



# Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

## INSIDE

### *U.S. Program in Ethiopia*

Empowering Parent Teacher Associations as an Institution (P 2)

### *African news*

U.S. Ambassador Sees Real Hope for Somalia's Future (P 2)

United States Tightens Sudan Sanctions (P 3)

U.S. Takes Steps To Fight Genocide in Darfur (P 5)

Millennium Challenge Corporation To Add Two African Partners (P 7)

Refugees in Eastern Chad Caught in Political, Ethnic Crossfire (P 8)

### *American news*

President Bush Honors U.S. War Dead at Memorial Day Ceremony (P 9)

Most U.S. Muslims Hold Moderate Political Views, Survey Finds(P 10)

Officials Urge Congress To Modernize, Expand Visa Waiver Program (P 11)

### *International Issues*

United States Is Largest Donor of Foreign Aid, Report Says (P 12)

United States Fights Global Decline in Political Freedom (P 13)

In Many Countries, Journalists Risk Their Lives To Do Their Jobs (P 14)

Teaching Civil-Military Relations Enhances Democracy (P 16)

### *Economic and Health Issues*

U.S. Groups Donate Bicycles To Aid Poor in Other Nations (P 17)

Chronic Economic, Social Hardships Seen as Food Crises Increase (P 18)

Old and New Emerging Diseases Threaten Nations Worldwide (P19)

Defense Department Teams with Partners to Fight Global Disease (P 20)



Addis Ababa, May 24, 2007— Ambassador Donald Yamamoto with Somalia Speaker of the House Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur during the recent visit of the Somali parliamentary delegation to Addis Ababa

## Voice of America Goes Up Front With African Listeners

Washington, D.C., May 16, 2007 - Beginning today, millions of young adults in Africa can tune in for candid discussions about issues affecting them on Up Front, Voice of America's (VOA) newest radio show.

happy to provide that platform," said VOA's English to Africa Service Chief Sonya Laurence

Today's premiere Up Front show examines the issue of self-image.

Hosts Jackson Mvunganyi at VOA headquarters in Washington D.C., and Nadia Samie at Bush Radio studios in Cape Town, South Africa, will lead listeners



Voice of America

"Young adults in Africa are eager to learn about what's going on socially, professionally, and politically with their counterparts around the world, and we're

Green. "This show is fast-paced and fun to listen to, and the topics covered provide real food for thought."

through a range of topics in the coming weeks, including a look at hip hop culture, successful young entrepreneurs, role models, and

(Continued on page 4)

## Empowering Parent Teacher Associations as an Institution

THURSDAY, MAY 24, 2007 –Save the Children USA hosted a two-day Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Conference today in Addis Ababa to raise awareness on the importance of parental engagement in their children’s education and to help strengthen a network of PTAs across Ethiopia. The conference follows three days of experience sharing between Save the Children USA, Tigray Development Association (TDA), PTA members and officials from the Ministry of Education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Afar and Oromia Regional States.

USAID Mission Director Glenn Anders spoke during the conference opening, held at the Global Hotel: “It is imperative that communities get involved in education. Parent Teacher Associations are improving

classrooms and helping this country reach its highest educational potential,” Anders said.

The PTA Conference is part of a larger initiative funded by the American people through USAID that seeks to improve quality and equity in primary education across Ethiopia. For the last five years, Save the Children (Afar, Gambela, Oromia and Somali regional states), World Learning Incorporated (SNNP, Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz Regional States), and TDA in Tigray have been implementing a project called “Community Government Partnership Program.” Over a five year period (2002-2007), USAID has invested nearly \$23 million USD in this program, which focuses on capacity building, coaching, mentoring and small grants assistance to individual PTAs to help

increase community involvement in schools. This assistance helps PTAs to create action plans, implement projects, monitor progress and report accomplishments.

As a result of this support and additional efforts by the Ministry of Education, PTAs are now better recognized and stronger institutions. Today’s conference allows PTA members and government partners an opportunity to celebrate achievements, discuss challenges, share lessons learned and discuss the way forward.

For further information on the conference, please contact:  
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## U.S. Ambassador Sees Real Hope for Somalia’s Future

By David Anthony Denny  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Somalis are “truly tired of the many years of chaos and conflict” and there is more reason to be hopeful about Somalia than ever before, says Michael Ranneberger, the U.S. ambassador to Kenya.

Ranneberger answered questions from an international audience about U.S. policy toward Somalia in a USINFO Webchat May 23. During the chat, he said that the Somali people, because of their years of suffering and privation, now are willing to work together. Because cooperation will be a new experience for them, it will not be an easy process, he said.

Late in 2006, Ethiopian armed forces went into Somalia to quell what they viewed as a threat from the Somali Islamic Courts, which had set themselves up as alternative authorities to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia. Ranneberger said that Ethiopia did this because it was in its own interest.

“I recognize that the Islamic Courts did manage to establish a degree of order in Mogadishu,” said Ranneberger. “However, the Islamic Courts never had broad support among the Somali people and, im-



Michael Ranneberger  
U.S. Ambassador to Kenya

portantly, the Islamic Courts were moving in a very radical direction, which would not have been to the benefit of the Somali people.”

The aim of U.S. policy, said Ranneberger, is to promote security and stability in Somalia. To do that, the United States supports efforts toward “inclusive national

reconciliation,” as well as sending in African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops as peacekeepers and providing humanitarian aid and development assistance.

The United States supported the

*(Continued on page 6)*

## United States Tightens Sudan Sanctions

By David McKeeby  
USINFO White House Correspondent

Washington -- The United States will tighten economic sanctions against Sudan for failing to end the violence in Darfur, President Bush announced May 29.

"For too long, the people of Darfur have suffered at the hands of a government that is complicit in the bombing, murder and rape of innocent civilians," Bush said.

Since 2003, violence in Darfur has claimed more than 200,000 lives, displaced 2 million people, and forced an additional 200,000 to flee into neighboring Chad, according to the State Department's 2006 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, released in March.

"My administration has called these actions by their rightful name: genocide," Bush said. "The world has a responsibility to help put an end to it."

Bush proposed expanded sanctions in an April 18 speech, but delayed action at the request of U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who hoped further international negotiation would break the diplomatic deadlock. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=April&x=20070418140214idybeekcm0.9382746> ).)

Bush said Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir has not stopped the killing.

"President Bashir's actions over the past few weeks follow a long pattern of promising cooperation, while finding new methods for obstruction," Bush said, which necessitates the U.S. sanctions plan.

First, Bush said, the U.S. Treasury Department will bar 31 Sudanese companies that have profited from genocide from doing business with U.S. companies or accessing the U.S. financial system. Included is a firm that has violated the international arms embargo by shipping

has refused to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement. These persons will be cut off from the U.S. financial system, barred from doing business with any American citizen or company, and publicly identified for their crimes.

Third, Bush said he is directing Sec-



A Sudanese teacher gives a lesson to students in Abu Shouk refugee camp north of the Darfur town of Al-Fasher April 20. (AP Images)

weapons to government forces and militias in Darfur, according to a White House fact sheet. The Treasury Department also will expand its investigations into individuals and companies suspected of working secretly with Sudan to violate sanctions.

Second, sanctions will be targeted against three individuals responsible for violence. They are Ahmad Muhammed Harun, Sudan's minister for humanitarian affairs; Awad Ibn Auf, Sudan's head of military intelligence and security; and Khalil Ibrahim, leader of a rebel group that

retary of State Condoleezza Rice to consult with the United Kingdom and other allies on a new U.N. Security Council resolution.

And, Bush said, the United States will continue to push for U.N. support, including funding for African Union peacekeepers, which he said are the only force in Darfur that is protecting people.

In November 2006, the United States joined 12 other nations, the African Union (AU), the European Union, and the Arab League in an

*(Continued on page 4)*

## United States Tightens Sudan Sanctions . . .

*(Continued from page 3)*

agreement under which the Sudanese government and rebel forces would strengthen their cease-fire and accept broadening the 7,000 member AU peacekeeping force into a blended U.N.-AU mission.

Despite the agreement, Sudan expanded offensive operations in the region and has blocked the deployment of 3,000 members of the U.N. force as well as vital shipments of food, medicine and other aid from the United States, Bush said.

"The Sudanese government has failed to implement its obligations under the Darfur Peace Agreement of May 2006," Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte said May 29 at a State Department briefing. "None of this is acceptable to the United States, and we think that none of it is acceptable to the world community." Negroponte said that new sanctions support the U.N.'s negotiations.

"There is no good argument for giving the Sudanese more time," he said. "The Sudanese government has shown what it does with more time."

At the United Nations, U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said the United States has begun consulting with its allies on the Security Council about a new sanctions resolution, but gave no indication when a draft would be presented to the full 15-nation council.

The United States is working closely with Secretary-General Ban on peacekeeping, political diplomacy and humanitarian assistance in Darfur, Khalilzad said.

However, "sanctions and diplomacy can work together," he added. Given Sudan's record, there is a need for continued pressure on the government, as well as the rebels and neighboring countries, to cooperate in all three areas, he said.

"My message to the government in Sudan is that it is imperative that they cooperate with the effort in terms of important benchmarks that have been communicated to them: ceasing attacks, dismantling the Jingaweit militias, allowing uninterrupted humanitarian assistance and, of course, agreeing very quickly to the agreement that has been made between the United Nations and the African Union on the hybrid force," Khalilzad said.

The United States is the largest single donor to the people of Darfur. To date, the United States has contributed more than \$1.7 billion in humanitarian and peacekeeping assistance.

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

## Voice of America Goes Up Front With African Listeners . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

how people form their social circles.

The lively, high-energy show features on-the-street opinion spots, interviews with Africans living both within and outside the continent, cultural briefs, health and career segments, and the latest music and artists from the United States and Africa. The weekly, 30-minute magazine show airs on Wednesdays from 1730-1800 UTC (5:30 p.m. West Africa; 6:30 p.m. West/Central Africa; 7:30 p.m. Southern Africa; 8:30 p.m. East/Horn of Africa).

For more information about Up Front and a complete listing of English to Africa programs, visit our website at <http://www.voanews.com/english/africa/upfront.cfm>. VOA's English to Africa Service broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to Anglophone Africa through shortwave, television, the Internet, and a growing list of more than 40 affiliates, as well as seven dedicated VOA 24-hour FM stations.

The Voice of America, which first went on the air in 1942, is a multimedia international broadcasting

service funded by the U.S. government through the Broadcasting Board of Governors. VOA broadcasts more than 1,000 hours of news, information, educational, and cultural programming every week to an estimated worldwide audience of more than 115 million people. Programs are produced in 45 languages.

For more information, please contact VOA's Office of Public Affairs at (202) 203-4950 or via e-mail at [publicaffairs@voa.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@voa.gov). ♦

## Fact Sheet: U.S. Takes Steps To Fight Genocide in Darfur

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

May 29, 2007

Fact Sheet: Fighting Genocide In Darfur

President Bush Announces Increased Sanctions Against The Government Of Sudan

Today, President Bush Announced The Expansion And Tightening Of Economic Sanctions Against The Government Of Sudan. The United States is now taking the steps the President outlined last month because the government of Sudan continues to violate its numerous commitments to stop the violence and suffering in Darfur.

President Bush Announced These Steps Last Month In A Speech At The U.S. Holocaust Museum. The U.S. held off on implementing them because the United Nations believed President Bashir should be given a "last chance" to meet his obligations to stop the killing. It is now clear that he has continued to break his word.

The World Has A Responsibility To Help Put An End To The Genocide In Darfur. The people of Darfur have suffered for too long at the hands of a government that is complicit in the bombing, murder, and rape of innocent civilians. The Bush administration has called these actions by their rightful name: genocide.

President Bashir Has Not Fulfilled His Obligations To Stop The Violence in Darfur

President Bashir Has Not Met His Obligations, And The Dire Security Situation On The Ground In Darfur

Has Not Changed. President Bashir's actions over the past few weeks follow a long pattern of promising cooperation while finding new methods of obstruction.

One day after President Bush spoke about this matter last month, President Bashir's military bombed a meeting of rebel commanders designed to discuss a possible peace deal with the government.

In the following weeks, he used his Army and government-sponsored militias to attack rebels and civilians in south Darfur.

He has taken no steps to disarm these militias in the year since the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed.

His senior officials have continued to oppose deployment of the UN Peacekeeping Force.

Today, The U.S. Is Taking The Steps President Bush Announced In April

The Department Of Treasury Is Tightening U.S. Economic Sanctions On Sudan.

With this new effort, the United States will more aggressively enforce existing sanctions against Sudan's Government.

The Treasury Department will add 30 companies owned or controlled by the Government of Sudan to its list of Specially Designated Nationals.

The U.S. is also targeting an additional company that has been transporting weapons to the Sudanese government and militia forces in Darfur.

All these companies are barred from the U.S. financial system, and

it is a crime for American companies and individuals to knowingly do business with them.

The U.S. Is Targeting Sanctions Against Individuals Responsible For Violence.

These sanctions will isolate these persons by cutting them off from the U.S. financial system, barring them from doing business with any American citizen or company, and calling the world's attention to their crimes.

The President Is Directing The Secretary Of State To Consult With The United Kingdom And Other Allies On A New United Nations Security Council Resolution.

This resolution will apply new sanctions against the Government of Sudan and against individuals found to be violating human rights or obstructing the peace process.

It will impose an expanded embargo on arms sales to the Government of Sudan.

It will prohibit Sudan's Government from conducting any offensive military flights over Darfur.

It will strengthen the international community's ability to monitor and report any violations.

Today's Action Builds On Previous U.S. Efforts To Achieve Peace In Darfur

America's Commitment Is Clear, And We Are Working For The Day When The Families Of This Troubled Region Are Able To Return Safely To Their Homes And Rebuild Their Lives In Peace.

Since this conflict began, we have

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Fact Sheet: U.S. Takes Steps To Fight Genocide in Darfur . . .

*(Continued from page 5)*

provided more than \$1.7 billion in humanitarian and peacekeeping assistance for Darfur.

The U.S. is the world's largest single donor to the people of Darfur.

The U.S. Will Continue To Push For UN Support For African Union Peacekeepers And Quick Transition To A UN-African Union Force.

African Union peacekeepers remain the only force in Darfur that is protecting the people.

The U.S. will continue to work for the deployment of a larger, hybrid

force of African Union and UN peacekeeping troops.

We will continue to support the diplomacy of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

The U.S. will also continue to insist on the full implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement.

The U.S. will continue to promote a broadly supported and inclusive political settlement that is the only long-term solution for the crisis in Darfur.

The United States Will Not Avert Our Eyes From A Crisis That Challenges The Conscience Of The

World

The people of Darfur are crying out for our help – and they deserve it.

The United Nations Security Council, the African Union, and all members of the international community must reject efforts to obstruct implementation of the agreements that would bring peace to Darfur and Sudan.

President Bashir should stop his obstruction, allow the peacekeepers in, and end the campaign of violence that continues to target innocent men, women, and children. ♦

## U.S. Ambassador Sees Real Hope for Somalia's Future . . .

*(Continued from page 2)*

deployment of Ugandan military forces to Somalia and has pledged additional support for other AMISOM forces, he said. In addition, the United States very soon will provide Somalia with about \$10 million in development assistance, mainly for social services. There is also a plan to help security forces become more professional, he said.

Ranneberger said the United States is urging Arab, Asian and European Union governments to provide assistance for the TFG, for AMISOM and for development.

"The amount of assistance being provided is not yet sufficient, but we are continuing to press others to do more," he said, adding that the United States is a leading donor government and for many years has been the nation contributing the most humanitarian aid to Somalia. President Bush has requested from Congress an additional \$60 million

in assistance for Somalia, he said.

Ranneberger emphasized the U.S. commitment to a political process that can bring together those Somalis who reject violence and extremism. He said Somalis are tired of chaos and conflict and want to participate in an inclusive procedure.

"This is the only way forward for Somalis to achieve lasting stability and security," he said.

The Transitional Federal Institutions were developed as the legitimate representatives of the Somali people, Ranneberger said. With the ousting of the Courts, he said, the TFG now has an opportunity to establish its credibility and become an effective, inclusive government.

"Our objective is to support this process," the ambassador said.

In addition to supporting the TFG's

effort to establish its credibility, the United States supports inclusive dialogue. It supports the National Reconciliation Congress, which the U.N. Security Council on April 30 called to be convened as soon as possible, and sees the need for all Somali parties and international partners to ensure that the Congress is truly representative of all parts of society, Ranneberger said. He said the United States believes that the Congress' agenda should be greater power-sharing and the development of a road map for the transition to a democratically elected government in 2009.

"Somalia faces huge challenges, but I am optimistic that the situation is moving in the right direction," said Ranneberger.

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

## Millennium Challenge Corporation To Add Two African Partners

Washington -- The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a U.S.-funded development aid organization, expects to sign two new funding agreements, with Mozambique and Lesotho, in the summer of 2007, according to the corporation's chief executive officer, John J. Danilovich.

Speaking May 22 at the Africa Day Public Forum at MCC headquarters in Washington, Danilovich said a large majority of new MCC agreements, or "partnership compacts," are likely to be in Africa. The corporation expects to commit \$3 billion in grants to the continent in the next 12 months.

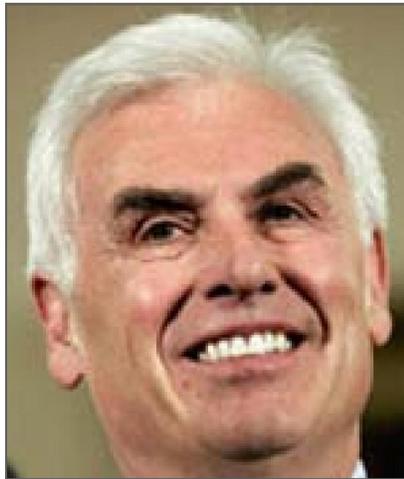
MCC and its African partner countries share a common purpose of "reducing poverty through growth" and improving lives "in a transformative and sustainable way," Danilovich said.

The corporation has established contacts with 40 countries throughout the world, 19 of which are in Africa, Danilovich said. It has 11 partnership compacts under implementation -- five with the African countries of Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Madagascar and Mali. These five compacts total more than \$1.5 billion, or half of what MCC has awarded so far, Danilovich said.

MCC, an independent corporation established by the U.S. government in 2004, offers grants and technical assistance to developing countries committed to good governance,

investing in people and economic freedom.

The corporation determines a country's eligibility by using 16 indicators of social, political and economic policy performance. Eligible countries are asked to submit proposals and participate in the implementation of MCC programs.



Ambassador John Danilovich, Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). (AP Images)

"Because of these expectations, we are seeing our African partners -- on their own -- enact the often difficult policy reforms necessary not just to qualify for our aid but, even more important, to do what is the best for their citizens,"

Danilovich said.

He added that the MCC partnership approach, which stresses "mutual responsibility and

accountability," is well suited to address the problems of poor African countries because it raises the region's expectations, builds capacity and delivers tangible results.

Danilovich said MCC funds a whole range of projects in all sectors of the African economy, "from pineapple farms in Ghana seeking to increase high-value crop production, to anti-corruption programs in Kenya and Zambia, to road rehabilitation projects in Cape Verde, to investing in the Bamako airport in Mali to increase its use for regional and international trade."

Speaking at the same forum, the ambassador of Burkina Faso in Washington, Tertius Zongo, praised what he called MCC's departure

from the "business-as-usual" approach to international aid. He said partner countries value the corporation's insistence that recipients take the initiative regarding their own development.

"Don't forget that money cannot buy reform," Zongo said. But aid based on partnership and accountability can "strengthen the capacity of the recipient countries to reform themselves, to be able to sustain further progress on their own," he added.

Burkina Faso has been declared as "compact eligible" while participating, together with Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, in the "threshold" program designed for countries that show significant progress but need to improve on some of the indicators. Three other African countries -- Niger, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe -- have been declared eligible for threshold aid.

MCC threshold agreements are designed for countries that are on the threshold of meeting MCC requirements, meaning they are committed to undertaking the reforms necessary to improve policy performance in the indicators central to eligibility for greater compact assistance.

For more information see U.S. Aid to Africa ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/aid\\_to\\_africa.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/aid_to_africa.html) ) and Trade and Economic Development ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade\\_economic\\_development.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade_economic_development.html) ).

Also visit the Millennium Challenge Corporation ( <http://www.mcc.gov/> ) Web site.

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

## Refugees in Eastern Chad Caught in Political, Ethnic Crossfire

By David Anthony Denny  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The humanitarian crisis in eastern Chad is no less severe than those in Sudan's Darfur region and Somalia, a U.S. refugee official says.

According to William Fitzgerald, deputy assistant secretary of state for population, refugees and migration, there are about 235,000 Sudanese refugees and 50,000 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) clinging to a precarious existence in Chad's eastern and southern border areas. He recently spoke with USINFO about the situation there.

Eastern Chad faces challenges similar to those across its border with Darfur, Fitzgerald said. However, there are differences.

"Chad has its own dynamics and its own ethnic problems within the country," Fitzgerald said. Sudanese rebels fighting the Khartoum government have bases in eastern Chad and Chadian rebels fighting the N'Djamena government have bases in Sudan, he said.

"Both are likely supported by the opposite governments," said Fitzgerald. "It's frankly the regional instability that has caused a lot of this, including the latest fighting in the Central African Republic, just to the south."

James Swan, deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, provided regional background in remarks at the American Enterprise Institute May 3. Chad and Sudan, he said, have a complex relationship in which national borders are subordinate both to tribal loyalty and to the fight for natural resources. In

eastern Chad and in western Sudan, for example, limited access to water and arable land leads to conflicts between herders and farmers on both sides of the border. Familial and ethnic ties also exacerbate economic tensions, said Swan.

Fitzgerald can attest to the bleak terrain and climate: "I was out

Just three weeks ago, said Fitzgerald, President Bush signed an emergency authorization for a refugee account that contains an additional \$1 million for ICRC to continue its projects.

The United States is supporting about a dozen NGOs in eastern Chad. The State Department works



Sudanese refugees who have recently crossed the border from Sudan rest in the refugee camp of Gaga in eastern Chad. (AP Images)

there last June, and it's like the surface of the moon. It's very dry, a desert, with few trees." With resources so scarce, he said, tensions with the local population, who originally welcomed the newcomers, are growing.

The United States continues to provide basic health care and education through its nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners such as the International Rescue Committee, CARE and the International Medical Corps. The United States also supports the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which primarily handles internally displaced persons (IDPs), while State works with refugees, Fitzgerald said.

As Fitzgerald sees it, the U.S. government has three aims in Chad: a political settlement to end the fighting; full access for humanitarian aid to reach refugees and IDPs; and a peacekeeping force for eastern Chad and northern CAR.

Fitzgerald says the solutions for

*(Continued on page 9)*

## President Bush Honors U.S. War Dead at Memorial Day Ceremony

President Bush paid tribute to the generations of America's war dead – from the nation's origins in the Revolutionary War through two world wars to Korea, Vietnam and Iraq – in Memorial Day remarks at Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington on May 28.

"The greatest memorial to our fallen troops ... is all around us -- a country where citizens have the right to worship as they want, to march for what they believe, and to say what they think," Bush said, adding that from their sacrifices comes greater safety for their own nation and liberty "for millions who have never known it."

Memorial Day, which honors those Americans who have fallen in defense of their country, has its origins in "Decoration Days" that remembered the dead from the American Civil War (1861-1865). It was renamed Memorial Day following World War I. Americans also celebrate Veteran's Day, honoring all those who have served in the U.S. armed forces, on November 11 each year. ♦



Major General Guy Swan III and President Bush commemorate Memorial Day at Arlington National Cemetery. (White House photo)

## Refugees in Eastern Chad Caught in Political, Ethnic Crossfire . . .

(Continued from page 8)

eastern Chad will not be achieved without a solution for Sudan's Darfur region. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte made the same point after meeting Chadian President Idriss Deby in N'Djamena April 17: "The United States is convinced that the violence in Darfur [Sudan], Chad and the Central African Republic is increasingly linked, that instability in each of the three states contributes directly to instability in the others, and that we need to move forward on all fronts to improve security and to protect civilians." Fitzgerald said a heavily armed peacekeeping force will be needed in eastern Chad to protect NGOs and international organizations. To create a safe area for the distribution of humanitarian aid,

Fitzgerald said, the United States has led the effort for a U.N. peacekeeping force in eastern Chad, in addition to one for Darfur.

Over the past year there have been attacks against humanitarian workers and refugees, according to Fitzgerald, and there is a growing problem with IDPs.

There are probably 150,000 IDPs in eastern Chad, Fitzgerald said, up from about 50,000 last summer. Many have been displaced by inter-ethnic conflicts in Chad, and also by cross-border attacks by the armed Arabic-speaking militia groups known as Jingaweit.

"There's Sudanese Jingaweit but, believe it or not, there's also Chadian Jingaweit," said Fitzgerald.

The United States also has been working with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to increase the number of gendarmes protecting the camps, according to Fitzgerald.

"Chad has just 235 gendarmes covering 12 camps -- 235 protecting 235,000 refugees and 150,000 IDPs. They are ... hopelessly outmanned, outgunned -- you name it. Since 2006, the United States has contributed money to increase the gendarme force by 100, but it's still not enough," he said.

"It's just a tough, tough place. There's just no two ways of saying it," Fitzgerald said. ♦

## Most U.S. Muslims Hold Moderate Political Views, Survey Finds

Washington -- Muslims living in the United States tend to be happy with their lives and moderate in their political views, according to a new, independent survey.

American Muslims largely are assimilated into society, and income and education levels among Muslims mirror those of the general U.S. population, according to a nationwide poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, an independent, nonpartisan opinion research group funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. About half the Muslims in the United States have attended college or university, the poll showed, which is comparable to the figure for all Americans.

"What emerges [from the survey] is the great success of the Muslim American population in its socioeconomic assimilation," said Amaney Jamal, assistant professor of politics at Princeton University, in published reports. Jamal was a senior adviser on the Pew survey.

The survey, released May 22, found that Muslims living in the United States make up a highly diverse population, one largely composed of immigrants from Arab and South Asian countries, yet "decidedly American in their outlook, values and attitudes." However, 35 percent of Muslims in the United States today are native-born Americans, and Muslims have lived in North America since the 17th century.

Interviews for the survey were conducted in English, Arabic, Persian and Urdu.

Most Muslims living in the United States said they do not perceive a conflict between practicing their religion and living in a modern society, and they believe hard work is rewarded in America, the survey reported. Financial institutions serving the Muslim market in the United States often consult with Islamic scholars in designing such financial products as home mort-



The Fadlallah family of Dearborn, Michigan, pictured in 2001, feels Dearborn is where they belong. (AP Images)

gages that are acceptable under Islamic law, or Shariah, which forbids the paying or charging of interest, for example.

The poll shows that Muslims in the United States reject Islamic extremism by larger margins than do Muslim minorities in West European countries, as shown in results from a 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Project survey. American Muslims feel they are subject to more security surveillance than other Americans since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, yet say they have a largely positive view of U.S. society and the communities in which they live. More than three-quarters of foreign-born Muslims rate their U.S.

communities as excellent or good places to live.

According to the survey, a majority of U.S. Muslims, including both males and females, said they believe life is better for women in the United States than in many Muslim countries. No laws in the United States prohibit the wearing of religious garb, and Muslim women in the United States are free to choose to wear the hijab (traditional headscarf).

The U.S. Census Bureau does not provide data on groups defined by religion because U.S. law prohibits the government agency from asking a mandatory question on religious affiliation, a restriction that reflects constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion. However, random telephone polls conducted by the bureau's American Religious Identification Survey, in which adults were invited but not required to state their religious

identification, found that the number of Muslims in the United States more than doubled between 1990 and 2001. Estimates on the number of Muslims in the United States vary from 2.35 million, according to the Pew Research Center, to 8.6 million, according to the Center for American Muslim Research and Information.

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

## Officials Urge Congress To Modernize, Expand Visa Waiver Program

By Jeffrey Thomas  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Delaying modernization of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) would have adverse security consequences for the United States, officials from the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State told Congress May 24.

The modernization proposed by the Bush administration would require such innovations as electronic registration of VWP travelers, as well as more data sharing and better reporting of lost and stolen passports. These changes would be applied first to travelers from countries newly certified for the program, but eventually would be extended to current qualifying nations as well. The changes would strengthen U.S. security, the officials said.

The Visa Waiver Program currently allows nationals of 27 countries to travel to the United States without visas for business or pleasure for up to 90 days. Approximately 15 million people travel to the United States under the program annually, according to the State Department's Stephen Edson, who testified at the May 24 hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe. President Bush declared his support for expanding the VWP during the NATO Summit in Latvia in November 2006.

For a nation to participate in the Visa Waiver Program, the refusal rate for nonimmigrant visas sought by its citizens cannot exceed 3 percent, which means that at least 97

percent of those who apply for a nonimmigrant visa must be deemed eligible by a U.S. consular officer. Furthermore, the particular country's participation must not undermine U.S. security, law enforcement and immigration interests. Currently, 27 countries are in the Visa Waiver Program: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Denmark, Finland, France, Ger-

the visa refusal rate requirement. "The administration would prefer for Congress to give us complete flexibility on the visa refusal rate requirement, rather than simply raise it from 3 percent to a marginally higher level," Sales said.

Of the seven new security measures being proposed by the administration, four would be mandatory.



Pablo Guzman and members of his family are processed through customs using the US\_VISIT system in Atlanta. (AP)

The mandatory measures include (1) an Electronic Travel Authorization requiring VWP travelers to register online in advance of travel; (2) more robust data-sharing efforts; (3) timely reporting of lost and stolen passports, whether blank or already issued; and (4) guarantees to repatriate nationals ordered removed from the United States.

The three additional measures focus on airport security standards, air marshals programs and common standards for travel docu-

ments. many, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The Bush administration has proposed seven new security measures as part of a modernization of the VWP that would shift its focus from economic migration to the threat of international terrorism.

Nathan Sales, a policy officer for the Department of Homeland Security, refused to single out one bill as preferred by the Bush administration. He said, however, that the administration needs flexibility on

Although the new security measures would be applied to new Visa Waiver Program nations first, Sales said, "in several years we intend to extend them to current VWP countries as well. We have no interest in running a two-tiered VWP. The same security standards should all apply to all member countries regardless of when they were admitted to the program."

Edson told Congress the proposed legislation would lead to more secure U.S. borders and strengthen ties with the 13 governments -- many of them European -- currently seeking to meet the criteria for

*(Continued on page 15)*

## United States Is Largest Donor of Foreign Aid, Report Says

By Jaroslaw Anders  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is the single largest donor of foreign economic aid, but, unlike many other developed nations, Americans prefer to donate their money through the private sector, according to a new report published by a Washington research organization.

Of the \$122.8 billion of foreign aid provided by Americans in 2005 (the most current data available), \$95.5 billion, or 79 percent, came from private foundations, corporations, voluntary organizations, universities, religious organizations and individuals, says the annual Index of Global Philanthropy.

The index was issued May 24 by the Center for Global Prosperity at the Hudson Institute, a Washington-based nonpartisan research organization.

"It isn't like in the 1950s when the Marshall Plan and government flows dominated our economic engagement with the developing world," said Carol A. Adelman, the director of the Center for Global Prosperity. She spoke May 24 at the launching of the report.

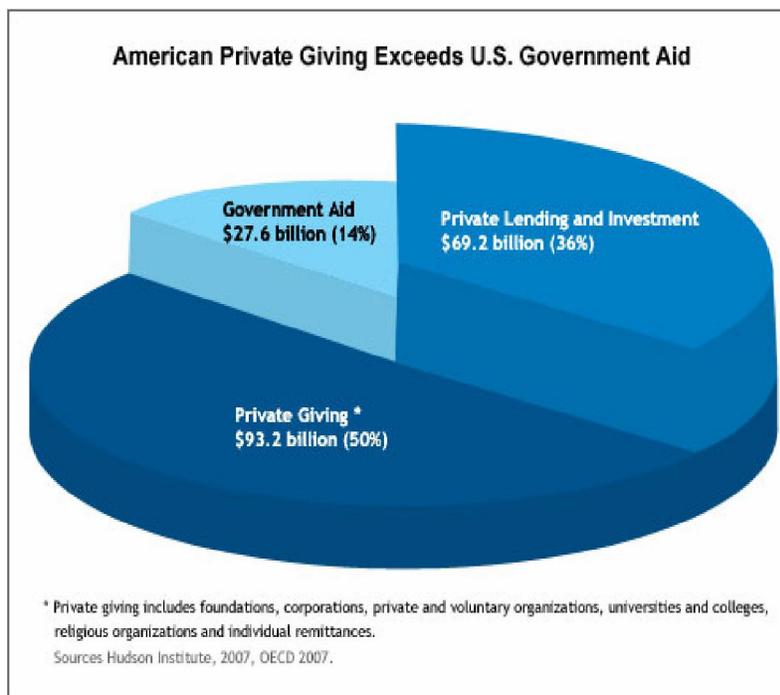
For example, U.S. foundations gave more -- in money, time, goods and expertise -- than 11 of the 22 developed-country governments each gave in 2005, and U.S. private voluntary organizations totaled more

than the governments of Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany and France each.

More than half of all U.S. assistance to developing countries, \$61.7 billion, came in the form of private remittances by individuals living in the United States to their

U.S. official development assistance (ODA) in 2005 was \$28 billion, the largest of all official donations by an individual country. But, according to the often-quoted measure used by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which compares government aid as a percentage of a country's gross national income (GNI), U.S. government aid is only 0.22 percent of GNI, which ranks the United States as the 20th of the 22 listed donor states.

Index of Global Philanthropy combines all aid from developed countries -- government and private -- an approach that its authors say is a more accurate measure of a nation's generosity. According to the index, the United States is the top donor in absolute amounts and the seventh of 22 in terms of GNI percentage.



families abroad, the report says. According to the report, those remittances not only reduce poverty, but, in some cases, increase credit-worthiness of countries and underwrite their trade imbalances.

### PRIVATE GENEROSITY

The scope of U.S. private giving often is overlooked in statistics that compare the relative generosity of various countries, the authors of the report say. Most of the other developed countries deliver their international aid primarily through official development aid programs run and financed by government agencies.

"This shouldn't be a numbers game, but since it always is, since people always are comparing numbers, let them look at what is going on in developing countries. Just looking at government aid flows is not going to help us understand ... what are the best practices, what are the success stories," Adelman said.

### QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY

For example, the report lists several case studies of private programs using skilled volunteers and delivering hands-on assistance at a third of the typical cost of government aid programs.

*(Continued on page 15)*

## United States Fights Global Decline in Political Freedom

By Eric Green  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is working with nongovernmental groups to prevent an erosion of democracy in the Americas and around the world, say two officials from the U.S. State Department.

Speaking May 24 at a forum on the role of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, Barry Lowenkron said the drive for greater personal and political freedom worldwide is being met with "increasing resistance from those who feel threatened by change." The charter, adopted by the 34 countries of the Organization of American States (OAS) on September 11, 2001, in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States, calls for governments in the region to promote and defend democracy.

Lowenkron, the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, described 2007 as the "year of the pushback" by countries that want to attack democratic progress and use national laws to solidify their grip on power.

Lowenkron said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in response to this "pushback," released a list of 10 core principles on proper treatment of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The principles, which complement existing U.N. and European Union documents dealing with NGOs, recognize that the nongovernment groups are essential to successful free societies and play a vital role in ensuring accountable, democratic government.

Lowenkron said the list, first released in English in December

2006, is now also available in Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Persian and Russian.

He also welcomed Colombian President Alvaro Uribe's announcement that he will release his own set of principles supporting NGOs in Colombia.



Barry Lowenkron

Lowenkron told those at the forum, which was sponsored jointly by two Washington public policy groups -- the Inter-American Dialogue and the Center for Strategic and International Studies -- that Rice, to further support democracy, also created the "Global Human Rights Defenders Fund."

He said the fund enables the U.S. government to respond quickly to the emergency needs of human rights defenders with assistance to activists who face extraordinary financial, legal or medical challenges as a result of government repression.

Lowenkron praised the Inter-American Democratic Charter for stressing "accountability" if a country tries to deprive its citizens of their political and human rights. Civil society and NGOs play an important role in ensuring accountable government, he said.

Another participant at the forum, OAS Secretary-General José Miguel Insulza, has said on previous occasions that the Inter-American Democratic Charter recognizes "the persistent dangers of backsliding" in defending democracy and that the countries of the Americas must work to reinforce democratic principles.

### CIVIL SOCIETY CAN BE PARTNER IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Thomas Shannon said the charter's adoption recognized that the principal threat to democracy in the Americas is not from military coups, but rather from people who use democratic means to obtain power and then attempt to "hollow out" democratic institutions.

Shannon, assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, said a prime example of such grasps for power came from Peru's former president, Alberto Fujimori. After being elected democratically, Fujimori staged what was called a "self-coup" (a coup against his own government) in 1992 by abolishing Peru's Constitution, Congress and Supreme Court.

Shannon encouraged governments in the region to use NGOs and civil society as partners in democratic governance, not as adversaries, as he said they too often have done previously.

Democracy "is not just a question of government," or politicians deciding public policy, but also a matter of "building democratic interaction at all levels of society," said Shannon.

Shannon hailed the Inter-American Democratic Charter for its declaration that democracy is a "right," which "effectively expressed" the aspirations of the people of the Americas for free and open government.

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

## Officials Urge Congress To Modernize, Expand Visa Waiver Program

By David Denny  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- In certain countries, relentless violence against the media seriously compromises coverage of some of the world's most important stories, according to a journalist who is also a university professor.

"Certain facets of conflicts in places like Congo, Chechnya and Sudan, remain exasperatingly elusive or, at best, thinly reported," Sherry Ricciardi said in a State Department Democracy Dialogues webchat with international participants May 22.

Ricciardi is a senior writer for American Journalism Review magazine and specializes in international issues. She is also a professor at the Indiana University School of Journalism at Indianapolis where she works on international affairs and teaches international communication courses. In addition, she serves as a consultant to the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma at the University of Washington.

Threats to journalists' safety remain an unfortunate but very real concern worldwide. The Committee to Protect Journalists says that in 2007, seven journalists had been confirmed killed as of April 9, while reports of seven additional deaths are unconfirmed. Reporters Without Borders says 23 journalists and five media assistants have been killed so far in 2007.

Due to these dangers, the media's role as eyewitness can be severely limited and the intimate stories of victims, survivors and their persecutors are not written, Ricciardi said. This directly affects news gathering

and the public's need to know, she added.

"That's why we must keep this dialogue about the free flow of information alive on an international level," she said.

According to Ricciardi, journalists are protected by international law, including when they work in war zones.



'Reporters Without Borders' members carry symbolic coffins in Berlin in remembrance of journalists slain while reporting. (AP Images)

"I would refer you to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the right to seek, receive, and impart information," Ricciardi said. The Fourth Geneva Convention, dealing with protection and rights of civilians, also offers protection to journalists in war zones, she added.

"[J]ournalists are civilians, not combatants, and they cannot be deliberately targeted by any of the warring parties," Ricciardi said. "As journalists, it is up to us to remind governments of this responsibility and point out when and where there are violations."

Despite legal protections, journalists occasionally are killed in combat zones, according to Ricciardi. Many "local journalists in Iraq have suffered greatly," she said, and many of them have been killed while reporting for their own media or for Western media.

"They definitely are being targeted for their work," she said. "This is of great concern to the international media community, and we often feel helpless in the face of the sacrifices they are making. Many of us are humbled by their bravery."

As for the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in helping to protect journalists in particular countries, Ricciardi cautioned that such groups can be helpful, but are limited in what they can do. She said that she has witnessed NGOs "playing a vital role in supporting media in certain countries; but NGOs also can be persecuted by a government dead set on silencing dissent."

"NGOs also can be at risk if they offend the host government," Ricciardi said. "On two occasions, I have seen NGOs thrown out of a country because they championed journalists and others the government deemed unpatriotic or obstructionist."

Nevertheless, sometimes international journalism-based NGOs can help protect journalists. On many occasions, she said, she has heard that "shining an international spotlight on endangered journalists and their media outlets can provide a modicum of safety." Such groups include The Committee to Protect Journalists, based in New York City; Reporters Without Borders,

*(Continued on page 15)*

## Officials Urge Congress To Modernize, Expand Visa Waiver Program . . .

*(Continued from page 11)*

VWP membership.

The debate over comprehensive immigration reform complicates modernization of the Visa Waiver Program. The top Republican on the House Europe Subcommittee, Elton Gallegly, a representative from California, said during the House hearing he "can't support any expansion of the Visa Waiver Program, unless

it is a part of a comprehensive immigration reform package that includes provisions that will secure our borders."

"This must include the implementation of an entry/exit system so we can determine if all foreign visitors - including Visa Waiver travelers -- leave the United States in compliance with their visa terms," Gallegly added.

The Department of Homeland Security hopes to achieve "within six months to a year" a reliable data-matching program that is key to implementing an entry/exit system, Sales said.

The fate of the complex immigration reform agreement reached May 17 between President Bush and a bipartisan group of U.S. senators remains unclear, however. ♦

## United States Is Largest Donor of Foreign Aid, Report Says . . .

*(Continued from page 12)*

In addition, according to the Index, private aid usually involves more people-to-people contact and more transfer of expertise, thus creating a more genuine partnership between the helpers and the poor.

One of the case studies in the Index cites a \$150 million AIDS prevention and treatment program for Africa launched by Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation (B-MS). Together with Baylor College of Medicine, B-MS built the first pediatric AIDS hospital in Gabarone, Botswana, and trained African doctors through its Pediatric AIDS Corps

volunteer program.

Most data on development aid also neglect those forms of foreign help that do not fall within the traditional notion of "aid programs," such as foreign scholarships offered by U.S. universities, research and development that benefit the poor, special lending and insurance programs, and direct investment, say the authors of the report.

In 2005, loans and investment by U.S. companies to the developing world totaled \$69.2 billion, according to the index.

Adelman said data on some of the

less traditional forms of international aid, like personal remittances or help in goods and time, still are scarce and hard to obtain but the growing diversity of aid flows needs to be studied to see what really works.

"If nothing else, we need to learn about what is going on in this area so we can see what is the engine that is driving the economies in the developing world," she said.

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

## Officials Urge Congress To Modernize, Expand Visa Waiver Program . . .

*(Continued from page 14)*

based in Paris; and the International Federation of Journalists, based in Brussels, Belgium.

"These groups often take an activist role, pushing governments to back off persecuting journalists, and, at times, rushing to the scene

to intervene and act as eyewitnesses," she said.

"A free press is the foundation of a healthy democracy. Governments should never be in the business of censoring the media," Ricchiardi said. "When this happens, it is a blow to the freedom of the people in that country."

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

## Teaching Civil-Military Relations Enhances Democracy

By Jim Fisher-Thompson  
USINFO Staff Writer

Monterey, California -- Thousands of foreign government officials and military officers worldwide are receiving guidance on forging effective relationships through an innovative educational outreach program pioneered by the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey.

"We're in the business of working to encourage the propagation of democratic norms in nations that are having problems in civil-military relations," says Rich Hoffman, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and retired Army officer who now directs NPS's Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR).

Hoffman told USINFO May 23 that CCMR, established in 1994, operates one- to three-week courses for foreign militaries and officials held in

their countries. The courses do not seek to impose an American brand of democracy, he said, but are "custom-designed to meet the specific objectives and conditions of a recipient country."

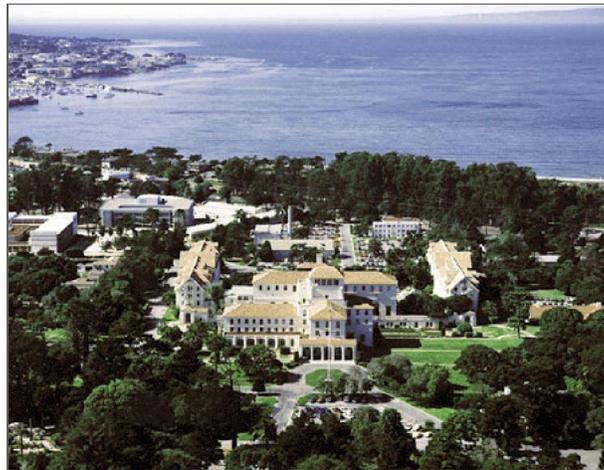
A central tenet of American democracy is civilian control of the U.S. armed forces, which is embodied in the U.S. Constitution. Helping other nations develop the critical relationship between the civilian leadership and its armed forces not only enhances a country's democratic institutions, but also strengthens its national security, Hoffman said.

The center's faculty of 15 professors, all of whom hold graduate degrees in area studies and foreign affairs, travels abroad as part of

mobile education teams (METs) at the invitation of host governments.

Hoffman said that within the past year, 100 METS have given short courses to more than 3,500 foreign officials and military officers in 100 countries.

CCMR offers courses on such topics as establishing democratic civil-



The Naval Postgraduate School campus in Monterey, California. (U.S. Navy photo)

military relations and the rule of law, intelligence and democracy, defense restructuring, civil-military cooperation and combating terrorism, building linkages between the legislature and the military and preparing for peacekeeping deployments.

Teaching is done through presentations by the MET faculty and through simulations "where we propose various civil-military scenarios, which are then acted out, discussed and analyzed," Hoffman explained.

"We're teaching courses in Jordan, Ukraine, Mongolia and Indonesia. And questions we're raising ask: 'How do you organize a force to conduct peacekeeping operations in support of the United Nations, respond to disasters and combat ter-

rorism?'" Hoffman said.

Peacekeeping is very important, he said, because "it can't be done efficiently by a military that does not have a democratic relationship with its own civilian authorities."

In October 2006, Hoffman joined a MET that traveled to Guatemala for a course with 40 military officers and government officials.

The Guatemalan military has worked hard to reform itself and now is interested in peacekeeping, he said, in part because its leaders believe that peacekeeping demonstrates to the world that the military "can be a force for good and not a repressive force within their own country," he said.

"The fact is a military going on a peacekeeping operation needs to adhere to human rights, rule of law -- and they need to be disciplined about it,

or they're going to get into trouble," Hoffman said. So by helping militaries prepare themselves for peacekeeping, "we're actually helping them become more professional and a force for good within the international community, which hopefully will lead to them being more democratic at home," he said.

Chile is another country that is doing very well on civil-military relations, Hoffman said. "We've worked with them very successfully in the development of their peacekeeping capabilities," he said.

Two Chilean officers were among the 254 students from 52 nations who were in the March 2007 graduating class at NPS, receiving graduate degrees after successfully completing their 12- to 18-month course requirements. ♦

## U.S. Groups Donate Bicycles To Aid Poor in Other Nations

By Louise Fenner  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – A bicycle can change a life in a country where the poorest people have no form of transportation other than walking.

In the past two years, Washington-based Bicycles for the World (BfW) has shipped more than 14,000 bicycles to partner nonprofit agencies in Barbados, Costa Rica, The Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Namibia and Panama. BfW's most recent shipment was to the Shape Lives Foundation in Bolgatanga, Ghana; and a container of bicycles and sewing machines will go out soon to Goodwill Panama, which provides training and employment to people with disabilities.

BfW is one of a host of U.S. non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that donate bicycles and other goods to community groups in developing countries, where better transportation -- to jobs, schools, health services and markets -- can help people become more productive.

"Our approach is to use bicycles as tools for development and individual empowerment," Keith Oberg, director of Bikes of the World, told USINFO.

He mentioned Marco Vinicio, a street vendor in San Jose, Costa Rica, who was able to buy a high-quality reconditioned bicycle for about \$10. Now, Vinicio can carry his cooler on the bike and visit more sites to sell ice cream and fried snacks (frituras). "His sales increased so dramatically that he paid off the bike in only two weeks, and now the additional income goes directly to family needs," said Oberg.

Vinicio's bicycle was one of nearly 900 donated new and used bicycles BfW shipped to Fundación Integral Campesina (FINCA), a Costa Rican nonprofit, microcredit agency. Several rural groups have purchased bicycles from FINCA to recondition and sell. For example, Superación



Marco Vinicio uses his bike to carry ice cream and fried snacks to sell in San Jose, Costa Rica. (Courtesy of Bikes for the World)

Femenina ("Female Advancement"), a women's group in northern Costa Rica that awards microloans to finance income-generating activities, used bike profits to increase its loan portfolio.

In 2005, Bicycles for the World and Working Bikes Cooperative, a Chicago-based NGO, worked with the Sri Lanka Association of Greater Washington to donate more than 1,300 bicycles to Sri Lankans affected by the December 2004 tsunami. The bikes were distributed via local Catholic, Muslim and Buddhist networks.

Hundreds of volunteers help BfW collect donated bicycles, prepare them for shipment and load the containers, Oberg told USINFO. Schools, religious organizations, community groups, bike stores, families and individuals have held bike donation drives. For example, a Boy Scout recently collected 125

bikes in a drive hosted by a local retailer as part of his community service project for becoming an Eagle Scout.

"It's a win-win for everyone," Oberg said. "For volunteers, it's a tangible hands-on service project. Donors put their old bikes to good use. And on the other end, it's transportation. So everybody who participates wins in some way."

BfW particularly wants donations of good-quality mountain bikes that can handle tough terrain, Oberg said. Most donations come from individuals, although retailers and distributors also contribute. BfW asks for a \$10 donation per bicycle from bike donors to help with shipping costs.

The remaining shipping costs are paid by BfW's partner agencies, and additional assistance is provided in certain cases. The organization encourages groups to set up self-sustaining bicycle repair operations that can help pay for shipping costs and also provide jobs and training for local people.

He said BfW is seeking additional qualified NGOs with which to partner, particularly in Africa. "We are looking for organizations that can visualize a role for the bikes, that see the bikes as furthering their mission," he said. "We want groups that show some promise of becoming a long-term partner" and that eventually will be able to cover their share of shipping costs.

A bicycle is just one example of a product that can gain a "second chance" in another country. U.S. groups are shipping used eyeglasses, computers, appliances, shoes and clothing, cars and other

*(Continued on page 18)*

## Chronic Economic, Social Hardships Seen as Food Crises Increase

By Kathryn McConnell  
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Food crises around the world are increasing in frequency and magnitude, causing significant numbers of people to face chronic economic and social hardships, says a U.S. development official.

Droughts in Africa have become more frequent, now occurring several times in a 10-year period and often causing herders to sell their animals and farmers their tools to purchase food, William Hammink, director of the Office of Food for Peace at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), said May 24.

Hammink testified before the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health.

In the past, communities affected by periodic droughts "have generally been able to absorb the shock, restructure their livelihoods and then begin to

grow again."

He said that continuous and overlapping crises of the last decade are leaving large population groups in Africa chronically vulnerable to new major food crises. Those most af-



A Congolese girl carries food aid to her family received from USAID in Bunia, Democratic

ected are in the eastern part of the continent and the Sahel region, and those with HIV/AIDS or who have grown up amidst civil strife, Hammink said.

Food aid programs "must be more effectively aimed at halting the loss of livelihoods," resulting from a series "of even small shocks," he said.

To meet emergency food needs better, the Bush administration is recommending that the new Farm Bill Congress is considering authorize up to 25 percent of emergency food funds for purchases of food in countries or regions affected by a food crisis, Hammink said.

The administration also is recommending it be given authority to pre-position more U.S. food aid near expected emergency areas to reduce response times, he said. The current Farm Bill limits how much can be spent on pre-positioning.

The current law, which covers all food aid programs, is set to expire at the end of 2007..) ♦

## U.S. Groups Donate Bicycles To Aid Poor in Other Nations . . .

(Continued from page 17)

goods to developing countries, Oberg said. "The question is which things lend themselves to reuse," he said. "They have to be useful and productive."

Oberg said bicycle donation programs are on the rise in the United States and other Western countries in part because when people buy new bicycles or clean out their garage, "[they] hate seeing the bikes go to waste."

"Bikes have sentimental value," he observed. "What people are giving is more than just an inanimate object."

Oberg recalled a bicycle collection drive at a church, when a couple brought in their son's bicycle. They had kept the bicycle for eight years after their son's death, but "they finally decided that donating the bike was the right thing to do to honor their son."

BfW is a member of Bicycles for Humanity, a coalition of NGOs from the United States, Canada and England. For more information, see the Bikes for the World ( <http://www.bikesfortheworld.org/> ) and Bicycles for Humanity ( <http://www.bicycles-for-humanity.org/> ) Web sites.

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

## Old and New Emerging Diseases Threaten Nations Worldwide

By Cheryl Pellerin  
USINFO Staff Writer

This is the third in a series of articles on the U.S. contribution to global disease surveillance.

Washington -- In the days before high-speed travel and international commerce, a disease that arose in a country usually stayed in that country. Today, viruses are globe-trotters, carrying, for example, sub-Saharan Africa's Rift Valley fever to the Arabian Peninsula, and West Nile virus to Idaho and Colorado in the United States.

Many viruses are transported by mosquitoes that arrive in a country on aircraft or in shipping containers. The insect influx cannot be stopped completely, but scientists at the Center for Medical, Agricultural and Veterinary Entomology, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, are working at home and overseas to keep Rift Valley fever and other diseases out of the United States.

For Rift Valley fever -- a viral disease associated with heavy rainfall that affects cattle, sheep, goats and camels, and for people has a 1 percent fatality rate -- the work begins in sub-Saharan Africa, said center Director Kenneth Linthicum in a recent USINFO interview.

### MOSQUITO SURVEILLANCE

With NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and the U.S. Defense Department's Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System, the center participates in a program that uses satellite measurements of rainfall and vegetation to produce Rift Valley fever risk maps of sub-Saharan Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and gives early warn-

ing of outbreaks.

"Rift Valley fever is our principal research model, but we work on other diseases," Linthicum said. "We primarily work on the insects that transmit those diseases, so we look for keys that tell us when those populations of mosquitoes are increasing."



Mosquitoes are tested for the potentially fatal West Nile Virus, which can be spread by mosquitoes that bite humans. (AP Images)

Another aspect of the research involves conducting surveillance around shipping ports for exotic mosquitoes coming into the country and collecting them for study. The research program will help the scientists understand how to collect mosquitoes most efficiently.

### TRANSMITTING DISEASE

Exotic mosquitoes can do more in a new country than cause illness -- they can become endemic to (established in) a specific place.

"West Nile virus was introduced in New York in 1999," Linthicum said. "Within four years it moved all the way across the country, and it's

still causing problems." The virus causes severe illness in one in 150 people, who experience high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors and convulsions. Some neurological effects can be permanent.

The cause of the spread was a mosquito called *Culex tarsalis*, which happened to be a very good transmitter of West Nile virus, he said, "even though it had probably never seen West Nile virus before." Research shows that several mosquitoes in the United States could transmit Rift Valley fever.

Something similar happened on the Arabian Peninsula in 2000, when Rift Valley fever "suddenly popped up along the Red Sea and affected a large number of animals and people there. We're trying to follow that right now," Linthicum said, and it is possible the disease could become endemic there.

In the United States, he added, Rift Valley fever could become established in one of the host mosquito populations and simultaneously in deer or other wildlife. If that happened, he said, "it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to do anything about it."

### VACCINES FOR DENGUE FEVER, MALARIA

The other side of disease surveillance is disease prevention, and the U.S. Defense Department is working on vaccines for a range of viral and parasitic diseases, including malaria, which kills more than 1 million people a year.

Dengue fever, which infects more than 100 million people a year, is "one of the major public health and military threats," according to Colo-

*(Continued on page 21)*

## Defense Department Teams with Partners to Fight Global Disease

By Cheryl Pellerin  
USINFO Staff Writer

This is the second in a series of articles on the U.S. contribution to global disease surveillance.

Washington -- The U.S. Department of Defense long has focused its research into infectious diseases, therapeutics and vaccines on men and women in uniform, but a growing disease-surveillance program, a network of overseas laboratories and a range of efforts with international partners have added public health to its mission.

The department's Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System (GEIS) has been part of that mission since 1996, when a presidential directive expanded the role of most federal agencies to improve domestic and international infectious disease surveillance, prevention and response.

But Defense had an overseas presence long before 1996, said Dr. Joseph Malone, GEIS director from 2003 to 2006, in a May 21 USINFO interview.

"The federal government has been interested in tropical diseases and international disease surveillance for many years," Malone said, "but a concerted effort was made [in 1996] to create a coherent surveillance product and activities that would work together among agencies and cooperate with the World Health Organization [WHO] and other systems around the world."

### SCIENTIFIC OUTPOSTS

Concerns about the spread of infectious diseases in an increasingly mobile and globalized world make surveillance, research and international scientific capacity-building



A biomedical researcher prepares specimens for lab experiments at the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 in Maryland. (U.S. Navy)

and training critical activities for Defense labs overseas.

"Each of five international laboratories is a collaborative operation with the host country," GEIS's director, Colonel Loren Erickson, told USINFO May 17, "and we're very proud that public health and research and the areas where we have common interests transcend political issues."

The labs are the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 in Cairo, Egypt; the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 in Jakarta, Indonesia; the U.S. Army Medical Research Unit in Nairobi, Kenya; the U.S. Naval Medical Research Center in Lima, Peru; and the Armed Forces Re-

search Institute of Medical Sciences in Bangkok, Thailand.

In Cairo, the U.S. Navy has been partnering with its neighbors in North Africa, the Middle East and Southwest Asia since 1946, when it commissioned the Naval Medical and Research Unit No. 3 (NAMRU-3) to study, prevent and control epidemic and endemic diseases in subtropical areas where Navy personnel were stationed.

Today, as they have for more than 60 years -- including during a 1967-1974 lapse in diplomatic relations between Egypt and the United States -- U.S. Navy, U.S. Army and Egyptian scientists and staff members at NAMRU-3 study viruses, disease vectors (carriers) like ticks and mosquitoes, and enteric (intestinal) diseases and establish surveillance networks to monitor the region's most important disease threats.

The overseas labs, Erickson said, "provide the bedrock for a lot of the work we do. [Scientists stationed there] work in the host country and regionally to help countries in the area build their own capabilities -- training professionals to work in laboratories, do epidemiologic investigations and conduct research."

### WORKING WITH PARTNERS

In the 11 years since the presidential directive was issued, U.S. federal agencies like the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also have broadened their scope to include the rest of the world.

*(Continued on page 21)*

## Old and New Emerging Diseases Threaten Nations . . .

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*(Continued from page 19)*

nel Gray Heppner, M.D., director of malaria vaccine development at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

Once called "break-bone fever" because of the severe joint and muscle pain it can cause, dengue is endemic in more than 100 countries in Africa, the Americas, the eastern Mediterranean, Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific. No specific treatment or vaccine is available.

But the U.S. Army, Heppner said, has developed a dengue vaccine in collaboration with pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline that is now in phase II clinical trials in Thailand. In phase II trials, the treatment is given to a large group of people to see if it is effective and to evaluate its safety.

To counter severe malaria infection, the Army developed and is evaluat-

ing an intravenous drug called artesunate in Kenya to replace intravenous quinidine. Quinidine, the only U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-licensed drug for severe malaria, has serious side effects and limited availability.

FDA licensure, which the Army estimates will come in early 2008, will make the drug available in the United States and increase its use worldwide.

The Army also co-developed GlaxoSmithKline's candidate malaria vaccine, called RTS,S, which reduced severe malaria by 48 percent over 18 months in Mozambican children. The vaccine now is being evaluated in Gabon, Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania.

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## Defense Department Teams with Partners to Fight Global Disease . . .

*(Continued from page 20)*

"Since 2004," reads an entry on the CDC Web site, "the agency has refined and begun to systematize its approach to [disease] responses through the Global Disease Detection program ... a network of international centers of excellence in emerging infectious disease outbreak detection, identification, tracking and response."

CDC's global strategy includes a broad emerging infections program, a training program for field epidemiology and laboratory scientists, and a team of epidemiologists focused on flu surveillance and detection. CDC also works with GEIS at the overseas labs and has a full-time epidemiologist at NAMRU-3. "Because the CDC is also engaged in international surveillance work and some capacity

building, and assisting countries with early response [to disease outbreaks]," Erickson said, "it's important that we work together, that we don't duplicate effort, that we don't waste taxpayers' money."

Another partner is WHO in Geneva, where GEIS has a full-time staff member -- a Navy captain and infectious disease specialist who works on viral hemorrhagic diseases. This officer serves as a liaison between GEIS and WHO through WHO's Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network, a technical collaboration of institutions and networks that pool resources to rapidly identify, confirm and respond to international outbreaks.

The overseas labs are considered WHO collaborating centers

(national laboratories used for international purposes), and the NAMRU-3 Virology Research Department is a regional influenza reference laboratory for WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office. In that capacity, scientists confirm the identity of flu viruses isolated by national laboratories, offer laboratory training, collaborate on surveillance studies and conduct research to improve flu virus surveillance.

"It's an exciting time to be engaged in this kind of work," Erickson said. "Avian flu is just the tip of the iceberg -- with the resurgence of Rift Valley fever and chikungunya [a viral fever spread by mosquitoes], extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis and, more broadly, microbial resistance to antibiotics, we're going to be busy." ♦