



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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Ambassador Yamamoto Plants Tree to Celebrate Earth Day



Ambassador Yamamoto planting a tree with Deputy City Mayor Mesganu Arga.

Ambassador Donald Yamamoto planted an indigenous "zigba" (podocarpus) tree with Addis Ababa City Administration officials at Dr. Haddis Alemayehu Secondary School on April 23, 2007 in celebration of Earth Day. Ambassador Yamamoto spoke on the oneness of the earth and the need for all people of the world to cooperate on environmental issues. Deputy City Mayor Mesganu Arga pointed out that planting trees is part of the Ethiopia's Millennium agenda. Headmistress Asselefech Gebrekidan said her school would name the tree after Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wis-

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USAID Supports Tigray Disabled Veteran's Association

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on April 20, 2007 announced its support for efforts to help persons with disabilities in Tigray develop entrepreneurial and business skills that will have an impact on the local economy. A \$25,000 grant from USAID to the Tigray Disabled Veteran's Association (TDVA) will provide business development skills training for nearly 100 business cooperatives in rural and semi-urban areas of Tigray, benefiting 6,000

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USAID Mission Director Glenn Anders is greeted with flowers on arrival at the MOPC, a rehabilitation center supported by TDVA.

Ambassador Yamamoto Plants Tree to Celebrate Earth Day . . .

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consin, founder of the modern environmental movement in the United States. Students representing each of the classes and members of the school's Nature Club, as well as administrators and teachers, attended the ceremony. The U.S. Mission has made a pledge to plant ten trees in each of the ten newly constructed secondary schools in Addis Ababa. The remainder of the trees will be planted during the coming rainy season. In addition to planting a tree, Ambassador Yamamoto made a donation of text books, reference books and the works of noted Ethiopian writer, Dr. Haddis Alemayehu, after whom the school is named. He also donated ten soccer balls with an Ethio-American friendship logo to the school. ♦



Ambassador Yamamoto presenting soccer balls to Headmistress Asselefech Gebrekidan.

USAID Supports Tigray Disabled Veteran's Association . . .

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persons with disabilities and their families.

The grant announcement was made by USAID Mission Director Glenn Anders at the Milano Hotel in Mekelle. Following the ceremony Anders visited projects supported by TDVA, including a physical rehabilitation center and low-cost housing units. "The American people and USAID are proud to support TDVA in its efforts to prepare persons with disabilities to run successful businesses. The skills they will learn will positively impact the lives of disabled participants, their families and the communities in which they live," Anders said.

In Ethiopia, an estimated eight to ten million people are disabled. Many are poor and food insecure, and many suffer discrimination against because of their disability. Landmines in the northern part of the country continue to maim and kill innocent people, leaving victims disabled, destitute and unable to work. Thanks to the efforts of the TDVA and others, nearly 18,000 disabled veterans are now engaged in self-help and income generating schemes that help them to lead productive lives and to provide for their families.

USAID support to the TDVA will provide training in basic business skills for disabled persons, to help them develop efficient and cost-effective strategies to improve their

livelihoods. Participants will learn how to access credit, basic accounting and how to manage a small business.

Since 1996, TDVA has provided integrated community-based physical, psycho-social, and economic rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities. An important component of the organization's work is reducing stigma and discrimination by documenting and sharing success stories that highlight the contributions of persons with disabilities in Ethiopia. ♦

U.S. Embassy Sponsors Discussion on Housing Study

The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section, in cooperation with the Addis Ababa University Faculty of Technology on April 26, 2007 held a half-day workshop at the Ghion Hotel on "Supplying Central City Housing for all Income Groups in Addis Ababa," a research project in urban planning conducted by Dr. Rosemary Curran, a U.S. Fulbright Scholar affiliated with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Addis Ababa University (AAU). Dr. Wubshet Berhanu, General Manager of the Addis Ababa City Administration, delivered opening remarks.

The workshop was an opportunity for Dr. Curran to present and discuss the initial findings of two years of research to develop strategies for Addis Ababa's urban development that allow for a renewed, vital urban core that includes adequate housing for all income groups.

Participants at the workshop included academics, city administrators and planners, government officials, and representatives of civil society and the private sector. The study and subsequent discussion

that a renewed, vital urban core that includes housing for all income groups is not just desirable, but also financially feasible, and politically possible.



(R-L) Dr. Rosemary Curran, a U.S. Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Ashenafi Gosaye and Dr. Heyaw Terefe at the workshop

Dr. Curran received her Masters Degree in Urban Planning from the University of Washington in 1998 and her Ph.D. from Fordham University in 1982. Prior to coming to Ethiopia, she worked for eight years as a Planning Research Analyst in the King County Executive Department, Seattle, Washington. Dr. Curran has been in Addis Ababa since 2006, teaching and conducting research under the U.S. Fulbright Program, sponsored by the United States

Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The Fulbright program sends 800 U.S. faculty and professionals abroad each year to lecture and conduct research in a wide variety of academic and professional fields. ♦

looked at the central areas of Addis Ababa that are destined for redevelopment, and at ways by which this redevelopment can provide new mixed-use, mixed income neighborhoods without the major resettlement of poor households to the city periphery. The study concluded

U.S. Military's Africa Command Will Help African Leaders

By Vince Crawley
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington - The U.S. military's new command center for Africa, Africa Command (AFRICOM), will not include large numbers of troops, but will promote regional security and stability while coordinating U.S. support for African leaders, senior Pentagon officials say.

"The goal is for AFRICOM not to be a U.S. leadership role on the continent," but rather to support African leadership efforts, Pentagon policy chief Ryan Henry told reporters April 23. "We would be looking to complement rather than compete with any leadership efforts currently going on."

President Bush in February announced that the Defense Department is creating a new Africa Command to coordinate U.S. government interests on the continent. Similar commands exist for other areas of the globe. AFRICOM would include all countries on the African continent except Egypt, which would remain associated with the U.S. Central Command.

(See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=February&x=20070206170933MVyelwarC0.2182581>).

From April 15-21, Henry and a group of State Department and military officials visited six countries plus the African Union headquarters to discuss the new command with regional leaders. They also addressed misconceptions about the new command. The officials visited: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, as well as the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Henry, who is principal deputy under secre-

tary of defense for policy, briefed Pentagon reporters after returning from the trip.

The United States plans to station the command's headquarters in Africa, but Henry stressed that his team is still in the "fact-finding" stage, and that AFRICOM would not necessarily be placed in one of the six countries visited. The headquarters staff, numbering well un-



Ryan Henry Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for policy

der 1,000 people, might be divided among several countries and might not all be based in Africa, he said.

"There has not been any process of elimination going on right now, and it's not safe to say that it will be in any single country," Henry said.

"There are a number of different models that are being looked at, and so pretty much all the options are on the table right now."

The AFRICOM headquarters and staff would be "small and as unobtrusive as possible," he said. Instead of focusing on purely military tasks, the command will emphasize

humanitarian missions, civil affairs and helping nations improve regional border and maritime security.

The Bush administration hopes to nominate a four-star military officer to lead the command by the end of the fiscal year, September 30. The U.S. Senate must approve the commander. "The only decision that's been made is that the commander of AFRICOM will be stationed ... on the continent," Henry said.

The command is expected to be fully operational by the end of September 2008, and Henry said he would like the new AFRICOM chief to be serving in Africa before then.

The deputy commander for AFRICOM would be a civilian employee of the U.S. State Department, a unique arrangement that stresses the nonmilitary focus of the command. Later, deputy commanders might be drawn from other U.S. federal agencies, he said.

In his meetings with African officials, Henry said he was able to address several misconceptions about the new command. He said he told the leaders that:

AFRICOM will not result in a large-scale deployment of U.S. forces on the continent. Currently, several thousand U.S. troops visit each year as part of regular exercises and training programs. This likely would continue with little change.

AFRICOM will not result in a dramatic increase in financial resources devoted to Africa from the Defense Department or other U.S. government agencies. Henry said U.S. investment in Africa has tripled under the Bush administration, and a main reason for creating AFRICOM is to

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Sudan Intimidating Aid Workers in Darfur, U.S. Official Says

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The Sudanese government appears to be intimidating humanitarian aid workers in Darfur deliberately, the State Department's second-highest official told reporters April 23. He warned that "time is running out" before Sudan will be subjected to further isolation due to its failure to allow international peacekeepers access to the region.

Deputy Secretary John Negroponte, whose April 16 visit to Sudan included meetings with President Omar al-Bashir, said Sudan's record in allowing humanitarian access to those in need is "not encouraging."

"The denial of visas, the harassment of aid workers and other measures have created the impression that the government of Sudan is engaged in a deliberate campaign of intimidation," he said.

Negroponte added that despite being encouraged by Sudan's agreement earlier in April with the United Nations to facilitate humanitarian operations, the Bush administration has not "seen any improvement" since the agreement was made, and it will continue to closely monitor the situation.

"We've heard some examples of them actually even creating additional complications for humanitarian workers since that time," he said, such as requiring aid workers to leave the country for a prescribed period if they move from one humanitarian agency to another.

The deputy secretary was speaking in Washington after visiting Sudan, Libya, Chad and Mauritania April 11-19 to discuss ways of ending the crisis in Darfur and relieving the suffering there.

He said he was not encouraged by his meeting with Bashir, and expressed skepticism over Sudan's willingness to follow through on its



A Sudanese boy waits for his turn to collect water supplies at Abu Shouk refugee camp in Sudan April 20. (AP Images)

verbal commitments.

"I think that the feeling I had after I left is, 'Well, whatever they say, we just better wait and see if they actually implement what it is they agreed to,'" Negroponte said.

The deputy secretary said the violence in Darfur increasingly is linked to instability in Sudan's neighboring states, including Chad, where many Darfur refugees have fled.

The violence on each side of Sudan's border has a tendency to feed on itself, he said "in part because there are refugee groups that cross from one side to the other," and also because, in the case of Chad, there is widespread belief that both countries "supported groups that are carrying out acts of violence in the other."

Sudan must disarm Jingaweit militias that are dependent on it for support, he said. Likewise, "all nonsignatory rebel groups must cease their attacks, put down their arms and come to the negotiating table."

Negroponte said the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement offers Sudan "great promise and opportunity," but it can be realized only with the "active cooperation" of the Sudanese government, including the deployment of a hybrid U.N.-African Union (AU) force to provide security, and allowing full access for humanitarian aid workers.

"[I]f these improvements do not take place, President Bush has made it clear that the alternative for Sudan is even further international isolation," he said. Assistant Secretary of State for

African Affairs Jendayi Frazer, who accompanied the deputy secretary on the trip, said U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had asked the Bush administration for additional time before measures, such as punitive sanctions, were taken.

"The belief is that Ban Ki-moon is hoping that due to the negotiation process that he's had with the government of Sudan, the AU and the U.N., that this heavy support package that was agreed to will actually be implemented," she said. But the next step, Frazer said, "is to get the government of Sudan to quickly also agree to the hybrid force itself."

For more information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).



U.S. Respects Religious Diversity, Muslim Publisher Says

By Louise Fenner
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Muslim women living in the United States are finding that religious and cultural differences are tolerated and respected widely, says Tayyibah Taylor, the editor of *Azizah* magazine, a glossy quarterly written by and for Muslim women in North America.

"I think America is the most religiously diverse country in the world," said Taylor, who was born in Trinidad of Barbadian parents. "You learn how to get along with people who are very different from you. Your differences don't really become an issue."

Speaking during a State Department-sponsored webchat April 23, Taylor said Muslim women are "well-integrated into the workplace" and are "in every professional field, engineering, medicine, business." Many have been profiled in the magazine, she noted.

"Usually there is no problem in terms of the way you dress or stopping to pray or any small issues like that," she said. More and more Americans "are getting used to seeing Muslim women in hijabs (traditional headscarfs)." Some Muslim women in America don't wear the hijab, and that is part of the freedom they have, Taylor said.

Compared with a Muslim majority country, it becomes "a definite conscious choice" to practice one's Muslim faith in America, she said, "so actually what happens is that your faith can become stronger, and your practice can become more conscious."

Taylor said she feels that "Muslims

in America are really in a very privileged position." America has a legacy of freedom of speech and movement and support for critical thinking -- things that "are not always present in all Muslim majority countries," she said. "And you have Islamic legacy of spiritual agency, and autonomy, intellectual autonomy, and the combination really goes to enhance your spiritual potential."



Tayyibah Taylor, the Editor and Publisher of *Azizah* magazine

During the webchat, 47 people from 15 countries asked questions about the magazine and life in America for Muslim women.

Taylor, who published the first issue of *Azizah* in 2000, told webchat participants that she wanted to create "a place where people can hear the voice of Muslim women, without filters." All articles are written by Muslim women, she said.

"It shatters misconceptions about Muslim women, both inside and outside the Muslim community," she said. Often when Muslim

women read *Azizah* for the first time "it is usually their first experience of seeing positive images and stories of Muslim women."

She pointed out that violations of women's rights often stem from cultural practices "and not Islam itself. So helping to kind of differentiate between culture and religion also is a way that we help to undo those misconceptions."

"By depicting women who are living a full life, without compromising Islam, we're really showing that Muslim women have autonomy, and have full human rights," Taylor said.

The magazine depicts "all kinds of Muslim women, not just one ethnic group or one school of thought," she said. Its name was chosen because "*Azizah*" is a common name throughout the Muslim world, and "we wanted to use that as a statement of diversity in Islam."

Americans sometimes ask Muslim women why they wear the hijab, Taylor said, but "usually it is a very friendly conversation out of curiosity, [they're] being inquisitive." This doesn't happen often, because everybody is usually busy with their own concerns, but when it does "you have an opportunity to explain who you are and what your beliefs are."

"When you can speak freely about who you are," she said, "I think it brings a sense of empowerment."

Taylor recently participated in a U.S. Department of State traveling speaker program in which she spoke of her experiences as a Muslim woman in America to audiences in Thailand, Malaysia and Pakistan.

◆

American Muslims Embrace Diversity, Decry Stereotypes, Panel Says

By Howard Cincotta
USINFO Special Correspondent

Washington – American Muslims are as diverse in outlook and views as any other group in the United States, but they continue to struggle under the burden of frequent stereotypes and misunderstanding, according to a distinguished panel of religious scholars and journalists who participated in a symposium at Georgetown University in Washington April 19.

Panel member Hadia Mubarak, the first woman to head the National Muslim Student Association, observed that her identity includes the Jordanian and Syrian heritage of her parents as well as her childhood in Panama City, Florida.

"My appreciation for the ideals [of this country] is reinforced by my religion. Islam has been central in shaping my identity as an American," she said.

The one-day symposium was co-sponsored by Georgetown's Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding and "On Faith," an interactive, electronic discussion of religious issues being hosted by Newsweek and Washington Post around the world.

Mubarak was joined by other panelists who together provided a diverse cross-section of American Muslims, including:

Ingrid Mattson, the first woman to head the Islamic Society of North America;

Imam Yahya Hendi, the Muslim chaplain for Georgetown University

and the U.S. National Naval Medical Center, and the imam of the Islamic Society in Frederick, Maryland (just outside Washington);

Salman Ahmad, a Pakistani-American medical doctor, and the lead guitarist for the popular South Asian rock band, Junoon; and

Sherman Jackson, an African American convert to Islam and a professor of both Arabic studies and law at the

University of Michigan.

The symposium moderator was John Esposito, a professor of religion and international studies at Georgetown, and the founding director of the university's Talal Center.

Several media representatives participated as well, including the founders of the "On Faith" initiative -- Newsweek editor Jon Meacham, former Washington Post writer Sally Quinn and Newsweek religion editor Lisa Miller.

DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY

Several panelists expressed concern about misperceptions of Muslims held by their fellow Americans.

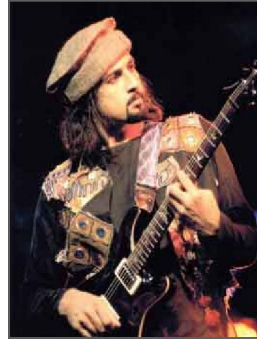
"They tend to view us as a stereotype, a collective, rather than as unique individuals," Mattson said, "especially those who choose to wear the hijab [head scarf]." Like any other woman, she added, "Each Muslim woman has a different issue ... we want to be able to

define ourselves."

The issue of identity in the larger American culture

"shouldn't be an issue any more than it is for African-American Christians," according to Jackson. "The meaning of the civil rights movement is that each of us can live the life we see fit for ourselves," he said.

"Muslims are Americans like everyone else," Jackson said.



Salman Ahmad

Rock musician Salman Ahmad, who was born in Pakistan but grew up in New York, recalled that his first band included both Catholic and Jewish members.

Islam has a long history of embracing people of different cultures and religions, according to Ahmad. "Pluralism has always been like oxygen for Islam, historically," he said.

In his remarks, Imam Yahya Hendi referred to his international travels to promote religious dialogue and understanding.

American Muslims "are using their knowledge of America and their experiences here to build a bridge between Islam and other faiths," Hendi said. "We care about both worlds because we know both worlds."

VIEWS OF THE NEWS MEDIA

A number of comments reflected frustration with how the news media has depicted American Muslims.

Muslims in the United States often feel a need to apologize or explain

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Hadia Mubarak

Muslim Women in U.S. Showcase Talents at Art Exhibit

By Lauren Monsen
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- A monthlong exhibit (April 2-30) featuring the work of 10 Muslim women artists in the Washington area is drawing capacity crowds of art enthusiasts from the local Muslim community and beyond.

All the artists -- Roda Alharithi, Nadia Janjua, Nadia Khalid, Bano Makhdoom, Samar Najia, Muna Sobhi Omari, Shela Qamer, Ann C. Saunders, Fatima Shaikh and Malia Steeple -- are members of Muslim Women in the Arts (MWIA), an organization that aims to educate the public about Muslim women and Islamic culture by showcasing the women's art.

This is MWIA's eighth annual show, a testament to the growing presence of Muslim women on the Washington art scene. The artwork spans many categories, including paintings (oil, acrylic, watercolor, mixed media), soft sculpture (innovative designs inspired by the illustrations in children's pop-up books), poetry, glasswork and richly ornamented textiles.

Arabic calligraphy is a recurring element in the paintings of Saunders, an artist whose large canvases are recognizable by for their dramatic flair. The bold, graphic quality of Saunders' work is achieved by superimposing calligraphy motifs against a backdrop of undulating plants and flowers. All these motifs have significance in the Muslim faith.

Saunders, who grew up in Chicago, originally hoped to pursue a career as a fashion illustrator, but she switched her focus to graphic design because it was "a broader ap-

plied-arts discipline ... and therefore a more challenging career path," she recalled.

In 1983, while still in graduate school, Saunders converted to Is-

lac. She cites Islam as the vital force that fuels her artistry. "My artistic endeavors have changed since I embraced Islam," she said. "I am more passionate, confident, and joyful about my work."



"Bismallah" (I begin in the name of God), by Nadia Janjua. Watercolor, 43 cm. by 61 cm., 2003. (Courtesy of Nadia Janjua)

lam. "I was drawn to Al Islam while attending a lecture series" at Syracuse University in New York state, she told USINFO. "The information presented about Al Islam resonated as truth."

She established herself as a successful artist, graphic designer and educator, and began making contact with other Muslim American artists, which inspired her to use art as a vehicle for sharing the tenets of her faith.

"This work became my passion after making the pilgrimage to Mecca" in 1999, she said.

Saunders has mastered a wide range of media, but her most recent efforts concentrate on oil and

acrylic painting. She cites Islam as the vital force that fuels her artistry. "My artistic endeavors have changed since I embraced Islam," she said. "I am more passionate, confident, and joyful about my work." Qamer, a painter whose abstract works display the vivid colors of the natural world, said she often incorporates texture into her canvases by adding pieces of parchment-like paper to the surface before she starts to paint. A native of Pakistan, Qamer showed artistic promise at an early age. With the encouragement of her parents, she honed her technique under the tutelage of the Karachi-based artist Ali Imam. She emigrated to the United States in 1978, and resumed her studies by taking courses offered by Washington's Corcoran School of Art.

"My focus is usually to maintain some sort of balance and rhythm in

Muslim Women in U.S. Showcase Talents at Art Exhibit . . .

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my paintings through the use of different colors, textures, materials and lines," she said. Qamer has experimented with different media over the years, such as charcoal drawing, oil painting, and watercolor. Now, "I am primarily working with a combination of hand-made paper and acrylic paint," she said. "I usually start with very subtle ideas of how I want the painting to be," while allowing the process to remain spontaneous. Along the way, the emerging "colors, space, lines, etc., sometimes dictate the end result," she said.

Janjua, another artist with roots in Pakistan, was born and raised in a

small rural town in western Maryland, where her parents settled after arriving in the United States during the mid-1970s.

Her works are not confined to one particular style, and she uses a variety of media. A few of her pieces have Arabic calligraphy in the foreground. There are also some surprises: one small image initially appears to be a detailed architectural drawing or etching, but on closer inspection, it reveals itself as a photo print on watercolor paper. Nearby, Janjua displays an oil painting of a shop interior filled with musical instruments, walking sticks, vases and miniature tapestries, evoking the bazaars of Cairo, Egypt, or Marrakech, Morocco. Janjua

confirmed that her travels have influenced her artwork. Travel, she said, "is an accelerated course in life" that brings the world into sharper focus, and "it has definitely shaped me into who I am."

Thanks to the efforts of MWIA, Muslim women in the United States have a forum for introducing their artwork to a general audience while exploring and preserving their cultural heritage.

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

American Muslims Embrace Diversity, Decry Stereotypes, Panel Says . . .

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the actions of Muslims everywhere, according to Jackson, which is not the case with other racial and religious groups.

As an example, he said that Muslim Americans "are very at home" with the concept of the separation of church and state – and shouldn't be linked to cultures and nations that don't value that separation.

Imam Hendi expressed frustration at the perception that American Muslims haven't spoken out strongly against terrorism when, in fact, they have issued repeated pronouncements, or fatwas, condemning acts of terrorism. In response, journalists Meacham and Quinn stressed that the news media is not

necessarily biased, but will always be drawn to stories involving conflict. "You cover what the story is," said Quinn, "and since 9/11 the story has been about Muslims not in this country."



Imam Yahya Hendi

On the other hand, according to Miller, journalism has made huge strides in understanding and covering religion generally in the past six years, Christianity as well as Islam.

After September 11, 2001, "we have learned a lot

about Islam," Miller said. "The Muslim community is as diverse as Catholics, as concerned about assimilation as Jews We're paying more attention to nuance and complexity."

In an online blog a day after the symposium, Ingrid Mattson said, "With freedom from clerical authority [for American Muslims] comes the responsibility to engage in the debate over the true meaning of Islam."

Despite the "oppressive weight of stereotyping," she wrote, "Hope lies in the goodness of ordinary Americans who try to overcome their prejudices and reach out to their Muslim neighbors. ... Hope lies in the extraordinary moral leadership shown by many American religious leaders to guide their congregations to the path of understanding and compassion."

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

Nations Must Use All Tools To Stop Nuclear Proliferation

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- A successful nonproliferation policy hinges on the steps that nations take individually and collectively with like-minded allies, a senior nonproliferation official says.

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons also depends on whether the international community "can successfully shape the calculations of present-day and future would-be proliferators in useful ways," Christopher Ford, the U.S. special representative for nuclear nonproliferation, said April 18 at a NATO-sponsored seminar in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Current proliferators have studied how the international community has coped with proliferation problems in the past, he said, "so we can be sure that tomorrow's would-be proliferators will learn lessons from how we approach and respond" to today's challenges.

New proliferation threats are opening the door to regional arms races with "greater risks of miscalculation, mistake or reckless overreaching" than those of the U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms race of the Cold War, he said.

A LAYERED, MULTILATERAL APPROACH TO NONPROLIFERATION

According to Ford, the United States has adopted a layered approach to preventing nuclear proliferation. Ford described it as "a mix

of formal and informal, multilateral, bilateral and individual measures" designed to reinforce and complement the existing nonproliferation regime.

U.S. multilateral efforts are central to approaching what Ford called the seminal challenges of weapons of mass destruction. He cited U.S. participation in the Six-Party Talks to resolve the nuclear crisis with North Korea and the U.S. role in



efforts to resolve Iran's nuclear pursuits – efforts that involve the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany, known informally as the P-5 plus one.

Additionally, the United States supported the International Atomic Energy Agency when Iran and North Korea sought to impede the work of IAEA inspectors and

undermine the effectiveness of the agency's nuclear safeguard system.

The United States also has worked multilaterally through the United Nations to develop U.N. Security Council Resolution 1540, which prohibits member states from supporting by any means non-state actors that attempt to acquire, use or transfer nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems.

The United States also is working with other nations on a new model for cooperation to raise the costs and risks to potential proliferators through a variety of interdiction efforts under the auspices of the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Ford also noted that the United States worked with the United

Kingdom to help Libya successfully reverse its active WMD-related weapons program in a way that did not require a change of regime.

Developing missile defenses also can reinforce the nonproliferation regime. "Working together with our allies, cooperation ... can not only defeat missile threats from proliferator states should attacks occur," Ford said, "but also solidify security relationships, reinforce alliance credibility and lessen incentives for both missile and nuclear weapons proliferation by making it harder to be sure that weapons, once acquired -- can be delivered."

OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

It is imperative that parties to the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) understand "the enormous stakes that ride upon the international community's success or failure in fighting proliferation," he said.

It is important that they demonstrate their fidelity to their NPT obligations, Ford said, and that the treaty's rules and obligations are used effectively to constrain non-compliant treaty behavior.

Nations are beginning a new cycle that will review the health of NPT formally in 2010. Ford said it is essential that the review – starting with a preparatory committee meeting in Vienna at the end of April – "develop and implement vigorous and sustained efforts to detect violations of the treaty's nonproliferation obligations, return violators to compliance and deter other future would-be violators from following such a path." ♦

U.S. Seeks To Intensify Global Fight Against Child Exploitation

By Jane Morse
USINFO Staff Writer

Vienna, Austria – The United States is urging U.N. member states to criminalize all aspects of child sexual exploitation -- sexually explicit images of children, child-sex tourism and the victimization of children through prostitution -- so that perpetrators of these crimes are held accountable for their actions.

"While there are various existing international instruments that address these issues in one form or another, numerous countries have not fully enacted legislation to address the criminal offenses as set out in existing instruments," Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Verville told USINFO. Verville, who is leading the U.S. delegation to the 16th session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, being held in Vienna, Austria, April 23 – 27, is the State Department's expert on international crime for its Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

The U.S.-drafted resolution "urges member states to consider implementing the existing international legal instruments by criminalizing all aspects of child sexual exploitation," Verville said, adding that "the United States will work with other countries to help to maintain the UNODC's [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime] focus on its core mandates starting with promoting the U.N. organized crime and corruption conventions as well providing anti-crime technical assistance."

Verville said that international cooperation is critical to preventing and effectively prosecuting serious crimes with a transnational dimension.

"As criminal networks diversify their methods and the scope of their illicit activities, countries must be more vigilant in working together to hinder criminals' advantages in crossing borders," Verville said.

MORE SPECIFIC ACTION NECESSARY TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING



In his remarks for the April 23 opening session for the crime commission, Antonio Maria Costa, executive director for UNODC, called for more action and less talk in fighting human trafficking.

"It is now time to move from statements of intent and legislative mandates into realizations of goals and delivery of results," he said.

"Despite the emotions this issue [human trafficking] stirs up, and despite the good crop of protocol ratifications [111]," Costa said, "this horrible business is spreading, facilitated by ever-growing demand, opening of markets and easiness of communications."

At a press conference the same day, Costa said the benefits of globalization unfortunately have been exploited by criminal elements. Multilateral actions by all governments, nongovernmental organizations and civil societies must be called into the fight against transnational crime, he said.

"The preconditions for multilateral actions are there," he told journalists. "Now the challenge for us all -- and, of course, for governments to begin with -- is to turn these instruments into reality, implementing them in a way which would make a difference, especially for those who are hurting -- they are usually the poorest and weakest in our society."

MORE KNOWLEDGE NEEDED TO FIGHT TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

In his formal remarks, Costa emphasized that "despite the fact that transnational crime is one of the greatest threats to security, we operate in an information fog.

"We do not know the scope of the threats we face, and we cannot gauge global crime trends. At times, we cannot even define the enemy we face or assess its strength," he said.

"Anecdotal evidence is abundant -- yet confusing -- about human trafficking rings broken up, traffickers prosecuted, victims rescued, corrupt public and private officials indicted, boat-loads of smuggled migrants intercepted, and shipments of illicit firearms seized. All this needs to be systematized and ren-

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dered coherent," Costa said.

"Multilateral crime control is at its infancy, but maturing," Costa said.

GLOBAL INITIATIVE SEEKS TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In March, UNODC launched the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). The United Arab Emirates contributed \$15 million to the initiative.

Costa called UN.GIFT "a far-reaching effort to develop, upon the foundation provided by international legal instruments, an unprecedented operational effort to fight human trafficking – enhancing awareness, mobilizing political will, canvassing resources to assist member states and to help those most vulnerable to, and affected by, this crime."

The United States estimates that between 600,000 and 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year. The United Nations and others estimate the total market value of human trafficking at \$32 billion annually.

In fiscal year 2006, the U.S. government obligated approximately \$74 million to 154 international anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) projects in 70 countries and \$28.5 million to 70 domestic anti-TIP projects. These projects are working to ensure human trafficking is prevented, the survivors are protected and the traffickers are put in prison. They are funded through the coordinated efforts and program funds of the departments of State, Justice, Labor, Health and Human Services, and USAID.

A fact sheet (<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/fs/07/83371.htm>) on U.S. anti-

trafficking funding for fiscal 2006 is available on the State Department Web site.

The full text (http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final_documents_2/index.htm) of the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and related documents on trafficking in persons are available on a U.N. Web site.

The full text (http://www.unodc.org/unodc/speech_2007_04_23.html) of Costa's formal remarks is available on the UNODC Web site.

For more information on U.S. policies, see Human Smuggling and Trafficking (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/human_trafficking.html).

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coordinate current U.S. government resources.

AFRICOM is still in the early planning stages.

AFRICOM is not being created in response to a specific threat or strategic concern. AFRICOM is "not being stood up in response to Chinese presence on the continent. It [is] not being stood up solely for the effort of enhanced counterterrorism. And it [is] not being stood up

in order to secure resources" such as oil, Henry said.

"While some of these may be part of the formula, the reason that AFRICOM is being stood up is, Africa ... is emerging on the world scene as a strategic 'player,' and we need to deal with it as a continent," he said.

AFRICOM will not press for U.S. solutions to African problems. AFRICOM's goal is "to work with the nations and the multinational organizations there to support African

solutions for the continent, both in the area of security and stability."

A transcript (<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=3942>) of Henry's briefing is available on the Defense Department Web site.

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Democracy and Development Inextricably Linked, Rice Says

By Jane Morse
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Well-governed democracies must be able "to deliver for their people" or they will not be able to sustain momentum for democratic development, says Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

At an April 16 meeting at the State Department with members of the Advisory Committee on Democracy Promotion, she emphasized the link between democracy and economic development.

"If you're really only talking about job growth, trade, investment, you're not making the connection to the next level of development," she said. That "micro level of development," Rice explained, "is making sure that there's an educated population, making sure that there's a healthy population, making certain that the benefits of democracy are translating downward into the population so that when the next term for accountability comes, which is the next election, those young democracies are able to point to something that they have delivered."

Rice convened the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on Democracy Promotion on November 6, 2006, with the goal of gleaning insights and advice from a team of experts inside and outside the State Department to promote democracy and formulate foreign policy and foreign assistance. She praised the committee for its work and expressed the hope of adopting some of the ideas that have been generated.

In addition to Rice, U.S. government officials serving on the committee include Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance Randall L. Tobias,

Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula J. Dobriansky (the committee's executive director) and Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Barry F. Lowenkron.

The committee also includes former U.S. government officials and representatives of corporations, nongovernmental organizations, public-policy organizations and academic institutions.

Anne-Marie Slaughter, dean of Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, chairs the committee.

New members of the committee include Joshua Muravchik, currently a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, and Brian Atwood, formerly the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

He added that he has come to believe that "poverty is a cancer that affects democracy as well as development, and that it breaks down social cohesion. And indeed, I would even go so far as to say that when that social cohesion is broken down, it contributes to violence, and it therefore is very, very dangerous."

Atwood urged the U.S. government to recognize that poverty is a real threat to national security and should be addressed more aggressively.

Carl Gershman, of the National Endowment for Democracy, blamed corruption as a "fundamental problem," especially among the newer democracies. Corruption, he said, "tends to undermine the credibility of democracy today."

Rice concluded the meeting with

expressions of hope that the upcoming round of the World Trade Organization negotiations will be successful. "Nothing could be better for poverty reduction than a successful Doha round," she said.

"It's extremely important to recognize that our most important poverty reduction tool is to open up markets for the good of those countries that are trying to rise out of poverty," she said. "[A]ll of the foreign assistance that we give is going to be augmented and amplified many times over by strong free trading polices as well."

Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funds, Rice said, have a very strong emphasis on fighting corruption and promoting good governance. The MCC is a U.S. government corporation that was established in January 2004 to reduce global poverty through the promotion of sustainable economic growth. But before a country can become eligible to receive this assistance, MCC must review the country's performance on 16 independent and transparent policy indicators.

More than 22 million people in 11 partner countries are benefiting from MCC-funded projects. But some unexpected problems have now become apparent, Rice said, citing "the degree to which old-fashioned issues like roads are absolutely critical to economic development."

One "screaming" example, Rice said, is Afghanistan. There, she explained, roads are needed desperately to give farmers access to markets in order to sell legitimate products -- such as pomegranates, which spoil quickly -- instead of poppy, which does not spoil and is used in narcotics production. ♦

Bush Administration Seeks Change in Emergency Food Aid Delivery

By Kathryn McConnell
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration's proposal to use up to 25 percent of emergency food aid funds for purchases of food located near crisis sites would increase U.S. capacity to get food quickly to where it is needed, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns says.

"When rapid response is essential, we ask simply for the flexibility to save lives," Johanns told reporters after addressing the International Food Aid Conference April 18 in Kansas City.

The annual conference, which drew representatives from 28 countries, is the largest gathering devoted to food aid in the United States.

Johanns said he is "guardedly optimistic" Congress will agree to the local or regional purchase and distribution proposal. He said local purchases would avoid the often time-consuming process of loading and shipping U.S.-grown commodities to sites in need of immediate food assistance.

He said, however, that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) does not anticipate frequent use of the local purchase option and that U.S.-grown food would continue to be the first choice in meeting global needs.

In the last two decades, the number of food aid emergency situations around the world has doubled to an average of 30 a year, Johanns said.

"The frequency of these emergen-

cies places more stress on the food aid distribution system and makes it even more important for us to respond quickly and with flexibility when there is a crisis," he said.

Johanns said the United States was able to respond quickly to emergency food needs in Lebanon in 2006 and to countries affected by

past have opposed similar proposals because of potential lost sales would not oppose the current proposal.

"When the emergency is so dire, so pressing, so critical, if we can get food to these people faster I believe the American farmer will support that," he said.



A U.S. soldier hands out emergency food to a boy in Pakistan after the devastating earthquake of 2005. Photo by Jim Stipe

Some representatives of private voluntary organizations involved in distributing U.S. food aid say local purchases should not be limited to a percentage of emergency aid funding or limited to emergency situations only.

The proposal is one of several changes the administration is proposing to the new multi-year Farm Bill now being considered by Congress. The current Farm Bill is set to expire at the end of 2007.

It also is one of several possible changes to U.S. food aid policy and procedures discussed at the conference, which was co-sponsored by USDA and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USDA and USAID each administer parts of the U.S. food aid program.

the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami because "we had supplies close by or already in the pipeline that could be rerouted."

In future emergencies, however, "the lead times and other logistical requirements of our current system could easily [create] a situation where we would be unable to deliver our aid as quickly as we would hope," he said.

Johanns said he expected U.S. commodity producers who in the

USDA also is asking Congress for authority to accept in-kind food aid donations, which is actual food purchased or donated and then delivered to targeted populations.

USDA and USAID together are undertaking a review of the quality of food aid they deliver to countries in need to ensure it meets the "unique dietary needs" of recipient populations, Mark Keenum, undersecretary

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What is Earth Day?

By Timothy Brown
USINFO Staff Writer

Earth Day, April 22, is the annual U.S. celebration of the environment and a time for Americans to assess the work still needed to protect the natural gifts of our planet. Earth Day has no central organizing force behind it, though several nongovernmental organizations work to keep track of the thousands of local events in schools and parks that mark the day. It affirms that environmental awareness is part of the country's consciousness and that the idea of protecting the environment -- once the province of a few conservationists -- has moved from the extreme to the mainstream of American thought.

This was not always the case. In the 19th century, Americans, blessed with a vast land rich in natural resources, lived with the notion that fresh fields were always just over the horizon. When one exhausted the soil or forests or coal of a given place, it was possible to move on to another. As industry boomed in the early 20th century people accepted without question skies blackened from smokestack emissions and rivers fouled with industrial waste. As early as the mid-1930s -- and again in the 1950s -- Ohio's Cuyahoga River, running through America's industrial heartland, was set ablaze by burning chemical waste from factories built upon its banks. There was no public outcry. Few people even noticed.

During the 1960s public attitudes began to change. In 1962 a marine

biologist named Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*. The title referred to a future without birds and described in plain language devastating long-term effects of highly toxic pesticides and other chemical agents then commonly used in American agriculture, industry and daily life. The book was a surprise best-seller. (See "Rachel Carson: Pen Against Poison (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/carson/>).")



In 1968 Apollo astronauts, returning from their pioneering orbital flight around the moon, photographed the planet Earth as a whole for the first time. This image of the Earth -- small, fragile, beautiful, and unique -- quickly was imprinted on the psyches of millions. In 1969 industrial runoff in the Cuyahoga River again caught fire. This time the public reaction was immediate and intense. Cleveland, where the fire occurred, became a national laughing-stock, and the satirical song "Burn On, Big River, Burn On" was heard on radios across the country. In that same year the U.S.

Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), establishing a "national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment."

Concurrent with this slow building of environmental awareness was the increasingly vocal opposition to U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam. Public demonstrations against the war -- particularly on college campuses -- gave impetus to the idea that organized challenges to the "status quo" could in fact change public policy and behavior.

ORIGIN OF EARTH DAY

Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. senator from Wisconsin and a longtime conservationist, was one who understood that the methods developed for use in the anti-war protest could succeed in other areas as well. "At the time," Nelson later wrote, "there was a great deal of turmoil on the college campuses over the Vietnam War. Protests, called anti-war teach-ins, were being widely held on campuses across the nation ... It suddenly occurred to me, why not have a nationwide teach-in on the environment? That was the origin of Earth Day."

Nelson returned to Washington and began promoting Earth Day to state governors, mayors of big cities, editors of college newspapers and, importantly, to Scholastic Magazine, which is circulated in U.S. elementary and secondary schools. In September 1969, Nelson formally announced that there would be a "national environmental teach-in"

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sometime in spring 1970. "The wire services carried the story nationwide," recalled Nelson. "The response was dramatic Telegrams, letters, and telephone inquiries poured in from all over the nation. Using my Senate staff, I ran Earth Day activities out of my office. By December, the movement had expanded so rapidly that it became necessary to open an office in Washington to serve as a national clearinghouse for Earth Day inquiries and activities

"Earth Day achieved what I had hoped for. The objective was to get a nationwide demonstration of concern for the environment so large that it would shake the political arena. It was a gamble, but it worked. An estimated 20 million people participated in peaceful demonstrations all across the country. Ten thousand grade schools and high schools, two thousand colleges, and one thousand communities were involved That was the remarkable thing that became Earth Day."

Groundbreaking federal legislation followed the success of the first Earth Day. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was established in 1970, followed by the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act of 1972, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Among the many far-reaching provisions of these bills was the requirement that automobiles use unleaded gasoline, achieve a minimum number of miles-per-gallon of gasoline and be equipped with catalytic converters to reduce the amount of toxic fumes released by automobile exhaust.

Then, in the wake of this legislative success, Earth Day seemed to disappear. Though annual celebrations continued, they failed to match the size and enthusiasm of the first year. Earth Day seemed to have become a relic of the protest days of the early 1970s.



Yet the spirit of Earth Day continued. Environmental organizations grew in size and power. Groups such as Greenpeace, formed in Canada in 1971, adopted principles of nonviolent civil disobedience to raise public consciousness about dwindling whale populations and the risks of nuclear power. The Nature Conservancy, formed in 1951, rededicated itself in the early 1970s to the "preservation of natural diversity" and began to buy undeveloped land for use as nature preserves. Venerable institutions such as the Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society vigorously brought suits against logging companies to slow the destruction of old-growth forests. Funded by public contributions and staffed with lawyers and educators as well as scientists and naturalists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) became aggressive watchdogs for the

environment.

At home, Americans, often prompted by their children, began to separate their household trash for recycling. By the late 1980s recycling programs were established in many communities. By the mid-1990s these municipal recycling programs were paying for themselves, the amount of trash dumped into landfills was in noticeable decline, and more than 20 percent of America's municipal trash was being converted into useful products. Corporations, ever conscious of the desires of the consumer -- and the bottom line of profits -- began to promote themselves as being environmentally friendly. Many firms adopted sensible business practices that increased efficiency and reduced the amounts of industrial waste.

RESURGENCE IN 1990S

Earth Day came back in a big way in 1990. Led by Dennis Hayes, a primary organizer of the first Earth Day, Earth Day 1990 was international in scope. More than 200 million people around the world -- 10 times the number in 1970 -- participated in events that recognized that the environment had finally become a universal public concern. The global momentum continued in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where an unprecedented number of governments and NGOs agreed on a far-ranging program to promote sustainable development.

The 25th anniversary of the first Earth Day in 1995 was a time to assess environmental progress. In

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Western countries the news seemed good -- air and water were cleaner, forests were expanding and many other environmental indicators were up as well. The sometimes volatile combination of legislation, lawsuits brought by NGOs, public education and more efficient business practices had made a noticeable and positive effect on the condition of the environment.

But there were conflicting views on just how good this news was. Environmental reporter Gregg Easterbrook wrote in *The New Yorker* magazine that environmental laws "along with a vast array of private efforts spurred by environmental consciousness ... have been a stunning success Environmental

regulations, far from being burdensome and expensive, have proved to be strikingly effective, have cost less than anticipated, and have made the economies of the countries that have put them into effect stronger, not weaker."

Environment magazine, a leading NGO journal, offered a gloomier assessment: "Earth Day ... has neither spawned a permanently active citizenry nor transformed the general malaise that undermines faith in democratic accountability. Although environmentalism has made great strides since 1970, institutionally as well as in public consciousness, environmental security... today remains even more elusive than 25 years ago."

Earth Day celebrates its 37th anni-

versary in 2007. What began in 1970 as a protest movement has evolved into a global celebration of the environment and commitment to its protection. The history of Earth Day mirrors the growth of environmental awareness over the last three decades, and the legacy of Earth Day is the certain knowledge that the environment is a universal concern.

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of USDA's Farm and Foreign Agriculture Service, told the forum.

One topic that evoked much discussion at the conference was the selling U.S.-produced food aid by recipient countries, with proceeds going toward development projects.

The practice is inefficient, some conference speakers said, because of the delay involved in turning the aid into cash.

Several private groups urged passage of bipartisan congressional proposals to expand the McGovern-Dole school feeding program that supports education, child development and food security in low-income, food-deficit countries com-

mitted to universal education.

The administration is proposing expanding funding for the program from five to 11 countries in the fiscal year beginning October 1 (FY08).

During his briefing with reporters, Johanns denied that the growing demand for crops for biofuel production would compete with future food needs of the world's growing population.

Improvements in technology, including improved seed varieties that can make current unproductive land farmable, combined with efforts to share knowledge of those technologies with developing countries and trade can help meet future food needs, he said.

A transcript of Johanns' remarks (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7_0_A/7_0_10B?contentid=2007/04/0104.xml) is available on the U.S. Department of Agriculture Web site.

For more information on U.S. policy, see Global Development and Foreign Aid (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/global_development.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>) ♦

Small Environmental Groups Can Make a Big Difference

By Louise Fenner
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Environmental groups in the United States come in many sizes, from the 1.3 million-member Sierra Club to small neighborhood groups that clean trash from their local streams, monitor water quality and plant trees to prevent erosion. Even the smallest grassroots groups can have a big impact.

Living Lands and Waters (LL&W) consists of fewer than a dozen people who live on a barge on the Mississippi River and direct river cleanup projects in their region. Members went to Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina to clear debris, and once a year the group travels to Washington to organize a volunteer cleanup of the Potomac and Anacostia rivers.

Throughout the United States, citizens are joining “stream teams” -- groups of volunteers that collect water samples and other data to monitor the health of their local watersheds (drainage areas). These nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) provide information to government agencies and lawmakers and press for effective laws against polluters. They focus on local problems but are frequently part of national coalitions.

At the neighborhood level, people who want to protect the small streams or creeks flowing through their back yards are forming tiny “subwatershed” groups, increasingly important tools for protecting the rivers that are fed by these streams, said Brian Van Wye of the Earth Conservation Corps (ECC) in

Washington.

“These are citizens in their communities who are the eyes and ears and voice of their creek,” he told USINFO. “They get involved in volunteer cleanup activities, restoration activities, and they notice if something’s going on that shouldn’t be going on and try to urge government officials to do the right thing, to hold businesses and polluters

70,000 tons of trash, sediment and pollutants from storm-water runoff every year.

For the past month, ECC and several other local groups have been working with LL&W on its annual monthlong cleanup of the Potomac and Anacostia. They put out a call to federal agencies, NGOs and the general public for volunteers to don gloves and spend a few hours pick-

ing up tires, plastic bottles, Styrofoam cups, discarded toys and tons of other debris resulting from storm-water runoff.

Capital River Relief, as the project is called, was started after LL&W founder Chad Pregracke flew to Washington in 2002 to receive a Jefferson Award for Public Service in recognition of his work to clean up the Mississippi River. He is based on a barge docked in East Moline, Illinois.

“I just could not believe all the garbage I saw on

the shore of the Potomac,” Pregracke told USINFO. “There was two feet [.61 meters] of garbage on the shore in some places.”

As he has done in Illinois, Pregracke set up coalitions of local groups and agencies and obtained corporate sponsorship. In the past four years, “we’ve had a couple thousand people come out and volunteer with us” in Washington, he said. In 2006, Capital River Relief collected more than 2,600 bags of debris from the Potomac and Anacostia.

Since Living Lands and Waters was launched about 10 years ago,

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Secretary Kempthorne joins Living Lands and Waters and other volunteers in the Capital River Relief cleanup. (Janine Sides/State Dept.)

accountable -- all the good things citizens can do by being involved.”

Van Wye said the focus within the Washington environmental community is on fostering the growth of these subwatershed groups.

“I see citizen involvement as essential to getting our rivers cleaned up,” he said.

ECC, the group for which Van Wye works, provides environmental training opportunities for disadvantaged young people in the Washington metropolitan area. It works on restoring the Anacostia, which Van Wye says receives more than

U.S. Government Scientists Urge Preparation for Climate Change

By Lea Terhune
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Leading U.S. government scientists tell Congress that, given the evidence, now is the time to provide adequate resources to prepare for the potential impact of changes in the earth's climate.

It is important to have strategies in place because "climate change could in the long term exceed the capacity of particular natural and managed systems to adapt," Roger Pulwarty, a scientist with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), told the House Committee on Science and Technology April 17.

Pulwarty, the lead author of one of the chapters of the United Nations-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II report, said such strategies might require investments in infrastructure due to changes in land use, watershed, ecosystems and livelihoods brought about by climate change. The insurance sector also likely would be involved.

Pulwarty is one of many scientists both from within the U.S. government and with academic institutions who have been appearing before Congress in recent weeks to discuss the IPCC's April 6 report, Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. The report concluded that there is a high probability human activities have increased greenhouse gas emissions and contributed to global warming. "Adaptation strategies and implementation initiatives in infrastructure, insurance, financial markets and collaborative resource management may be needed," Pulwarty told the House committee. "Many adaptation strategies can be implemented at low cost," he said, and developing research and manage-

ment partnerships that provide reliable information to decisionmakers could enhance risk management, he said.

"Climate change is becoming a very key issue in the 110th Congress," Texas Congressman Ralph Hall said at the hearing. "Climate change is one of our nation's biggest challenges," he said, adding that "clean, affordable and reliable energy technologies" are long-term goals.

The same day, the chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Senator Barbara Boxer, invited scientists to brief senators on the chief climate-change issues studied by the IPCC. In coming months, legislators in both houses of Congress will consider measures to mitigate the effects of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States.

Innovative energy technologies currently are being explored under the U.S. Climate Change Technology Program, initiated by the Bush administration, led by the Department of Energy, and involving more than a dozen U.S. agencies. Among technologies under investigation are low-emission power sources based on fossil fuels; hydrogen; biofuels; and renewable sources such as solar, wind and geothermal energy. Nuclear energy, fusion energy and carbon sequestration technologies also are being studied as ways to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

President Bush, who called for climate change research and development early in his administration, announced in his 2006 State of the Union Address his commitment to reduce CO2 emissions by 20 percent in the next 10 years as compared to projected levels if no action is taken to abate emissions. At the hearing, scientists raised

many areas of potential concern for climate change, including migrations of human and animal populations, agriculture, water and public health issues.

Cynthia Rosenzweig, a scientist at NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and coordinating lead author for another chapter of the IPCC report, explained the certainty that "anthropogenic (related to human activity) warming has had a discernible influence on many physical and biological systems." The report's conclusions were drawn from a wide range of evidence derived from observation of ecosystems and climate patterns worldwide, she said.

The impact of extreme weather events and economic implications were discussed by Stanford University's Christopher Field, the lead author of a chapter on North America in the IPCC report. He told the Senate committee that areas to watch are coastlines, which typically have large populations and economic development, and cities, where "profound urban heat islands make cities warmer than the surrounding area."

The Bush administration, with congressional approval, committed \$35 billion for climate-related research, assistance and incentive programs. The amount -- nearly \$3 billion annually since 2003 for climate-change technology research and deployment -- exceeds that dedicated by any other nation for that purpose.

"The United States is shifting to a 'green culture.' Americans are realizing that environmental protection is not just EPA's responsibility. It's everyone's responsibility," he said.

◆

Saving the Earth Begins Early for U.S. Teens

By Andrew R. Hall
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington - For Megan Waggoner, global warming is not a scientific abstraction. The secondary school student is worried the phenomenon is heating up her home state of Alaska, a place she calls "ground zero for global warming."

Waggoner, a native of Palmer, Alaska, was one of 50 young people from across the United States recognized for their environmental activism at the President's Environmental Youth Awards (PEYA) ceremony in Washington April 20. The annual awards program is sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and highlights creative individual and group efforts promoting environmental awareness and community involvement in recycling, energy efficiency, climate change and water conservation.

"I've noticed the impacts of global climate change," Waggoner said. "I have to take action myself and with my peers."

The United States is shifting to a "green culture," according to EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson. Environmental stewardship has expanded beyond the EPA, and now all Americans seek to improve the environment, he added.

"Even the youngest among us can take real action to improve our world," Johnson said.

Waggoner, 16, said she was afraid global warming is melting Alaska's icy landscape and is affecting her neighbors' lives, Alaska's infrastructure and the state's economy.

With Waggoner's help, Alaska

Youth for Environmental Action collected 5,000 teen signatures for a global warming petition that the group presented to U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska.

Rachel Ridge of Holladay, Utah, and her team, called Get Really Energy

the use of machine-made snow on ski resorts and raises awareness of water conservation, preservation and restoration.

Group member Amol Lingnurkar, 15, said Arizona's desert-like climate was one of the reasons the



Kelsea Gaul participates in an environmental cleanup activity in Burlington, Iowa. (AP Images)

Efficient Now (GREEN), took the issue of smog control to Salt Lake City by launching a campaign to call on motorists to turn off their automobiles instead of idling to reduce emissions. The campaign included singing a "Stop Idling" song and distributing "Stop Turn Off and Save" stickers, the GREEN team's logo.

"We wanted to help our environment and make people aware," Ridge, 13, said.

A group of teens from Chandler, Arizona, formed the Arizona Water Activists Karing for the Environment (AWAKE). The group helps fight

group focused on water conservation issues.

"Water is one of the basic necessities and this is important for us to focus on," Lingnurkar said.

Taylor McGillis, 12, whose recycling program in his hometown of Toluca, Illinois, collected more than 7,260 kilograms of discarded aluminum, said waste in landfills can pose a danger to wildlife. McGillis said people should care about the environment "because if we don't do it now, it'll be worse in the future."

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U.S. HIV/AIDS Program Blending Food Aid, Anti-retroviral Therapy

By Kathryn McConnell
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is combining nutritional assistance with anti-retroviral drug therapy to boost the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs in developing countries, says Michele Maloney-Kitts, program director of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

A "complex interface exists between the prevalence of HIV infection and chronic food insecurity," Maloney-Kitts said April 17 at the International Food Aid Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Because AIDS is "a wasting disease," people with it have "increasing energy needs," she said.

Established in 2004, PEPFAR is a five-year, \$15 billion commitment with a particular focus on the 15 countries that are among the world's most severely affected by HIV/AIDS. Also working in 100 other countries, PEPFAR is the largest public health initiative dedicated to a single disease undertaken by any nation.

PEPFAR partners with the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which administer U.S. food aid programs, to provide food to groups in the targeted countries that are vulnerable to malnutrition, including children born to women infected with HIV, pregnant women, lactating mothers and children orphaned by AIDS, she said.

Children who are HIV-positive at birth are more likely to need enhanced nutrition because they often

begin life underweight. Without proper nutrition, these children are more likely to have stunted growth and be susceptible to other infections, according to PEPFAR officials.

The agency also partners with the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP), which receives nearly half its resources from the United States, host country governments, foundations and nongovernmental organizations to help sick and vulnerable people receive life-saving nutrients.

One such partnership is with the Academic Model for the Prevention and Treatment of HIV (AMPATH), an initiative that emphasizes food and economic security in addition to anti-retroviral drugs for people affected by HIV in Kenya, said Maloney-Kitts.

With AMPATH, PEPFAR is working with the WFP and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to provide food therapy based in health care centers for six months and counseling and cooking classes to HIV patients and their families. Once patients regain their strength, they are provided access to job training. AMPATH currently is treating 20,000 patients, Maloney-Kitts said.

NUTRITION "FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE" AGAINST AIDS

In Ethiopia, PEPFAR is providing logistical support to help get food, vitamin supplements and nutritional counseling to people affected by HIV/AIDS, she said.

"Nutrition is the first line of defense" against HIV/AIDS, John Powell, WFP deputy executive director, said at the conference.

He said undernourished people are more prone to contracting communicable disease because chronic hunger leads to a sense of hopelessness, which can lead to risky behavior.

Powell also said that drug treatments are less effective when taken on an empty stomach.

In addition, he said, sick people who do not have enough to eat might be less likely to take their medication because the drugs, when taken on an empty stomach, can make the patient feel sicker.

Powell urged donors to devote more AIDS funding to agricultural development programs.

He said spending on improved seeds, fertilizers and irrigation and clean water systems in areas heavily affected by HIV can help patients grow their own nutritious food and eventually rebuild their strength.

As of PEPFAR's most recent report in September 2006, a total of 822,000 people were receiving anti-retroviral drug treatment it supported, up from an estimated 50,000 that received the treatment when PEPFAR was first funded. Approximately 1 million people are expected to receive PEPFAR-supported treatment by late 2007, Maloney-Kitts said.

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

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Saving the Earth Begins Early for U.S. Teens . . .

(Continued from page 20)

In Oklahoma, Christina Navarro and Teresa Ezersky from Guthrie and Alex Bryan and Jessica Mackiewicz from Edmond worked with their Girl Scout troop to develop an educational program on bats and their role as pollinators.

Jami Harper of Grand Island, Nebraska, modeled the "H2Owood Squares" game teaching safe-water practices on a popular television game show Hollywood Squares.

Placida, Florida, native Alexander "Zander" Srodes started "Turtle Talks," an educational program on sea turtles, and fifth-grade students from Crellin Elementary School in Oakland, Maryland, participated in developing the Crellin Environmental Education Lab, an outdoor classroom helping with the restoration of a nearby stream.

Gabriela McCall-Delgado of Humacao, Puerto Rico, created an aware-

ness campaign on the birds of eastern Puerto Rico to teach local residents about the importance of preserving their habitat.

In Durham, Connecticut, an environmental organization from Coginchaug High School worked with a Boy Scout troop to form the ECO Club, an organization that started a recycling program at a local fair.

"Youth should have a strong leadership role in saving our environment because really it's going to affect us and so we shouldn't wait for the future," said Smitha Ramakrishna, 15, a member of AWAKE. "We should just start now."

The full text (<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/dmpress.nsf/8822edaadaba0243852572a000656841/07e934e35ca7c066852572c3005ee0c4!OpenDocument>) of a press release announcing the winners and their projects is available on the EPA Web site. ♦

Small Environmental Groups Can Make a Big Difference . . .

(Continued from page 18)

40,000 volunteers have helped collect 4 million tons of discarded appliances, tires and trash, Pregracke said.

On April 18, one of the volunteers was U.S. Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, who led a group of Interior Department employees participating in a volunteer program called Take Pride in America. Three boatloads of volunteers were taken to Oxon Cove on the Potomac River. As they approached the shore, they could see perhaps 2,000 plastic and glass bottles carpeting the ground and floating in the water.

"It was incredible," said Kempthorne.

"We need to understand that what we do in our neighborhoods affects everything else," he said, noting that litter thrown on the street kilometers away from a river ultimately can end up in the ocean. A project such as Capital River Relief "shows the tremendous power of volunteerism," Kempthorne said. "This is trash that won't end up in habitats down river."

Kristen Ellis with LL&W said that after volunteering for the cleanup "a lot of people say 'I'm never littering again.' I've heard that several times. People are dumb-founded when they see the trash."

Chris Fenderson, who also traveled from Illinois for the cleanup, said one of the group's main goals "is to get people out and show them

the garbage and show them they can do something about it. We want to leave a lasting impression that you can do something."

See also "Tending the Rivers (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0605/ijge/allan.htm>)" with a related article on Chad Pregracke and Living Lands and Waters in the the eJournal Protecting the Environment (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0605/ijge/ijge0605.htm>).

For more information, see Earth Day (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/environment/earth_day.html).

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