wanted to adopt it. And she began to think of other children in the world with a deformity similar to that of the baby she was holding.

Back in the United States she had her child's cleft palate repaired and sought out Operation Smile to volunteer, having heard of the organization's work.

Operation Smile estimates that one out of approximately 500-600 babies in the developing world

is born with a cleft lip or cleft palate. Both are congenital defects that scientists believe are caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors, according to Operation Smile.

Surgery to repair a cleft palate and

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stigma of being unattractive and may have had difficulty eating, talking or breathing their entire lives, McCain said.

As a nonmedical volunteer, McCain provides administrative assistance for pre- and postoperative medical evaluations, and comfort to the children and their family members before and after surgery.

McCain said her most memorable experience as a volunteer, which occurred several years ago, began when she visited an orphanage in Bangladesh while working with another medical nonprofit group.



Koranic Students in Senegal Lunch and Learn Aided by Counterpart

Young students attending traditional Koranic schools in northern Senegal used to beg for alms every day to help pay for their school meals because their families were too poor to provide both food and education.

Students are now spending more time in class, thanks to a hot meal program that enables Koranic schools to focus on feeding the minds of their students.

The Koranic school feeding program, implemented by the U.S.-based nongovernmental organization Counterpart International, is providing students with daily meals, bedding, mosquito bed nets to prevent malaria, medicines, and literacy and vocational skills training.

The food is provided through the Food for Peace program, administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). School gardens and nutrition lessons complement the meals.

The program aims to improve students' living and learning conditions, enhance their health and nutrition and strengthen local communities' connections to the Koranic schools, in hopes of ensuring that the children have a bright future.



Students enjoy a hot meal at a Koranic school in Mboumba, Senegal. The food, donated by the U.S. Agency for International Development, is part of a comprehensive development program. Photo: R. Nyberg, USAID.

Students are more likely to stay in school if they know they will have a hot meal, and with a full stomach children can concentrate on their studies. In addition, when schools

flourish the community is energized to get involved and education can be shared, Counterpart says.

Thierno Bass, head of Koranic schools in the village of Mboumba, agrees. "By helping the students at these schools, you are also helping the women, the men and every household within the village," he said.

"We have already seen immediate results from this program as [students] are able to stay in school longer and learn more each day," said another school head, Thierno Diop.

Counterpart is currently working with 10 Koranic schools, reaching approximately 3,800 children in the Podor and Koki areas of northern Senegal.

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

Bush Supports Comprehensive Immigration Reform

President Bush called on senators to pass a comprehensive immigration bill that will respect U.S. federal laws, meet the legitimate needs of workers and employers and treat people with dignity.

Speaking to the American public May 12 in his weekly radio address, Bush looked ahead to the upcoming week when the Senate is expected to take up the issue of immigration reform.

“Reforming our immigration system is an important opportunity to show that elected officials in Washington can work together to find practical solutions to the problems that matter most,” the president said.

Bush noted that a new comprehensive immigration reform bill must address and accomplish five clear objectives in order to be successful:

Continue efforts to improve border security;

Provide employers with better tools to help verify work eligibility status of their employees;

Create a temporary work program that allows foreign workers to legally enter the United States to fill jobs that Americans are not taking;

Resolve “without amnesty and without animosity” the status of illegal immigrants already residing in the United States;

Uphold “the American tradition of the melting pot” by helping foreigners to assimilate into American society and learn to speak and write the English language;



President Bush tours the U.S.-Mexico border in Yuma, Arizona. (AP Images)

“We must address all elements of this problem together, or none of them will be solved at all,” the president said.

Bush expressed optimism about the possibility of passing comprehensive immigration legislation this year, saying: “We’ve been addressing our differences in good faith, and we’re building consensus.”

“Coming together on a good bill that includes all five elements, we will make America more secure. We will make our economy more competitive,” he said. “And we will show the world that America can

be a lawful society and a welcoming society at the same time.”

For more information on U.S. policy, see Visas and Immigration (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.html).

An audio link (<http://whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070512.a.mp3>) to the address is available on the White House Web site.

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

Lucille Clifton First Black Woman To Win Lilly Poetry Prize

By Jeffrey Thomas
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Black poet Lucille Clifton has won the 2007 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, one of the most prestigious honors awarded American poets.

In making the \$100,000 award, the judges cited Clifton's "looming humaneness" and "moral quality."

"Clifton has added enormously to the representation of the African-American experience in poetry and has been a kind of historical consciousness for her people and a public consciousness for us all," the judges said.

Clifton, 71, is the first black woman to win the Lilly Prize, which was established in 1986 and is presented annually by the Poetry Foundation. Previous winners include such well-known poets as Adrienne Rich, John Ashbery, Donald Hall, Yusef Komunyakaa, and last year's winner, Richard Wilbur.

"I'm a contemporary American poet who is African American and female," Clifton told USINFO when asked how she sees her work within the context of American poetry.

She said it never occurred to her when she was growing up in western New York state that she would win such recognition for her work. "I began writing at a time when people who looked like me were not being published."

But Clifton has become one of the most revered figures on the American poetry scene. "Lucille Clifton is a powerful presence and voice in American poetry. Her poems are at once outraged and tender, small

and explosive, sassy and devout. She sounds like no one else, and her achievement looks larger with each passing year," said Christian Wiman, editor of Poetry magazine and chair of the selection committee, in announcing the award.



Poet Lucille Clifton, the first black woman to win the Lilly Prize. (AP Images)

The first of her 11 books of poems, *Good Times*, appeared in 1969, and some of her poetry was selected the next year by Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps in their collection *Poetry of the Negro 1746-1970*. She has won many honors since then, including a National Book Award in 2000 for *Blessing the Boats: New and Selected Poems, 1988-2000*. She served as poet laureate of the state of Maryland from 1974 until 1985. She is also well known as the author of many books for children.

The range of subjects in Clifton's poetry is broad. A mother of six, Clifton has written poems about family relationships, identity, love, sex, death – most of them clearly informed by the black experience in

the United States. There are also the many poems about American history and the world of today – poems about nameless blacks buried on old plantations during the days of slavery; the first child killed in a riot in Soweto, South Africa; a 12-year-old South African victim of AIDS; the victim of a racist murder in Jasper, Texas, in 1998; and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. She also can be funny, as in "wishes for sons and "homage to my hips."

"I am an African American poet, and I try to write out of what I know about the history of this country and certainly the history of African Americans in this country," she said, but she added that she also writes "of everyone."

"I think my audience are ones who feel like me, and I think that's a lot of humans. ... I write out of humanness, and I like those who have been or plan to be or are human to join me in that." Clifton said she is "always surprised" at her growing international audience. Her work has been translated into Norwegian, Spanish, French, Japanese, Hebrew and Serbian, among other languages.

For those unfamiliar with her work and looking for a place to start, Clifton suggests *Good Woman*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 1980 and includes her first four books of poetry and an essay about her father's family, one member of which was brought to the United States from what is now Benin.

"Mulberry Fields," which Clifton identified as a good poem to start with, is available on the Web site of the Poetry Foundation. Another per-

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Jamestown Laid Foundations for American Democracy, Bush Says

By Melody Merin
USINFO Special Correspondent

Washington -- The founding of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America, in 1607 also laid the foundations of American democracy, President Bush says.

During a celebration honoring the 400th anniversary of the settlement May 13, Bush said the Jamestown settlers "planted the seeds of American democracy, at a time when democratic institutions were rare." Bush cited the creation of private property rights that encouraged ownership and free enterprise, the establishment of the rule of law and the formation of the first representative assembly that "ensured the consent of the people and gave Virginians a voice in their government."

However, the expansion of Jamestown came "at a terrible cost" to some, the president added, citing the losses suffered by many American Indians and Africans. "Their story is a part of the story of Jamestown," he said, and "reminds us that the work of American democracy is to constantly renew and to extend the blessings of liberty."

"America is proud to promote the expansion of democracy, and we must continue to stand with all those struggling to claim their freedom," Bush said. U.S. history has

shown there are many challenges and setbacks on the road to democracy, he said, but freedom has the "power to transform societies," and "liberty is the path to lasting peace."

english&y= 2007&m= May&x= 20070504163351esnamfuak0.713833)."

Additional information (<http://www.jamestown2007.org/>) about Jamestown and the events commemo-



President Bush and Virginia Governor Tim Kaine talk with a sail maker during a visit to Jamestown, Virginia, May 13. (White House)

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070513.html>) of the president's speech is available on the White House Web site.

See also "American Indians See Opportunity in Jamestown Anniversary" ([rating its 400th anniversary can be found on the Jamestown 2007 Web site.](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

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

U.S., International Museums Win Awards for Innovation

By Jeffrey Thomas
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- An animated Native American folktale, a weekly science news podcast, a sunken treasure map game, a Chicago blues audio tour, a butterfly habitat simulator, an opportunity to play photojournalist on a breaking story and a stock-market simulator game are among the outstanding achievements in museum media recognized by the American Association of Museums.

The association announced its MUSE Awards, as they are known, May 13 in Chicago to honor ingenuity, creativity and innovation in museum exhibits.

The Museum of Science in Boston won a gold medal for its "Current Science & Technology Podcast," which reaches thousands of listeners per week. The MUSE judges cited the podcasts as "super-engaging" and said they upload quickly and offer great sound-production quality. "The podcasts allow in-depth discussion between museum staff and guest scientists that could not be addressed better in other media," they said. The topics of the 90 episodes created since 2005 are "pleasantly unusual" and "accessible," they added.

The traveling treasure map game, called "National Geographic MAPS: Tools for Adventure," won a gold medal for The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, which partnered with the National Geographic Society to create it. For the exhibit, The Children's Museum created five computer interactive games to introduce kids to the roles maps play in daily life. The games have been modified for play on the National Geographic Society Web site, so

that kids and parents around the world can undertake virtual explorations. The judges praised the variety of presentations, which shows maps in use in different time periods, places and situations. "The games emphasize the active process behind using maps by putting users in control of their own experi-



The Museum of Science in Boston won a gold medal for its Current Science & Technology Podcast. (Janine Sides/State Dept.)

ences," the judges said.

The Newseum in Rosslyn, Virginia, won a gold medal for giving visitors the experience of being a photographer on the scene of a breaking news story, even providing a critique of their chosen shots. The judges cited the interactive kiosk for appealing to audiences of all ages, enabling visitors to get into the head of a photojournalist and explore such professional issues as aesthetics, timing, judgment and ethics.

An animated Native American folktale won a gold medal for best video for the National Museum of the American Indian, which is part of the Smithsonian Institution museums on the National Mall in Wash-

ington. The producers of the video set out to show, through story, the basis of Native American knowledge and why the traditional practices are important. The judges deemed the result "bright, colorful and beautiful" and "a breath of fresh air in terms of execution ... wonderfully imagined, tightly edited and perfectly tailored to a museum exhibit environment."

The Smithsonian American Art Museum's 10 in-gallery kiosks were awarded a gold medal for delivering information on the Luce Center's 3,400 artworks and 1,100 artists. In addition to providing narrated slideshows and video interviews with American artists, the kiosks enable visitors to create their own scrapbooks and then access them from home online.

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS CITED FOR INNOVATION

The MUSE Awards, now in their 18th year, are open to entries from museums around the world, and three of the gold medal winners in the 11 categories were museums in Mexico City; Taipei, Taiwan; and Melbourne, Australia.

El Museo Interactivo de Economía in Mexico City won a gold medal for its "Stock Market Simulator," which immerses visitors in a multiplayer game that illustrates market forces. The judges lauded the "lively social experience." They cited the simulator as "an outstanding example of using technology as a tool for museum learning, and not simply for technology's sake."

Taiwan's National Palace Museum won a gold medal for its Web site in Chinese and English titled "The Calligraphic World of Mi Fu's Art,"

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Lucille Clifton First Black Woman To Win Lilly Poetry Prize . . .

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sonal favorite of hers, "the message of crazy horse" is also available there. Crazy Horse was the war chief and visionary leader of the American Indian Lakota who played a major role in the Battle of the Little Bighorn in which the 7th U.S. Cavalry under General Custer was killed in 1876. "I'm very fond of her who was called Crazy Horse," Clifton said.

Asked why she writes, Clifton responded, "I'll give you Martin Luther's answer: 'Because I cannot do otherwise.'"

More information (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>) on Clifton and her poetry, including the full text of "wishes for sons (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=179617>)," "homage to my hips (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=179615>)," "Mulberry Fields (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=176013>)" and "the message of crazy horse (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=176010>)," is available on the Poetry Foundation Web site.

A webcast (http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=3656)

of Clifton reading her poetry at a Maryland high school is available on the Web site of the Library of Congress.

For more information on African Americans and poetry, see Gateway to African American History (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population/population_and_diversity/african_americans.html) and The Arts (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/the_arts.html).

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

U.S., International Museums Win Awards for Innovation . . .

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which focuses on the calligraphy of this scholar of the Northern Sung period (960-1127). The MUSE judges were taken with the site's beauty and elegance. "The narrative is woven seamlessly with one of the most effective and even poetic timelines and maps we have ever seen. Flash and design are used with subtlety to complement, not overwhelm, the content, and the sound design adds a serene quality to the experience."

The Melbourne Museum won its gold for its brief, humorous and in-

formative television advertisements for its "Dinosaurs in Time" exhibition.

A complete list (<http://www.mediaandtechnology.org/muse/2007muselist.html>) of the 2007 MUSE Award winners and judging criteria is available on the Web site of the American Association of Museums.

(*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, Iran Agree To Hold Talks on Iraq

By David Shelby
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Following on a brief exchange between U.S. and Iranian officials at the Iraq Neighbors' Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, Washington and Tehran have agreed to engage in ambassadorial-level discussions about the situation in Iraq.

State Department deputy spokesman Tom Casey said the agreement was a "logical follow-up" to the discussions in Sharm el-Sheikh May 3-4.

"The Iranians ... continue as they have in the past, to say that they would like to play a constructive role, and that they want to help in promoting the stability of Iraq. We, in light of the conversations that have taken place in the Neighbors' Conference, want to give a chance to test that proposition out," Casey told reporters at a State Department briefing May 14.

White House and State Department officials stressed that the discussions would be limited to Iraq-related issues.

The Neighbors' Conference focused on actions Iraq's neighbors could take to help bring stability to Iraq. At the conference, the United



President Bush speaks to the press about the war in Iraq after his meeting at the Pentagon May 10. (AP Images)

States urged the neighboring countries, particularly Iran, to tighten border security, refrain from supporting militias inside Iraq and stanch the flow of weapons and militants into Iraq. Casey said the proposed discussions between the United States and Iran would focus on these same issues.

U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker will represent the United States in the discussions. Casey pointed out that the U.S. ambassador in Baghdad has had the authority from President Bush to engage in contacts with Iran since late 2005, when Zalmay Khalilzad held the post.

Although the United States and Iran have not had formal diplomatic relations since 1979, when Iranian militants seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and took its staff hostage, the countries have had diplomatic exchanges on several occasions. Casey pointed out that the proposed meeting in Baghdad is similar to talks between U.S. and Iranian officials over the situation in Afghanistan following the toppling of the Taliban regime in 2001.

For more on U.S. policies in the region, see Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).

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

U.S.-Based Operation Smile Brings Hope to Children Around World . . .

(Continued from page 5)

cleft lip is a "simple procedure" and in the United States usually is performed when a baby is days old, McCain said. But in poor countries the cleft conditions typically are left untouched until a volunteer organization steps in to help.

Donating time to Operation Smile

benefits volunteers as well as the young patients, say McCain and fellow longtime volunteer Cindi Raglin, a nurse from Virginia.

As soon as a child wakes from surgery, he or she is given a mirror, Raglin said.

"At first they just stare" at the re-

flection of their new appearance, she said. "Then they smile."

"It doesn't take a language to say, 'Thank you.' You can see it in their smiles," she said.

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U.S. Draft Law Would Toughen Penalties Against Counterfeit Goods

Washington -- Violations of intellectual property rights not only deprive legitimate businesses of millions of dollars and undercut innovation but often pose serious threat to human safety and health, says U.S. Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales.

In response to this problem, the U.S. Justice Department on May 14 sent to Congress the Intellectual Property Protection Act of 2007. The draft legislation calls for stronger penalties for repeat offenders and would increase the maximum penalty for counterfeiting offenses if the defendant "knowingly and recklessly causes serious bodily injury or death," Gonzales said.

To be considered by Congress, a draft bill sent by the administration must be sponsored by one or more members of Congress. To become a law, identical versions of a bill must be passed by both chambers of Congress and signed by the president.

The administration also announced plans to expand its efforts to improve intellectual property enforcement in key countries. Many counterfeit goods, particularly pharmaceuticals, are imported from overseas markets.

According to the draft bill, serious body injury could carry a penalty of 10 years to 20 years in prison, and up to life imprisonment if counterfeiting results in death, a senior Justice Department official told journalists May 14.

Although some may think violations of intellectual property rights have purely economic effects on "faceless corporations," the reality is much different, especially when medical and pharmaceutical products are concerned, the attorney

general said May 14 at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

"Imagine a heart patient undergoing emergency surgery at a hospital that unknowingly purchased substandard counterfeit surgical equipment or medication," he said.

Gonzales added that the new bill would "hit the criminals in their wallet" and make sure they lose all illicit profits and any property used to commit the crime.

This summer, the Justice Department will establish a second IP law enforcement coordinator in Sofia, Bulgaria, to improve the department's international cooperation and outreach. The first Justice Department IP coordinator was installed in 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/Archive/2006/Jan/10-176639.html>).)

Gonzales said he recently traveled to Brazil to discuss joint operations to combat intellectual property crime. The issue of intellectual property violations also will be a subject of his discussions at the G8 justice and interior ministers meeting in Munich, Germany, May 23-25.

As criminal organizations benefiting from intellectual property theft are becoming more sophisticated and better organized, the Justice Department is dedicating more resources and increasing the number of investigations and prosecutions to protect intellectual property rights, the attorney general said.

For example, in 2006 federal investigations resulted in 57 percent more convictions for copyright and trademark offenses than in 2005 and the number of defendants re-

ceiving prison terms of more than two years has grown by 130 percent, he said.

Modern technology has given inventors and creators unprecedented opportunities to share the fruits of their hard work with audiences and communities throughout the world, Gonzales said. But the same technology also has made it easy to copy and trade pirated and counterfeit goods across national borders, he said.

Those who seek to undermine the cornerstone of U.S. economic competitiveness and recklessly put human well-being at risk believe they are beyond the reach of the law, the U.S. attorney general said. "It is our responsibility and commitment to show them that they are wrong."

The full text (http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/speeches/2007/ag_speech_0705141.html) of prepared remarks by Gonzales is available on the Justice Department Web site.

See also "Public Safety Jeopardized by Chinese Counterfeiters, Experts Say" (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=May&x=20050520113013mbzemog0.1829798>)."

For more information, see Protecting Intellectual Property Rights (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/intellectual_property.html).

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Governments, Private Groups Work To End Child Slavery

By Lea Terhune
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Nearly 30 years ago, when activist Kailash Satyarthi began rescuing children who were bonded laborers in India, he had little company.

“Child labor was a non-issue,” he told USINFO. “Now we see thousands of organizations are dedicated, very genuinely working to eradicate child labor.” His efforts sparked young people, businesses and governments to cooperate in eradicating a practice that robs a child of well-being and a future.

To Satyarthi, who leads raids on offenders and epic marches against child labor, the solution lies in education. “Education is the answer to violence, education is the answer to conflicts,” he said at an April 26 event for youth organized by the International Center for Child Labor and Education (ICCLE), part of an international campaign for universal education.

Satyarthi recognized early that merely freeing children was not enough. Not only the children, but societies that employ children as laborers must be educated for the abuses to stop. He urges governments, activists and businesses to unite to prevent children from being forced to haul bricks at construction sites or work in mines or quarries when they should be in classrooms. Today, eliminating child labor is “very much on the political agenda; it’s very much in the social discourse and discussion,” he told USINFO.

But acknowledging child bondage is just a start in a world where, according to UNICEF, an estimated 218 million children aged 5 to 17 are forced to work, often in hazardous environments for little or no

labor. Since 1994, RugMark has rehabilitated about 3,500 child weavers from “one of the problematic industries” that use child labor to keep costs down, RugMark director Nina Smith told USINFO.



Child weavers at a carpet factory in Nepal.
(Robin Romano/Courtesy RugMark)

pay. This figure omits millions of children who work long hours as domestic servants and are vulnerable to abuse. Satyarthi says a significant number of children are sold into servitude.

Because Satyarthi believes abolishing child labor is “a matter of corporate social responsibility,” he founded RugMark, with the help of concerned businesses and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), to enlist market forces against child

RugMark offers voluntary, “child-labor-free” certification to carpet factories, soliciting retail outlets to stock RugMark certified carpets. A recently launched “Most Beautiful Rug” consumer awareness campaign promotes rugs made by adult weavers. “[A] rug made by child labor is ugly, no matter what it looks like,” Smith says.

“The market here is growing. Something like one-third of U.S. consumers incorporate their social, environmental and spiritual values into their purchases,” Smith explained. “We believe about 15 percent market share -- we are at 2 percent now -- is the tipping point for where the industry would be child-labor-free, sometime in the next decade. One of the good things about what we do, our mission is achievable,” she says. RugMark income goes

to rehabilitation and vocational training programs in South Asia.

The U.S. Department of Labor supports such multilevel approaches, according to Marcia Eugenio, director of the department’s International Labor Affairs Bureau. Since 1995, the United States has appropriated nearly \$600 million for child labor and trafficking eradication efforts in 79 countries. “As of the end of March 2007, we actually reached

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Internet Censorship Concern for Businesses as well as Activists

By David Anthony Denny
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Internet censorship applies to economic as well as political topics and can have serious consequences for businesses, says Julien Pain, a French journalist and a member of Reporters Without Borders.

Pain participated May 10 in a USINFO Webchat May 10 sponsored by the State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs. The webchat was the second in a series of Democracy Dialogues on press freedom.

"Markets require information for investment and other decisions," Pain said. "And in countries such as China, how can you trust news media that are censored directly by the authorities? How can you get information about the level of corruption, about the problems faced by the Chinese economy?"

According to Pain, the Chinese government recently censored a French Web site because the site had cautioned that investing in China could be risky and had alerted French companies to possible problems for business entrepreneurs.

Pain said he believes the business community does not realize the im-

portance of supporting free speech. Too many businesses are overly concerned with pleasing governments, even ones with strong censorship like China, to get access to markets, he said.



Julien Pain spoke about the economic and political impact of internet censorship during a May 10 webchat. (Reporters Without Borders)

However, "Internet censorship should not only be a concern for human rights activists, but also for anybody who's planning to do business in countries which censor the [Internet]." Pain said.

Even bloggers -- authors of online journals -- who write about economic matters can

find themselves subject to government censorship, Pain said. At the same time, there are countries where bloggers enjoy more independence and provide less-censored information than do traditional, professional journalists, he said.

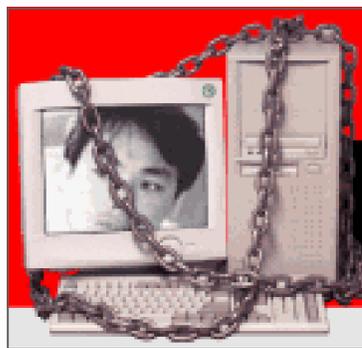
"So who's the real journalist then? The one who has a press card, or the blogger who [has] another job but takes risks by publishing information which is not covered by mainstream media?" Pain asked.

According to Pain, blogs can be important sources of information for journalists. He said bloggers in Egypt were the first "to prove acts of torture committed by the security forces" and said "all media now monitor what's being reported on blogs." This practice "can even be a problem," because media outlets "tend to rely on the Internet instead of sending people on the ground to investigate," he said.

For details, see a transcript (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=May&x=20070510131145eaifas0.5888178>) of the webchat and Democracy Dialogues (http://www.democracy.gov/dd/democracy_dialogues/freedom_speech.html).

Articles about the phenomenon of bloggers and other new forms of media can be found in the USINFO eJournalUSA Media Emerging (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0306/ijge/ijge0306.htm>).

For more information on U.S. policies, see Internet Freedom (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/inter-net_freedom.html).



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U.S. Promotes International Collaborations at Health Conference

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – U.S. officials are joining delegations from 192 other nations in Geneva for the 60th World Health Assembly (WHA), being held May 14-23, to discuss and act on policies addressing key issues, including avian and pandemic influenza and the revised International Health Regulations.

The assembly is a forum of international health ministers that determines major World Health Organization (WHO) policy questions. During these meetings, its members also approve the WHO program and budget for the next two-year period.

In 2007, the assembly will consider resolutions on issues agreed upon by the WHO Executive Board in its January session. In addition to avian flu and International Health Regulations, members will discuss smallpox eradication, malaria, tuberculosis control, chronic diseases, better children's medicines and other topics.

"In the past few years, the assembly's leading issue has been the threat of avian influenza and pandemic influenza," said U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Michael Leavitt at a May 14 press conference in Geneva.

"The United States strongly supports [WHO's] effort to meet the global need for an influenza vaccine," Leavitt added. "The United States also works with partners throughout the world to monitor the spread of disease and prepare for possible pandemics."

The four principles of U.S. international collaboration, he said, are

transparency, rapid reporting, data sharing and scientific cooperation.

"We continue to call on countries everywhere to share influenza samples openly and rapidly and without preconditions," Leavitt said. "No nation can go it alone."

The United States contributed \$10 million in 2007 to WHO to help other countries produce more vaccines, and has invested heavily in vaccine research and expanding U.S. production capability.

Also attending the press conference were Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Admiral (Dr.) John Agwunobi of the U.S. Public Health Service and HHS assistant secretary for health; and Ambassador John Lange, the State Department special representative for avian and pandemic influenza.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS

The International Health Regulation (IHR) are legally binding rules adopted by most countries to contain the disease threats that could spread rapidly from country to country. Such diseases include emerging infections like a new human flu virus or severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which caused a major epidemic between November 2002 and July 2003 with more than 8,000 known cases and 774 deaths. Threats also could come from chemical spills, leaks and dumping or nuclear accidents.

The newest IHR, completed in 2005, updated the 1969 IHR, which addressed only four diseases – cholera, plague, yellow fever and smallpox, a disease that has been eradicated.

"In a globalized world," said Dr. Paulo Ivo Garrido, minister of health of Mozambique and president of the 59th WHA, in a May 14 address to the assembly, "health issues present new challenges that go far beyond national borders and have an impact on the collective security of people around the world."

According to WHO, the 2005 revision has led to an unprecedented international public health agreement to contain health emergencies at the source. The assembly adopted the revision in May 2005; the new regulations come into force June 15. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=December&x=200612201049311cniirelep6.954372e-03>).)

"All nations have a responsibility," Leavitt said, "to work together toward universal implementation of the International Health Regulations."

The IHR offers a legal framework that defines rights, obligations and procedures to ensure international health security without unnecessary interference in international traffic and trade. The revised regulations require all member states to strengthen their capacity for disease surveillance and response.

SMALLPOX DEBATE CONTINUES

The last naturally occurring case of smallpox was reported in 1977; in 1980, the WHO declared the highly infectious disease eradicated.

Today, although there is no evidence of naturally occurring smallpox transmission anywhere on

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Governments, Private Groups Work To End Child Slavery . . .

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our 1 million children target," she told USINFO. U.S. technical assistance includes refurbishing schools, training for children and adults, and access to microcredit.

Eugenio explains that children often labor away from the eyes of inspectors: "They are down in the supply chain to a point where they are not directly linked with the formal sector of the economy." Changing attitudes at the community level is critical to stopping child labor, she says.

U.S. grant money funneled through large NGOs to local organizations supports building sustainable programs. Annual reports to Congress track the nature and extent of child labor in countries around the world. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2005 mandates publication of a list of goods and companies associated with forced labor each year. The Asia Pacific regions have the largest number of child laborers, fol-

lowed by Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, according to UNICEF.

Satyarthi's group, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, operates three centers in India that prepare former child laborers for productive lives through counseling and appropriate training. In 2006, the U.S. State Department, through the U.N. Development Fund for Women, funded the group's public awareness campaign for child labor trafficking.

"I've come here to remind you about the children who are like any one of us, who are not able to go to school and have dreams and aspirations," said Kinsu Kumar, a 12-year-old boy from India rescued from domestic servitude. He was among several former child laborers from India, Africa and Colombia who accompanied Satyarthi and shared their stories. Now in school, he said "I wish each one of us can work together to give the same opportunity to other children in bonded labor." ♦

U.S. Promotes International Collaborations at Health Conference . . .

(Continued from page 16)

Earth, small quantities of smallpox variola virus are held in two research laboratories – one in Atlanta at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and one in Russia.

Some experts think both samples of the virus should be destroyed; others – who think the virus still might exist somewhere in the world, or that terrorists could use it as a biological weapon – want to retain copies of the virus.

There is consensus across science, Agwunobi said, that the smallpox virus is still useful for creating improved diagnostics for smallpox

and better treatments and vaccines.

At the 120th meeting of the WHO Executive Board in January, discussion continued about a draft resolution to destroy smallpox virus stocks. The results of those discussions were sent to the 60th WHA for further discussion.

"The United States and the CDC take very seriously the trust that we hold in being the custodians of the smallpox virus," said Gerberding. "We also take very seriously our responsibility to conduct the research that the global community has deemed necessary to be sure that we have the best possible means of protecting people

should that virus ever be re-released into our society."

More information about the 60th World Health Assembly (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/2007/wha60/en/index.html>) and the International Health Regulations (<http://www.who.int/csr/ihr/en/index.html>) is available at the WHO Web site.

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