



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Dr Jendayi Fraser (second from right) held a press conference at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa on January 30, 2007. The U.S. was invited to participate as an observer to the AU Summit, and Assistant Secretary Frazer led a U.S. delegation. United States Ambassador to the African Union (USAU), Dr. Cindy L. Courville, (far right) was also in attendance.

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer wrapped up a busy schedule of meetings at a summit of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by highlighting cooperative efforts on nettlesome issues like conflict in Sudan and Somalia. Speaking at a January 30 press conference in the Ethiopian capital, Frazer said she had "excellent consultations" on Soma-

lia and Sudan, as well as on a range of other issues important to achieving stability on the continent.

"We have also had good consultations on our partnership on regional peacekeeping, on economic development and on elections support," she said. The last was important, the official added, because West Africa alone has 11 elections coming up this next year.

On Sudan, Frazer said the focus of her consultations was on speeding up the three phases of the "Addis Ababa package" of peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts -- "the light assistance package, the heavy package of enabling forces, and the AU-U.N. hybrid force."

The United Nations has mandated a larger peacekeeping force to augment the 7,000 AU forces that are overstretched in

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Sudan trying to maintain peace in Darfur while monitoring parts of the North-South Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The United States has a lot at stake in trying to speed up the deployment of this hybrid force, she told journalists, because "we spend about \$1.3 billion annually in Sudan -- half in Darfur, half in Southern Sudan."

SOMALIA

Turning to Somalia, where a radical Islamist force was defeated recently with the help of the Ethiopian military, Frazer said the United States is "very happy" with AU members Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, Burundi and Uganda, who have volunteered peacekeepers to replace the Ethiopians with an AU-mandated force called the African Union Mission in Somalia.

She again mentioned the U.S. decision to provide \$40 million for the reconstruction of war-torn Somalia, noting that \$14 million will go to support the new AU peacekeeping force. She also reiterated that \$10 million would go for development assistance "to build the capacity of the Transitional Federal Government [TFG]."

Asked if she supported talks between Somalia's transitional government and the radical Islamist Council of Islamic Courts (CIC), Fra-

zer emphasized that "the U.S. government has never asked the TFG to negotiate with terrorists. That is not our position. What we have said is that there are individuals who were members of the Council of Islamic Courts ... who come out of the organic Islamic courts, who should be part of an inclusive dia-



Dr Jendayi Fraser speaking to journalists in Addis Ababa

logue as individuals. But we do not support the reconstitution of the Council of Islamic Courts."

Commenting on the report of a jihadist Web site threatening to attack any peacekeepers that enter Somalia, Frazer said: "It doesn't surprise me that you would find that type of extremist message on a Web site. It's been there throughout. Clearly, the Council of Islamic Courts made such threats against the Ethiopians and against the Transitional Federal Government.

"That very same Council of Islamic Courts was thoroughly defeated militarily. The real message behind it is to try to intimidate the African Union and the international commu-

nity not to assist the people of Somalia," she added.

Frazer said the U.S. commitment to Somalia is "long-term," in part "to prevent Somalia from becoming a threat to its neighbors in terms of regional stability, and from becoming a safe haven for terrorists."

Commenting on Eritrean support for the CIC, Frazer said, "The government of Eritrea was providing arms and providing fighters and training the al Shabaab militia of the CIC, which was the most extremist arm of the CIC."

In the future, she said, "we would hope that the government of Eritrea would play a constructive role in terms of trying to support the Transitional Federal Government and not continue to support remnants of the CIC that are bent on terror or insurgency."

Frazer also complimented the new AU chairman, President John Kufuor of Ghana, noting, "He is a man of great experience, great standing on this continent, and we are looking forward to the year ahead working with the AU."

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

First Ethiopian Barista Championship to Showcase Farmers' Top Quality Coffees

Addis Ababa—Coffee baristas, or coffee servers, from Addis Ababa and other Ethiopian cities have been honing their skills for a first-of-its-kind competition in Ethiopia, the 2007 Addis Ababa Barista Championship. The event took place February 15 -17 at the Hilton Hotel as part of the East African Fine Coffee Association (EAFCA) 4th annual Conference. The competition is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and its Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Program, which is improving the coffee industry in Ethiopia through the technical assistance of organizations like Fintrac and Boot Coffee. The winner of the barista competition will be flown to Tokyo, compliments of Emirates, to compete in the World Barista Championship (WBC) against winners from participating countries in Africa, North America, Europe, and Asia.

Since 2000, the WBC has been organizing competitions and gaining immense popularity in the European and American specialty coffee industries. By providing a stage and criteria for standout coffee service and training for coffee baristas, the WBC has helped increase consumer demand for high quality espresso

coffee and a corresponding willingness to pay more for a great cup of coffee. Great coffee comes from high-quality, higher-priced beans as opposed to common low-cost commodity trade coffee.

To enhance local and international awareness of Ethiopia's unique, high quality coffees during the EAFCA conference, baristas will showcase top-scoring coffees entered by farmers in the Feb. 17th Ethiopia 2007 Limited Coffee Auction (another USAID supported event). Buyers will have an opportunity to be served these coffees by well-trained barista competitors. The top-scoring Ethiopian coffees will also be available to buyers in the EAFCA Taste of Harvest sampling room.

The EAFCA conference is expected to bring together over 500 participants from approximately 40 countries, including coffee producers, processors, exporters, foreign coffee buyers, equipment manufacturers, and government officials. It provides a unique venue for Ethiopia to promote to the world its outstanding coffees, leading to increased demand and higher prices for Ethiopia's coffee producers. The Ethiopian Barista Championship

and Limited Coffee Auction are part of a larger effort by USAID to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Ethiopia's coffee sector, increase incomes for coffee farmers, and expand exports earnings.

Barista Jams, which includes free training, occur every Thursday from 4 - 7 p.m. at the Red Bean Café, located near Bole International Hotel, on the road to Lalibela Hotel, just off of Bole Road. For the barista training and competition, Tarara Coffee has provided espresso equipment and coffee roasting expertise while the recently launched Red Bean Café has donated the use of their facilities. For information on how to register for the free trainings and participation in the competition, contact event coordinator Joseph Brodsky at 0912-111-466. Spectators are welcome. ♦

Voice of America To Launch Daily Radio Broadcasts To Somalia

Washington, D.C., January 26, 2007 – Starting February 12, the Voice of America (VOA) begins a new daily radio broadcast in the Somali language to the Horn of Africa.

A group of Somali broadcasters at VOA's headquarters in Washington, D.C. will team up with freelance reporters in Africa and elsewhere around the world to provide millions of Somali speakers with accurate, up-to-date news and information.

"We look forward to joining the information community in Somalia," said VOA Director Dan Austin.

"Providing accurate, objective, and timely news and information to the people of Somalia is vital during this critical time in the region's history," he added.

The new half-hour VOA program will air seven days a week and will include world news as well as news of Somalia and entire Horn of Africa region. The broadcast will also offer music and discussion features that will allow leaders and ordinary listeners alike to express their opinions on topics of interest.



VOA's Somali-language service is being funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of State. The new service will supplement VOA's current broadcasts to the Horn of Africa in Amharic, Afan Oromo and Tigrigna. VOA previously broadcast in Somali between 1992 and 1994.

The VOA Somali broadcast will air on AM, FM and shortwave radio at 1600 UTC (7:00 p.m. in Somalia) and repeats at 1700 UTC (8:00 p.m. in Somalia). The 1700 UTC broadcast will also air on HornAfrik (88.8 FM), a VOA-affiliated station. The programs will also be available live and on demand on the service's website.

Frequencies: 1600-1630 UTC:
13580 Khz, 15620 Khz, 1431 Khz

1700-1730 UTC:
13580 Khz, 15620 Khz

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 44 languages. ♦

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Director of U.S. Africa Center Stresses Long-Term Outreach

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Ambassador Peter Chaveas, the new director of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), is as keen now on outreach and community-building as he was during his previous service as a Peace Corps volunteer and later as a top diplomat to Africa.

The center, based in Washington, is one of five U.S. Department of Defense regional centers for security studies. It works in support of the U.S. Department of Defense and other U.S. agencies to counter ideological support of terrorism, foster regional collaboration and cooperation on security matters and strengthen defense establishments in Africa.

During a January 18 interview in his office at the National Defense University's campus in Washington, Chaveas told USINFO, "I think I bring a useful range of experiences to this job, including the many years I worked on the continent on development and conflict issues."

Chaveas said ACSS' "flagship" training effort -- the Senior Leadership Seminar -- will be held February to March at the new center, which was established in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 2006. "Our intent is to open three other offices in Africa in the next few years," he added. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=200608011600502jrgnik0.5310633>)).

After seven years of operation, Chaveas said, ACSS has worked

with "2,500 defense officials, half of whom are civilians, and many of them are in influential positions" in their home countries.



Ambassador Peter Chaveas

"What I would like to do now," he told USINFO, is to build on that base by expanding local ACSS alumni centers, called "community chapters." Sixteen already have been set up by African alumni to discuss defense issues and operate civic projects, he said.

"We underline to the Africans that this is their initiative, and if they decide to set one up we're prepared to be supportive with limited funding, usually no more than \$5,000 to \$10,000," the official added.

A good example of what a chapter could do, said Chaveas, is "the Kenya group, which has been particularly active. It recently conducted an interesting study on terrorist threats in the subregion."

Burkina Faso is another example of a chapter's effectiveness, he said. There, ACSS alumni "have focused on developing conferences to sensitize people on the issues of peace and reconciliation."

Chaveas said European Union officials were so impressed with that effort that they financed an expansion of the project. "And so with the Burkina Faso alumni we got a two-for-one benefit -- and that's the type of homegrown multiplier effect we're looking for."

Chaveas said building long-lasting relations is "particularly important to me because 'long-term' has not

usually characterized U.S. relations with Africa. Instead, our policy has often been crisis-driven."

Chaveas was a rural development volunteer in Chad with the Peace Corps from 1968 to 1970. He later joined the State Department serving as U.S. ambassador to Malawi and Sierra Leone before joining ACSS as deputy director in 2004.

His service as chief political adviser to the U.S. European Command from 1997 to 2001 -- responsible for security programs in most sub-Saharan nations -- is also a plus, Chaveas said. The military now understands that it has to work with aid organizations when supporting peacekeeping missions and relief efforts, he said. "On the other side, I tell the NGOs [nongovernmental organizations], 'If you're going to do development, you've got to have security,'" which means a working relationship with the military.

The Africa Center was established in 1999 as a defense-related academic institution to bring civilian and military defense specialists from Africa together for training seminars held in both the United States and Africa. Its goal is to promote military professionalism and democratic civil-military relationships on a continent beset by civil-military strife.

Centers like the Africa Center at NDU are part of the university's efforts to provide educational opportunities for foreign civilian defense and military personnel spanning every continent.

"If I have a vision," Chaveas said, "it would be to build on the legacy of reaching out to the African defense community that my predecessors

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Sudan's Peace Accord Making Progress, U.S. Official Says

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The agreement the United States helped broker in Sudan that ended more than 20 years of civil war is making "steady progress," says Lauren Landis, director of the State Department's Sudan Programs Group.

"We see the CPA [Comprehensive Peace Agreement] moving forward," Landis told USINFO during a January 25 interview. "But like any comprehensive settlement, the hard parts are going to take longer."

Nagging issues still remain, she said, like ongoing violence in Darfur, but gains have been made under the agreement in the areas of power sharing, the economy and security. She said such progress forms building blocks for reunifying the divided nation

During Sudan's 21-year-long conflict, more than 2.5 million people were killed while 4 million were displaced. The CPA was signed January 2005 between the warring parties -- the Islamic Congress Party of President Omar Bashir and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the main power behind the government of South Sudan. The agreement provides for national elections before the end of 2009 to decide on North-South unification.

The idea, Landis explained, is to make unification "attractive" to both the North and South by ensuring security and raising peoples' standards of living -- not an easy task. But the former U.S. Agency for International Development official said progress was being made by the Sudanese themselves in

partnership with international donors.

In the past two years, the United States has provided close to \$3 billion in humanitarian, development and peacekeeping assistance, making it the largest single donor to Sudan.

the Southern army. Such training is allowed under the CPA, and those soldiers eventually will be folded into the national army under unification.

The South also is receiving oil revenues under the CPA -- about \$1 billion since the agreement was signed -- she added.



U.N. World Food Programme workers offload sacks of rice donated by the U.S. Agency for International Development, Khartoum, Sudan last December. (AP Images)

Landis said a prime focus of her work was to keep policymakers attention riveted on the peace process in Sudan. "I make a regular phone call every week to our counterparts in a number of different European capitals to see how we, as donors, can come together to have an increased influence and help the Sudanese reinforce their transition to unification."

Part of that effort involves strengthening South Sudan, Landis explained, and progress is being made there in rebuilding infrastructure, especially roads, as well as training

Landis spoke on the eve of a trip she is making with Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where the officials will attend a summit of the African Union (AU). The AU currently has more than 7,000 peacekeepers in Sudan.

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Personal Stories Win at 2007 Sundance Film Festival

By Carolee Walker
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Personal stories crossing cultural and geographical borders dominated audience and jury awards for both documentaries and dramas at the Sundance Film Festival 2007 as the 10-day internationally acclaimed independent film festival in Park City, Utah, closed on January 28.

The award winners “exemplify the artistic power of film to illuminate and explore issues that are prevalent in our global society,” said festival director Geoffrey Gilmore.

Even the grand jury prize winners in both the dramatic and the documentary competitions managed to cross the cultural divide, with both winning entries from American directors telling personal stories that involve Latin American problems.

Padre Nuestro, by Kenyan-born American filmmaker Christopher Zalla, about a Mexican boy who travels with illegal immigrants to New York City, is primarily in Spanish and won the dramatic competition. The winning documentary, Manda Bala (Send a Bullet), directed by Jason Kohn, uses the chilling stories of a variety of characters to study violence and corruption in Brazil.

The independent film competition, which celebrates the work of American and international filmmakers, is the heart of the Sundance Institute, which was founded in 1981 by American director, actor and producer Robert Redford. The

Sundance Institute is an internationally recognized resource for independent artists through its annual film festival and artistic development programs throughout the year for filmmakers, screenwriters, composers, playwrights and theater artists.



Robert Redford, president and founder of the Sundance Institute, center, poses with Geoffrey Gilmore, director of the Sundance Film Festival, left, and Brett Morgen, director of 'Chicago 10,' at the Sundance Film Festival's opening day news conference in Park City, Utah, Thursday, Jan. 18, 2007. (AP photo)

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

Because American and international films are screened side by side at the Sundance Film Festival, says expert Richard Pells, it is impossible to imagine American filmmaking without the influence of works from other countries, not only in terms of style and ideas, but, even more important, in terms of “presence,” or distinctiveness and effectiveness.

“One of the best examples of this is the influence in the 1920s that German expressionist filmmaking had on Hollywood,” Pells, a history professor at the University of Texas,

told USINFO. Many of these filmmakers became refugees in the United States in the 1930s and wound up making movies in Hollywood that became known as film noir, a French term for darkly suspenseful films.

The influences of Hong Kong martial arts films and the French New Wave have been persistent in American films, Pells said. The British-born American filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock is the best-known New Wave director who rejected narrative methods of cinematography in favor of expressive themes and making movies on location instead of in the studio.

Today, Latin American filmmakers are playing an

important role, Pells said. At Sundance, The Same Moon, Mexican director Patricia Riggen’s film about a mother and child separated at the U.S.-Mexico border, received a standing ovation.

“Human nature in Mexico City is stronger and more raw and I think that is reproduced in Mexican cinema,” Guillermo Arriaga, producer of The Night Buffalo, which was screened at Sundance, told reporters.

Directors who physically and cinematically move between the United States and other nations in filmmaking

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ing are becoming more prevalent, according to Pells. One such director is Taiwanese-American Ang Lee, whose *Brokeback Mountain* won three Academy Awards in 2005, Pells said. Lee's current project is the Chinese film *Se jie* (*Lust, Caution*).

Sixty-four American and international films in dramatic and documentary genres were screened at Sundance, and five dramas made by American directors featured characters speaking mainly in Spanish, Hindi, Korean, Portuguese or Muskogee, an American Indian language. Most of the more than 3,000 feature films submitted for consideration focused on global issues. Six submissions concerned Africa, Gilmore said.

AMERICAN FILMMAKING AND ITS INFLUENCE OVERSEAS

Awards voted on by Sundance Film Festival audiences in the documentary and dramatic categories were given to movies by American filmmakers about personal stories.

Hear and Now, a documentary directed by Irene Taylor Brodsky, tells the story of the director's deaf parents and their decision after 65 years of living together in silence to undergo cochlear implant surgery. *Grace Is Gone*, by director James C. Strouse, is a dramatic film about an American family whose father finds the courage on an adventurous road trip to tell his young children about the death of their mother, a career soldier, in Iraq.

"American films historically rarely ask the audience to know very much about American politics or American society or headlines," Pells said. Audiences overseas who may not know very much about America still can appreciate American film because much of what is going on in these films is something that they themselves have experienced, he added.

In this way, Americans have had an influence on filmmaking in other countries.

For example, Sundance's world cinema audience award for drama was given to *Once*, directed by Irish filmmaker John Carney. The film, a

modern-day musical set on the streets of Dublin, tells the love story of a street performer and a Czech immigrant.

And *Sweet Mud*, Israeli director Dror Shaul's drama about a son's struggles to help his mentally ill mother on a kibbutz in southern Israel in the 1970s, won the world cinema jury prize.

The world cinema jury prize for documentary was given to the Danish *Enemies of Happiness*, directed by Eva Mulvad and Anja Al Erhayem. The documentary follows the personal story of Malalai Joya, the 28-year-old Afghan woman elected in 2005 to Afghanistan's parliament.

For more stories on the influence of filmmakers and other artists in society, see *The Arts* (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/the_arts.html).

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Director of U.S. Africa Center Stresses Long-Term Outreach . . .

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sor, [Marine] General Carl Fulford, left when he moved on last year [2006]."

Chaveas said he wants to build on the work of his predecessor in reaching out to the African defense community. "Fortunately," he added, "I'm able to build on an out-

standing academic foundation that offers a dozen courses, ranging from a few days to four weeks, covering topics like military budgeting to civil-military relations in a democracy." The center has 15 major academic programs planned for 2007, covering topics like maritime security and counterterrorism.

More information ([\[www.africacenter.org/\]\(http://www.africacenter.org/\) \) on the center is available on its Web site.](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

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Black History Month Tells Story of Determination and Triumph

By Louise Fenner
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Each February, Black History Month tells of the struggles of millions of American citizens over the most devastating obstacles -- slavery, prejudice, poverty -- and looks at their contributions to the nation's cultural and political life.

2007 marks the 81st annual celebration since Carter G. Woodson, a noted scholar and historian, instituted Negro History Week in 1926. He chose the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and the black 19th century abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

The first official Black History Month was announced in 1976 by President Gerald R. Ford, who urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

Woodson, the son of former slaves in Virginia, realized that the struggles and achievements of Americans of African descent were being ignored or misrepresented. He founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASALH), which publishes a scholarly journal and sets the theme for Black History Month each year.

ASALH has its headquarters in Washington, where Woodson lived from 1915 until his death in 1950. His home is designated a national historic site.

The theme for 2007, "From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the Americas," takes its name from historian

John Hope Franklin's 1947 book *From Slavery to Freedom*, John Fleming, ASALH president, said in a telephone interview.

"Certainly, struggle has been an ongoing theme in our history from



Carter G. Woodson
founder of Black History Month

the very beginning," said Fleming, who is vice president of museums for the Cincinnati Museum Center.

He believes Black History Month should focus on both positive and negative aspects of the black experience. "We were not slaves prior to being captured in Africa," said Fleming, "and while slavery was part of our experience for 250 years, we have a hundred-and-some years in freedom that we also need to deal with. That's not to diminish the slavery period, but it's not just the most encompassing thing."

Fleming said he has seen "substantial progress on many fronts," noting that about 10 percent of congressional representatives are black as well as hundreds of mayors across the United States. "There has been substantial progress in moving into the middle class and various professions," Fleming said.

"At the same time there are still major problems that have to be addressed, one being the permanent underclass in urban areas now -- that we don't seem to be able to break that cycle of poverty. And there are still some major rural pockets of poverty," he continued.

"I'm glad to see the National African American Museum being developed on the Mall, which will tell a much broader story," said Fleming. In 2003, President George W. Bush signed legislation to establish the museum on the National Mall. "From talking with young people, black and white students, the lack of knowledge about African-American history is just appalling," Fleming said. This applies to the general population, he said: "That's why Carter G. Woodson came out with Negro History Week in the first place."

"I think that African-American history gets more attention during February than during any other time of year," he said, "and I think it's an opportunity for us in the field to emphasize that it is something that should be studied throughout the year."

Each year, the U.S. president honors Black History Month, or African American History Month as it is also called, with a proclamation and a celebration at the White House.

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African-American Newcomers, Veterans Share Political Spotlight

By Lauren Monsen
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Growing appreciation of diversity has transformed the U.S. political landscape in recent years, and the country's 2006 midterm elections ushered in a new wave of promising black politicians. At the same time, those elections also elevated older, more seasoned blacks in Congress, legislators whose experience and seniority are being rewarded with leadership posts.

Among the newcomers at the state level is Deval Patrick, the Democratic governor of Massachusetts, whose eloquence and charisma already have generated comparisons with the better-known Senator Barack Obama (Democrat of Illinois).

A native of Chicago's inner-city neighborhoods, Patrick received a scholarship to Connecticut's prestigious Milton Academy when he was a teenager. He took full advantage of the opportunity, becoming an academic achiever at Milton and editing the school newspaper, then winning admission to Harvard University. After graduating from Harvard in 1978, he worked for a year in Africa and then enrolled at Harvard Law School. He completed his law degree and established himself as an attorney, eventually becoming partner at a Boston law firm. In 1994, President Bill Clinton appointed Patrick to head the U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

Following his service in Washington, Patrick returned to the private sector, but in 2005 he began to consider running for governor of Massachusetts. Delivering an impressive speech at the Democratic state con-

vention in June 2006, he earned his party's nomination and quickly proved to be a gifted campaigner. His victory in the 2006 Massachusetts gubernatorial race -- and his credentials as a successful attorney and polished orator -- suggest he might be a rising star in the Democratic Party.



Deval Patrick takes the oath of office as Massachusetts governor as his wife, Diane, holds the Bible. (AP Images)

Another fresh face is Hank Johnson (Democrat of Georgia), one of two Buddhists elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. A lawyer, he served 12 years as a local magistrate judge and five years as a county commissioner, which helped him to secure a seat on the House Judiciary Committee. In addition, Johnson will sit on the Armed Services Committee.

In a November 2006 interview with cable television's MSNBC network, Johnson pledged to work amicably with congressional colleagues of both parties. He also hailed the election of fellow African-American Keith Ellison (Democrat of Minnesota), who takes his seat as the first Muslim member of the House of Representatives. With Ellison's arrival on Capitol Hill, "Congress begins to reflect the American people and what [the United States] looks like

in all of its diversity," said Johnson.

Midterm elections enhanced the standing of black political veterans as well. For example, Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones (Democrat of Ohio) and Representative James Clyburn (Democrat of South Carolina) have gained prominence within the new Democratic-controlled Congress.

Jones, a former prosecutor and judge, assumed the chairmanship of the House Ethics Committee. This means she is responsible for reviewing the conduct of her congressional peers to ensure they abide by the more stringent ethics rules adopted in the wake of recent scandals.

Speaking to National Public Radio (NPR) January 7, Jones reflected on her role as ethics enforcer on the Hill: "My background and experience qualify me for this job," she said. "That's not to say I'm getting any enjoyment out of sitting in judgment of my colleagues. But if somebody has to do it, I believe that I have the background and experience to bring integrity to the process."

As the legislative session progresses, said Clyburn, interparty discussions will "get tougher," particularly on hot-button issues like immigration. However, he stressed that Democrats must make serious progress on voters' priorities before the 2008 presidential election overshadows all else. By August, according to Clyburn, attention will have shifted to the presidential race, where another African American, Senator Barack Obama, is poised to have a substantial effect, and provide yet more proof that blacks are a force to be reckoned with in the U.S. political arena. ♦

Young Americans Learn Firsthand How Their Government Works

By Michelle Austein
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Young Americans are taught in school about how their government works. But many choose to go one step further and learn how the government operates by working or volunteering for the U.S. government.

Capitol Hill in Washington is a popular choice for such an experience. More than 15,000 aides provide support to the 435 representatives and 100 senators in the U.S. Congress. Many are students or recent college graduates. These young staff members see the legislative process in action and gain knowledge that helps them develop their own careers.

Many prominent U.S. politicians got their start on Capitol Hill in staff positions. Former President Lyndon B. Johnson first came to Washington in November 1931 as a secretary for Texas Representative Richard Kleberg. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer both served as interns for Maryland Senator Daniel Brewster.

Young people working for Congress get to watch votes, attend hearings, listen in on briefings, see the political process as it happens and sometimes even participate in events that are closed to the public. As a congressional page during the 104th and 105th Congresses, Brandon Snesko was on the House floor during then-President Clinton's State of the Union address. Only pages and elected representatives were allowed on the floor.

About 100 students in their third year of secondary school serve as pages, primarily running errands.

They spend a semester or a full academic year in Washington, live in a dormitory and attend classes together. While they perform their duties, they get to see elements of the legislative process, such as congressional votes, taking place. Snesko told USINFO that even though he learned much about the political process in his classes, the best lessons came from talking to congressmen and their staffs.



Representative John E. Peterson of Pennsylvania talks to a group of students about drug testing in schools in his Capitol Hill office. (AP Images)

For many young people working on Capitol Hill as an intern or staff assistant it entree to the world of Washington politics. "You learn one thing in an academic course," 24-year-old Mitch Holzrichter said in an interview with USINFO. "It is another thing to see it live and in action."

Initially an intern in one of then-Speaker Dennis Hastert's Illinois congressional offices, Holzrichter met with constituents, community groups and local governments to learn more about the community's

needs and interests. In the summer of 2004, Holzrichter came to Washington and served as an intern for the speaker's office.

Most Capitol Hill interns are not paid, and generally are assigned routine clerical tasks, but they also have opportunities to see and participate in the inner workings of congressional offices.

During his internship, Holzrichter tracked the progress of bills, in particular a large transportation appropriations bill. He attended hearings and conference committees discussing the bill. He helped his office predict how members would vote and develop a plan to get the bill passed. That bill was not passed during his internship, but it was passed a year later.

Holzrichter attended President Bush's bill-signing ceremony for the bill he helped worked on -- the Transportation Equity Act, which

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United Nations Condemns Denial of the Holocaust

By Judy Aita
USINFO United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- The U.N. General Assembly, on the eve of the second International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, adopted by consensus a resolution condemning any denial of the Holocaust.

The United States led the effort, drafting the text and convincing 104 nations to cosponsor the resolution, which "condemns without any reservations any denial of the Holocaust." The resolution also urges all member states "unreservedly to reject any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event, either in full or in part, or any activities to this end."

U.S. Ambassador Alejandro Wolff said after the January 26 vote that the United States was "extraordinarily proud" to head the effort. "It is fitting that today the General Assembly came together to speak with one voice and say to the world the denial of the Holocaust is not to be tolerated."

Wolff, acting head of the U.S. delegation, said that the Holocaust must be remembered "to ensure that such events are never repeated. Those who will deny the Holocaust -- and sadly there are some who do -- reveal not only ignorance but their moral failure. ... To deny the events of the Holocaust is tantamount to the approval of genocide in all its forms."

In November 2005, the General Assembly set January 27 for the international observance and urged all

nations to develop ways to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive so that future generations will help prevent similar acts of genocide. January 27 is the date in 1945 on which the Soviet army liberated the largest Nazi death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland, where more



Visitors tour the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, January 26. The U.N. Holocaust Remembrance Day is January 27. (AP Images)

than 1 million prisoners were killed. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Nov/02-548735.html>).)

The Holocaust refers to the systematic, bureaucratic effort by the Nazi government of Germany to exterminate Jews and other groups the regime targeted. A total of 6 million Jews and millions of others were murdered by the Nazis during World War II.

By unreservedly rejecting any denial of the Holocaust, Wolff said, "this assembly places its moral authority and its political will squarely behind the very first words of our [U.N.] Charter: To save succeeding generations."

The United States introduced the resolution not as a rhetorical exer-

cise nor to counter free speech or intellectual thought, the ambassador said, but because of the dangerous implications of denying the Holocaust.

The resolution "is about avoiding future disasters," he said. "One observer put it simply and powerfully when he stated that 'The black hole of forgetting is the negative force that results in future genocides.'"

"Some experts on the topic have noted that every genocide is followed by denial," Wolff said. "Despite the undeniable truth of the Holocaust, we are now witnessing so-called

scholars, even world leaders, attempting to revise history, masking a more dangerous agenda."

Iran was not mentioned in the resolution, but several delegations commented on the December 2006 conference questioning the Holocaust that was convened by Iran's president, Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad. The Iranian president also has called for the destruction of Israel.

IRAN ISOLATED

Iran disassociated itself from the General Assembly's action, calling it politically motivated.

Wolff said Iran "stands alone in shame, isolated against the rest of the international community," and

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United Nations Condemns Denial of the Holocaust . . .

(Continued from page 12)

added that Iran's actions and the words of its president "underscore why this resolution is so important."

"That same regime is under U.N. Security Council sanctions right now to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons in direct violation of its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The confluence of these three forces cannot be viewed abstractly or in isolation of each other. They create a cauldron of conflict that cannot be ignored," he said.

Conferences such as those sponsored by Iran are designed to polarize and incite hatred, he said. If successful, that hatred can be used as a catalyst to justify genocide, Wolff said.

Israeli Ambassador Dan Gillerman dedicated the resolution to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. "The international community was saying to those survivors: You are not alone and we will make sure that what happened to you will not be forgotten and will never be repeated," he said.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the resolution and

expressed his "strong desire to see this fundamental principle respected both in rhetoric and in practice."

The full text (<http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rm/79421.htm>) of Wolff's statement on adoption of the resolution is available on the State Department Web site, as is his statement (<http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rm/79424.htm>) on introduction of the resolution.

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Young Americans Learn Firsthand How Their Government Works . . .

(Continued from page 11)

provided more than \$286 billion over six years to upgrade U.S. roads, bridges and mass transit systems. Watching the president sign that bill into law was gratifying, said Holzrichter, now a law student.

Lindsey Lauer, age 24, also worked as an intern in a local district congressional office, the Santa Barbara office of California Representative Lois Capps. One week after graduating from college with a degree in political science, she began her political career by taking a job in the congresswoman's Washington office. She later worked for California Representative Ellen Tauscher.

Lauer had the opportunity to learn more about policy issues that interested her by attending briefings on Capitol Hill. Lauer told USINFO she learned a great deal about legislative policy from the more senior co-workers in her offices, including the chief of staff and press secretary, and from the congresswomen for whom she worked.

"As an intern or staff assistant you are not writing legislation but you do have significant influence in the office," Lauer said. "You get to interact with constituents and write letters on behalf of the member and play your part to give to the community."

Many congressional staff members are people in their twenties, Lauer said. The work is fast-paced, the hours are long and the pay is low compared to other jobs in Washington, but eager young workers continue to arrive on Capitol Hill "excited about wanting to make a difference," Lauer said.

For more information, see U.S. Congress (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/congress.html>).

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

Homeland Security's Chertoff Warns of Nuclear Terror Threat

By David McKeeby
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Today, the international community faces a test of its willingness to stop nuclear terrorism, says Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff.

"You can't put that genie back in the bottle once a weapon of mass destruction or a nuclear bomb gets into the hands of a terrorist," Chertoff said in a January 26 panel discussion at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

Terrorism is high on the forum's agenda this year. It constitutes one of the top threats to global security, according to a survey of international business and political leaders attending the event.

"What we face in the 21st century is the ability of even a single individual, and certainly a group, to leverage technology in a way to cause a type of destruction and a magnitude of destruction that would have been unthinkable a century ago," Chertoff said.

As the destructive potential of the next large-scale terrorist attack grows with every technological advance, Chertoff said, so too does the risk of failing to detect terrorists before they strike.

Governments thus are faced with the challenge of striking the right balance among providing security, facilitating free flow of goods and services, and protecting citizens' civil liberties.

It is for this reason, Chertoff said, the United States approaches counterterrorism from the perspective of risk management. Because working

to prevent every conceivable threat would be virtually impossible, the United States focuses its efforts on identifying and preventing the greatest threats.

Countries must be willing to stand together and take decisive action



Homeland Security Secretary
Michael Chertoff

against hostile regimes and non-state entities seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction for future attacks, he said.

"At the end of the day, if those who are trafficking in this activity don't take seriously our will to enforce the rules, all the paperwork in the world is not going to make a difference," Chertoff said.

PANELISTS CONSIDER ROOT CAUSES OF TERRORISM

Chertoff joined Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, leader of the British Conservative Party David Cameron and the European Union's counterterrorism coordinator, Gijs

de Vries, who also discussed the root causes of terrorism and how best to confront them.

Tackling terrorism requires more than security operations and sophisticated technologies. Deprivation, in the form of poverty and the lack of basic political freedoms and economic opportunities, turns people into terrorists, Aziz said.

The international community must do more to help alleviate poverty and must redouble diplomatic efforts to promote a working Israeli-Palestinian peace, a settlement in Lebanon and progress in Iraq -- all causes exploited by terrorists to rationalize their attacks, he said.

The world must reject terrorists' attempts to justify their murderous acts in the name of religion, the panelists said.

"Terrorism is not a friend of anybody. Terrorism is not linked to any faith," Aziz told the panel. "It is a mindset we are dealing with."

"I accept that Islam is a peaceful religion and does not endorse this use of violence," Chertoff said.

The panelists also agreed that a careful balance between security and civil liberties is essential.

"We've got to be very strong in combating terrorism but equally strong in defending liberty, democracy and the things we are actually fighting for," Cameron said.

"That means that not everything is permitted in the War on Terror," de Vries said. "To use detention without trial, or detention without charge, to use secret prisons, should not be acceptable."

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Securing Iraq's Capital Is Vital, National Security Advisor Says

The following piece was originally published in the January 29 edition of the Washington Post and is in the public domain. There are no republication restrictions.

(begin byliner)

Baghdad Is Key
By Stephen J. Hadley

The Baker-Hamilton report explained that failure in Iraq could have severe consequences for our national interests in a critical region and for our national security here at home. In my many conversations with members of Congress and foreign policy experts, few have disagreed.

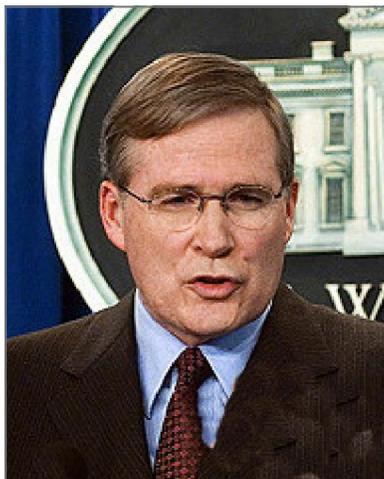
The strategic review commissioned by President Bush analyzed the options for setting Iraq on a trajectory for success. Alternatives now being discussed in Congress were considered but rejected after the strategic risks and stakes were calculated.

The review considered the option of pulling U.S. forces out of Baghdad and concentrating on al-Qaeda in Iraq and training Iraqi security forces, as some in Congress recommend.

Most people agree that we must focus on fighting al-Qaeda. The president's strategy steps up this fight -- particularly in Anbar province, where al-Qaeda seeks a sanctuary. The administration also agrees that we must accelerate the training of Iraqi security forces. The president's strategy does this -- with benchmarks to track progress and bolster the size and effectiveness of those forces. Training and supporting Iraqi troops will remain

our military's essential and primary mission.

But the president's review also concluded that the strategy with the best chance of success must have



National Security Adviser
Stephen Hadley

a plan for securing Baghdad. Without such a plan, the Iraqi government and its security institutions could fracture under the pressure of widespread sectarian violence, ethnic

cleansing and mass killings. Chaos would then spread throughout the country -- and throughout the region. The al-Qaeda movement would be strengthened by the flight of Sunnis from Baghdad and an accelerated cycle of sectarian bloodletting. Iran would be emboldened and could be expected to provide more lethal aid for extremist groups. The Kurdish north would be isolated, inviting separation and regional interference. Terrorists could gain pockets of sanctuary throughout Iraq from which to threaten our allies in the region and our security here at home.

The new plan for Baghdad specifically corrects the problems that plagued previous efforts. First, it is an Iraqi-initiated plan for taking control of their capital. Second, there will be adequate forces (Iraqi and American) to hold neighborhoods cleared of terrorists and extremists. Third, there is a new operational

concept -- one devised not just to pursue terrorists and extremists but to secure the population. Fourth, new rules of engagement will ensure that Iraqi and U.S. forces can pursue lawbreakers regardless of their community or sect. Fifth, security operations will be followed by economic assistance and reconstruction aid -- including billions of dollars in Iraqi funds -- offering jobs and the prospect of better lives.

As Gen. David Petraeus, the new commander of our forces in Iraq, explained in hearings before Congress last week, reinforcing U.S. troops is necessary for this new plan to succeed. Any plan that limits our ability to reinforce our troops in the field is a plan for failure -- and could hand Baghdad to terrorists and extremists before legitimate Iraqi forces are ready to take over the fight. That is an outcome the president simply could not accept.

The Baker-Hamilton report supports this conclusion. It said: "We could, however, support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad ... if the U.S. commander in Iraq determines that such steps would be effective." Our military commanders, and the president, have determined just that.

The focus on reinforcing our troops must not overshadow the comprehensive nature of the changes in the president's strategy. Contrary to what some have suggested, reinforcing our military presence is not the strategy -- it is a means to an end and part of a package of key strategic shifts that will fundamentally restructure our approach to achieving our objectives in Iraq.

Building on experience elsewhere in

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Securing Iraq's Capital Is Vital, National Security Advisor Says . . .

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the country, the new strategy doubles the number of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Iraq. These civilian-led units will target development aid where it is needed and help the Iraqi government extend its reach to all corners of the country.

Because close civilian-military cooperation is key to success, 10 new civilian PRTs will be embedded with U.S. combat brigades.

The new strategy incorporates other essential elements of the Baker-Hamilton report, such as doubling the number of troops embedded with Iraqi forces, using benchmarks to help us and the Iraqis chart progress, and launching a renewed diplomatic effort to increase support for the Iraqi government and advance political reconciliation.

Ultimately, a strategy for success must present a realistic plan for bringing security to the people of

Baghdad. This is a precondition to advancing other goals. President Bush's strategy offers such a plan -- and it is the only strategy that does.

(The writer is national security adviser to the president.)

(end byliner)

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

Homeland Security's Chertoff Warns of Nuclear Terror Threat . . .

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Chertoff, a former prosecutor and federal judge, agreed, but added that governments must weigh the potentially catastrophic consequences of a successful terrorist attack as they pursue terrorists. Because of "the complexity of global terrorism," thwarting terrorism might require measures beyond those commonly utilized in prosecuting criminals, such as increased intelligence collection.

"We are going to have to come to a sustainable approach to this that safeguards fundamental liberties, but does not regard every security measure as inherently a civil liberties problem," Chertoff said.

A video link (http://gaia.world-television.com/wef/worldeconomicforum_annualmeeting2007/default.aspx?sn=18627&lang=en) to the panel discussion and more information (<http://www.weforum.org/en/events/AnnualMeeting2007/index.htm>) on the 2007 annual meeting are on the World Economic Forum's Web site.

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States and cities hold their own events around the country, and media feature topics related to black history.

"African Americans have been an integral part of America for generations, and our nation is stronger because of their contributions," Bush said in this year's proclamation, issued on January 26. "All Americans can be proud of the progress we have made, yet the work ... is not done." (See related text (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-english&y=2007&m=January&x=20070126154135eaifas0.367428>).)

For more information on U.S. society, see African Americans (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population/population_and_diversity/african_americans.html).

More information (<http://www.asalh.org/>) on African-American life and history is available at the ASALH Web site.

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Killing of Turkish Editor Termed Assault on Free Expression

By Eric Green
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States and the world community say the assassination of independent Turkish journalist Hrant Dink strikes a blow against freedom of expression.

In condemning Dink's January 19 murder in Istanbul, Julie Finley, the U.S. ambassador to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), said the assassination of an independent-minded journalist like Dink is "an assault that is felt by all." Finley said the United States welcomed Turkey's "quick and proper reaction" and promise to solve the murder case as quickly as possible.

Finley added that Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer was right in characterizing the murder as a "repugnant and shameful attack" that "deeply wounded" Turkey.

Sezer's wish that Turkey "never experience such a sorrowful event again" is the United States' wish as well, said Finley. She added that the United States applauded the "new gestures of openness" between Turkish and Armenian authorities in response to the assassination.

In an interview with Mehmet Ali Birand of the Turkish television station Kanal D January 19, Under Secretary of State R. Nicholas Burns called Dink's murder "an outrageous act of criminality."

"We look forward to see Turkish justice and we look forward to see these killers brought to justice," he said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=January&x=200>

70121192714niremydolem0.2485468).)

At a January 23 memorial service in Washington for Dink, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried said

menian-community related affairs," said Haraszti, adding that "this is a cowardly act resulting in tragic loss."

The editor and columnist of the bilingual Turkish-Armenian weekly



Raket Dink, center, wife of slain Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, holds a white dove as her daughters Baydar, left, and Sera, right, set others free during a ceremony outside of the offices of Armenian newspaper "Agos" in Istanbul, Turkey, January 23. Dink's slaying and subsequent funeral showed signs of healing between Turks and Armenians. (AP Images)

the slain journalist "stood for a civic virtue higher than hatred, higher than ethnic stereotypes, higher than fears and repression and ignorance. His was a vision of a better world. His was a vision of the best in Turkey's tradition. The measure of how our world falls short must be judged by his murder at the hands of an ignorant, hate-filled nationalist."

Miklos Haraszti, the OSCE representative on freedom of the media, said January 19 he was shocked by Dink's murder.

Dink was one of Turkey's "outstanding commentators on Ar-

menian-community related affairs," said Haraszti, adding that "this is a cowardly act resulting in tragic loss."

Agos, was gunned down outside his paper's offices.

PRESS FREEDOM GROUPS UNITED IN CONDEMNATION

The Paris-based press freedom advocacy group, Reporters Without Borders, said Dink was outspoken in his views regarding the massacre of Armenians under the Ottoman Empire during World War I. The organization said Dink's murder "will distress and disturb all those who defend the freedom of thought and expression in Turkey and else-

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U.S. Businesses Pursue Different Strategies To Fight Counterfeiters

By Jaroslaw Anders
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- If your tofu tastes like it is made of gypsum, perhaps it is. Tofu cakes made of gypsum, paint and starch are just one example of counterfeit products that sometimes find their way into seemingly legitimate retail outlets. Others include exploding cell phones, auto brakes that fail and medications that harm patients.

"The U.S. Customs and Border [Protection agency] announced last year [2006] that it had witnessed [an] 83 percent increase in the number of seizures at American borders of counterfeit goods and an overall 67 percent increase in their value over 2005, so clearly we have a problem," said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce Stephen Jacobs. He was speaking at a January 24 meeting with representatives of the private sector at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington.

Brad Huther from the Chamber said that prosecution of counterfeit activity remains inadequate because of the absence of a global database of intelligence on the subject. To address this problem, he said, his organization partnered in 2006 with Interpol, the world's largest international police organization, to create a global intelligence database for tracking and prosecuting commercial counterfeiters.

"That is to say, hopefully, that in a year's or so time there will be 186 member countries of the Interpol submitting timely data 24 hours a

day, seven days a week," Huther said.

According to FBI estimates, intellectual property (IP) infringements cost U.S. businesses between \$200 billion and \$250 billion a year, and counterfeit merchandise has contributed to the loss of more than 750,000 American jobs.

Jacobs said that "the government has a responsibility to help fight counterfeiting and piracy, but so does the private sector."

Aaron Graham of Purdue Pharma LP said his pharmaceutical company sees public-private collaboration as essential and regularly shares information with authorities in the United States, China, Taiwan, South Korea and elsewhere.

The World Health Organization has estimated that about 10 percent of all pharmaceuticals are counterfeited, and in some countries the figure reaches 60 percent.

David Wilt of Xerox Corporation said his company follows the strategy of vigorous investigation of IP violations and is pursuing the perpetrators both in U.S. courts and abroad.

"We want Xerox to be as hard a target as possible for counterfeiters that try to infiltrate our marketplace," he said.

Andy Cifranic of Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems, LLC, a major producer of brake systems used in large trucks and buses, said customer education is as important as

IP protection and enforcement. He said that for the last five years his company has conducted "a multi-faceted customer and industry awareness program" to help distinguish genuine Bendix parts from look-alikes and counterfeiters.

The Commerce Department's Jacobs said that so far as anti-counterfeiting measures are concerned there is no "one-size-fits-all for companies and no one-size-fits-all for governments."

To help businesses -- especially small and medium-size -- protect their consumers, as well as their reputations and their bottom lines, the Chamber of Commerce and the Coalition Against Counterfeiting and Piracy (CACCP), with the cooperation of the U.S. Department of Commerce, published January 24 a set of guidelines and case studies titled No Trade in Fakes: Supply Chain Tool Kit.

Jacobs said these guidelines will be made available to U.S. trading partners "for them to adapt as appropriate to their own economies."

No Trade in Fakes: Supply Chain Tool Kit (<http://www.thetruecosts.org/portal/truecosts/resources/supplychain>) is available on the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Web site.

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

U.S. Navy, Egyptian Scientists Fight Global Illness, Infection

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

This is the first in a series of articles on U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3, Cairo, Egypt

Washington – As pathogens, both ancient and emerging, move from country to country, carried by and shared among insects, animals and people to spread illness and death, a small group of U.S. and Egyptian scientists is building a medical line of defense throughout the Middle East, North Africa and Southwest Asia, against diseases that range from malaria and fevers to HIV/AIDS and avian influenza.

In a triangular, 1.2-hectare compound in eastern Cairo, in the shadow of the 1,500-bed Abbassia Fever Hospital – the Middle East's oldest and largest – a team of Navy and Army scientists, U.S. civilian employees, Egyptian scientists and technicians, and contractors staffs the 60-year-old U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 (NAMRU-3).

Their direct mission is to support U.S. military personnel in that region by studying viruses, enteric (intestinal) diseases and disease vectors (carriers) like ticks and mosquitoes, and through disease surveillance, which means monitoring the most important infectious disease threats in the region.

The scientist also engage in an activity not in the official NAMRU mission statement: they make sure they are good neighbors, passing along the benefits of science and medical research to the citizens of

nearby countries.

"The idea is that public health work is good diplomacy," said NAMRU-3 Commanding Officer Captain Bruce Boynton, a doctor, in a recent USINFO interview in Cairo, "and not just in the sense that we represent the United States. [Diseases studied



Naval Medical Research Unit No.3 researchers train Libyan collaborators in Cairo, Egypt, in virus identification and isolation. (NAMRU)

at NAMRU-3] are of interest to public health leaders, and doing good things for people brings countries and people together."

NAMRU-3 is part of the Naval Medical Research and Development Command in Maryland, whose other overseas research laboratories include NAMRU-2 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

The scientists at NAMRU-3 work closely with the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), the World Health Organization

(WHO), the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and many nongovernmental organizations.

At NAMRU-3, the Virology Research Department is a regional influenza reference laboratory for WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, where NAMRU-3 scientists confirm the identity of flu viruses isolated by national laboratories, develop and distribute virus reference reagents (substances used in a chemical reaction to detect and measure other substances), prepare training materials, organize workshops, offer extended laboratory training, collaborate on special surveillance studies and conduct research to improve methods of flu virus surveillance.

NAMRU-3 technicians analyze and study the genetic composition of viruses to identify specific types of viruses, a process important to the development of vaccines and therapies. They also examine the genetic mate-

rial of influenza viruses, including the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of avian influenza, and share the data with the scientific community so scientists around the world can benefit from the information.

For example, in Egypt on January 18, H5N1 viruses were found to have a genetic mutation that was linked in laboratory testing with moderate resistance to the anti-viral drug oseltamivir (TamiFlu®). These were found in two people with H5N1 infections, according to a WHO statement.

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U.S. Navy, Egyptian Scientists Fight Global Illness, . . .

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Both patients – a 16-year-old girl and her 26-year-old uncle who lived in the same house in Gharbiyah province north of Cairo – had been treated with oseltamivir for two days before the clinical samples were taken. Despite the efforts of health workers, the girl died December 25, 2006, her uncle December 28, 2006. Of the 267 H5N1 cases reported worldwide since 2003, 18 have occurred in Egypt.

Egypt's monitoring and rapid virological analysis conducted at the Central Public Health Laboratory in Cairo initially allowed the H5N1 diagnoses to be made. Confirmatory testing and genetic sequencing were done at NAMRU-3 and two WHO collaborating centers in the United States (at CDC) and the United Kingdom.

According to WHO, there is no indication that oseltamivir resistance is

widespread in Egypt or elsewhere.

TRAINING THE TRAINERS

"One of the major things we do as a regional reference laboratory when it comes to influenza or avian influenza," said U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Marshall Monteville, head of the NAMRU-3 Viral and Zoonotic Diseases Research Program, "is give [scientists and technicians] in the region training [in influenza diagnostics] here at NAMRU-3, then we send a field team to train them in their own laboratories ... and we visit them once in a while to make sure they're doing okay."

Such thorough training is in the interest of quality assurance, he added.

More information about NAMRU-3 (http://www.nmrc.navy.mil/namru_3.htm) is available at the Naval Medical Research Center Web site. ♦

Killing of Turkish Editor Termed Assault on Free Expression . . .

(Continued from page 17)

where." The Ottoman Empire was a vast Turkish state that existed from 1299 to 1922.

Dink's murder follows a report by Reporters Without Borders that more journalists were killed around the world in 2006 than in any year since 1994. At least 81 journalists were killed in 21 countries while doing their jobs in 2006. Reflecting on the dangers facing journalists worldwide, Karen Hughes, the State Department's under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, told USINFO January 12 that "we live in a time of unprecedented attacks on the media around the world. Journalists in many countries face the threat of being harassed, ab-

ducted, imprisoned, tortured, maimed or assassinated just for doing their jobs. We need to talk much more in international circles about the extent of this problem -- what's being done about it -- and what more we could do."

Another press freedom group, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), said 18 Turkish journalists have been killed for their work in the last 15 years, making Turkey the eighth deadliest country in the world for journalists.

The CPJ said in a January 19 statement that Dink had received numerous death threats from nationalist Turks who objected to his views.

The group said that "through his

journalism, Hrant Dink sought to shed light on Turkey's troubled past and create a better future for Turks and Armenians. This earned him many enemies, but he vowed to continue writing despite receiving many threats."

Koichiro Matsuura, secretary-general of the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, said January 22 that he welcomed the speed with which the Turkish authorities were investigating the case. Matsuura said the swift investigation was "proof" of the Turkish government's determination to not let "this heinous crime go unpunished." ♦