



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

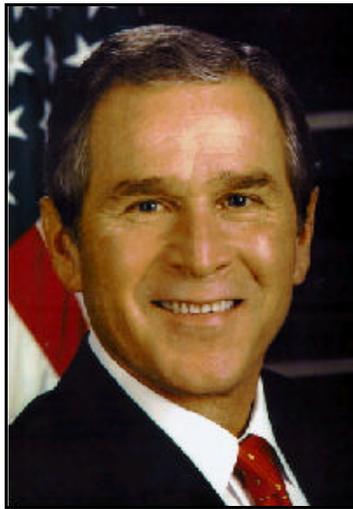
INSIDE

PRESIDENT PROCLAIMS NATIONAL DAY OF THANKSGIVING

Expressing the nation's gratitude for living in a country "where freedom reigns, justice prevails, and hope prospers," President Bush proclaimed Thursday, November 24, 2005, a National Day of Thanksgiving.

Presidents traditionally so designate the fourth Thursday of each November. By statute, Thanksgiving Day is a federal legal holiday.

In this year's proclamation, Bush specifically expressed thanks for the armed forces, state and local law enforcement personnel and first respond-



President George W. Bush

ers who work to keep the country safe. He also praised the determined example set by victims of natural disasters, who

are rebuilding their lives, and the many Americans who are helping them.

For additional information on this American holiday, see Thanksgiving Day (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/holidays/thanksgiving_day.html).

The text of the proclamation follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
(Busan, Republic of Korea)

November 19, 2005
THANKSGIVING DAY,
2005

(Continued on page 2)

CONSOLIDATE AFRICA'S PROGRESS, PROMISE NOW, STATE'S FRAZER URGES



Assistant Secretary Jendayi Frazer

"There has never been a more auspicious time than now to consolidate the progress and promise" that can be seen across the African continent, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer told the U.S. Senate November 17.

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, Frazer said, "The emergence of an activist African Union [AU] with a modern, forward-looking agenda is one of the most important developments on the continent in decades."

(Continued on page 3)

African issues

Africa "Vital" to U.S. Security, Defense Conference Says (P 3)

Former Envoy Praises Bush Anti-Terrorist Partnerships with Africa (P 5)

Contemporary African Art Exhibition Opens at Smithsonian (P 7)

American issues

U.S. Entertainment Industry Notables Work for Social Causes (P 8)

U.S. Aid Agency to Focus on Select Poor Countries in 2006 (P 10)

International issues

United Nations Reform Process Lagging, U.S. Ambassador Says (P 11)

Initiative Would Provide \$100 Laptop to World's Poorest Countries (P 12)

International Writers Offer Work Samples to Washington Audience (P 13)

Health issues

HIV/AIDS Discrimination Is Topic for USINFO Web Chat (P 14)

U.S. Aid Agency Increases Efforts to Fight Malaria in Africa (P 15)

PRESIDENT PROCLAIMS NATIONAL DAY OF THANKSGIVING

(Continued from page 1)

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Thanksgiving Day is a time to remember our many blessings and to celebrate the opportunities that freedom affords. Explorers and settlers arriving in this land often gave thanks for the extraordinary plenty they found. And today, we remain grateful to live in a country of liberty and abundance. We give thanks for the love of family and friends, and we ask God to continue to watch over America.

This Thanksgiving, we pray and express thanks for the men and women who work to keep America safe and secure. Members of our Armed Forces, State and local law enforcement, and first responders embody our Nation's highest ideals of courage and devotion to duty. Our country is grateful for their service and for the support and sacrifice of their families. We ask God's special blessings on those who have lost loved ones in the line of duty.

We also remember those affected by the destruction of natural disasters. Their tremendous determination to recover their lives exemplifies the American spirit, and we are grateful for those across our Nation who answered the cries of their neighbors in need and provided them with food, shelter, and a helping hand. We ask for continued strength and perseverance as we work to rebuild these communities and return hope to our citizens.

We give thanks to live in a country where freedom reigns, justice prevails, and hope prospers. We recognize that America is a better place when we answer the universal call to love a neighbor and help those in need. May God bless and guide the United States of America as we move forward.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 24, 2005, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage all Americans to gather together in their homes and places of

brings together many strands of American culture. Domestic travel peaks as families and friends reunite for a number of festive occasions.

At this time of year, Americans often indulge themselves at the dinner table. It has been estimated that the classic Thanksgiving dinner of turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce and green beans includes some 1,600 calories -- before dessert!

American cuisine in many ways reflects the broader national culture. From its integration of diverse immigrant culinary traditions to the rise of "health consciousness," Americans are indeed what they eat.



The best-selling cookbook author and popular New York Times columnist Mark Bittman will discuss the role of cuisine in American culture in a live Internet chat on November 23 at 9 a.m. (1400 GMT).

A biography of Bittmann and information about registering for the webchat are available on the USINFO

Web site (http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/bittman_23_nov_2005.html).

For additional information about the role of food in U.S. culture, see "Thanksgiving (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/holidays/thanksgiving_day.html)" and the electronic journal Americans at the Table: Reflections on Food and Culture (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0704/ijse/ijse0704.htm>).♦

worship with family, friends, and loved ones to reinforce the ties that bind us and give thanks for the freedoms and many blessings we enjoy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The holiday season between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day

AFRICA "VITAL" TO U.S. SECURITY, DEFENSE CONFERENCE SAYS

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer was in the vanguard of top defense officials, military officers, diplomats and scholars who hailed Africa as vital to U.S. national security interests at a conference hosted by the National Defense University (NDU) November 15-16.

Frazer, who was U.S. ambassador to South Africa before she took over as chief formulator of Africa policy at the State Department two months ago, gave the keynote address at the two-day meeting, which examined the growing importance of Africa to America. The conference, co-sponsored by the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) and the Africa Center for Strategic Studies

(ACSS), was held at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington.

The assistant secretary captured the general tone of the gathering as she asked: "Is Africa vital to U.S. security interests?" and then responded: "The answer is yes."

Ambassador Johnnie Carson, NDU senior vice president, said the gathering was meant to showcase "the U.S. desire to help African nations strengthen their own national security policies" while exploring partnership possibilities between America and the continent.

The NDU, INSS, ACSS are government-operated policy research facilities that function on an independent academic basis fostering intellectual inquiry among defense officials and military officers from the U.S. armed forces and from foreign countries.

Frazer, a former Harvard University professor and top Africa adviser at the National Security Council, told the more than 300 attendees, including several admirals, generals and two former assistant secretaries of state for African affairs -- Chester Crocker and Herman Cohen -- that she was "excited" to be in her new position during "a period of exponential positive trends across the continent."

These include "an upward trend in democracy," as well as "a growing focus and consensus on private-sector-led, trade-based investment" as the engine for economic development and prosperity, Frazer said.

Based on such dynamic and positive political and economic movements, Frazer said, "I'm very pleased to have been part of an

(Continued on page 4)

CONSOLIDATE AFRICA'S PROGRESS, PROMISE NOW, . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Most important, she continued, "the African Union and some of the regional and subregional organizations in Africa are demonstrating effective leadership" in advancing the mutually shared U.S.-Africa goals of prosperity, good governance, social and economic development and combating terrorism.

The assistant secretary was called to Capitol Hill to testify on the effectiveness of African organiza-

tions and institutions as they relate to cross-continental progress.

Frazer praised recent peacekeeping efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). She went on to note that "many do not realize that African nations already provide close to 30 percent of United Nations peacekeeping forces worldwide, with four African countries -- Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa -- among the top 10 U.N. troop contributors."

The United States, Frazer told the lawmakers, supports African peacekeeping in two major ways: through direct assistance to ongoing operations and through programs to enhance the capacity of African peacekeepers.

For additional information on U.S. policy affecting Africa, see Peace and Security (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/peace_security.html).♦

AFRICA "VITAL" TO U.S. SECURITY, DEFENSE CONFERENCE SAYS

(Continued from page 3)

administration that does indeed see Africa as vital to U.S. global interests" and therefore is keen on expanding U.S.-African partnerships.

Central to those partnerships, she told the NDU gathering, is a focus on "conflict prevention and conflict remediation," which means that America's diplomats actively work with African subregional organizations and "leading African mediators" in key hotspots like Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Liberia.

Frazer has gained a reputation for being an indefatigable diplomatic traveler and troubleshooter -- she visited all of South Africa's provinces during her brief tenure in Pretoria, and indicated she planned to travel the same way throughout Africa in her new role as assistant secretary. She also said she expects all U.S. ambassadors on the continent -- whom she is currently hosting at a meeting at the State Department -- to get out into the countryside as much as possible.

In Sudan, Frazer said, "U.S. leadership was absolutely important in ending the North-South conflict and is continuing to be important in addressing the situation in Darfur." Having visited Sudan twice in the past few months, she said

she plans to travel there again within days.

Working with subregional groups like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and lead mediators like Kenya to hammer out the landmark Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan, Frazer said, "The effort has been to transform the government of Sudan so that it can become a legitimate government that protects the interests of all its citizens."

In Liberia, Frazer said, America worked closely with Ghanaian President John Kufuor and the government of Ghana, as the African lead country, and with the subregional Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on recent national elections that were "free and transparent ... clearly a success."

"The U.S. is a major 'player' in Liberia and will continue to be," Frazer told her audience.

South Africa played the lead mediator role in helping resolve conflict in the DRC, she said, noting, "Twenty-two million Congolese have now been registered to vote [in upcoming elections], which is really an amazing feat."

Despite more work to be done, Frazer said, "serious progress has been made." She concluded that

with the "very positive dynamics" at work on the continent and with recent renewed commitments by President Bush to help Africans resolve conflict and fight disease and poverty -- U.S. aid was about \$3 billion last year -- "we're going to see a day when there are no conflicts in Africa."

For additional information on U.S. policy in the region, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>).

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FORMER ENVOY PRAISES BUSH ANTI-TERRORIST PARTNERSHIPS WITH AFRICA

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- By focusing on poverty and security, the Bush administration's partnerships with Africans to combat international terrorism are moving in the right direction, says diplomat-turned-scholar David Shinn.

A career Foreign Service officer who served as U.S. ambassador to Burkina Faso and later to Ethiopia, Shinn now teaches young Americans about Africa as an adjunct professor at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs in Washington.

"No country outside Africa has done more than the U.S. to combat terrorism on the continent," Shinn told more than 300 participants on the second day of the November 15-16 National Defense University (NDU) conference examining, "Africa: Vital to U.S. Security?"

The two-day meeting, held on NDU's campus at historic Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, was co-sponsored by the Institute for National Strategic Studies and the African Center for Strategic Studies. All three organizations are policy research organizations associated with the U.S. Department of Defense.

Shinn, who made his comments on the panel "Terrorism and Transna-

tional Threats -- Causes and Enablers," said there are many reasons why extremism and terrorism develop in Africa. They include



David Shinn

"poor governance, corruption, radical ideology and religious beliefs, opposition to Western policies, [and] a desire to impose a new political order."

Many believe poverty is an underlying cause of terrorism, Shinn pointed out. And African leaders "tend to draw a closer link between poverty and terrorism," he said. Therefore, he reasoned, any strategy designed to counter extremism and terrorism in Africa "must be conducted in partnership with African governments. If those governments perceive that reducing poverty is an intrinsic

part of the solution, then it must be considered seriously in the dialogue."

With that in mind, Shinn said, "U.S. policy on the role of poverty and inequality as reasons for extremism and terrorism has been evolving in the right direction."

For example, he noted that President Bush in his September 2002 National Security Strategy paper stated: "Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders."

Shinn also pointed out that Bush's February 2003 National Strategy for Combating Terrorism acknowledged that although many terrorist organizations have little in common with the poor and destitute, they exploit these conditions to their advantage. "It recognized that weak and failed states are a source of international instability and that they may become a sanctuary for terrorism," he said.

President Bush was even more explicit, Shinn said, when he said at the United Nations in New York on September 14: "We must help raise up the failing states and stagnant societies that provide fertile ground for the terrorists. We must defend and extend a vision of hu-

(Continued on page 6)

FORMER ENVOY PRAISES BUSH ANTI-TERRORIST . . .

(Continued from page 5)

man dignity, and opportunity, and prosperity -- a vision far stronger than the dark appeal of resentment and murder. To spread a vision of hope, the United States is determined to help nations that are struggling with poverty." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Sep/14-441754.html>.)

In the past year, Bush announced more spending to help Africans fight HIV/AIDS and malaria as well as fund educational programs aimed at women and children. He also announced a massive debt relief program for Africa's poorest nations. In 2004 alone, total U.S. government emergency assistance and development aid to the continent totaled \$3 billion. (See U.S. Aid to Africa (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/aid_to_africa.html.)

AFRICAN SECURITY

Bush policy also has taken steps to strengthen African security by identifying and diminishing conditions that contribute to state weakness and failure. This includes U.S. help to resolve regional disputes and protect against homegrown terrorism. Since America was attacked on September 11, 2001, there have been

several multicountry partnerships with African nations aimed at enhancing their security, he said.

These include:

-- The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), established in Djibouti in 2002. Its 1,400 military and civilian personnel focus on gathering intelligence, training friendly militaries and creating good will by carrying out civic action projects. It works in partnership with Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and Yemen and plans to include Tanzania and Uganda.

-- The \$100 million East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative (EACTI), launched in 2003 to provide counterterrorism equipment, training and assistance to Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

-- The \$8.4 million Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI), which provided counterterrorism training for the security forces of Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad during 2003-2004. As a follow-up, the United States started the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI) in 2005, which includes the four Sahel countries and adds Algeria, Senegal, Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia and potentially Libya. Funding for

TSCTI may reach \$500 million over the next seven years.

The purpose of these programs is to improve the military and political capability of the African governments to meet the terrorist threat by providing training and equipment not only for counterterrorist units but also for "development assistance, expanded public diplomacy, and support for improved governance and human rights," Shinn said.

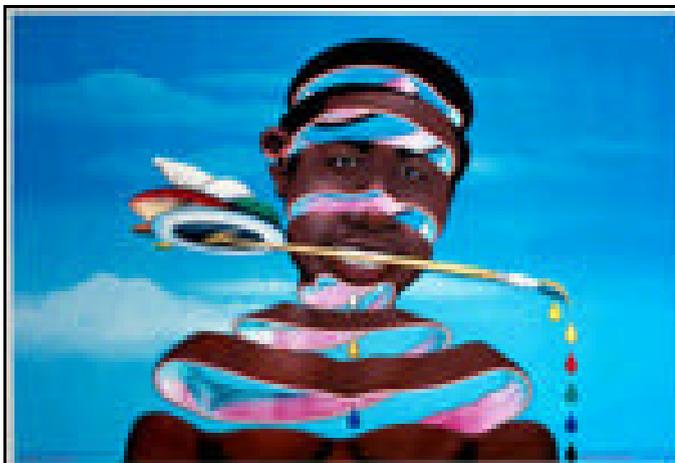
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CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART EXHIBITION OPENS AT SMITHSONIAN

By Christine A. Terada
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington--The National Museum of African Art in Washington is exhibiting one of the world's most significant collections of contemporary African art from November 16 through February 26, 2006. "Africa Art Now: Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Col-

lection" features 100 objects by 27 contemporary African artists, most of whom are lesser-known, self-taught artists. contemporary African paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures, mixed media and videos in 1989 after being inspired by the exhibition "Magiciens de la terre," which opened that year at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. Together with Andre Magnin, the Paris-based curator of that exhibition, he made a commitment to assemble a broad collection and



Painting entitled "I Like Colour" by artist Cheri Samba (CAAC photo-Patrick Gries)

acquired 6,000 objects from 93 artists from 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The collection was amassed over a period of 15 years.

At a press preview, National Museum of African Art Director Sharon F. Patton said the collection is different from previous shows. She called it a catalyst for discussion and a reflection on African contemporary art, and said it will serve to open up a "global dialogue."

"By presenting this collection, we do not so much weigh in on how to present contemporary African art as we carry out our mandate to educate the public about the visual arts of Africa -- in this case, some of the most significant art being produced in Africa today," said Patton.

Highlights of "African Art Now" include Malick Sidibé's photographs of rock-and-roll culture in Bamako, Mali, during the 1960s, Willie Bester's mixed media collages memorializing anti-apartheid sentiment in South Africa, Frédéric Bruly Bouabré's postcard-shaped sketches and Samuel Kane Kwei's whimsical onion coffin.

Seydou Keita's photographs, taken in the 1950s, reflect Bamako society during its transition from a cosmopolitan French colony to an independent capital. The Malian artist, who died in 2001, is the senior artist in the exhibition. His work is juxtaposed with that of the youngest artist represented in the exhibition, 35-year-old Abu Bockari Mansaray. Mansaray's 2003 drawing "Alien Resurrection" depicts a war carried out by fantastic machines that kill people, reflecting the harsh realities of Sierra Leone's civil war.

Another striking piece is Romuald Hazoumé's motorcycle sculpture "Benin Roulette," made in 2003-2004. Hazoumé used found materials and audio clips to examine the black market for gasoline between Nigeria and Benin. The sculpture portrays a motorcycle carrying an overflowing mound of gas containers to bring cheap fuel into Benin. According to a brochure, "the viewer is asked to contemplate whether it is the international trade or the black market that creates this explosive situation."

All artists came of age in Africa and maintain close ties to their na-

(Continued on page 8)

U.S. ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY NOTABLES WORK FOR SOCIAL CAUSES

By Carol Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- As ambassadors of good will in Washington, actor Brad Pitt and his Mr. & Mrs. Smith co-star Angelina Jolie join a long list of Hollywood celebrities using their looks and star appeal to sway U.S. legislators on issues ranging from free trade to stem cell research to environmental protection.

Jolie is in Washington to push for funding programs for AIDS orphans, and Pitt spent two days in meetings to discuss issues pertaining to poverty alleviation, AIDS and debt relief. Pitt's summer visit to South Africa generated widespread publicity for the plight of AIDS patients there.

Hollywood stars have long lobbied Congress and can do so due to

their resources and popularity among U.S. citizens. Since the 1940s, comedian and entertainer Jerry Lewis has raised the bar on celebrity causes, obtaining millions of dollars in contributions for muscular dystrophy research. "It is not just about celebrities raising money, it is about celebrities raising awareness," said Sahar Moridani, director of media relations of the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, in a November 21 interview with the Washington File. Glaser died of AIDS in 1994; she was the wife of Paul Michael Glaser, star of the television show *Starky and Hutch*. The foundation is headquartered in Santa Monica, California.

"Celebrities have broad appeal both domestically and internationally. Through a celebrity's passion, you are able to get your message out to far more places and to far

more people," Moridani said. "The importance of this kind of broad appeal is that it causes people who



Actor Brad Pitt

may not have known about your issue to think about the issue, look at your Web site, maybe attend an

(Continued on page 9)

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART EXHIBITION OPENS . . .

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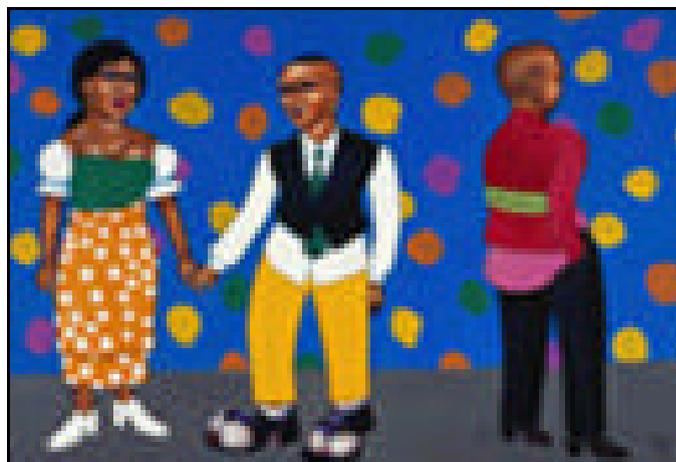
tive traditions. The brochure stated: "No single tradition or method unites these artists. Rather, they reflect the complex heritage of Africa today and respond to both the historic traditions of their local cultures and the new era of international globalism."

All their works, though highly individual, acknowledge a transitioning identity by infusing local, everyday materials and traditional methods with Western influences and contemporary issues.

Museum officials said they hope visitors to the exhibition

will question the stories behind the pieces and seek to enlarge their own understanding of art in contemporary Africa.

To complement the exhibition, the museum will hold a variety of free public offerings, including films, gallery talks and programs for young audiences.



Painting entitled "Dandies" by artist Moke (CAAC photo-Claude Pastel)

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U.S. ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY NOTABLES WORK . . .

(Continued from page 8)

event and hopefully do whatever they can to get involved, in our case, in eradicating pediatric AIDS."

As the global ambassador for YouthAIDS, actress Ashley Judd testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on behalf of the organization in June. "She's a door-opener for us and she realizes her celebrity brings us places we might not get on our own," said Marshall Stowell, deputy director of YouthAIDS, in news reports covering Judd's Capitol Hill visit.

Other door-openers to worthy causes include the late Christopher Reeve, star of the movie Superman, who several times argued before Senate panels debating the use of cloning technology that scientists believe might some day lead to a cure for spinal-cord injuries. Michael J. Fox, of the television shows Spin City and Family Ties and the Back to the Future movies, who has Parkinson's disease, also has raised money and promoted stem cell research to Congress.

Pop singer Billy Joel's benefit concerts raised awareness in 1993 about the devastating effects of brown tide on the bay scallop industry, especially in the Peconic Estuary about 129 kilometers east of New York City. Joel's efforts gained the attention of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which designated the Peconic Estuary a "national estuary of significance." In June, Star Wars creator George Lucas was in Washing-

ton supporting Digital Promise, a coalition of technology executives, university officials and celebrities advocating for legislation to create a trust fund to provide revenue for public television stations, libraries and universities.



Co-star Angelina Jolie

Other celebrities have their causes: actor Pierce Brosnan supports the environmental group the Natural Resources Defense Council; actress Kyra Sedgwick volunteers for the Children's Hope Foundation; actress Selma Hayek speaks out against domestic violence; Grammy music award winner Mary J. Blige fundraises for the Minority AIDS Project; and actress Calista Flockhart is the national spokeswoman for the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women.

Actor Ben Affleck has worked on behalf of AT, or ataxia-telangiectasia, a rare, recessive ge-

netic childhood disorder characterized by neurologic problems. Game show host and animal rights activist Bob Barker has been influential in spreading the word about the importance of spaying and neutering pets and has testified on the treatment of circus elephants. Host of the morning news program, Today, Katie Couric's testimony on colon cancer to a Senate committee in 2000 has raised awareness of the disease that killed her husband and of the importance of early testing for both men and women.

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U.S. AID AGENCY TO FOCUS ON SELECT POOR COUNTRIES IN 2006

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. aid agency that manages the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) expects to provide grants in the current fiscal year to a select group of low-income countries that best match its standards of inclusiveness, accountability and measurable results, says the agency's head.

Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Chief Executive Officer John Danilovich said the focus for fiscal year 2006 (FY06) is a result of less-than-expected yearly funding appropriated by Congress.

Danilovich and other MCC officials spoke November 14 at a public meeting in Washington.

Additionally, MCC is urging countries wanting to apply for its funding to do more to incorporate women into all levels of their decision making on poverty reduction issues, Danilovich said.

The MCA is a Bush administration foreign aid initiative established in early 2004 to reinforce sound political, economic and social policies. The foreign aid spending bill for FY06 allocates \$1.77 billion for the MCC; Bush had requested \$3 billion. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-eng-lish&y=2005&m=November&x=20051114154933AKllen-noCcM0.9979517&t=ei/ei-latest.html>).

MCC ACTIVITIES

Some lawmakers said the MCC, established in early 2004, has been slow becoming operational and so far has delivered little aid.

MCC has been conducting evaluations of public policy improvements in countries applying for or already receiving MCA funding, said MCC official Sherri Kraham.

It also has been working with eligible and potentially eligible countries to help them adopt policies leading to sustainable economic growth, she said.

The agency has been pleased by the high level of commitment of many countries vying for its aid to "challenge the status quo" of their governments' traditional approaches to developing and implementing policies, said Kevin Saba, another MCC official.

Danilovich stressed that MCC has expanded its Internet-accessible guidance for countries wanting to become or remain eligible for its development funding.

Saba added that the agency has been pleased that countries interested in receiving MCC funding have been sharing with each other information about how to compete for MCA grants effectively.

The grant application process is easiest when a country has a designated core financial team of government officials and representatives of civil society, and when officials at top levels of government

are involved in the grant proposal process, said MCC's John Hewko.

MCC so far has signed compacts -- or official, multiyear agreements -- worth more than \$900 million with five countries: Madagascar, Honduras, Cape Verde, Nicaragua and Georgia. More compacts are expected to be signed in coming months, Danilovich said.

MCC also has named 23 countries eligible to apply for FY06 compact funding and 13 countries for its FY06 threshold program, according to MCC. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/Archive/2005/Nov/09-949636.html>).

The threshold program is designed to assist countries that do not qualify but are close to undertake reforms necessary to help them qualify for MCA assistance.

Guidance for developing proposals (<http://www.mca.gov/guidance/index.shtml>) for MCA assistance is accessible on the MCC/MCA Web site.

For additional information, see Millennium Challenge Account (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html).

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UNITED NATIONS REFORM PROCESS LAGGING, U.S. AMBASSADOR SAYS

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- U.S. Ambassador John Bolton says that unless the General Assembly enacts a package of management and other changes by the end of the year, the United Nations risks being sidelined as a "global problem solver."

As the General Assembly approaches the end of its major three-month work session in December, it must pass a biennial budget that will reflect its priorities and work plan for the secretariat as well as assessment of annual dues for the organization's 191 member countries for 2006 and 2007.

Of concern to the United States is that the budget will be passed before final decisions are taken on a range of reforms called for in a 40-page document adopted by the U.N. 60th anniversary summit in September.

Changes mandated by the summit include management and administrative reforms, along with the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission and a new Human Rights Council to replace the Commission on Human Rights.

Speaking at U.N. headquarters November 22, Bolton said that with two months gone, the assembly is

"not two-thirds of the way toward successful launching of those reform efforts" by the time delegates leave for holiday break December 20.

"We are not making adequate progress to abolish the existing Human Rights Commission and establish a reform body. I'm quite concerned that we won't make it by the end of the year," he continued.

Bolton has suggested the assembly pass an interim budget by December 31 "as one possible mechanism to accommodate the desire to get the reforms fully implemented in the longer-term budget." The biennial budget then could be adopted by the end of February 2006.

"It is important to keep the priority and emphasis on long-term reform," the ambassador said. "This is a moment of crisis for the United Nations. If we don't get serious reform, it's going to put us in a very difficult position."

"REVOLUTION OF REFORM" NEEDED

Addressing the opening of the General Assembly in September Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that for the United Nations to become an "engine of change in the 21st Century, it must now change itself" and launch "a lasting revolution of reform." (See related article ([\[usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Sep/17-758243.html\]\(http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Sep/17-758243.html\).\)](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Bolton said that Rice's remarks were intended "to convey the strength of our feeling that substantial reform is needed."

"It is not a question of simply a new ethics office or new whistleblower protection or a stronger inspector general -- though those are important aspects. A revolution of reform means you're going to have continuing work day-in-and-day-out over a long period of time. Reform is not a one-night stand. Reform is forever," Bolton said.

The assembly needs "to be creative about how to work the budget mechanisms," the ambassador said, to allow the General Assembly to take into account the mandate and program reviews now under way in the secretariat.

Those reviews will help member states decide which programs to continue and which to cut.

UNITED NATIONS MUST COMPETE AS A PROBLEM SOLVER

Americans see the United Nations "as a competitor in the marketplace for global problem-solving. If it's successful at solving problems, they'll be inclined to use it. If it's not successful at solving problems, they'll say: Are there other mechanisms, other institutions,

(Continued on page 16)

INITIATIVE WOULD PROVIDE \$100 LAPTOP TO WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES

By Tim Receveur
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – A nonprofit group seeking to develop a \$100 laptop computer for children in developing countries unveiled its first working prototype November 16 at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis, Tunisia.

One Laptop per Child (OLPC), a U.S.-based organization created by faculty members of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab, seeks to distribute the low-cost computers through ministries of education, according to Nicholas Negroponte, chairman and co-founder of the MIT Media Lab and Wiesner professor of media technology at MIT.

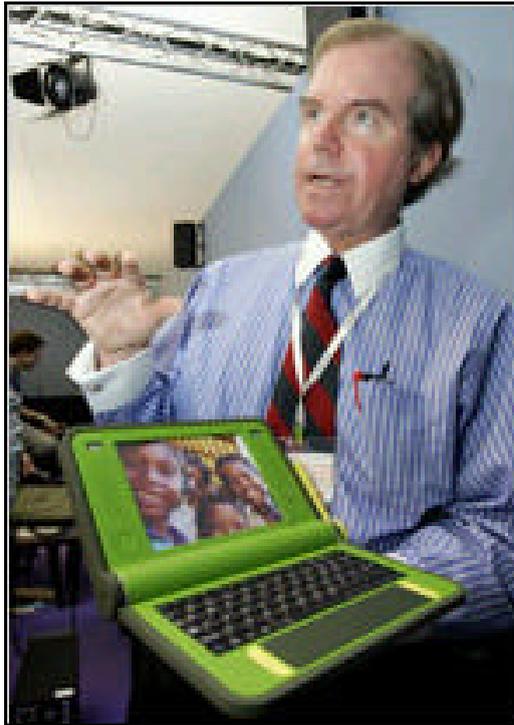
He says that OLPC has had "initial discussions" on implementing the program with officials from China, Brazil, Thailand and Egypt.

Negroponte, who first announced the initiative at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January, said the new technology could revolutionize how the world's children are educated.

"Laptops are both a window and a tool: a window into the world and a tool with which to think," he said November 16. "They are a wonderful way for all children to 'learn learning' through independent interaction and exploration."

"We hope to provide these laptops to hundreds of millions of children around the world," he said.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan called the laptop initiative "inspiring" and said it has the potential to change lives in poorer nations. "It holds the promise of



Nicholas Negroponte with the \$100 laptop computer. (©AP/WWP)

major advances in economic and social development," he said during the WSIS meeting.

"These robust, versatile machines will enable children to become more active in their own learning," Annan said.

OLPC hopes to have laptops ready for shipment by the end of 2006 or early 2007, and will begin manufacturing when 5 million to 10 million machines have been ordered and paid for in advance, Negroponte says.

LAPTOP FEATURES

Power supply interruptions are a recurring problem in developing nations. To address that constraint, the laptop can be fitted with a hand crank to supply extra power when needed. According to MIT Media Lab, one minute of hand cranking will result in 40 minutes of uninterrupted power.

"In one Cambodian village where we have been working, there is no electricity, thus the laptop is, among other things, the brightest light source in the home," Negroponte said.

The laptop also features a low-power display that can be switched from color to black and white to allow viewing in bright sunlight. Many children in developing countries attend school outside, he said.

The machine can be folded in different ways to serve as a computer, electronic book or media player. "We designed the device to perform many roles," said Negroponte. He also said applications will be open-source based (run from a nonproprietary operating system), and available in "every single language that people want."

U.S. GOVERNMENT GOALS

The OLPC initiative is consistent with other U.S. efforts to narrow the gap between countries that make comprehensive use of technology and those that have little

(Continued on page 16)

INTERNATIONAL WRITERS OFFER WORK SAMPLES TO WASHINGTON AUDIENCE

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Writers from Tanzania, Syria, Vietnam, Libya and Sri Lanka read selections from their works at Washington's Hirshhorn Museum on November 18.

The five are participants in the International Writing Program (IWP), at the University of Iowa and their readings were supported by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Programs (ECA).

Described by Program Director Christopher Merrill as a "United Nations of writers," IWP since 1967 has brought more than 1,000 established and emerging poets, fiction writers, dramatists, and nonfiction writers from more than 115 countries to the University of Iowa campus at Iowa City, Iowa. Participants take part in university life, give and attend readings and talks and meet with American writers.

ECA is a major source of funding for the program and supported 10 writers' participation in the fall 2005 semester. ECA also plans to bring those authors to Paros, Greece, for a weeklong colloquium with five American writers.

The November 18 readings were organized around the phrase "Don't Be Afraid," which is also the theme of a major work by the artist Jim Hodges that currently is featured at the Hirshhorn, the Smithsonian Institution's museum of international modern and contemporary art.

Hodges invited more than 90 United Nations delegates to write

the phrase "don't be afraid," in their respective national languages, on a billboard. The billboard is affixed to the outside of the Hirshhorn and is prominently visible along Independence Avenue, the major thoroughfare that runs along the museum.

The five writers taking part in the reading were:

Yvone Owour Adhiambo, of Tanzania, a native of Kenya. She is the author of several plays, a winner of the 2003 Caine Prize for African Writing and the executive director of the Zanzibar International Film Festival.

Van Cam Hai of Vietnam has published widely in both Vietnamese and American publications and is an award-winning documentary filmmaker.

Ameena Hussein of Sri Lanka has published two short-story collections and founded a publishing house featuring the works of Sri Lankan writers. She edits a journal that explores issues of violence, governance and development. She also is a consultant for several human-rights nongovernmental organizations.

Laila Neihoum is the first Libyan author to participate in the IWP. She edits and contributes to a number of Libyan journals and newspapers and has published a short-story collection and compiled a collection of poems by young Libyans.

Nihad Sirees, a civil engineer from Aleppo, Syria, is among his nation's leading novelists and screen-

writers. He is the author of several novels and internationally distributed television screenplays.

A Department of State grant permitted the five writers to travel to



Christopher Merrill
Program Director

Washington for the readings. Daniel Schuman, chief of ECA's cultural division, said of the event, "We wanted to share the voices of these important writers with an American audience."

Additional information (<http://www.uiowa.edu/~iwp/PROG/PROGdescript.html>) on the program is available on the University of Iowa's Web site.

For more information about U.S. support for humanities and the arts, see U.S. Life and Culture (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture.html).♦

HIV/AIDS DISCRIMINATION IS TOPIC FOR USINFO WEB CHAT

Washington -- USINFO.state.gov will commemorate World AIDS Day with an online discussion of the discrimination and stigma aimed at persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Linda H. Scruggs, an HIV-positive woman, AIDS educator and activ-



Linda H. Scruggs
(photo courtesy AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families)

ist, will take questions on this topic, drawing on her community experience in Washington as an executive at the AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families. Scruggs will be online for the chat Wednesday, November 30, at 9:00 a.m. EST.

Overcoming stigma and discrimination is one of the keys to ending HIV transmission and stopping the spread of the epidemic, experts

say. Fear of stigma is known to be a significant factor in preventing individuals from learning their HIV status. Without knowing their status, infected persons can continue to spread the virus.

Helping communities overcome the hurdles of fear and stigma can reduce the growth of the epidemic and move communities closer to offering compassion and assistance to persons living with AIDS.

Scruggs has more than 13 years' experience working in communities, and helping HIV-infected persons cope with discrimination and their own fears.

In addition to her work in the Washington area, Scruggs has been involved with hundreds of similar organizations across the United States and in the Caribbean.

If you want to participate in the Internet chat, ask a question or make a comment, please register at iipchat@state.gov (mailto: iipchat@state.gov). We neither require nor encourage the use of full names.

As always, WE ACCEPT YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS IN ADVANCE of the program and at any time during it. You may also e-mail your questions to iipchat@state.gov (mailto: iipchat@state.gov) without registering.

Since June, the State Department's Bureau of International In-

formation Programs (IIP) has held interactive Internet chats on such diverse topics as:

- Biotechnology (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Nov/10-104302.html>)
 - Environmental Protection (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Jun/29-22766.html>)
 - Foreign Aid (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Jul/27-997226.html>)
 - Future of Web Chats (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Aug/19-328674.html>)
 - Human Rights (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Jul/21-564409.html>)
 - Immigration and Multiculturalism (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Sep/28-3257.html>)
 - Muslims in America (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Sep/07-600416.html>)
 - Spread of Democracy (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Sep/21-429952.html>)
 - Supreme Court of the U.S. (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Aug/10-607307.html>)
 - Uzbekistan (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Jun/08-501312.html>)
- (Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

U.S. AID AGENCY INCREASES EFFORTS TO FIGHT MALARIA IN AFRICA



Dr. Kent R. Hill
Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Global Health

Washington -- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced November 18 that it is seeking input from interested organizations able to implement a major public health program to fight malaria in Africa.

The request for information, issued under President Bush's malaria initiative, precedes an approximately \$100 million grant for indoor residual spraying that would coat the inner walls of houses with residual insecticide to reduce and interrupt malaria transmission from mosquitoes to people.

"Through the President's Malaria Initiative, USAID is taking aggressive action to implement substantial spraying activities, beginning in Angola, Tanzania and Uganda," said Dr. Kent R. Hill, assistant administrator of the Bureau for Global Health, in a USAID press

release. "President Bush's initiative, barely five months old, is moving at an unprecedented rate, and we will begin planning for other target countries in a matter of weeks," Hill said.

"USAID is hard at work because we want to save as many lives as possible, most especially children and pregnant women," he added.

Under the program, USAID will purchase the insecticide, supplies and equipment to "conduct scientifically sound spraying programs," according to the press release. USAID expects to consider the use of 12 insecticides, including DDT, approved by the World Health Organization on a "scientific, case-by-case basis," according to the release. The program also will provide technical planning, training and logistical support before the spraying begins.

On June 30, President Bush pledged to increase funding for malaria prevention and treatment by more than \$1.2 billion over five years. The goal is to reduce malaria deaths by 50 percent in target countries after three full years of implementation. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Jul/01-587232.html>).

In addition, the U.S. government aims to provide \$500 million more per year for malaria prevention and treatment by 2010. The effort eventually will cover more than 175 million people in 15 or more of the most affected African countries.

For additional information on U.S. efforts to fight malaria and other diseases, see Health (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/health.html).

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UNITED NATIONS REFORM PROCESS . . .

(Continued from page 11)

other frameworks ... other courses of action," Bolton said.

"That's why making the U.N. stronger and more effective is a reform priority for us because if it is a more agile, effective organization, [the United Nations] is more likely to be a more successful competitor as a global problem solver."

The release of a report by the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Program headed by Paul Volcker in September described a litany of problems within the United Nations that were exposed during the seven years the United Nations ran the \$64 billion program. Volcker said that the organization lacked effective auditing and administrative controls, had weak planning processes, inadequate funding and too few profes-

sional staff, and that the 60th General Assembly must insist on key reforms. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Nov/02-146342.html>).

Bolton has said that the shortcomings of the Oil-for-Food Program should be viewed as "as a catalyst for change at the United Nations."

For more information on U.S. activities at the United Nations, see The United Nations at 60 (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.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>)♦

INITIATIVE WOULD PROVIDE \$100 LAPTOP TO . . .

(Continued from page 12)

access to it. It is one of many U.S. public- and private-sector efforts to bring the benefits of information and communications technologies (ICT) to the developing world. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Nov/10-646840.html>)).

"The key here is to get countries around the world, but particularly in the developing world, to adopt and ingrain the use of technology to help better their economies, jobs, economic opportunities," U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce Michael Gallagher told reporters November 16.

WSIS originally was convened in 2003 to help bring the benefits of

technology to poorer countries. However, in advance of the Tunis summit, talks and media attention focused heavily on a disagreement among nations over Internet governance and the oversight of the main computers that control traffic on the Internet. That disagreement was resolved, clearing the way for WSIS again to focus on its original mission. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Nov/16-493027.html>)).

For additional information on the conference, see World Summit on the Information Society (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/world_summit_on_information_society.html).

More information on the \$100 laptop initiative is available on the

MIT Media Lab (<http://laptop.media.mit.edu/faq.html>) Web site.

The full texts (<http://www.itu.int/wsis/tunis/index.html>) of documents presented at the Tunis summit are available on the WSIS Web site.

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