Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

bassy of the United States, Addis Ababa

Volume 9, Issue 31

August 2, 2007

Weekly Special Report

Produced by the Public Affairs Section

HIV+ Mothers Support Each Other to Prevent Mother-to-Child Transmission and Ensure Positive Living

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – (August 2, 2007) One hundred thirty-eight mothers living with HIV from the Addis Ababa area became the first to graduate today from the Mothers' Support Group (MSG) program. The graduating class will be community leaders in the struggle against the pandemic, educating peers on the importance of HIV prevention.

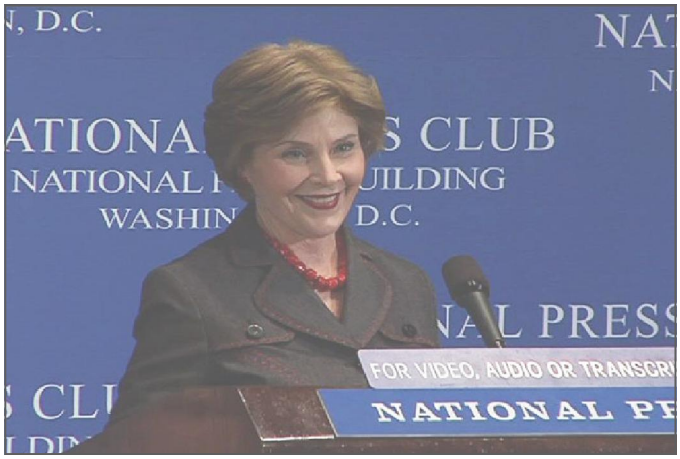
USAID/Ethiopia Glenn Anders (center) delivers remarks at the ceremony flanked by Ato Bayelign Meshesha of Intrahealth International (left) and Sister Yetimwork Tekle of HAPCO

(Continued on page 2)

African HIV Sufferers Get Chance at Futures, Laura Bush Says

By Jane Morse
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Thanks to the Bush administration's fight against HIV-AIDS worldwide, people who thought they were dying of the disease are finding they have a second chance at life.



Mrs. Laura Bush speaks at the National Press Club Newsmakers Luncheon Wednesday, July 25, 2007
White House photo by David Jolkovski

First lady Laura Bush, speaking at the National Press Club July 25, marveled at "the Lazarus effect" she saw during her most recent trip to Africa. (Lazarus, according to a story in the Christian Bible, after having been dead and entombed for several days, was raised to life by Jesus Christ.)

During her visits to Senegal, Mozambique, Zambia

(Continued on page 3)

INSIDE

African news

Small Ghanaian Business Manufactures, Exports Apparel (P 4)

American issues

American Dream Still Alive and Well for Immigrants, Report Says (P 5)

U.S. Public Gardens Present Beauty and Biodiversity (P 6)

Young Tajik Gymnast Brings Her Talent to American Dance Festival (P 7)

International news

Counterterrorism, Iraq Top U.S.-U.K. Agenda (P 8)

Arab Leaders Renew Support for Iraq, Mideast Peace (P 10)

Arts Academy Promotes Iraqi Reconciliation (P 11)

Pakistan "Indispensable" in Global Anti-Terrorism Fight (P 12)

Former Exchange Students, Now Adults, Report Successes (P 13)

Access to Oil, Natural Gas Seen as Central to Global Stability (P 14)

Health & Science

Genetic Discovery Could Lead to New AIDS Vaccine, Treatments (P 15)

Scientists, Engineers Receive Highest U.S. Science Honors (P 16)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

HIV+ Mothers Support Each Other to Prevent Mother-to-Child . . .

(Continued from page 1)

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funds the MSG program through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a five-year, $15 billion initiative to combat HIV/AIDS around the world. Ethiopia receives PEPFAR funds for a wide range of HIV prevention, care and treatment activities, , including the MSG program. IntraHealth International, a USAID partner, developed the MSG program to educate, mentor and connect HIV-positive mothers with other mothers living with HIV.

Sister Yetimwork Tekle hands certificate to one of the graduates

The clubs provide the mothers with emotional support, while ensuring their access to a range of health services, such as family planning, nutrition, immunizations for their babies as well as anti-retroviral treatment for mothers and children. In addition to providing access to services, the program works at the community level to deliver targeted messages on receiving antenatal care, HIV testing and counseling, male involvement and stigma reduction. The MSG program, which is an important component of PEPFAR's Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) program, will expand to more Ethiopian communities in 2008. The graduating MSG mothers have completed peer education sessions and are expected to become active community-based leaders, educating and referring pregnant mothers to antenatal care which includes testing for HIV in order to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the disease.

"This is just the beginning of an important process in combating HIV in Ethiopia," USAID Mission Director Glenn Anders said. "These peer mothers are going to help promote better care for infants and pregnant women and reduce the rate of mother-to-child HIV transmission."

Without interventions, approximately 35% of infants born to HIV-positive mothers contract the virus through mother-to-child-transmission. According to the Ministry of Health's most recent estimates, the total estimated number of pregnant mothers living with HIV in 2007 in Ethiopia is 75,420 (7.7%) and the estimated annual number of HIV positive births is 14,146. Since October 2004, IntraHealth International has used PEPFAR funds to provide PMTCT services in 248 public health centers and communities in all nine regions and two city administrations of Ethiopia. ♦

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

African HIV Sufferers Get Chance at Futures, . . .

(Continued from page 1)

and Mali, the first lady said, she met people who now can plan productive futures because they have been given access to the drugs that can control the disease. (See related story (http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=June&x=20070629174104lmlenuhert0.7688105).)

The catalyst for the turnabout for more than a million HIV-AIDS victims worldwide has been the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

First announced by President Bush in 2003, PEPFAR's $15 billion, five-year emergency effort to combat AIDS is the largest commitment by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease. As of March, PEPFAR has supported life-saving anti-retroviral treatment for more than 1.1 million people through bilateral programs in 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Caribbean.

WHY AFRICA?

Much of PEPFAR's focus has been on Africa. The sub-Saharan region is one of the areas hardest-hit by the disease and is home to 26 million people with HIV infections. Before the PEPFAR initiative, only about 50,000 people in the region received treatment; now more than 1 million have been treated, Laura Bush said.

Moreover, there is emphasis on preventive care for mothers, as well as public education, the first lady said. Education is especially important, she said, to stem the tide of new infections, which topped 4 million in 2006. (See related story (http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=June&x=20070611162000GLnesnoM0.6086237).)

An essential element in PEPFAR's success, the first lady said, is that its programs are developed in close partnership with the native people of the countries in which the programs operate. For example, the United States supports the "ABC" model for prevention developed by African officials: that is, abstinence, being faithful to one's spouse, and the correct and consistent use of condoms.

This model is having a positive effect in Uganda, Botswana, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia, the first lady said. In Kenya, for example, HIV prevalence in the population has dropped from 10 percent in the mid-1990s to about 6 percent today. Data suggest that Kenyan men are having fewer sexual partners and Kenyan women are waiting longer to begin having sex.

Also important, the first lady said, is removing the stigma associated with having the disease. She cited a "Positive Art" program for children in a hospital in Mozambique, where infected children could paint while their mothers had tea as part of a group support program.

Laura Bush said she was "especially touched" by the programs she saw in Zambia, where more than 16 percent of the country's adult population has HIV/AIDS and more than 700,000 children have been made orphans by the disease.

"In Lusaka, I visited Chreso Ministries, which is run by the Gospel Outreach Fellowship," the first lady said. "All of the Chreso clinic's anti-retrovirals are provided by PEPFAR. In Chreso's worship hall, I met with patients and care providers. One woman, Patricia, told us about the pain of stigma; about losing her job when people found out she was positive. Another woman explained how out of her family of 29, only 14 are still alive and 12 of them are HIV positive. One man, Jonathan, a married father of four, explained that he was so weak from AIDS that his entire family thought he was going to die. But with treatment he receives at Chreso, he said, 'I'm healthy. My children are in school and my family is smiling.'"

Every year, American taxpayers spend more than $6.5 billion on African development. The first lady said she often is asked why the United States focuses so much of its aid help on Africa. She said her response is that Americans feel a moral obligation to help the people of Africa.

"We're able to provide these resources because our history has yielded a free and prosperous nation. In Africa, however, history has been less kind. Colonialism, the slave trade, poverty and war have each, by turns, devastated the continent," she said. Now HIV-AIDS

(Continued on page 4)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Small Ghanaian Business Manufactures, Exports Apparel

On the wall of the Sleek Garments factory in Ghana, overlooking a bustling assembly line of 300 workers, is a sign that says "Quality First, Quantity Second."

Nora Bannerman, Sleek's founder and chief executive, was determined to maintain that philosophy as the company shifted into mass production, sewing thousands of shirts bound for large U.S. discount clothing retailer Ross Stores.

Sleek's emphasis on quality convinced a buyer's agent to place Ross's order for 75,000 casual rayon shirts. The agent had heard of Sleek from another garment factory, which, along with Sleek, is part of Ghana's blooming apparel-manufacturing cluster.

Incentives offered by Ghana's government have encouraged the relocation and building of several clothing factories, many exporting duty-free to the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The law waives duties on select goods from eligible African countries.

"We are putting Ghana on the radar as an exporter under AGOA of high-quality garments," Bannerman said.

In 2002, Bannerman's fashion shop produced its then largest order -- 10,000 garments -- qualifying it to participate in Ghana's apparel initiative. That program provided access to loan guarantees for equipment acquisition, training and a production site in a trade zone that waives import taxes as long as companies export at least 80 percent of their output.

Bannerman also received support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) West Africa Trade Hub, which conducts industry-specific training and accompanies clients to major trade shows in the United States to facilitate business links.

The trade hub provided Bannerman with financial planning services and advice as she sought financing to purchase fabric for the Ross order. Bannerman then negotiated another large order with a U.S. uniform company and planned to triple her work force over the next few years.

"I dream of brands coming out of Ghana, supplying African markets as well as the huge U.S. market," Bannerman said. "Everything is possible in this industry."

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

African HIV Sufferers Get Chance at Futures, . . .

(Continued from page 3)

claims millions of lives every year.

"If you ask 'Why Africa?' one answer is that it's in our country's interest to stand with governments that bring stability and opportunity to their people," the first lady said. "We've learned that it's in our urgent interest to invest in successful governments now so that we don't have to pay the price for failed governments down the road. "
She said it is also in the U.S. interest to help the nations of Africa build stable societies.
"Compassionate Americans want to help, not for our own benefit, but because we believe that every human life has value."

A transcript (http://www.pepfar.gov/press/89420.htm) of the first lady's remarks and more information on the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief are available on the PEPFAR Web site.

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

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

American Dream Still Alive and Well for Immigrants, Report Says

By Jeffrey Thomas
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Immigrants to the United States continue to find a land of opportunity both for themselves and for their children, according to a new report.

"America offers dramatic mobility for immigrants," said Ron Haskins, the author of Economic Mobility of Immigrants in the United States, during a teleconference July 25. "The great story of America is that it still offers a job to first-generation immigrants and better jobs to their children." Haskins serves as a principal of the Economic Mobility Project, a collaborative effort involving individuals from four major U.S. think tanks, which recently issued the report. The Economic Mobility Project is an ongoing examination of the so-called American Dream, a concept that embraces social justice, social advancement and equality of opportunity.

Legal immigration to the United States has grown substantially in recent decades -- from 3.3 million annually in the 1960s to 9.1 million in the 1990s, according to the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The State Department reports that between 2000 and 2005, 3.7 million immigrants became citizens and the United States granted legal permanent residence to 5.8 million people.

Estimates of the number of illegal immigrants in the United States vary widely. The Pew Hispanic Center, a nonpartisan research group, calculates an unauthorized population of 11.5 to 12 million as of March 2006, based on Census Bureau and other data. Haskins estimates that 500,000 undocumented or illegal workers arrive each year, most of them from Mexico.

Haskins did sound one note of concern: "Historically, the U.S. economy has successfully created opportunity and economic mobility for immigrant families, but the scale of recent immigration -- and especially of poorly educated immigrants -- could be cause for future concern." Educational attainment has a dramatic effect on the wages of both first-generation and second-generation immigrants, and therefore on economic mobility, the report shows.

Ron Haskins
Author of Economic Mobility of Immigrants in the United States

There is not one typical immigrant, according to the report -- there are two. And an accurate portrait of new arrivals is complex: a much higher percentage of legal immigrants have advanced degrees than is true for the nonimmigrant population, but large numbers of immigrants -- particularly undocumented workers from Latin America -- have relatively low levels of education.

A recent study by the National Science Foundation found that, unlike less-educated immigrants, 67 percent of immigrant scientists and engineers cited family reasons or educational opportunities as their primary reason for coming to the United States, and only 21 percent cited job or economic opportunities. As of 2003, there were 3,352,000 U.S. scientists and engineers who were immigrants.

Historically, immigrant workers have on average earned more than nonimmigrant workers, as have the children of immigrants, the so-called "second generation." In 2000, the most recent year for which statistics are available, second-generation immigrants continued to earn more than nonimmigrant workers, by 6.3 percent (versus 17.8 percent more in 1940 and 14.6 percent more in 1970).

First-generation immigrants, however, earned 20 percent less in 2000 than the typical nonimmigrant worker (versus 6 percent more in 1940 and 1.4 percent more in 1970), according to U.S. Census data, the source of all statistics for the report.

"The U.S. economy seems to be increasingly rewarding education," said Stuart Butler, an expert on economic policy studies at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative research institute.

High school graduates from Mexico working in the United States earn less than nonimmigrant workers, but they earn eight times as much

(Continued on page 19)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

U.S. Public Gardens Present Beauty and Biodiversity

By Lauren Monsen
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Visitors to the U.S. Botanic Garden can walk through displays of lush vegetation from Hawaii and Florida or cacti and succulents from California, and learn how public gardens in America help conserve these very different types of ecosystems.

An exhibit titled "A Sense of Place: Public Gardens Across America" takes viewers on a mini-tour of 12 botanical landscapes reflecting distinct regions of the United States. Along with the tropics and the desert, the oak forests of Kentucky are represented, as are the alpine meadows of Colorado, the urban landscape of New York, and more.

The exhibit has two main themes, says Christine Flanagan, public programs manager at the Botanic Garden: first, "plants are not optional," because they contribute so much to the Earth's welfare, and second, plants are unique markers of their environments and ecosystems.

Although public gardens and conservatories serve myriad purposes, most are committed to education and research, "and we wanted to do something that reflected their common interests," Flanagan told USINFO.

"What public gardens do is important; we wanted to make this clear to the public," she said. The exhibit features gardens that offer striking contrasts in size, appearance, location and mission, and it conveys the importance of conserving threatened or endangered plant species and the fragile ecosystems that support them.

U.S. public gardens often have collaborated with their counterparts around the world to promote conservation and to protect biodiversity, Flanagan said. For example, the Denver Botanic Gardens worked with the U.S. Botanic Garden on a program in applied conservation that "had foreign participants, including one person from Turkey and one from [Canada's] Newfoundland," she said. "They were trained by U.S. scientists and botanists so they could apply that knowledge in their own countries."

Flanagan pointed out that many U.S. public gardens owe a debt to the tradition of European public gardens that inspired them. "The classical university garden -- typically, a teaching garden -- originated in Europe," she said. "An entire school campus will often be landscaped with plants from certain plant families, so when instructors teach botany, they can point to specific examples" of plant species. That tradition has continued and evolved in the United States.

The exhibit has surprises around almost every corner. In a cedar glade dotted with colorful wildflowers, courtesy of the Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest in Clermont, Kentucky, visitors will learn about rare glades that lie within the oak forest communities of the southeastern United States. An accompanying sign explains that "many of the plants that grow in glades are found nowhere else in the world."

A few steps away, visitors will enter a slice of tropical paradise offered by the National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG), which encompasses four public gardens in the Hawaiian Islands and one in Florida. Surrounded by dramatic leafy palms, dryland forest trees and the increasingly scarce Hawaiian cotton plant, a sign reveals that the NTBG is "a leader in the struggle to save not only disappearing native species, but also the rapidly disappearing Polynesian crop varieties brought by the ancient Hawaiians or developed over the centuries on the islands." Coastal development now threatens many of these species.

A tranquil spot for contemplation is

(Continued on page 9)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Young Tajik Gymnast Brings Her Talent to American Dance Festival

By Louise Fenner
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Manizha Mahmudzoda, a 16-year-old gymnast from Dushanbe, Tajikistan, spent six weeks this summer studying modern dance and ballet at the American Dance Festival (ADF), a premier modern dance event in Durham, North Carolina.

Her artistry, skill and flexibility had impressed audiences in Dushanbe, including Jon Larsen, a U.S. Embassy official who saw Mahmudzoda perform as part of an exhibition in commemoration of the first day of spring, or navrouz. Larsen and his colleagues agreed that she "was one of the best dancers any one of us had ever seen," he told USINFO.

His recommendation and that of another colleague at the State Department convinced the ADF to accept Mahmudzoda on fairly short notice and to offer her a scholarship covering tuition, room and board.

Mahmudzoda, who has trained in dance gymnastics since 2001, made the most of her experience at the festival, studying modern dance technique and ballet for six hours a day, four days a week. She was one of nearly 500 students from 24 countries at the 2007 festival, which is held annually at Duke University in Durham.

In addition to classes in choreography, composition and technique, the June 7-July 21 festival featured more than 60 performances, some by internationally renowned groups such as the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Mark Morris Dance Group and Pilobolus, whose dancers performed at the 2007 Academy Awards.

Mahmudzoda said her favorite event at the festival was the choreography of Shen Wei, a native of Hunan, China, who launched the acclaimed Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2000 at the ADF. Shen has been commissioned by the 2008 Olympic Committee in Beijing to choreograph portions of the opening and closing ceremonies, according to news reports.

"Modern dance is cool, in my opinion," Mahmudzoda said in a telephone interview from Durham during the last week of the festival. "Maybe I can help people [in Tajikistan] study and learn more about modern dance because I got a lot of experience here."

She is not devoting her energies exclusively to dance. This spring Mahmudzoda graduated from the English Access Microscholarship Program, a State Department-initiative that funds English language and leadership training for 14- to 18-year-olds in predominantly Muslim countries. Her classes took place at the Aga Khan Humanities Project at the University of Central Asia. That organization helped pay for her trip to the United States.

In addition, Mahmudzoda applied for the State Department's Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program, although she was not selected. She may try again or, after secondary school, seek an IREX exchange. IREX, the International Research and Exchanges Board, is an international nonprofit organization that sponsors academic exchanges, Internet training and other programs.

Mahmudzoda, who will be entering the 11th grade, said that after graduation she may seek an advanced degree and continue to study English. "And of course I'll do gymnastics training," she said.

On July 18, in Durham she performed a work for fellow ADF students that she choreographed herself, featuring gymnastics and modern dance set to classical music. "They enjoyed it very much because they were not used to seeing such flexibility," Mahmudzoda said.

She is the first ADF participant from Tajikistan and one of the youngest at the festival. Mahmudzoda was one of 20 dancers and choreographers participating in the ADF's International Choreographers Residency Program (ICRP).

"I like this festival. We can exchange our experiences; we can study other cultures," Mahmudzoda said. She enjoyed telling the other students about her country, and she admitted that she had occasionally been homesick. "I cried one day," she said, "but after crying I thought, 'It's okay, that's finished. Let's go to training.'"

Nicolle Wasserman, an ADF executive assistant who monitors the ICRP, said that, because Mahmudzoda's training had focused on gymnastics, she "had a lot to learn in the dance classes, but she's been a good student, soaking up a lot and taking everything in. She has thrown herself into it and learned as much as she can, and she wasn't afraid to try the really hard stuff. She is very ambitious"

Asked what she would tell her friends and family in Tajikistan about her experience, Mahmudzoda said, "I will tell only good things because I meet only good people and good experiences." Americans

(Continued on page 9)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Counterterrorism, Iraq Top U.S.-U.K. Agenda

By David McKeeby
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – The United States and the United Kingdom have reaffirmed their continued commitment to fighting terrorism and stabilizing Iraq.

"Any time you share values the way we share values, it makes it easy to have strategic conversations," President Bush told reporters in a July 30 joint press appearance with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown after two-days of talks between the two leaders. "It makes it easy to be able to have common ground on which to deal with these problems."

The press briefing followed two days of talks at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland. The talks marked Bush's first official meeting with the new prime minister, who succeeded Tony Blair on June 27.

Although observers have sought signs of a possible shift in the new prime minister's approach to Washington, Brown echoed Bush's emphasis on shared values. The prime minister quoted Winston Churchill's famous observation that both nations share, "a joint inheritance of liberty, a belief in opportunity for all, a belief in the dignity of every human being."

For this reason, Brown said he and Bush "are as one" in their view on the importance of confronting terrorism, such as failed attempts by extremists to launch new attacks in London and Glasgow, Scotland, since Brown took office.

"Terrorism is not a cause, it is a crime -- and it is a crime against humanity," Brown said. "And there should be no safe haven and no hiding place for those who practice terrorist violence or preach terrorist extremism."

"We're dealing with a variety of methodologies to deal with them," Bush said. "One is intelligence, one is law enforcement, and one is military. We've got to use all assets at [our] disposal to find them and bring them to justice."

President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown address the press Monday, July 30, 2007, at Camp David near Thurmont, Md.
White House photo by Eric Draper

Brown said his government would continue the commitment of his predecessor's government to Iraq. He highlighted Britain's progress toward transitioning security responsibilities to local army and police units in three of four southern Iraqi provinces where British coalition forces operate.

"Our aim, as is the aim of the United States government, is threefold: security for the Iraqi people, political reconciliation and that the Iraqis have a stake in the future," Brown said.

Also on the agenda were support for tougher sanctions against Iran's nuclear program, the Middle East peace process, the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, alleviation of global poverty and disease; global trade talks, and efforts to address climate change.

A transcript (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/07/20070730.html) of Bush and Brown's remarks is available on the White House Web site.

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

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

U.S. Public Gardens Present Beauty and Biodiversity

(Continued from page 6)

next on the tour. The Japanese Garden, located in Portland, Oregon, has been recreated in miniature by combining plants with elements such as stepping stones, a water basin, a pebble enclosure and bamboo fencing. Conceived in the 1960s by Portland citizens seeking to improve Oregon's trade and cultural relations with Japan, this facility "has been proclaimed one of the most authentic Japanese gardens outside of Japan," a sign indicates.

Offerings from New York's Brooklyn Botanic Garden demonstrate how horticulture has been used to beautify a metropolitan setting. A diminutive version of Virginia's Norfolk Botanical Garden showcases an assortment of azaleas, camellias, roses and hydrangeas. A rugged Western vista is evoked by a scene transplanted from California's Huntington Botanical Gardens.

Contributions from six other public gardens round out the exhibit: the North Carolina Botanical Garden, with its Venus flytrap and other carnivorous plants; Michigan's Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park; the Missouri Botanical Garden; Florida's Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden; the Sarah P. Duke Gardens of Durham, North Carolina (a series of terraced gardens on the campus of Duke University); and Colorado's Denver Botanic Gardens.

Some gardens featured in "A Sense of Place" are publicly funded, while others rely on private donations. Most are involved in vigorous conservation efforts. Flanagan said the Missouri Botanical Garden "has a long and active history of working with other institutions in foreign countries" to train botanists and horticulture professionals, and to share conservation practices.

Flanagan expressed hope that the exhibit will focus attention on the urgency of conservation efforts. "I believe plants are critical to the survival of our way of life, as we know it," she said. "We can't take for granted that plants will always be there to serve our material or aesthetic needs. And if we don't protect them, society will pay a heavy price."

More information (http://www.usbg.gov/) about the U.S. Botanic Garden's exhibits and programs is available on the garden's Web site.

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

Young Tajik Gymnast Brings Her Talent to American . . .

(Continued from page 7)

are friendly and polite, she said: "I like it that they always say 'excuse me' and 'hello,' 'good morning,' 'good afternoon.'"

She also was impressed that Americans are usually positive and optimistic "even if they're not feeling good," and with Americans' acceptance of diversity. "Here everybody is equal," she said. "I like that very much."

"I will also say America is a beautiful and developed country," Mahmudzoda said.

Information about the English Access Microscholarship Program (http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/access.htm), the FLEX (http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/programs/flex/) program and IREX (http://www.irex.org/education/index.asp) education programs is available on the State Department Web site. Information (http://www.akdn.org/humanities/Humanity.htm) about the Aga Kahn Humanities Project is available on the Aga Kahn Development Network Web site.

See the American Dance Festival Web site for information (http://www.americandancefestival.org/) about the festival, the ADF school and its international student program

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

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Arab Leaders Renew Support for Iraq, Mideast Peace

By David McKeeby
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Arab leaders meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Defense Robert Gates in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, July 31 agreed to continue aiding Iraqis and expressed support for intensified U.S. efforts toward a comprehensive Palestinian-Israeli peace.

Rice and Gates urged Gulf Cooperation Council members Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, joined by representatives from Egypt and Jordan, to help the United States convince Iraq's Sunnis to continue seeking political reconciliation with the Shia-majority government.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, center, and U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, left, meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, right, at a hotel in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, Tuesday, July 31, 2007.

"All parties need to really now throw their weight behind this effort at national reconciliation that the Iraqi leaders are trying to carry out," Rice said July 31 in a joint press appearance with Egyptian Foreign Minster Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

Rice cited Egypt's diplomatic support to Iraq, as well as Saudi Arabia's moves toward canceling Iraq's Saddam-era debts, tightening control of its border to prevent militants from crossing into Iraq and appeals to tribal authorities to support the Iraqi government.

"We have the same interest in a stable Iraq that can defend itself, defend its new political system, its new democratic political system and be unified," Rice said July 30 en route to the conference. "We have the same interests and we're pursuing them."

Following the meeting, Arab leaders issued a joint statement reiterating their pledge at the Iraq Neighbors' Conference earlier in 2007 of noninterference in Iraq's internal affairs.

Rice rejected criticism that an arms package announced July 30 for Saudi Arabia and five other Gulf States, as well as Israel and Egypt, is a trade-off for assistance at a key diplomatic juncture. (See related article (http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-enlish&y=2007&m=July&x=20070730145144sjhtrop0.5523493).

"This isn't an issue of quid pro quo," Rice said. "We are working with these states to fight back extremism and to give a chance to the forces of moderation and reform."

She added that along with the security assistance, the United States would encourage regional allies to continue making progress on political reforms.

"We continue to discuss and press for reform and democratic reform because it is our strong belief that that is ultimately – in and of itself will be a stabilizing factor in the Middle East when you have more open political systems," Rice said.

Arab governments also welcomed President Bush's July 16 announcement of a renewed effort to jump-start the Middle East peace process by encouraging bilateral talks between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and its plan to convene an international peace conference later in 2007.

"A two-state solution can come whenever the conditions are ripe for it, whenever the groundwork has been laid for it, and when Palestinians and Israelis can come to agreement on what that state will look like," Rice said.

Transcripts of Rice's press briefing (http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/89836.htm) en route to the conference and remarks (http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/89854.htm) with Gheit are available on the State Department Web site.

For more information, see Middle East and North Africa. (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/)

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

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Arts Academy Promotes Iraqi Reconciliation

By James Helicke
USINFO Special Correspondent

Erbil, Iraq -- Young Iraqi ballerinas in pink costumes gracefully glided across a stage to a concerto by Mozart as a veteran U.S. dancer watched their every step.

"Listen to the music," Quae Simpson gently told the girls, members of Baghdad's only ballet troupe. "Watch your posture!"

The workshop was one of dozens at Iraq's National Unity Performing and Visual Arts Academy held in July in the northern Iraqi city of Erbil. The academy provided an opportunity for about 300 of the most talented performers from across Iraq to train with acclaimed U.S. artists, and reinforced a sense of unity, normalcy and hope through the arts.

Ten professional musicians and performers from the not-for-profit organization American Voices provided the free training to the Iraqi ballet dancers, folk dancers and musicians, classical musicians, jazz musicians and hip-hop performers. The program was supported by the U.S. Embassy and the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Culture.

"I'm a teacher. This is my passion and I have to share it," said Simpson, a Baltimore native who has been a featured dancer in popular New York musical productions. "I think it's up to us to let people know we care."

Mahasin al-Khatib, director of Baghdad's Butterfly Ballet Company, added that the arts academy promotes reconciliation and national unity for Iraq.

"We feel there's a strong love that binds us here together. Everybody is one on the stage," said al-Khatib, a Russian-trained ballerina. "I brought Kurds, Assyrians, Shia and Sunnis together. I wanted to bring all these people together, to unite the Iraqi people through dance."

The Iraqi National Ballet performs a scene from Sleeping Beauty during a 10-day camp for aspiring Iraqi performers and artists at the National Unity Performing and Visual Arts Academy, July 13-24. State Dept. photo.

However, she also acknowledged that pursuing her love for ballet has often been challenging amid violence in Baghdad. In 2005, on the day of a wedding for one of her brothers, another brother was killed. Her ballet group had been scheduled to participate in a cultural event in Cairo, Egypt, the next day.

"I was almost finished. But because of my love for ballet and the arts, I realized that life should continue. I needed to prove this, so I went," she said.

Many artists at the arts academy expressed optimism that the arts might contribute to healing Iraq's wounds from conflict.

"I don't care about war and fighting. I care about dancing," said Brwa Abdulrahman, a self-taught hip-hop dancer from the northern city of Sulaimaniyah. "It's a reality that we lived in war. But we didn't take part. We just danced."

The intense training -- sometimes beginning early in the morning and ending late at night -- culminated in two gala concerts that emphasized national unity.

A "Jazz Bridges Concert" on July 22 featured blends of Iraqi Kurdish and Arabic folk music with jazz themes along with traditional music and dance. A July 23 "National Unity Concert" concluded with a performance by a national unity orchestra that combined the talents of the Iraq National Symphony Orchestra and orchestras from the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq.

Organizers also worked to ensure that the training and belief in the arts would not end with the close of the program. American Voices donated many musical scores, teaching materials, ballet slippers and other supplies that are difficult to find in Iraq. It was a gesture that the young ballerinas are unlikely to forget.

"They slept with their slippers under their pillows," al-Khatib, the ballet director, said of her dancers. "They were dreaming like Cinderella."

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

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Pakistan "Indispensable" in Global Anti-Terrorism Fight

By Eric Green
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -– Despite impressive achievements fighting terrorism, Pakistan still needs to do more to defeat terrorist forces on its soil, says R. Nicholas Burns, the State Department's under secretary of state for political affairs.

In his prepared congressional testimony July 25, Burns said Pakistan's success fighting al-Qaida and the Taliban is indispensable to the global effort to defeat radical Islamic terrorist groups in South Asia and worldwide.

Burns told the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Pakistan's future is key to stability in South Asia, which Burns said had become a region of "singular importance" to U.S. foreign policy since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America.

The official said he could "think of nothing more important" to the U.S.-Pakistani relationship than continued U.S. attention, commitment and engagement with Pakistan.

Pakistanis, Burns said, should be assured the United States will remain a good and reliable friend. But as a good friend, said Burns, the United States will speak frankly and sometimes disagree with Pakistan on "vital issues such as the best way to defeat terrorist groups and the right way to build a democratic state."

In outlining Pakistan's effort against terrorists, Burns said that since 2001, the government of President Pervez Musharraf has killed or captured more al-Qaida operatives than did any other country in the world. However, he added, Pakistan's tribal regions of north and south Waziristan have become "safe havens for violent extremist and terrorist activity." Burns said not enough is being done to bring to justice top al-Qaida and Taliban leaders in the tribal regions.

"Long-term denial of these areas to terrorists will require local cooperation, and Pakistan will have to find a more effective and successful way to do so," Burns said.

R. Nicholas Burns
State Department's under secretary of State for Political Affairs

Recent reports of al-Qaida activity in those regions, said Burns, underscore the need for Pakistan to "elevate its efforts to fight this enemy." (See related article (http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-enlish&y=2007&m=July&x=20070717165022ndyblehs0.1854364).

U.S. assistance to Pakistan has strengthened significantly the country's capability to combat extremist forces, Burns said. The aid comes in two forms: security assistance to fight terrorists and bilateral aid in such areas as governance and economic reform aimed at creating an environment inhospitable to terrorists and violent extremists.

PROGRESS ON COUNTERTERRORISM, COUNTERPROLIFERATION

Burns said Pakistan's Musharraf shares with the United States recognition that terrorism and other forms of violent extremism cannot be countered by military means alone. To this end, he said, the United States has provided Pakistan in 2007 with $843 million in economic and security assistance, making Pakistan the fifth-largest recipient worldwide of U.S. aid. U.S. development assistance is tailored to build sustainable growth, improve living standards and promote "good governance, responsible citizenship, and foreign investment," Burns said.

He also said the United States welcomes Musharraf's commitment that Pakistan will take a leading role in international efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related technology and expertise.

The United States, he said, remains engaged with Pakistan on a full range of nonproliferation and counterproliferation issues because "they remain vital to U.S and global interests" and key to preventing the emergence of a "shadow proliferation network." Burns was referring to a network led by Abdul Qadeer Khan, the former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, which sold nuclear technology and know-how to rogue regimes around the world, such as Iran and North Korea.

(Continued on page 19)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Former Exchange Students, Now Adults, Report Successes

By Louise Fenner and Elizabeth Kelleher
USINFO Staff Writers

Washington -- Chisinau, Moldova's capital, has a new mayor, elected June 17. He is Dorin Chirtoaca, remarkable because he is an under-30 bachelor who overcame low name-recognition to win.

Chirtoaca may have learned lessons from an earlier campaign, which he lost. But Alexandr Snaidruc, a computer student at Moldova State University and high-tech worker, says Chirtoaca won, at least in part, because he energized an army of young volunteers, many of them -- like Snaidruc -- alumni of cultural exchange programs with the United States.

Snaidruc, visiting Washington July 26, said he himself had campaigned for Chirtoaca, a liberal who ran against the candidate of the governing Communist Party. "Everybody was trying to help [Chirtoaca], giving whatever we had," Snaidruc said of a group of exchange program alumni who joined the campaign. The young campaign workers were paid with pizza.

Each year, some 30,000 people, many students, travel to the United States to participate in exchange programs hosted by the U.S. State Department. On their departure, they typically report that they enjoyed learning about America, making new friends and sharing their own cultures with their hosts.

But clearly, their experiences do not end there; many of them maintain formal networks into adult life. Chisinau's new mayor, for instance, is an alumnus of an exchange program to the United States and has headed an exchange alumni group in Chisinau for two years. The group's members, including Snaidruc and other professionals and students, trust him. "He got our votes, and he got our help with the campaign. I think it will have a positive impact on our country," Snaidruc said.

Snaidruc was one of a dozen graduate students and business owners from former Soviet Union countries who, having spent a year as teens studying at American high schools, came back to spend the summer of 2007 in a professional development program sponsored by the State Department and private-sector partners Lehigh University and the Iacocca Institute.

The program they participated in years ago, the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program, brings teenagers from former Soviet Union countries to attend U.S. schools for one year while living with host families. Hanna Zubko, of Ukraine, said most of the management positions at her high-tech company are filled by former FLEX participants.

The program Zubko, Snaidruc and the others just completed, called Global Village for Future Leaders, brings men and women in their mid-20s from every region of the world to spend six weeks honing business and community development skills.

The group told State Department officials, after completing the Global Village program, that it offered them invaluable advice from American business executives and academics.

Zubko said she improved her understanding of how to commercialize an invention and protect intellectual property rights. She also learned how companies can serve their communities through sponsorship of charitable events.

Ravshan Safarov, of Uzbekistan, who works at his family's manufacturing business while studying economics, said he was able to study topics that might help him someday take the family business global. The participants completed real-world business projects with 84 others, who hailed from all over the world; they said the contacts they made among their peers will boost their careers.

"Wherever you go now, as a business or a person, you always have support," Zubko said.

"I think we can make a difference by using all the experience we got here," said Snaidruc. "OK, you make money, you make a business, but what else? Look around. You'll see many things that need to be done."

All of the visitors said they maintain contact with their host families from the FLEX program, and most planned visits to their "second moms and dads" before returning home.

"It is very important for all of us to stay in touch," said Alina Romanowski, a State Department official who oversees exchange programs, "especially today when there are so many global issues."

See also "A Life-Changing Experience (http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0707/ijse/ismailzade.htm)" in an eJournal USA to read about one exchange student's experience in the United States and get more information about the FLEX program.

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

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Access to Oil, Natural Gas Seen as Central to Global Stability

By David McKeeby
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington –- Reliable access to affordable oil and natural gas is a cornerstone of international security, but in today's energy market, disruptions in the supply chain can have thorny diplomatic and security consequences.

"We have a serious problem, America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world," President Bush said in a State of the Union address.

Energy independence, long touted by U.S. officials, is a goal that might be achievable through technology advances. But for the foreseeable future, security and energy experts agree, fossil fuels and the integrated global supply chain that delivers them to global markets will make "energy security" a critical transnational concern for the 21st century.

The world currently consumes approximately 86 million barrels of oil per day, and the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects that by 2030 demand will grow by nearly 50 percent, to 118 million barrels per day. EIA expects that as much as 70 percent of this growth in demand will come from emerging economic and political powers, like China and India.

The United States produces 70 percent of the energy resources it uses and it remains the world's single largest consumer of petroleum products, using 20 million barrels per day, according to EIA.

As domestic oil production continues to decline, EIA estimates that the United States will be importing 27 million barrels per day by 2030, if circumstances remain the same.

"The scale and scope of this challenge threatens our long-term security," Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman said in a February speech. "And that threat only promises to grow more pressing over time as traditional sources of energy become more stretched and demand continues to grow."

For this reason, says Daniel Yergin, president of international energy consulting firm Cambridge Energy Research Associates, lawmakers must look beyond fossil fuels as a mere commodity.

True energy independence, Yergin argues, is best found in an energy security system that is rooted in market stability and international cooperation in responding to global supply disruptions.

For years, the international community has worked to avoid disruptions by seeking multiple supply sources, encouraging open markets and maintaining strategic reserves. These are necessary, but insufficient, steps to ensure future energy security for three reasons, Yergin argues.

First, exploration is expanding into more remote and potentially unstable regions of the world, he said. Even in leading energy production regions, like the Middle East and Latin America, future political turmoil could endanger global energy supplies.

Second, as new sources of energy are discovered farther away from consumers, the world would see a rapid expansion of infrastructure -- like pipelines, refineries and ports – that is a potentially attractive target for terrorists, guerillas and organized crime. Natural disasters also would pose a threat to this infrastructure, Yergin said.

Many global shipping routes, such as the Straits of Hormuz in the Gulf or the Straits of Malacca in Southeast Asia, make tanker traffic vulnerable to terrorists and piracy, he said. On land, pipeline projects increasingly cross multiple borders, compounding calculations of political risk for companies that have sizable investments in getting oil and gas safely to market.

The third challenge to energy security, Yergin said, is the lack of transparency in the market processes. Bodman said that half of the world's oil reserves are in the hands of state-owned energy companies, which do not respond to market demand in the same manner as private multinational oil companies.

John Deutsch, a former director of

(Continued on page 17)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Genetic Discovery Could Lead to New AIDS Vaccine, Treatments

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – An international group of scientists contributed to a study that has found genetic reasons for the natural resistance of a small percentage of the population to HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

David Goldstein
Professor of molecular genetics and microbiology at Duke University in North Carolina

The researchers, led by David Goldstein, professor of molecular genetics and microbiology at Duke University in North Carolina, expect their findings to help in the search for AIDS treatments, and an HIV vaccine that would work by boosting the effects of apparently protective genes.

"People really vary in their vulnerability to HIV," said Goldstein, also director of the Duke Institute for Genome Sciences and Policy, during a July 23 USINFO interview.

"Some people, despite repeated, high degrees of exposure, will not become infected," he added. "And even for those who do become infected, their immune systems are able to control the virus just fine. So far as we know, perhaps as many as 10 percent of people who do become infected will not become sick."

But most people exposed to HIV progress to AIDS. More than 64.9 million people have been infected with HIV since the pandemic began in the 1980s, according to the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS estimates that 39.5 million people worldwide were living with the disease in 2006.

NATURAL RESISTANCE

The work, published July 19 in the online issue of Science, is the first large cooperative study with major findings arising from the Center for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Immunology (CHAVI), funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

CHAVI is a consortium of researchers from Duke University, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the University of Alabama-Birmingham, Harvard Medical School in Massachusetts and Oxford University in the United Kingdom.

"Within CHAVI," Goldstein said, "we established a consortium of investigators called EuroCHAVI who worked together to establish a group of subjects for analysis."

The investigators -- from Switzerland, Italy, the United Kingdom, Australia, Spain and Denmark -- looked through the records of 30,000 patients to find 486 patients with specific characteristics.

"We had to know when they became infected, within a two-year window," Goldstein said, "and we had to have a laboratory estimate of their viral load during the time that they were not treated." Viral load is the number of virus copies or particles in a milliliter of a patient's blood.

When a person is infected by HIV, viral load rises to a high level before the immune system pushes it down to a stable level, called a set point. Some people can push the virus to undetectable levels; those who cannot control it progress rapidly to AIDS.

To find out why some people can push the virus to such low levels, Goldstein and his team focused on the viral load set point. What, they asked, controls how much virus is present at the set point?

CHIPS AND SNIPS

To answer that question for each of the 486 study subjects, the scientists used a genetic tool -- a microassay on a credit-card-sized wafer or "chip" that simultaneously

(Continued on page 17)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Scientists, Engineers Receive Highest U.S. Science Honors

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Twenty-seven scientists and engineers and three corporations have received the presidential National Medals of Science and Technology for 2005 and 2006, the United States' highest honors in science.

Awardees work in fields that include mathematics and computer science, biological and physical sciences, chemistry, engineering and behavioral and social sciences.

Their discoveries have led to treatments for HIV/AIDS and the major cause of pneumonia, refinements of the Big Bang theory of the universe, advances in paleoclimatology and climate variability, forensic DNA fingerprinting and the Human Genome Project, the development of high-density microarrays for genetic analysis, the development of roadside and race track safety technologies, development of the cell phone and much more.

"The men and women we salute have been recognized with countless honors, including the Nobel Prize," President Bush said July 27 during a ceremony at the White House. "And now they add to their deep and remarkable resumes the highest award a president can confer in their fields."

Congress established the National Medal of Science in 1959 and the National Medal of Technology in 1980 as presidential awards.

SCIENCE AND DIPLOMACY

Among the eight 2006 Medal of Science recipients is Nina Fedoroff, a geneticist and molecular biologist from Pennsylvania State University who on July 18 became the new science and technology adviser to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Nina Fedoroff
Geneticist and molecular biologist
from Pennsylvania State University

Fedoroff received the medal for pioneering work in the molecular modification of plants and for being first to clone and characterize corn (maize) transposons, also called mobile genes.

In the 1940s, Nobel laureate Barbara McClintock (Medicine 1983) discovered that some genes could move, Fedoroff said during a July 31 USINFO interview.

"Until then," Fedoroff added, "geneticists believed that all genes stayed in their places on chromosomes, and they spent their time constructing maps that were based on the fact that genes didn't move. Then McClintock came along."

When Fedoroff began working on plant transposal elements, she said, she read McClintock's genetic work and thought, "'Wouldn't it be really spectacular to be able to understand the molecular side of this?' -- and that's what I set out to do."

One of the important things Fedoroff and her colleagues discovered, she said, is that sometimes the transposal elements they studied would "act like they disappeared, and sometimes they would come back -- they could stay off for generations and then come back," she said. "The underlying mechanism is now something that people are studying very actively, calling it epigenetic modification."

As science adviser to the secretary of state, Fedoroff said, her first job will be determining where science advice can make the most difference.

"I'd like to be able to serve diplomacy," she said, "by identifying the right kinds of information and supplying it where it's needed."

HIV AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

One of eight 2005 Medal of Science recipients is Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health. He has also been chief of the NIAID Laboratory

(Continued on page 18)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Access to Oil, Natural Gas Seen as Central to Global . . .

(Continued from page 14)

the CIA who now teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, agrees. In recent congressional testimony, he said that state ownership can be advantageous, such as Saudi Arabia's work in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to moderate global prices. But, he cautioned, it also can result in abuses, such as some suppliers threatening energy cutoffs to achieve political objectives or others outbidding private energy companies by forming energy deals that include additional government-to-government benefits, such as economic aid and arms sales.

Bodman said that these factors all add up to one simple point -- international cooperation is essential to meeting the global energy security challenge: "We cannot let energy become a variable, a risk, a question mark in our nation's – or our world's – economic and security equation."

For additional information on U.S. policy, see Climate Change and Clean Energy (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/climate_change.html).

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

Genetic Discovery Could Lead to New AIDS Vaccine, . . .

(Continued from page 15)

tests 550,000 of a genome's 3 billion sites -- to see which of the sites, called single nucleotide polymorphisms, or SNPs (pronounced "snips"), might influence the trait of viral load.

The researchers extracted DNA from the subjects, prepared it for the assay and ran each sample over a chip. The 550,000 SNPs represent the 10 million or so SNPs on the genome that vary from one person to the next.

Over 18 months, the sweep of genomes found three SNPs that were strongly associated with either viral load set point or disease progression. The SNP most relevant to a potential vaccine is near a human immune gene called HLA-C. People with this variant are thought to make more of the gene's potentially protective product than people who do not have it.

The HLA genes are involved in presenting foreign bits of protein on the surface of cells in the body to let the immune system know that the cell is infected and should be destroyed.

Nobody knew the identified gene "was able to act in this way to flag HIV-infected cells for destruction," Goldstein said. And HIV does not interfere with the gene, "which could mean that a vaccine strategy working through this mechanism might be a vulnerable point for HIV."

"We don't know whether it's going to work or not," Goldstein added, "but it's a possibility that would not have been a focus before these results."

Next steps include expanding the genetic analysis to larger samples to find other genetic determinants, examining resistance to infection, and doing functional work to better understand how genetic differences have their effects.
More information about the Global Enterprise (http://www.hivvaccineenterprise.org/) and CHAVI (http://www.chavi.org/) can be found on the organizations' Web sites.

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

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

Scientists, Engineers Receive Highest U.S. Science . . .

(Continued from page 16)

of Immunoregulation since 1980, working as an administrator and a scientist.

He received the medal for pioneering understanding of how the human immune system is regulated and for his contributions to knowledge about how the AIDS virus destroys the body's defenses, leaving the body susceptible to deadly infections.

Dr. Anthony Fauci
Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

Since the early years of the AIDS pandemic, Fauci has helped "at the scientific level" to find "the mechanisms of pathogenesis of HIV disease," he said during a July 31 USINFO interview, asking questions such as "how does the virus work, how does it destroy the body's immune system, what are the pathways the virus uses to subvert the human immune system and what are the mechanisms whereby this virus is able to replicate so rapidly and destroy the body's defenses?"

The reason that has become very important, Fauci said, "is that it has laid the foundation and framework for a rational approach to therapy of HIV-infected individuals. You can't address the issue of drug development and/or vaccine development unless you understand what we call these pathogenic mechanisms of HIV."

Fauci's work during the 1980s and 1990s sought to explain why the immune system response to HIV is inadequate, whereas in the response to virtually every other infection, even deadly infections, ultimately, the immune system wins out.

HIV is unique, he added, "in that it has these mechanisms of pathogenesis which not only wreak havoc on the body's immune system but also evade the body's ability to eliminate the virus."

The next steps in his research, Fauci said, "overwhelmingly" involve developing a safe and effective vaccine against HIV.

More information (http://www.nationalmedals.org/) about medal recipients is available at the National Science and Technology Medals Foundation Web site.

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

Nobel laureate Barbara McClintock (Medicine 1983)

Click Here & Upgrade
Expanded Features
Unlimited Pages
PDF Complete

SECTION
AMERICAN EMBASSY

P.O.Box 1014
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Phone: 251-11-5174007
251-11-5174000
Fax: 251-11-1242454
Email: pasaddis@state.gov

Web site
http://
ethiopia.use
mbassy.gov

American Dream Still Alive and Well for Immigrants, . . .

(Continued from page 5)

as they would if they remained in Mexico, Haskins said. "The American economy provides a huge boost to the mobility of first-generation immigrants," even those with less education, and even if they earn less than nonimmigrants, he added.

The report shows that the children of immigrants attain higher levels of education than their parents -- and indeed, are more likely to attain college degrees and advanced degrees than the children of nonimmigrants.

The report concludes, however, that the economic prospects of the second generation are very much tied to their educational attainments. "Economic assimilation appears to be working well," Haskins says, but "the children of low-wage, poorly educated immigrants may well have an uphill climb to continue reaching economic parity with nonimmigrants."

The full text (http://www.economicmobility.org/reports_and_research/?id=0003) of Economic Mobility of Immigrants in the United States is available on the Web site of the Economic Mobility Project.

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

Pakistan "Indispensable" in Global Anti-Terrorism . . .

(Continued from page 12)

Burns said Khan "did enormous damage to international efforts to restrain the spread of nuclear technology," and the Pakistani government has "direct responsibility to help us undo that damage and ensure it does not happen again." (See related article (http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=June&x=20070615144755sjhtrop0.5392115).)

FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN PAKISTAN

Burns said the United States is providing technical advice and assistance for scheduled presidential and parliamentary elections in Pakistan in 2008. Musharraf, Pakistan's military ruler, has pledged to hold free and fair elections that will allow Pakistan's citizens to choose their leaders through a civilian-led democratic government, Burns said.

Burns indicated that the fairness of Pakistan's election will be judged on whether political parties that win the majority of votes are allowed to form a democratic government that reflects the will of the Pakistani electorate.

Burns said the United States seeks for Pakistan a "transformation into a more stable, open, and secure nation where its people can, in the future, live peacefully."

See also "New Players on the Scene: A.Q. Khan and the Nuclear Black Market (http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0305/ijpe/lutes.htm)" in the e-Journal Today's Nuclear Equation.

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