



Weekly Special Report



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Taytu Puts Ethiopia in High-End Fashion Directory

Friday, October 3, 2008 Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – At a fashion trade show in New York this September, top international retailers, including Barneys New York, ordered more than 500 products from the Ethiopian leather goods and textiles consortium. Taytu, a consortium of twelve leather, leather product and hand-woven folkloric textile-producing small and (Continued on page 2)



The marketing expert taking orders for Taytu at the New York fashion trade fare.

Conflict Prevention Will Be Key for New Africa Command



Agency for International Development, Defense Department and Africa Command officials celebrate the launch of AFRICOM October 1, 2008.

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S. military activated its sixth geographic command, dedicated exclusively to the continent of Africa, on October 1.

The new U.S. Africa Command flag was unfurled during a formal ceremony held at the Pentagon before African dignitaries and members of the U.S. Congress on the first day of AFRICOM — as it is known — as a fully independent unified command. Defense Secretary

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Taytu Puts Ethiopia in High-End Fashion Directory . . .

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medium enterprises (SMEs) participated in the Designers and Agents International Fashion Trade Show in New York, September 13-15, with support from USAID's Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Program (ATEP). At the New York show, an unprecedented number of retail outlets and prestigious department stores visited the Taytu stand. Barneys New York ordered 240 leather bags from Taytu, marking a milestone in the consortium's growth. Nine additional stores from the United States, one from South Korea and one from Japan confirmed orders for a total of 240 more items.



Taytu's stand at the New York trade fare

USAID's ATEP supports Ethiopian efforts to maximize export earnings from priority sectors like the leather industry. Over the last two years, USAID's ATEP and UNIDO have

actively supported Taytu's participation in high end trade shows in Europe and the United States. This participation has helped

the consortium earn more than U.S. \$50,000 in sample orders from the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan and lead to regular export engagements for the consortium's member SMEs. USAID support has also helped build Taytu's capacity

through professional development of staff and the establishment of a modern showcase and retail outlet in the Dembel City Center in Octo-



A Night Purse featuring beaded accessories

ber 2007. Through this retail outlet, Taytu has sold more than U.S. \$50,000 of products locally.

Taytu's products incorporate unique designs inspired by age-old Ethiopian traditions with the superb qual-

ity of Ethiopian leather and indigenous workmanship of the SMEs' artisans. Initially supported by UNIDO and ITC, Taytu was formed five years ago to market its members' leather and textile products to high-end Western markets. USAID's ATEP joined UNIDO in 2007 to support the consortium's institutional capacity building and marketing activities of the consortium. The international support for this group of Ethiopian companies has contributed to an encouraging upturn in sales that signals Ethiopian products' potential to compete in the international high fashion market. ♦

Conflict Prevention Will Be Key for New Africa Command . . .

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Robert Gates emphasized that AFRICOM's mission is to prevent war, not wage it. And, he said, the new command — headquartered now in Stuttgart, Germany — was created to enhance the security of America's African partners, not to establish a U.S. military presence on the continent.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Michael Mullen, who spoke at the command activation ceremony, said bringing together civilian and military assets in this way will allow the United States to engage with Africans in new ways because it now will have dedicated staff (more than 1,000) to do so.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Henrietta Fore expressed strong support for the command's vital mission of contributing to military-to-military security cooperation. "We expect AFRICOM to substantially contribute to African defense sector reform and to build African partner capabilities in peacekeeping, in coastal and border security and counterterrorism," she said.

Fore said the State Department will ensure that the command's activities are coordinated through the U.S. ambassador assigned to each African nation. State and USAID will work in tandem to ensure that all development, diplomatic and defense activities are carried out in Africa in a way that maximizes resources, she said.



U.S. Army Gen. William E. Ward, center, the prospective commander of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), is briefed on a construction project by U.S. Navy Builder Constructionman Jason Talavera, right, and Builder Constructionman Mark Lindsey at a school in Holl Holl, Djibouti

All three entities should take pride in their collective record of accomplishments in Africa, Fore said, "in delivering humanitarian assistance, in advancing peace and security, in promoting the rule of law and good governance, in investing in the well-being of Africa's people in times of crisis and ... peace, and [in] spurring economic growth on the continent."

State and USAID know, Fore said, that the success of diplomatic and development missions often depends on security and logistics provided by Defense. "The link between security and development is clear throughout sub-Saharan Africa," Fore said.

Improvements in security, she said, have allowed countries such as Rwanda and Liberia to begin experiencing "sound economic growth,

better living conditions and improved governance following years of devastating armed conflict."

HOW THE COMMAND WILL WORK

The prevailing question among Africa specialists is how will AFRICOM work? In times of natural disaster, civilian government agencies will turn to the command for logistical support. It will help them work with African governments and with private partners with personnel dispersed to African towns and villages.

"We identify the needs of vulnerable populations for humanitarian assistance. We call upon our military to help provide [air]lift capacity and support to reach the people," Fore said.

USAID will continue to coordinate activities of nongovernmental organizations, host nation partners, other government agencies and the military. Fore said this proved an effective operations model during the 2000 and 2007 floods in Mozambique and Kenya, respectively.

Additionally, the administrator said development, diplomatic and defense experts are also concerned about a future avian flu pandemic. In response, she said, AFRICOM personnel are preparing for that possibility.

The command also has a conflict prevention role. Preventing conflict serves to protect precious resources. Fore quoted an Oxford

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South African Company Grows at Breakneck Pace with U.S. Help

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Cape Town, South Africa — A predominantly black-owned South African manufacturer of electric power transformers is growing at a breakneck pace, in large part because of a strategic boost from the U.S. government.

Electro Inductive Industries (Pty) Ltd. (EII) has seen its sales rocket from less than \$8 million in 2005 to more than \$27 million in the last fiscal year.

"The big kickoff came in 2004 when EII got a contract from the Johannesburg city government," said Mark Going, EII's chief of electrical design and part owner of the company. "That got our name known in the market. Since then, our growth has been exponential."

Going said that EII's production and sales accelerated after the company received assistance from a U.S. government program, South African International Business Linkages (SAIBL), which is designed to help predominantly black-owned South African small and medium-size companies.

In 2005, SAIBL analyzed EII's business practices and paid half the costs of getting its transformers tested and certified by an independent agency. Transformers are used to channel electricity from high-tension power lines to individual houses and businesses. They are most frequently seen atop poles holding up electricity lines.

Since the certifications were ob-



Electro Inductive Industries tank fitter Alfie Coster prepares a transformer for shipment.

tained, EII has been working overtime to meet the orders from Eskom, South Africa's national power provider, as well as from municipal governments. South Africa is in the midst of a building boom of new houses, roads and communities, creating surging demand for electricity.

"EII should do well. It has a good chance for success," said SAIBL's Bertram Richards. SAIBL has given EII \$23,000 over three years, most of it going to product testing costs. "That is not a lot of money, but it has been very effective in helping EII create new jobs and become a bigger player in the marketplace,"

said Tina Dooley-Jones of the U.S. Agency for International Development, which oversees the SAIBL program.

"SAIBL has been a big help for us," said Going. "Obviously, we are having growing pains in all aspects of our business — systems, people and cash flow. When we started in 1999, we had six workers. Today we have 280, and we don't have enough."

If EII is going to continue to prosper, not only will it have to fill Eskom's order, but it also will need its smaller business partners to grow. "Some of our black service providers have been able to grow along with us. Some have not and have fallen by the wayside," Going said.

SAIBL's Richards said that he will contact EII subcontractors with offers to help them plan growth strategies. The companies that SAIBL identifies for help are ones that are able to have a beneficial impact on other companies in the same sector.

Going said that once EII has stabilized from its current growth spurt, it will seek SAIBL's help in developing markets for its transformers in other African countries. "We see the potential for future markets in Zambia, Kenya, eventually Zimbabwe," Going said. ♦

Wine Company Goes Global with U.S. Help

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Cape Town, South Africa — Loukie Vlok, the winemaker of South Africa's Koopmanskloof Vineyards, points to six bottles on a table — three reds, two whites, and one rosé. "These wines are going to be known around the world and make us rich," he says.

By "us," Vlok means primarily the 86 black farmworkers who collectively own one of the six Koopmanskloof farms and 26 percent of Koopmanskloof Vineyards, the winemaking and retailing firm. He also refers to the mostly black businessmen who have a controlling interest in the vineyards and to Steve Smit, the aging owner of the five other Koopmanskloof farms.

The Koopmanskloof lands and winery, located in the lush Stellenbosch region north of Cape Town, have produced wines for more than 100 years, but the people who used to drink them knew them by other names. The wine was sold in bulk; buyers bottled it and put their own labels on the bottles.

"Mr. Smit was not interested in marketing. He was only interested in the quality of the production. I told Mr. Smit that other people put their names on our wines and make extra money from that. I told him that we could do that too," Vlok said.

The launch of Koopmanskloof wines under its own labels came in 2005. That event was the outcome of a convergence of factors, the prime one being the South African government's drive to place 30 percent of the country's farms under black

ownership by 2014. The government is steering clear of the forceful land-seizure policy taken by Zimbabwe, a policy blamed for devastating agriculture and causing famine in Zimbabwe.

Taking a different approach, the South African government is trying to build partnerships with South Africa's white farmers, paying them for their lands and putting ownership in the hands of the farmworkers. In return, the government is asking the former owners to continue managing the farms while they train the new worker-owners. This is part of a broader policy, called Black Economic Empowerment, which is intended to bring once disenfranchised blacks into the mainstream of all sectors of the economy.

The U.S. government supports this policy with its South African International Business Linkages (SAIBL) program, which is administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development. The agency reports that since 1998, SAIBL has helped more than 10,000 black, historically disadvantaged businesses, helping them to create more than 17,000 jobs and generate sales exceeding \$1.4 billion.

For Koopmanskloof, SAIBL experts carried out a thorough diagnosis of its business. Out of this has sprung the decision to market under Koop-

manskloof labels. The SAIBL examination also coached managers in how to sell wine in international markets, train personnel, draft business plans and acquire the international fair trade accreditation.

Speaking to America.gov from the Cape Town airport September 30 as he was about to board a flight to China on a marketing trip, the chief executive of Koopmanskloof, Rydal Jepfta, expressed gratitude for the U.S. support.

"SAIBL has helped us meet major challenges," Jepfta said. Before joining Koopmanskloof in 2007, Jepfta was the general manager of Thandi Wines, another South African

brand that is run by black executives and winemakers and that was the subject of a 2007 BBC documentary. While at Thandi, Jepfta developed a reputation as an imaginative and energetic business leader.

His plans for Koopmanskloof do not end with putting bottles of fair trade wine on the shelves of shops in the United States, Europe and Asia. There are artificial ponds on the farm, constructed for water management. He intends to turn them into fish farms. "Africans need more protein in their diet, and fish is a good source," he said.

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Conflict Prevention Will Be Key for New Africa Command . . .

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University statistic that one war occurring in a low-income nation costs an estimated \$64 billion. She said there have been 21 African countries in the past 25 years that have experienced military conflict.

Typically, Fore said, an average conflict goes on for nearly seven years. Then, she said, it takes a conflict-ravaged nation about 17 years to return to its pre-conflict gross domestic product growth rate.

"Conflict is an impediment to development and ... nations building their futures," she said. As an example, she pointed to daily USAID activities in Darfur to feed 3 million people who were displaced by conflict.

Gates pointed out that economic turmoil, ethnic fissures, natural disasters, disease, crime and terrorism "can be just as destabilizing as traditional military threats," and it is in some of these nontraditional areas that AFRICOM can help out.

Army General William "Kip" Ward, who is in charge of the new command, said it is "rare ... indeed" to be able to build a new organization from the ground up. He will focus on a range of programs, including counternarcotics and counterterrorism, maritime training through the Africa Partnership Station program, and mentoring peacekeepers through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program.

Gates said the command will solidify the processes of "building lasting ties with our African friends and partners and helping them secure and develop their own nations."

He summarized his vision of AFRICOM this way: "It is, at its heart, a different kind of command with a different orientation, one that we hope and expect will institutionalize a lasting security relationship with Africa."

For more information about AFRICOM, see "New U.S. Military Com-

mand to Focus Exclusively on Africa. (<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/September/20080926135812sjhtrop0.3994409.html>)"

For more about partnering, see "African Outreach Includes Training, Humanitarian Aid. (<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/February/20080207152552sjhtrop0.2349054.html>)"

A brochure about the new command (<http://www.africom.mil/fetchBinary.asp>) is available on the AFRICOM Web site.

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

Wine Company Goes Global with U.S. Help . . .

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The Koopmanskloof farms have a low mountain that allows a person standing on the summit to see the Atlantic and Indian oceans, Table Mountain, and lush valleys. Smit had built a cabin on the summit where he hosted private celebrations. Jepfta talked of plans to turn the cabin into a restaurant and lodge for tourists and of building hiking trails on the hills where the

guests could sharpen their appetites.

A portion of the Koopmanskloof profits will flow into a trust for the worker-owners, which they can use to improve their homes and send their children to high schools and universities. Loukie Vlok is sending his black apprentices to school so they can understand the reason behind the grape cultivation practices he has taught them for decades.

"They carry out my instructions very well. Now, they will learn the reasons for my instructions. In the future, they will be master wine-makers," he said.

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

Economic Issues Dominate Second Presidential Debate

By Michelle Austein
Staff Writer

Washington — With troubles in financial markets continuing to dominate world headlines, John McCain and Barack Obama spent more than half of their second presidential debate discussing economic issues October 7.

The debate, at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, was held in a town-hall format. Members of the audience, who were uncommitted voters, posed questions directly to the candidates. For the first time, the debate's moderator also asked questions posed by Americans on the Internet. More than 6 million questions were submitted, but only a handful were asked.

Both candidates outlined their plans for overcoming the country's current financial problems, which both agree amount to a crisis. Obama said his plan would provide a tax cut to the middle class. Noting the health care and energy costs faced by middle-class families, the Democratic candidate said, "We've got to fix our health care system, we've got to fix our energy system that is putting such an enormous burden on families."

McCain said he would order the secretary of the Department of the Treasury to buy bad home-loan mortgages and renegotiate them at the new value of those homes, enabling more Americans to be able to afford to stay in their homes.

"Is [this plan] expensive? Yes. But we all know, my friends, until we stabilize home values in America, we're never going to start turning

around and creating jobs and fixing our economy," the Republican candidate said.

A large number of Americans — 82 percent according to a September American Research Group poll — believes the economy is getting worse, yet when asked if they feel



Republican presidential candidate John McCain (R) speaks during the debate with Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama (L) at the Town Hall Presidential Debate at Belmont University's Curb Event Center October 7, 2008 in Nashville, Tennessee. (AFP/Getty Images/File/Anthony Jacobs)

the same, neither Obama nor McCain said the economy would worsen before it got better.

"I am confident about the American economy," Obama said. "But we are going to have to have some leadership from Washington that ... sets out much better regulations for the financial system." These regula-

tions would include limits on the roles of lobbyists and special interests, he said.

McCain said the economy can improve "if we act effectively, if we stabilize the housing market ... if we get rid of the cronyism and special interest influence in Washington so we can act more effectively."

CANDIDATES DESCRIBE FOREIGN POLICIES

Audience members posed foreign policy questions to the candidates during the last half hour of the 90-minute debate, as the candidates outlined their international objectives and sparred over the best way to fight terrorism.

The candidates shared similar views on when it is necessary for the United States to participate in peacekeeping or peacemaking missions overseas, but they disagreed on other foreign policy goals.

"The United States of America ... is the greatest force for good," McCain said. "And we must do whatever we can to prevent genocide, whatever we can to prevent these terrible calamities [about which] we have said 'never again.' But it also has to be tempered with our ability to beneficially affect the situation. ... This requires a person who understands what our, the limits of our capability are."

The Arizona senator said his years of foreign policy experience have given him the judgment needed to determine whether the United States can play an influential peacemaking or peacekeeping role.

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Nation's Economy Might Trump Local Issues for Oregon 1st Voters

By Steve Holgate
Special Correspondent

Portland, Oregon — A month before Election Day, the adage that “all politics is local” is being challenged in Oregon’s 1st Congressional District, as it is elsewhere in the country.

Although voters remain concerned with local issues, attention is focused on the country’s economic turmoil. Almost all newscasts begin with financial reports, most of them gloomy. Coffee shop chats quickly shift to the latest twists and turns on Wall Street and in Washington, and residents worry about their investments and pensions.

When asked what concerns voters most at the moment, David Sarasohn, associate editor of the state’s largest paper, *The Oregonian*, said, “It’s overwhelmingly the economy.” He added, “Since last spring we were hearing from Americans that this election was about the economy, superseding Iraq.”

Jeb Bladine, publisher of the *McMinnville News-Register* in rural Yamhill County, confirmed people are very concerned about the economy. He said he does not see evidence that the financial crisis has yet affected voter choices, but added that it may do so in the coming weeks.

Patrick Webb, editor of *The Daily Astorian*, said he believes that the proposal for a new liquefied natural gas terminal near this port city is still the Number 1 issue, but that the worrying economic news is very much on voters’ minds.

It is hard to be certain how all this

will play out politically in the next few weeks. Neither political party is blameless in the country’s current plight, and the mood of the electorate is difficult to read. Polls indicate the recently enacted bailout pack-



age is hugely unpopular, but the same polls show Congress’ reputation took a beating when it failed to enact the measure promptly.

THE CONGRESSIONAL RACE

Like a number of other lawmakers, Congressman David Wu initially voted against the proposal before supporting a modified version of the bill. If Wu faced a serious political challenge in 2008, it might be easier to tell whether voters hold the shift against him, but the challenge to Wu’s seat in Congress has, in the last few weeks, largely evaporated amid some extraordinary political events.

Republican Joel Haugen won his party’s primary against a more conservative opponent with 70 percent of the vote, but his opposition to a number of Bush administration policies and his endorsement of Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama angered party leaders. Haugen, upbeat for most of the

campaign season, said that he is “still managing to have some fun,” but smiled a bit wanly when he said, “I’ll be glad when Election Day comes round.”

Haugen’s shaky standing with Republican Party leadership was not enhanced when he sought and gained the nomination of the Independent Party in addition to that of the Republicans. When state election officials did not allow the names of both parties to be listed on the ballot next to his name, Haugen faced a dilemma.

He resolved it by waiting until the deadline for parties to replace their nominee had passed, then resigned the nomination of the Republican Party. This allows Haugen’s name to remain on the ballot as the Independent Party. But, in what must be embarrassing for a party that dominated district politics for nearly a century, Republicans will not have a congressional candidate on the November ballot.

In light of these developments, Wu might be tempted to celebrate his re-election before the votes are cast. And if, as some analysts have suggested, Wu’s support is eroding, voters will lack a major party candidate with whom they could lodge a protest vote.

OTHER ISSUES

In the Oregon 1st, other issues and offices are very much in play and the current economic distress will cast a shadow all the way down the long ballot.

Sarasohn said he does not believe the economy will have much direct

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Record Turnout Likely for 2008 General Election

By Meghan Loftus
Staff Writer

Washington — A record voter turnout is expected for the 2008 U.S. presidential election, and that prediction is putting new election law reforms to the test.

In 2004, 125 million people voted in the presidential election, about 88 percent of registered voters. Experts believe that turnout in 2008 will be somewhere between 125 million and 200 million voters, the highest numbers in recent memory.

Under the U.S Constitution, state governments — not the federal government — are responsible for conducting elections. There are approximately 7,500 election jurisdictions in the United States and about 200,000 polling places. In recent years, some election officials across these varied jurisdictions have faced staffing shortages, out-of-date technology, weather emergencies and increasing litigation.

But one event focused national attention to the need for reform — an incredibly close 2000 presidential contest in Florida. The outcome of the election hung in the balance as officials struggled to determine voter intent on thousands of paper ballots. As a result, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002. The act provides money to states to improve the administration of federal elections.

“HAVA is a step in the right direction,” said Nathan Cemenska, of the Moritz College of Law at Ohio State University, who is the co-author of Key Questions for Key

States. “It caused states to update their voting technology and provided money for them to do that. The voting technology we have is better because of that.”

HAVA also funds voter education and outreach programs, training for

successful outcome, there is every indication that states will be fully prepared for a potential record turnout in November.”

Cortés is president of the National Association of Secretaries of State, which just released a report detail-



Ohio, voters stood in line at crowded election offices to cast their ballots early, many of them concerned about heavy rain or ice forecast for Tuesday's presidential primary. Here voters wait at the Franklin County Board of Elections in Columbus. AP Photo/Kiichiro Sato Across

poll workers and election officials, and improving accessibility to election sites.

VOTER EDUCATION

State and local governments have been working overtime to prepare for elections.

“Dramatic increases in registration figures and predictions of high turnout are driving state preparations this year,” said Pedro Cortés, Pennsylvania secretary of state, testifying before the House Judiciary Committee. “Nearly 58 million Americans voted in the 2008 presidential primaries. Based on the suc-

ing such preparations. According to Engaging the Energized Electorate, educating new and experienced voters alike is a top priority this year.

States have created videos, brochures and Web sites on registration, polling place locations and Election Day procedures, and have gotten creative in the process. Some states, including New Mexico and Maine, held competitions to produce the best public service announcements on voting and civic engagement. In Missouri, officials posted their video guide to voting on MySpace, YouTube and other video-sharing sites.

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Record Turnout Likely for 2008 General Election . . .

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OUTREACH TO SPECIFIC VOTER GROUPS

Many states have targeted young voters specifically. An unprecedented 6.5 million people under 30 voted in the 2008 primaries, and turnout among this demographic in the general election is expected to be high as well.

Twelve states have used social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to reach young adults, and half of all state election Web sites have special pages dedicated to young voters. Publicity efforts have focused on reaching non-English speakers as

well. States such as Connecticut and Rhode Island have translated voting information into many languages, provided voter registration materials at naturalization ceremonies and targeted historically underrepresented groups.

For elderly and disabled voters, states are providing equipment demonstrations and guides.

PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTION DAY

In addition to publicity, states such as Arizona and Arkansas are stepping up their efforts to recruit and train poll workers.

Training has become more intensive in some states. In Iowa, poll work-

ers must complete a three-day certification program, and in Delaware poll workers are taught in a college setting that includes hands-on equipment demonstrations. Five states and the District of Columbia (Washington) allow poll workers to split shifts, giving volunteers the opportunity to work the polls part time and easing staffing shortages.

Many states are hoping people will avoid the large Election Day crowds and vote early or by absentee ballot. Thirty states use early voting, which allows voters to cast their ballots before Election Day. Many early voters will not have to set foot inside a voting center, but instead will mail in an absentee ballot. ♦

Economic Issues Dominate Second Presidential Debate . . .

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"We may not always have national security issues at stake, but we have moral issues at stake," Obama said, referring to ongoing international conflicts such as genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan and fighting in Somalia.

"So when genocide is happening, when ethnic cleansing is happening somewhere around the world and we stand idly by, that diminishes us. And so I do believe that we have to consider it as part of our interests, our national interests, in intervening where possible," the Illinois senator said.

The candidates outlined differing views on how to wage the war on terrorism. Much of the first presidential debate focused on fighting

in Iraq; this debate primarily examined how the candidates would handle security concerns in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Obama reiterated his support for withdrawing U.S. military forces from Iraq and advocated new policies toward Pakistan.

"If we have Osama bin Laden in our sights and the Pakistani government is unable or unwilling to take them out, then I think that we have to act and we will take them out. We will kill bin Laden; we will crush al-Qaida. That has to be our biggest national security priority," Obama said.

Throughout his campaign, Obama has said he would be willing to act unilaterally to take out a terrorist target in Pakistan if the country's

government would not cooperate. McCain has argued this approach amounts to an announcement of plans to attack the country.

McCain said he would stop terrorists on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border "by working and coordinating our efforts together, not threatening to attack [Pakistan]." McCain said he would cooperate with government leaders to help gain support from the country's people to fight terrorism, a strategy that he says has worked in Iraq.

According to a poll conducted by CNN/Opinion Research Corporation, in the first 30 minutes following the debate, 54 percent of those polled said that Obama did better; 30 percent said McCain had the stronger performance. ♦

U.S. Presidential Nominees Market Themselves to Voters

By Eric Green
Staff Writer

Washington — Republican presidential nominee John McCain and Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama are using the advertising tool of “branding” to market themselves to the U.S. electorate, advertising specialists tell America.gov.

“What we know about branding of political candidates,” said Allen Adamson of Landor Associates, which offers marketing and research services, “is that you’ve got to be single-minded, very focused,” and voters have to understand the candidate’s message with their “gut,” emotionally, and their “head,” intellectually.

Physical interaction with voters, such as walking into an audience like a television talk-show host, can reinforce the core message that a candidate evokes in his speeches, said Adamson, managing director of Landor’s New York office. He said his firm has mapped the attributes of political candidates to images and well-known commercial brands.

For instance, the company’s “Presidential ImagePower” study for incumbent President George W. Bush’s successful bid for re-election in 2004 showed that his supporters associated him with the “brand” that evoked such positive attributes as “reliable, humble and solid.” Bush’s brand was consistent with such established mainstay products as IBM, Ford Motor Company and Bud Lite beer. Landor’s study was

done in collaboration with the market research firm Penn, Schoen and Berland.

Supporters of 2004 Democratic candidate John Kerry associated him with a brand that conveyed attributes of “high quality, high performance, hip and young.” He was associated with the premium brands of BMW automobiles, Apple computers, and Heineken beer.



For the 2008 campaign, Adamson said he believes McCain could be branded like the soft drink Coca-Cola. That will evoke images of “the real thing, all about America, authenticity, patriotic, experienced, and a war hero” with “the core message that he has been there, done that.”

Meanwhile, Obama would be “Pepsi-Cola,” associated with “the choice of the next generation, more the challenger brand [that] is trying to change things,” said Adamson, whose firm is nonpartisan.

Sarah Palin, the 2008 Republican vice presidential nominee, has branded herself as the “hockey mom,” said Adamson. He said nei-

ther Democratic vice presidential nominee Joe Biden nor the presidential nominees have branded themselves “as clearly or as powerfully” as Palin, although McCain seeks to appeal to voters as “a maverick who bucks the trends.”

Adamson wrote in his blog, BrandSimple, that “one of the essential rules of successful brand building is to establish something you want to represent in the minds of consumers and stick with it.”

As McCain and Obama prepare for the final weeks of the 2008 campaign, wrote Adamson, “they must do everything possible to stick to the brand position that initially resonated with their party platforms and take every opportunity to convey this position,

no matter the specific issue at hand.”

AN INDIVIDUAL’S POWER TO AFFECT ELECTIONS

Andrew Rasiej, who consults on the use of technology in politics, says both Obama and McCain are branding themselves as agents of change. Where they differ, he said, is that Obama’s campaign is casting its candidate as the agent of “generational change,” in which Americans are asked to make a shift in “the way in which our democracy works.”

McCain is using “institutional change,” saying that the U.S. government in Washington needs to

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Joe Biden, Sarah Palin Highlight Their Political, Personal Roots

By Michelle Austein
Staff Writer

Washington — In their first meeting and only debate, vice presidential candidates Joe Biden and Sarah Palin described the roles each would play as the next in line to lead the United States.

Palin, the Republican first-term governor of Alaska, said she and running mate John McCain “have had good conversations about where I would lead with his agenda. And that is energy independence in America and reform of government over all, and then working with families of children with special needs.”

The U.S. vice president also presides over the Senate, casting a vote whenever that vote would affect the outcome, such as breaking a tie or achieving a supermajority. It is a position that Palin would take “very seriously,” she said.

Biden, a Democratic senator from Delaware first elected in 1972, said he would be “the point person for the legislative initiatives in the United States Congress for our administration” during a Barack Obama presidency.

“Barack Obama indicated to me he wanted me with him to help him govern,” Biden said. “So every major decision he’ll be making, I’ll be sitting in the room to give him my

best advice.”

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

Palin and Biden highlighted their political expertise: Biden emphasized his years of experience dealing with international affairs while



Democratic vice presidential candidate U.S. Senator Joe Biden (D-DE) shakes hands with Republican vice presidential candidate Alaska Gov.

Palin stressed that, as governor, she has had to tackle complex energy issues in a state known for its oil production.

Biden spoke of his role on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and touted his early recommendations for U.S. intervention in Bosnia. He also discussed his visit to the Darfur region of Sudan, saying, “I’ve seen the suffering; thousands and tens of thousands have died and are dying. We should rally the world to act.”

Speaking about her current job duties, Palin described Alaska as “a huge energy-producing state that is accounting for much progress towards getting our nation energy independence.” As governor, Palin said, she oversees a \$40 billion pipeline project that will produce more oil in the state and has limited tax breaks for oil companies.

PERSONAL STORIES

Both candidates described how their personal experiences have shaped their political philosophies. Palin said one of the reasons she was selected as the Republican vice presidential candidate “was my connection to the heartland of America.”

“Being a mom, one very concerned about a son in the war, about a special needs child, about kids heading off to college — how are we going to pay those tuition bills? ... We

know what other Americans are going through as they sit around the kitchen table and try to figure out how are they going to pay out of pocket for health care. We’ve been there also, so that connection was important.”

Palin, who has an infant son with Down syndrome, said working for children with special needs is an issue that is “near and dear to my heart.” Her oldest child is in the U.S. Army and is currently serving in Iraq.

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Joe Biden, Sarah Palin Highlight Their Political, Personal Roots . . .

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Biden, who has a son soon deploying to Iraq, was clearly emotional when speaking about a car accident that killed his first wife and daughter and injured his two sons. "Look, I understand what it's like to be a single parent. ... I understand what it's like as a parent to wonder what it's like if your kid's going to make it."

"I understand ... what it's like for those people sitting around that kitchen table. And guess what? They're looking for help," he said.

CANDIDATES TOUT RUNNING MATES' PROPOSALS

When discussing policy matters, the vice presidential candidates focused mostly on McCain's and Obama's

positions rather than their own.

Biden said his running mate is very concerned about nuclear weapons, particularly in Pakistan. He also said he and Obama believe it is necessary to promote a stable Pakistani government to stop terrorism.

"If an attack comes in the homeland ... it's going to come from al-Qaida planning in the hills of Afghanistan and Pakistan," Biden said. "We need to support that democracy."

On domestic issues, Palin described her running mate as a bipartisan leader with the experience to bring about economic reforms. As president, Palin said, McCain would "get rid of the greed and the corruption on Wall Street and in Washington," provide tax credits for families to purchase their own health care and take an "all-of-the-above approach"

to considering ways to tackle climate change.

Biden linked McCain with ill-received Bush initiatives, emphasizing that an Obama presidency would bring change. As president, Biden said, Obama would provide tax relief to middle-class families, change bankruptcy laws to help homeowners and invest in alternative energies.

The October 2 event was the only vice presidential debate. There will be two more presidential debates; the next is scheduled for October 7.

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

U.S. Presidential Nominees Market Themselves to Voters . . .

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alter the way it operates, Rasiej said. McCain's brand of change invokes patriotism to appeal to voters, said Rasiej, who previously has consulted for a number of Democrats but is not working for a candidate in the 2008 campaign.

Rasiej said Obama's brand of change is notable for spreading his advertising message through the Internet, using broadband technology to move "beyond the cultural wars" that defined previous presidential campaigns. Obama is using a language that is comfortable and familiar for people under age 40 who use computer technology in their daily lives, Rasiej said. The

consultant founded a Web site called techPresident that tracks how the 2008 presidential candidates are using the Internet.

Rasiej said e-mail allows individuals to play a powerful role in presidential campaigns. He cited his 82-year-old father as an example of how one person hopes to influence voters. His father, Rasiej said, is e-mailing YouTube videos of Obama speeches to his friends, which is a "less overt" and "less intrusive" way to communicate a political message. Rasiej said that in past elections, his father might have political conversations with 50 friends, "but it would take a year and half" to meet those people in casual situations to engage in politi-

cal conversation.

The power of one person becomes evident when millions of other Americans multiply his father's efforts with their own e-mail appeals for the same candidate, Rasiej said.

YouTube, Flickr and other video-sharing Web sites allow a huge audience to watch a candidate's presentations in full. For example, Rasiej said, the public has "clicked on" Obama's 37-minute speech on race relations in America 6 million times.

Rasiej said that "we're going from the era of the sound bite to the sound blast," where millions can watch, read and absorb a political speech. ♦

U.S. Senate Endorses Financial Rescue Plan

By **Andrzej Zwanecki**
Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S. Senate approved a revised version of the \$700 billion plan to shore up the U.S. and global financial systems, reviving hope that the measure will be passed by the other congressional chamber, which rejected the plan days earlier.

Senators voted overwhelmingly October 1 in favor of the bill. It is designed to prevent further bankruptcies of U.S. and foreign financial institutions jeopardized by the fallout from the U.S. mortgage crisis and to bring back confidence to the credit markets, which have practically frozen up in recent days.

President Bush said the plan is “essential to the financial security of every American.”

“The American people expect — and our economy demands — that the House pass this good bill this week and send it to my desk,” Bush said.

On September 29, the House of Representatives rejected the initial version of the plan by a slim margin.

For the bill to become law, both the House and Senate must pass the same version of it, and the president must sign it. The House is expected to vote on the Senate-approved bill October 3, and leaders of both parties expressed guarded optimism about the chances of its passage.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average



Despite the financial crisis he predicted, billionaire Warren Buffett continues to invest in U.S. and foreign companies.

stock index fell 778 points, or close to 7 percent, on the day the House rejected the bill. Although the average regained some ground the next day, it did not return to its previous level.

Congressional representatives trying to gauge voters' opinion have had difficulty. The week of September 22, most calls and e-mails from voters expressed anger about what they perceived as an attempt to rescue greedy and irresponsible Wall Street companies and officials; the week of September 29, the number of messages criticizing House members for failing to pass the rescue plan significantly increased.

Senate Banking Committee Chairman Christopher Dodd, a Democrat, acknowledged that “many Americans are confused and angry about this crisis.” But he reassured them

that, ultimately, the plan will work to their advantage.

Dodd, who played a key role in pushing the legislation through the Senate, said that it “not only [will] provide stability and confidence to our financial markets, but also will help American families who are struggling to make ends meet.”

The stock market plunge and change in constituents' sentiments, plus new provisions in the Senate version of the rescue bill, may persuade House members who earlier voted “no” to change their minds, according to congressional observers.

Also important is the fact that leaders and central bankers in industrialized countries and emerging markets, surprised by the degree of their countries' exposure to the U.S. financial crisis, have been calling on Washington to do whatever is necessary to prevent a global financial meltdown.

But he added that “not doing anything at this time is to virtually guarantee that we, as an economy, will begin a very significant downturn of disproportionate impact on people on Main Street.”

SENATE-STYLE BAILOUT

The provisions added by Senate include a temporary increase (from \$100,000 to \$250,000) of the cap on bank deposits guaranteed by the government and a package of tax cuts, including a small tax relief measure for some homeowners, earlier rejected by the House.

The bill calls for the government to

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U.S. Senate Endorses Financial Rescue Plan . . .

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act as the buyer of last resort for home mortgages and so-called toxic securities held by struggling institutions, including some foreign banks, and as a provider of fresh capital to financial institutions whose failure could jeopardize the financial system. Mortgage-backed and other securities lost much of their value as hundreds of thousands of Americans defaulted on their home loans.

The drafters of the original plan put together by the Treasury Department — with support from the Federal Reserve, the U.S. central bank — hope to jump-start credit markets so securities' prices will rise and private investors will feel confident enough to re-enter the market.



Senate Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., talks with reporters during a news conference on the passage of the Senate version of the bailout package Oct. 1, 2008 in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

The plan — in its original and its latest form — contains several options for the government to recoup the money used to finance the plan and possibly earn a profit. If, after five years from the bill's enactment, the government determines that the program has lost money, it would ask the financial industry to cover the projected shortfall.

As a result, a congressional research arm estimates that the "net cost [to the government] is likely to be substantially less than \$700 billion."

During the negotiations with congressional leaders, the three-page proposal submitted by Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson grew to more than 100 pages of legislation, which included oversight provisions, taxpayer protection, help for homeowners struggling with debt and other provisions reflecting lawmakers' many reservations about the plan, its effectiveness and its cost to the taxpayers. The version passed by the Senate is more than 400 pages.

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Nation's Economy Might Trump Local Issues for Oregon 1st Voters . . .

(Continued from page 8)

effect on the statewide ballot measures, but it could make a big difference when Oregonians vote on increases to their local property taxes for school budgets. He said voters are less likely to approve such measures than they were the last time they went to the polls.

The economic turmoil will damage Republican hopes in next month's election, not so much over ideologi-

cal issues, but simply because they are seen as the party in power, according to Sarasohn, an assessment with which Webb concurred. Bladine, however, was less sure, saying that Senator John McCain has a generally good track record on economic issues.

Whichever analysis proves correct, few would argue that the economic challenges of 2008 have thrown a sudden wildcard into election predictions.

This article is part of America.gov's continuing coverage of seven of the 435 U.S. congressional districts during the 2008 campaign. Each offers a different prism from which to view U.S. politics.

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

Policy Researchers Support Financial Plan, with Reservations

By Burton Bollag
Special Correspondent

Washington — The five economics specialists on a panel at the Brookings Institution were not sure how the government's \$700 billion financial rescue package would be used or what it would accomplish. But they all support it because they believe the price of inaction could be even greater.

Could the crisis pass without this massive commitment of government money, as some economists and politicians have argued? It might, said Alice Rivlin, senior fellow at Brookings and former vice chairwoman of the Federal Reserve. But the possibility that the crisis could lead to a financial meltdown and a deep economic recession is too big a gamble to take.

"It's a little bit like nuclear war," she said. You don't know what the result would be, "but you better do everything you can to avoid it."

She and the others spoke October 1 in a Brookings-hosted discussion billed as "The \$700 Billion Question." Analysts at several other Washington-based research organizations have taken up the topic, and they too largely come out in favor of the rescue plan.

Several economists with the Peterson Institute for International Economics support the "troubled asset relief program," which is already referred to by its acronym: TARP. "There is still time for the U.S. administration and the Congress to make something positive emerge from the delay in passing TARP legislation," said Morris Goldstein, a Peterson economist. "A revised

and improved TARP bill can ... increase the liquidity of mortgage-backed securities, while allocating more resources [than did the original TARP] both to recapitalization of our financial institutions and to mitigation of rising home foreclosure rates."

Even researchers from the Heritage Foundation, which has "limiting government" among the goals in its mission statement, argue for congressional action. "Faced with a crisis of this scale, lawmakers need to consider steps that would be out of the question in more normal times," write Stuart Butler and Edwin Meese III in a recently published paper titled *The Bailout Package: Vital and Acceptable*.

At the Brookings meeting, William Frenzel, a former Republican congressman from Minnesota, said the initial opposition to the rescue package — the House of Representatives voted it down days earlier — was due to pressure from the "hard left and hard right." The former did not want taxpayer money used to bail out investors; the latter felt the market was sacrosanct and should not be meddled with.

But after a few days, members of Congress increasingly heard from less ideological and more representative members of their constituencies, he said. People may not have much faith in the government's ability to handle the crisis, he said. But "the public knows there's an emergency" and feels something needs to be done.

The five panelists all appeared optimistic that the rescue package was likely to bring the current crisis under control. But several stressed

that Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr. may get extraordinary powers to implement the government's efforts, but he has no detailed road map. Instead, he will be moving without a plan as he tries to remedy a problem that emerged quickly.

Simon Johnson, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, used satirical flair to drive the point home. "I think the reason we're frightened is [that] the most trusted public servants with regard to economic policy, the secretary of the Treasury and the chairman of the Federal Reserve, two weeks ago were continuing to tell the American people that the economy was ... fine; we're going to avoid a recession. Two days later, they showed up and they asked for 5 percent of [gross domestic product] in small unmarked bills to be placed in a paper bag outside Mr. Paulson's office, no questions asked."

Yet Johnson and other panelists seemed to accept that in this extraordinary situation, there was little alternative to giving Paulson the authority to make deals to purchase the so-called "toxic" securities that no one else wants to buy, to get the credit markets functioning again.

William Gale, director of economic studies at Brookings, said Paulson would need a free hand. "You can't constantly be coming back to some congressional board for oversight or approval," he said.

Brookings panelists said the Treasury Department should use the rescue funds in a transparent manner.

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World Markets Remain Hesitant Following Financial Rescue Plan

Washington — World stock markets remain jittery even after the U.S. Congress approved a \$700 billion financial rescue plan. In the first full day of trading after President Bush signed the bill into law, New York's Dow Jones industrial average stock index fell more than 7 percent before rebounding slightly and closing down 3.5 percent. These movements were echoed in markets around the globe.

Speaking to an audience in Ohio on October 6, President Bush said it will take time for the rescue plan to take effect.

"I believe that this plan will work over time. I signed the bill on Friday. It's going to take time for the Treasury Department to put a plan in place that won't waste your money and that will achieve the objective," he said. Bush said the rescue plan is large enough to prevent credit markets from freezing up.

The two candidates vying to replace Bush as the next U.S. president also weighed in on the market's reaction to the rescue plan, which both supported when the bill came before the Senate.

"It was a tourniquet, but not a permanent solution," Republican Senator John McCain told supporters in New Mexico on October 6. "Today we're seeing the stock market fall and the credit crisis spread to other parts of the world. Our economy is still hurting. ... Further action is needed. It must be done."

McCain promised additional measures to shore up the U.S. economy,



Traders gather at a post on the New York Stock Exchange floor

including tax cuts and reduced government spending. He vowed to balance the federal budget by the end of his first term in office if elected president.

Democratic Senator Barack Obama warned that continued turmoil in the markets could have grave consequences. "Not only are we seeing the stock market go down, but there is still a great danger of the credit markets locking up, and we've seen that the contagion is spreading to all parts of the globe. Europe is having some of the same problems that we're having here in the States. Asia is being affected," he told supporters in North Carolina on October 6.

"It is a reminder that the rescue package that was passed last week is not the end of our efforts to deal with the economy. It's just the beginning," he said.

Obama urged Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke to move quickly in implementing the rescue plan in an effort to build confidence in the markets. He also proposed an economic stimulus package to help American consumers confront higher gasoline and food prices and to help state and local governments meet their payrolls.

Obama also voiced support for extending unemployment insurance following a disappointing jobs report showing the U.S. economy lost 159,000 jobs in September.

See Bush's Oct. 6 remarks (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2008/October/20081007120747eaifas0.9489405.html>) on the financial rescue plan and the economy on america.gov. ♦

Contributions to Judicial Races Worrisome, Justice O'Connor Says

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — As campaign contributions play a larger role in the election of some U.S. judges, retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor warned business interests that attempting to buy influence will not, in the long term, result in a more business-friendly legal environment.

Speaking October 2 at the "Our Courts and Corporate Citizenship" conference hosted by the Georgetown University Law School in Washington, O'Connor said "a qualified fair and independent judicial branch" benefits everyone, but the increased use of campaign funds damages the judiciary's impartiality and fuels negative public perceptions of it.

"While we've come a long way ... I'm worried that we are inching sort of backwards as the money creeps its way back into the judicial races," she said.

Nationwide, 87 percent of all U.S. state court judges face elections, and 39 states elect at least some of their judges, according to the National Center for State Courts. In contrast, judges for the U.S. federal court system are appointed with lifetime tenures. Only two other nations — Switzerland and Japan — hold judicial elections and do so only in a very limited way.

Within the U.S. legal community and among the general population, the wisdom of electing judges has been debated almost from the nation's founding.

Proponents argue that requiring



Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor says that when justice is for sale, you do not know who the buyer will be.

judges to periodically stand for election makes them more accountable to the community. They also cite the transparency of the process, contrasting it favorably with an appointment system that is conducted in large measure out of the public view and can be marred by cronyism. Critics of judicial elections maintain that campaigning and campaign fundraising open the door to undue influence, perhaps even corruption.

O'CONNOR CITES CURRENT, HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

In her October 2 remarks, O'Connor referenced a case on appeal to the West Virginia Supreme Court in which a judge who had received campaign contributions from a wealthy businessman refused to recuse himself from a case in which

the businessman was a litigant. The judge then ruled in favor of the businessman.

The case eventually could end up being decided by O'Connor's successors in the Supreme Court, who judicial reformers hope will clarify the circumstances under which elected judges must disqualify themselves from cases involving campaign contributors.

The West Virginia example stands to become more common as the amount and diverse sources of campaign contributions increase. According to the Justice at Stake Campaign, state supreme court candidates across the United States raised more than \$165 million for their campaigns between 1999 and 2007 compared to \$62 million over the previous six years.

"As the selection of state court judges becomes ever more political, I think the interests of all sides have been pouring a great deal of money into state judicial races," O'Connor said. "In the long term, that kind of a system undermines our notions and standards for an independent judiciary and ... business interests ultimately suffer too when that happens."

To help illustrate her point, she recalled Judge Roy Bean, who ran his court out of a saloon in western Texas in the 19th century. "Everyone ... was expected to buy drinks," she said, and those who did not were held in contempt and ordered to pay a fine that amounted to the cost of a drink. "He was selling ice cold beer and law in that order."

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Contributions to Judicial Races Worrisome, Justice O'Connor Says . . .

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Judge Bean also commuted the death sentence of a prisoner when he discovered the condemned man had access to a small fortune and sensed that "there might be some profit in leniency."

That chaotic "justice-for-sale environment" did not translate to a business-friendly legal system, O'Connor said. "It was difficult to have faith that the government would enforce property or contract rights because for every Judge Bean who might be in your pocket, there was another one in somebody else's pocket.

"Once you hang the 'For Sale' sign on the courthouse door, you can't predict who the buyer is going to be."



Judge Roy Bean's court, housed in a 19th-century saloon in western Texas, made a mockery of justice.

The only sure result from competing interests pouring money into judicial campaigns is that the rule of law will suffer. "So justice is a special commodity. The more you pay for it, maybe the less it's worth," she said.

However, O'Connor acknowledged, businesses and other parties have

"real concerns" about the judicial branch.

"Some see runaway juries creating unpredictability. Some see litigation delayed and expensive discovery processes that greatly increase the cost and time of litigation," she said, adding the judiciary increasingly is made up of younger judges "who lack experience with complex business issues."

All of these concerns "need to be addressed," O'Connor said.

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Policy Researchers Support Financial Plan, with Reservations . . .

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After all, they said, the crisis was brought on in part by a lack of transparency around the widely held mortgage-backed financial instruments, leaving investors unsure of their true value.

The speakers said the government could determine the worth of these financial instruments by quickly re-auctioning a small part of the securities it buys. "We know there are investors out there. ... They're waiting to buy," Johnson said. Economists say that in the best-case scenario, the government

could make a profit selling off the securities after the market stabilizes and prices rise.

One way to make the market more transparent in the future, panelists said, is to reform the way the credit-rating agencies operate. Investors from the United States and around the world typically relied on credit ratings to determine the risk of complicated mortgage-based securities. But critics say these agencies did not do their job and often gave such securities higher ratings than they deserved.

"It's manifestly not working to have

the rating agencies paid by people who want to sell the thing that they're rating," Rivlin said.

She added that, after the current crisis is remedied, there is an urgent need to regulate financial markets after several decades with little oversight. "A lot of this could have been avoided if we had sensible lending standards on subprime mortgages."

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

Artist Heba Amin Explores Her Egyptian Heritage in America

By Howard Cincotta and Deborah Conn
Special Correspondents

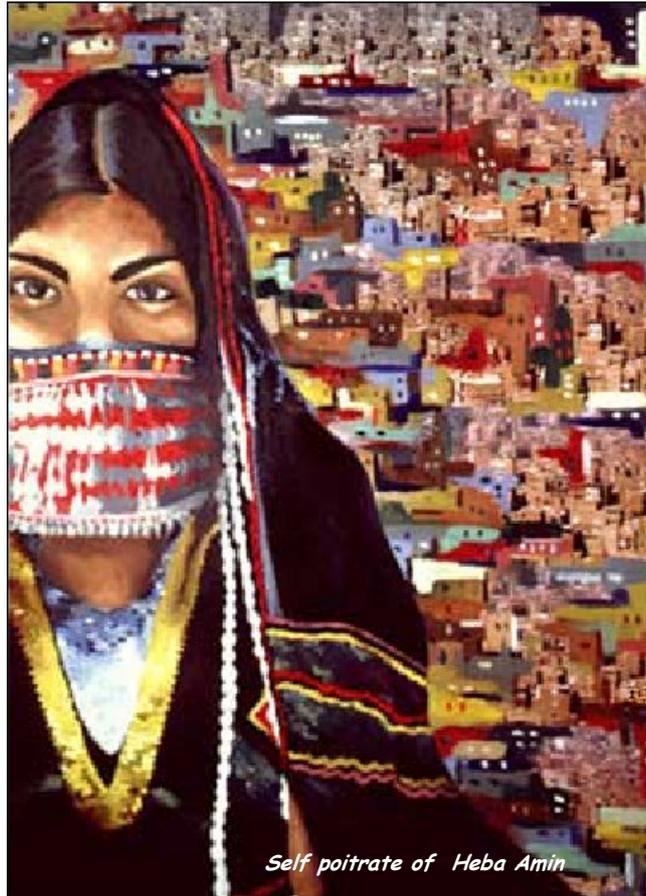
Washington — Contemporary artist Heba Amin, 28, has been drawing for as long as she can remember, but pursuing art full-time did not occur to her until she was a junior in college. At the time, Amin, who now lives in Minneapolis, was a math major and first envisioned herself as an architect.

Amin was born and raised in Cairo, Egypt. Her late father was an interior designer; her mother, an administrative worker at the private American school Amin attended from kindergarten through 12th grade.

After high school, Amin traveled to the United States to attend Macalester College, a private, liberal arts school in St. Paul, Minnesota. By her third year, Amin realized that her heart lay in art, not math, and, in 2002, she earned a bachelor's degree in studio art, with a concentration in oil painting.

Living in the United States, she told Faye Oweis, editor of the *Encyclopedia of Arab American Artists*, allowed her "to take the role of the outside observer" and opened her eyes to the richness of Arab and Egyptian culture that she had "previously overlooked or taken for granted." For several years, Amin's work revolved around portraits of Bedouin women, who, she said, "are known for their embroidered and beaded crafts."

"The European Union had a program designed to preserve these crafts, funding the work and encouraging older women to teach younger ones. I became interested



in that and stayed with different tribes to see the process working. I also apprenticed with a Bedouin artist who created sand paintings."

As Amin spent time with different Bedouin tribes, she realized she was even more interested in their way of life than their craft.

"I was struck by how attached they were to their surroundings and the land, and how sad it was that their culture was deteriorating due to urban sprawl and modernization,"

she recalled.

Amin began painting brightly colored portraits of Bedouin women juxtaposed with urban geometric patterns. "The patterns overwhelm the paintings, representing how the city is taking over the Bedouin culture," she said.

Eventually, Amin's Bedouin paintings led her in a different artistic direction, toward three-dimensional installation pieces. "As I did the portraits, I found I was really interested in the city structure format," she explained.

The next time she was in Cairo, Amin said, "I noticed how many abandoned structures there were — expansive masses of land were covered with unfinished buildings. I took photos of these structures, and then started doing a series of works about them, investigating them. What they were, why they were abandoned, their effect on people."

Amin became fascinated with the thought of the city as an emotional idea, rather than a structural one, and that led her to a different medium.

"I found that painting was a little restrictive — I couldn't really relay the emotion I was after," she said. "I wanted to move into something that was more experiential. Installation art allowed me to create a space that expressed the emotional

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Increase in American Soccer Players Bolsters Professional League

By Paul Levitan
Staff Writer

Washington — About 16 million people play soccer in the United States, a number that is growing as the result of increased participation of youth and women in the sport. Between 1990 and 2007, girls' participation on high school soccer teams in the United States rose 177 percent. Increasing immigration from Latin America, where soccer is wildly popular, has also bolstered the popularity of soccer in the United States.

Major League Soccer (MLS), a North American league, may be benefiting from this increase in popularity.

With consistent game attendance and a committed fan base, MLS is approaching profitability, something its predecessor, the North American Soccer League (NASL), was never able to do.

MLS Commissioner Don Garber, blogging on the MLS Web site, argued that soccer has a bright future in America: "Since I became commissioner of Major League Soccer in 1999, I have felt strongly that the seismic shifts in America's demographics, economy, family, social dynamics and media/technology landscape will drive the popularity of soccer in our country. It is why I was bullish on the sport when I joined the league nearly 10 years ago. And it is why I am now even more optimistic about our future." MLS's predecessor, the North American Soccer League, lasted for 16 years — from 1968 to 1984. NASL attracted international players like Brazil's Pelé and Germany's Franz Beckenbauer. Average game

attendance during the late 1970s and early 1980s was around 14,000, comparable to the average attendance of 16,770 for MLS games in 2007. NASL at its peak had 24 teams, while MLS has 14.



The Los Angeles Galaxy's David Beckham, left, and the Kansas City Wizards' Sasha Victorine battle for the ball during an MLS game.

Yet MLS is a well-established and successful league, while the North American Soccer League floundered and collapsed.

There are a number of possible reasons why MLS is succeeding where NASL failed. The North American Soccer League's popularity was largely based on its international players. They brought a high level of skill, but their high salaries made costs spiral out of control. The cost of running teams was too high and most went bankrupt, leading to the league's collapse. MLS has more modest salaries, and its teams have a core of American players. NASL did not improve the level of soccer played by the U.S. national

team. During that era, the team was poorly organized, with little time to practice and disappointing results in international competition. In contrast, the origins of MLS lay in the 1994 World Cup, played in the United States. The U.S. team, made up mostly of MLS players and former MLS players now playing in Europe, has been increasingly successful in international competition, reaching the quarterfinals in the 2002 World Cup.

Individual MLS teams have also been successful in international competition. In 1998 D.C. United was the first American team to win the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) Champions Cup and the InterAmerican Cup, competing against North American, Caribbean and South American clubs. In 2000 the Los Angeles Galaxy also won the CONCACAF Champions Cup.

During the NASL era, U.S. television was dominated by three major networks, and NASL was not able to secure a stable TV contract with them. Today's plethora of TV stations received by cable and satellite gives viewers ample opportunities to see their favorite MLS teams play on English- and Spanish-language channels.

MLS Deputy Commissioner Ivan Gazidis is optimistic about the future of soccer in America. "MLS continues to make remarkable progress for a young league. We have established stability and we are constructing an infrastructure for the sport across North America that will last for generations," he said in a blog entry on the MLS Web site. ♦

2008 Global Handwashing Day Promotes Hygiene Education

By **Nancy L. Pontius**
Special Correspondent

Littleton, Colorado — Every year, diarrhea and pneumonia kill more than 3.5 million children under age 5 worldwide. Many of them could have been saved by the simple act of washing hands.

Studies have shown that handwashing with soap can cut deaths from diarrhea by almost 50 percent and deaths from acute respiratory infections by 25 percent — saving more lives than any single vaccine or medical intervention. The challenge is to transform handwashing with soap from an abstract idea into an automatic behavior in homes, schools and communities worldwide.

To promote this life-saving habit, millions of children in 20 countries across five continents will participate in the first Global Handwashing Day on October 15. Supporters of the event will focus on mobilizing school children worldwide to wash their hands with soap to increase the practice of this important behavior.

Global Handwashing Day is supported by the Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap (PPHW). Established in 2001, partnership members include the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), World Bank, Water and Sanitation Program, UNICEF, Unilever, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Procter & Gamble,

Colgate-Palmolive and the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health.

“Global Handwashing Day is de-

ber/20080904125558nsuitnop0.9548609.html).”

“Global Handwashing Day is important because diarrhea still unneces-



The USAID Hygiene Improvement Project set up this booth at an International Environment Day event in Antananarivo, Madagascar, June 5.

signed to bring international and individual country attention to this critical public health intervention,” John Borrazzo, chief of the Maternal and Child Health Division, USAID Bureau for Global Health, told America.gov.

The event supports the 2008 World Water Week conference’s international focus for this year on sanitation. (See “2008 World Water Week Highlights Water-Related Challenges ([sarily kills 1.6 million children a year, and we know that effective handwashing with soap can prevent almost 50 percent of these diarrhea \[illnesses\],” Borrazzo said. “Recent research results also show that effective handwashing by birth attendants and mothers may reduce newborn deaths — which globally total 4 million a year — by as much as 40 percent.”](http://www.america.gov/st/env-english/2008/September-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

OBSERVANCES PLANNED AROUND THE WORLD

During the week of October 15th,

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2008 Global Handwashing Day Promotes Hygiene Education . . .

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from India to Egypt, Peru to China, Indonesia to Ethiopia, high-profile promotional and educational activities are planned for school children, teachers and parents — joined by government officials and celebrities — to raise awareness that handwashing with soap is a powerful public health intervention.

In Madagascar, President Marc Ravalomanana and the government of Madagascar worked with the USAID Hygiene Improvement Project (HIP), local soap companies, the media and others to plan an all-out national weeklong celebration of Global Handwashing Day. During the week of October 15, all of Madagascar's 19,300 primary schools will participate in the activities, culminating with 3.5 million children all washing their hands at noon on Global Handwashing Day. A parade of schoolchildren through the capital also is planned for October 15.

In Pakistan, the country's vision for Global Handwashing Day is to have 1 million school children across the country all wash their hands on October 15. This will be accomplished through many local groups and school programs working with members of the PPPHW, including USAID and multinational consumer products maker Procter & Gamble.

USAID's Pakistan Safe Drinking Water and Hygiene Promotion Project (PSDW-HPP) plans to celebrate with 65 partner nongovernmental, community and government organizations. Planned activities include interactive theater performances, speeches from community leaders and creative classroom activities to

complement the interactive hygiene curriculum currently used by PSDW-HPP in more than 20,000 schools. School activities will end with an oath to always wash hands with soap at critical times and to help others to do so.

Procter & Gamble intends to teach 75,000 Pakistani children via its Safeguard Schools Program on October 15.

INTERNATIONAL HYGIENE EDUCATION PROJECTS

For many years, U.S. public and private organizations have joined with other countries to help develop the vital habit of handwashing with soap.

"USAID has long recognized the importance of incorporating hygiene education and handwashing promotion as part of both maternal and child programs, and water supply and sanitation activities," Borrazzo said. "We have worked for over a decade with many international partners to encourage handwashing, including promotion through the community, private sector, health facilities and schools."

For example, USAID has been assisting with hygiene-behavior education through one component of USAID's participation in the \$59 million West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI) that began in 2002.

WAWI's 13 partner organizations — including the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, World Vision, UNICEF, USAID, WaterAid, Winrock International and World Chlorine Council — work in Ghana, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

Multiple USAID programs partner

with international organizations in many countries to carry out relevant hygiene education and sanitation programs, including in Ethiopia, Nepal, Madagascar, Pakistan and Indonesia.

"School programs that teach the benefits of handwashing and effective handwashing techniques have been shown to increase handwashing behavior," Jay Gooch, associate director of external relations for Procter & Gamble, told America.gov. "Young people are the most effective age group to reach to develop this habit," he said.

In Pakistan, 7.5 million schoolchildren have participated in Procter & Gamble's Safeguard Schools Program since 2003. In a country where more than 250,000 Pakistani children die from diarrhea annually, the practice of handwashing could save many lives.

In China, more than 24 million school children have participated in Procter & Gamble's Safeguard Schools Program since 1999.

More information is available on the Web sites for Global Handwashing Day (<http://www.globalhandwashingday.org/>) and the Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap (<http://www.globalhandwashing.org/index.html>).

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

United States Committed to Protecting World's Oceans

By Daniel Gorelick
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States has met or is on schedule to meet all initiatives proposed in the president's Ocean Action Plan, a program announced in December 2004 to protect and preserve Earth's oceans and coastal resources, according to a statement by the White House.

"Our oceans are vital for our planet," President Bush said in a speech marking the opening of the Sant Ocean Hall at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington on September 26. "The Ocean Action Plan is helping to protect our planet's most essential natural resource."

The president drew attention to several related achievements since the program began: a reduction in the number of fish stocks listed as overfished; restoration and protection of 1.2 million hectares of wetlands, including the largest watershed restoration in the world in the Florida Everglades; and the creation of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, one of the largest marine conservation areas in the world.

"The ocean is a vast ecosystem crucial to our existence, yet scientific and public understanding of the ocean is still limited," said Cristián Samper, director of the museum. "That's why the new Sant Ocean Hall, the most ambitious renovation in the museum's history, is so vi-

tally important. It will greatly expand our knowledge of this extraordinary ocean planet we call home."

PROTECTING TROPICAL REEFS

As part of the Ocean Action Plan, the United States provided \$8.4 million for the Coral Triangle Initiative to help Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines,



the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste enhance coral conservation, promote sustainable fisheries and ensure food security.

The Coral Triangle covers almost 640 million hectares, an area equal to half the size of the United States, and contains more than 600 species of coral and 3,000 species of fish, according to the World Wildlife Federation (WWF), a private organization that supports the initiative.

"From a conservation perspective, the biodiversity and resources of the Coral Triangle make it the marine equivalent of the Amazon," said Kate Newman, WWF's managing director of the Coral Triangle program.

The U.S. Agency for International Development is providing an additional \$26 million for ongoing ma-

rine and coastal management programs in the area of the Coral Triangle Initiative.

UPDATING ALVIN

Exploring beneath the sea is another part of the president's Ocean Action Plan.

The National Science Foundation is providing \$21.6 million to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to construct an improved human-occupied, deep-ocean submersible. With a depth capability of 6,500 meters, it will be able to descend into 99 percent of the global ocean. The current submersible, Alvin, has a depth capability of 4,500 meters and can reach only 63 percent of the ocean's floor.

Manned deep-sea submersibles allow scientists to see details of the seafloor with their own eyes. Submersibles also are used to sample rocks, sediment, fluids and sea life. Scientists aboard Alvin made several notable discoveries, including the initial identification of hydrothermal vents and the first survey of the wreck of the RMS Titanic.

MONITORING SEAS FROM SPACE

NASA plans to launch a satellite, Aquarius, which will help determine ocean climate variability and its effects on weather. Aquarius will monitor sea surface salinity — the amount of dissolved salts in the water — which varies throughout the world.

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See also

<http://www.america.gov/>

Telling America's story

Artist Heba Amin Explores Her Egyptian Heritage . . .

(Continued from page 20)

ideas I was after."

Amin's work has been shown at a number of galleries in Minneapolis, New York, and Washington.

"I look at city infrastructure as representation of the progression of a society," she wrote on her Web site. "Urban planning is indicative of a society's political situation, and I am interested in investigating Middle Eastern cities where the infrastructure is an obstacle and a burden to peoples' daily lives. I am interested in the city's effect on personal space, where city structure begins to take precedence over individuality and where buildings and humans begin to overlap and layer on top of one another instead of coexisting."

"These installations are simply intended to address the idea that one's surroundings play an immense role in behavior," she wrote.

In addition to her installations, Amin recently illustrated a book that profiles Muslim women in history called *Extraordinary Women from the Muslim World*.

In spite of her artistic success, Amin is reluctant to depend on her art for her living. "I'm not focused on selling my work," she said. "And that frees me from the obligation of making work that other people want. I've been in school now for 10 years, and ultimately, I'd like to stay in academia."

As for living in the United States, she said, "I love it. I love being in the academic environment, where I have time to explore my ideas and how to express them."

For more on the arts in America, see *The Arts* (<http://amlife.america.gov/amlife/arts/index.html>) on *America.gov*. ♦

United States Committed to Protecting World's Oceans . . .

(Continued from page 24)

Small variations in salinity can have dramatic effects on ocean circulation and the exchange of water between Earth's oceans, atmosphere and land. Tracking changes in salinity will help to predict climate fluctuation, according to NASA scientists.

Aquarius will measure salinity nearly simultaneously over a large area of the Earth, something which has been impossible to do using land-based techniques. Salinity never has been measured in 24 percent of the global ocean.

The Aquarius mission is an international partnership with Argentina's space agency, Comisión Nacional de Actividades Espaciales. More

than 17 academic, corporate, government and international institutions also are involved in the mission, according to Earth and Space Research, a nonprofit research institute headquartered in Seattle. Its president, Gary Lagerloef, is principal investigator for the NASA mission.

Argentina is providing the spacecraft and additional science instruments, while NASA provides the Aquarius salinity sensor and the rocket launch.

President Bush concluded his remarks at the museum by stating: "All Americans have a responsibility and obligation to be good stewards of our environment."

More information on the Sant

Ocean Hall (http://ocean.si.edu/ocean_hall/) is available on the Web site of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History.

Additional information on the Aquarius mission (<http://aquarius.gsfc.nasa.gov/>) is available on the NASA Web site.

More information on the improved submersible (<http://www.who.edu/page.do?pid=11044>) is available on the Web site of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

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