



“We have common duties: to protect our peoples, to confront disease and hunger and poverty in troubled regions of the world...to promote development and progress...”



PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH
Press Conference, November 4, 2004

Karzai Wins Afghan Election

KABUL, Afghanistan—An estimated 80 percent of the 10.5 million registered Afghan voters traveled by foot, donkey, and vehicle Oct. 9 to select a president in the country’s first free election in its 5,000 year history—carried out with more than \$50 million in U.S. assistance.

Despite concerns about Taliban attacks, warlords, and intimidation, the huge turnout

▼ SEE **KARZAI WINS ON PAGE 9**

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Sudan Deaths Reach 70,000 Since March

The U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) announced October 15 that 70,000 people have died from disease and violence since March in the Darfur region of western Sudan, as U.S. and other aid teams struggled to feed and protect about 2 million Sudanese fleeing violence.

The U.S. government is the largest donor to the crisis in Darfur. To date, U.S. contributions total \$302 million for humanitarian projects and relief supplies. In addition, a USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team has been in Sudan since April overseeing relief efforts.

Overall, however, donor support for Darfur is inadequate, USAID officials say.

Dr. David Nabarro, head of crisis operations for WHO, said, “We still don’t have a significant enough popular perception around the world of the enormity of the suffering—disease and

suffering is being experienced on a quite extraordinary and inhuman scale.”

According to Roger Winter, Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, violence against ethnic African Darfur people has waned somewhat in part due to the presence of international aid workers in September. Lately, however, violence had been increasing.

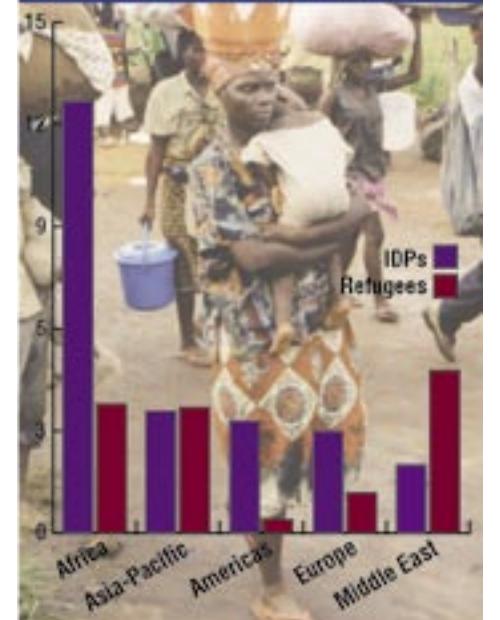
“Violence has tapered off after we got more international eyes out there, but it hasn’t ended,” Winter said.

In April, USAID warned that without international assistance 80,000–300,000 persons could die, due to violence, disease, and hunger by the end of the year. These estimates have not been realized, due to the provision of international assistance and subsequent improvement in the humanitarian situation.

“People have not stopped dying but mortality has fallen back,” said Winter. “The humanitarian situation is

▼ SEE **SUDAN ON PAGE 11**

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (2003) AND REFUGEES (2002) WORLDWIDE, IN MILLIONS



Refugees, who flee persecution across international borders, are entitled to U.N. protection. Internally displaced persons, who flee their homes but not their home countries, often lack international protection.

Data: <http://www.idproject.org>; photo © ICRC/Virginia de la Guardia

U.S. Sets Policy for Displaced

The 25 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) wandering across the earth to escape violence, hatred, hunger, and natural disasters are getting a formal offer of assistance and protection under a new USAID policy adopted in September.

▼ SEE **NEW DISPLACED POLICY ON PAGE 10**

Fighting Locusts

DAKAR, Senegal—In response to a locust invasion in the Sahel region of West Africa, USAID has sent experts involved in the last invasion in the late 80s to Niger, Mali, and Mauritania—with a command center in Senegal—and sent six aircraft to spray pesticides.

Some \$3.8 million in immediate assistance to protect crops as part of a regional approach to combat the locusts was approved, in addition to \$3.65 million in aid channeled through the United Nations

▼ SEE **LOCUSTS ON PAGE 10**

AFGHAN WOMEN VOTE



Albana Vokshi/USAID

Afghan women vote in Kabul at 9:15 a.m. Oct. 9 in the first presidential election in the country’s 5,000-year history. An estimated 3 million Afghan women and 4 million men voted. Separate lines for men and women were required by Afghan culture.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CENTRAL ASIA RELIGIOUS LEADERS VISIT AID SITES PAGE 7		Religious tolerance explored 2 Solar power comes to Ugandan hospitals. . . . 4 Guinea schoolchildren get textbooks 6 New rubber bounce in Sri Lanka 7 Where in the World. 8		AFGHAN WOMEN JOURNALISTS TRAINED PAGE 5
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Boston University Project Debates Religion's Role in Peace and Democracy



Kristina Stefanova/USAID

The skyline of Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, has minarets and church towers built by the Muslims and Christians, who coexisted there for hundreds of years until sectarian fighting erupted in the 1990s, leaving hundreds of thousands dead in the country.

Religion is a major source of conflict today but it also can be a source of peace and tolerance according to a recent project at Boston University's Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs (CURA).

Since 1997, with help from Ford Foundation and the Pew Trust, CURA's Tolerance Project has explored and now advances the proposition that if religion is properly engaged, it can frequently find within itself a theological rationale which encourages tolerance, civil society, and democracy.

On September 20, Dr. Adam Seligman, principal researcher on the project, summarized its results for Administrator Andrew Natsios and other USAID officials.

The interaction was enlightening, with major implications for how the State Department and USAID engage religious communities to advance the foreign policy goals of promoting peace, democracy, and civil society. USAID will be supporting some follow-up to the Tolerance Project in Bosnia and Albania.

Dr. Kent R. Hill, Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia, posed some further questions to Dr. Seligman.

Q: Dr. Seligman, some scholars, like Doug Johnston, have argued that Western government officials have often significantly underestimated the importance of religion in international relations and have not interacted in effective ways with religious communities. Do you agree and, if so, why?

A: It is very difficult for many people in the West to "take religion seriously" in the public realm. Religion, in most Western societies is a private matter, not a public one. Disestablishment is the rule, not the exception.

Western Europe is, in many ways, the secular anomaly in a world of people with overwhelming religious commitments (and I include here the U.S.A.).

There is little in the most recent experiences of such officials in their own countries to sensitize them to the role of religion in other lands and among other people.

Q: You assert that it is not possible to "export" democracy from the West to non-democratic countries, and yet you clearly support tolerance and civil society abroad as hallmarks of a full democracy. How do you propose that we promote democracy in settings where there are strong religious communities and strife if we cannot "export" it?

A: I would prefer to address the issue of American civil culture, which, I do maintain, cannot be exported.

The particular American terms of civic culture (what some would call its civil society) include a secularized public sphere, the privatization of religion, the notion of the individual as a morally autonomous individual and, in essence, the liberal idea of a politics of rights rather than of "the good." It is the above, as the uniquely American terms of civic culture, that are, I claim, not exportable.

The reasons, I believe, are rooted in the particularities of American history, especially the influence of non-separating Congregational Puritanism in the 17th and early 18th century and, in essence, the uniquely religious arguments of separation and disestablishment that defined political culture at the founding of our country. These are what we cannot export.

Certain forms of the Protestant faith have what the great sociologist Max Weber would have termed an "elective affinity" with Church-State separation and the principle of disestablishment.

But that is not an argument for wanting the whole world to share in those religious assumptions that support this political option.

What is necessary is the rather long and laborious work of making similar arguments (similar mind you, not identical) from within the grammar of other religious traditions.

Where the understandings of the workings of salvation are public and not—as in American Protestantism—private, it is necessary to develop other arguments for the respect of personal dignity, the protection of personal freedoms, and social and political enfranchisement.

These can and are being developed. Slowly, hesitantly, and with much back and forth, much negotiation, and not a few mistakes.

It is important, however, to support such efforts and recognize that the arguments that will be adduced to support minority "rights" in Israel, or Iran for that matter, may end up being of a very different nature than those developed, say, in the Netherlands.

Q: Clearly, you believe that there are within Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, as well as within other religions, sacred texts and traditions which can be used to support "tolerance." But how do you encourage these religious communities to

deal with other texts and traditions which do not support "tolerance"?

A: There is little doubt that every tradition and every sacred text or corpus contains both passages and perspectives that encourage tolerance and mutual acceptance and those that encourage hatred, intolerance, and denial of the other.

This is why The Tolerance Project has never been about "cherry-picking" the textual traditions for quotes to support this, that, or the other position. This is an easy, but pointless exercise. For one can find exactly what one wants in all traditions.

Here, perhaps, I should add that the premise of most inter-religious dialogue groups is learning about the other. While this is no doubt crucial, our goal is to learn about one's own tradition through meetings with the other and, indeed, through wrestling with the texts—often difficult and troubling texts—of one's own tradition.

Texts and traditions must be grappled with, wrestled with—not swept under the rug and denied. We must be honest with ourselves and honest with others, subject our own beliefs and histories and commitments to the light of reasoned reflection, in a community of diverse opinions and practices.

This is precisely what is done with Muslim, Christian, and Jewish schoolteachers in the programs we work with in Israel.

Q: Can you provide some practical examples of how The Tolerance Project has successfully worked with religious communities to support "tolerance"?

A: Perhaps our most successful projects have been in the field of curricula development and its implementation.

In Israel, we have worked closely with educators and others connected to Yesodot Center for Torah and Democracy and the Prophetic Traditional Helpers Association

(religious Jewish and Muslim groups) to develop curricula to teach tolerance to religious students, in religious schools, from religious texts and principles. Developed over three years through the collaborative efforts of deeply observant Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Druze, the curricula is currently being tested in two pilot projects.

A similar curricula project developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently being readied for a pilot in that country.

At the same time, for two years now through the International Summer School for Religion and Public Life, I have brought together educators, religious leaders, journalists, academics, and policymakers from over a dozen countries to discuss the complicated and not always peaceful manner in which religious beliefs and commitments influence the public sphere in different parts of the world.

These meetings have been intense intellectual and emotional encounters that, in some cases, have resulted in new projects and initiatives on the return of the school fellows to their home countries.

In one case, Jewish and Muslim fellows from Israel were so influenced by the school that, on their return, they instituted a program of having (religious) Jewish and Arab (Muslim and Christian) high school teachers develop joint programs between their respective high schools.

In another case, a joint Hebrew/Arabic radio program is being initiated. Moslem fellows have, partially in response to the summer program, organized politically and established a series of networks and frameworks for meeting with and joining Jewish and Christian colleagues, and have organized conferences and workshops.

In Bosnia and elsewhere in the Balkans, local participation in the summer school provided a crucial arena where new behaviors and attitudes towards the other could be modeled. ★

First Person



“In the early days of our operation, the Business Internet Center [BIC] really helped us to improve our image and our management. We really couldn’t have grown as quickly without the services of the BIC.”

ANNA SLAVTOVA,
Operations Director, Classic Inc., Ukraine.

Steve Rynnecki, National Telecommunications Association

The popularity and use of the internet in Ukrainian cities is quickly growing as new computer training centers and cybercafés open their doors. But in the rural regions of Ukraine, connectivity is poor. To change that, USAID helped five BICs across the countryside to open up, introducing basic business management training and high-speed internet access to rural and disadvantaged communities. Each office has at least five computer workstations. They serve commercial clients such as Classic Inc., a cabinetmaking company that has used the center to conduct market research, set up email accounts, design a website, and improve its marketing plan through training.

Mission of the Month

EL SALVADOR

The Challenge

El Salvador was struck by two powerful earthquakes—in January and February 2001—that killed 1,100 people. The quakes destroyed more than 166,000 homes and caused about \$1.8 billion in damage.

Together, they affected one in five people in El Salvador, a nation that only nine years earlier emerged from a long civil war and was still recovering from Hurricane Mitch, which cost 374 lives and \$600 million in property damage in 1998.

Innovative USAID Response

After leading the emergency earthquake disaster response, the San Salvador mission spent \$170 million on reconstruction programs that built new homes and schools, repaired roads and sewage systems, prepared communities for future natural disasters, and boosted economic activity.

Working with the Salvadoran government, local communities, and 40 other partners, the U.S.-funded program focused on hard-hit regions and people living below the poverty line. It also rebuilt structures to resist future earthquakes.

A major challenge was helping people prove land ownership, so one of the first steps USAID/El Salvador took was to work with the government to speed up the land titling process for earthquake victims.

It can take anywhere from a year to a decade to get a land title processed in El Salvador. But when the earthquake hit, USAID worked with the Vice Ministry of Housing to reduce the waiting period for obtaining a land title and provided lawyers to help follow up on people’s land title claims. As a result, families were rapidly approved for the USAID housing program.

Results

As the reconstruction program wraps up in December 2004, its most visible result has been more than 26,000 new homes built across half the country.

USAID paid about \$3,200 for each home—the full cost of construction. The work was done by the El Salvador government agency that subsidizes housing and several NGOs. In most cases, the soon-to-be homeowners also helped with construction.

New houses were designed to meet earthquake-resistant standards and were evaluated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for soundness of construction.

Previously, homes were built of adobe, with tile roofs. The new homes are built with concrete blocks and their roofs are



Rosa Maura de Mayorga, USAID/El Salvador

Thousands of people helped build their own homes under the USAID-funded earthquake reconstruction program in El Salvador. The program covered the costs of construction and used the help of citizens, NGOs, and local government agencies to erect the homes.

made of sheet metal or synthetic fiber sheet.

To help prepare for future disasters, the program installed three flood monitoring gauges; provided assistance to the country’s Earth Sciences Agency in seismic, hydrological, and volcanic monitoring programs; and did four flood hazard site assessments. Disaster preparation activities were also carried out in 47 high-risk municipalities and Geographic Information System databases were created for five municipalities.

The program also helped build or refurbish 50 schools, 60 rural childcare centers, healthcare facilities, municipal offices, and markets. Since water is scarce, USAID also provided 145,400 people with drinking water systems.

In Santiago de Maria in the department of Usulután, for instance, USAID helped build more than 400 homes, a municipal office building, a town market, a community health center, and a preschool. It also funded the reconstruction of a clean water system for a small village near the town.

The program also worked with small farmers in rural and remote regions. By introducing them to crop diversification—switching from one crop to another that is more profitable—USAID helped some 1,000 small farmers sell \$6.53 million in agricultural products.

To further revitalize the economy, the reconstruction program included a \$1.1 million program that assisted 2,521 micro and small businesses, most of which were women-owned. ★

Notes from Natsios

★★★★★★★★



Sudan is the single largest humanitarian crisis in the world today, where ethnic, political, economic, and tribal pressures exist in a volatile mix.

In September I spent a week in Sudan, four days of which was in Darfur. I met with Vice President Taha in Khartoum, provincial governors, and with NGO and U.N. aid workers. I also met with rebel leaders to discuss humanitarian access and UNOCHA [U.N. humanitarian] protocols, which they have not been observing.

In the most recent tragic chapter, Darfurians rebelled in February 2003. They were reacting against a history of political exclusion and economic marginalization. The Sudanese government initiated a brutal counterinsurgency strategy, which included the arming of Arab militias, now called Jangaweit, who conducted an ethnic cleansing campaign destroying 574 African villages. Unspeakable atrocities continue to be visited upon the tribes of the three African tribes from which the rebel movement has drawn support.

USAID and its Disaster Assistance Response Team have played a leading role in the massive humanitarian relief operation. The U.S. contribution is more than \$300 million, equal to all that other countries have given.

Agriculture has been decimated. Food prices are rising. Markets are under stress and the economy of the region has collapsed, putting much of the population that is not displaced under severe stress.

What’s to be done? USAID and the international community must continue their primary humanitarian mission and put the relief infrastructure in place to protect the vulnerable and begin rehabilitation. It may also be necessary to undertake certain market interventions to prevent a food crisis early next year, as the crop soon to be harvested is expected to be poor.

Millions of animals have been looted by the Jangaweit from the African tribes who have been impoverished. We believe that tribal mediation is needed to begin the process of restitution or there will be no resolution of the conflict.

With U.S., Australian, and EU assistance, a 10-fold increase in African Union forces is deploying to serve as a much more robust observer presence, which should restrain some of the violence now perpetrated with impunity.

In my 15 years of humanitarian work, I have never seen a bigger mess in a crisis. Putting the province back together politically, resettling refugees and internally displaced people, and restoring the fragile economy will take time, be very costly, and is an enormously complex task. The United States government is in Sudan and Darfur for the long term. We will not rest until the crisis has been settled. ★

ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE

Clean Solar Energy Replaces Kerosene Lanterns



Christina Keller, Environmental Resources Trust

A group of U.S. and East African high school students stand on top of Tweyambe Boarding School in western Tanzania in August 2004. The group, through a USAID-funded project, had just installed solar light panels so that the school could switch from kerosene lamps.

KAMPALA, Uganda—Kakuuto Hospital in Rakai district, where AIDS was discovered in 1981, installed solar energy in 2004 to provide light and pure water with the help of USAID programs aiding hundreds of hospitals.

Solar Light for Africa (SLA), a faith-based NGO working with U.S. and African churches and governments to provide solar power in rural Africa, has helped hundreds of hospitals with a \$300,000 grant from the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT).

The group's primary project this year was to electrify Kakuuto with solar photovoltaic panels.

Pure water was provided, utilizing solar-powered pumps as well as piping to bring water over 3.2 kilometers to the hospital from a spring. Spigots were placed along the way so that nearby villages also had access to the water.

Before the project, the hospital had relied on kerosene lanterns for light and there was no supply of clean water. Hospital staff and villagers had to travel long distances to get water from a spring that was not clean and frequently caused illnesses.

SLA is installing 100 solar systems at rural health clinics, community centers, churches, and schools throughout Uganda and Tanzania during 2004. The group has installed 1,400 solar systems since it was founded in 1997 by retired Episcopal Bishop Alden Hathaway.

The Kakuuto Hospital project "is an excellent demonstration of the important role energy plays in a number of sectors, including health," said Kevin Warr of EGAT's energy team. "You can't refrigerate vaccines without electricity, you can't

run a proper operating room. You have to sterilize equipment, and all of that takes electricity."

"So we don't look at energy as an end in itself, but as an important input to larger development issues," Warr added.

Nearly 40 percent of the adult population in Rakai district has died since HIV—the viral condition that precedes AIDS—made its first appearance.

But today Uganda is one of the few African countries with declining HIV rates. The infection rate ran as high as 30 percent in the early 1990s, but it is about 4.1 percent this year, according to the United Nations AIDS agency.

SLA runs its projects through groups made up of volunteer American and Ugandan solar engineers, doctors, dentists, students, and environment experts who monitor cuts in emission gases as solar energy replaces oil and wood fuels.

Electricity in Africa helps education and reduces environmental degradation by promoting a clean energy source and replacing the fumes of kerosene lanterns. Solar electricity also cuts deforestation and erosion by reducing burning of roots and other biomass.

"One of my fondest memories is of a young mother giving birth to her child in the dark of night, with the assistance of solar light," said Sherry Rainey, a former youth mission participant from Tallahassee, Fla.

"Had it not been for this solar installation at the birthing center, the midwife would have delivered the baby utilizing the meager light of one kerosene lantern that produces noxious black fumes. Instead, the baby's first breath was of pure air." ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Rainforest Alliance Protects Forests

Although consumers and businesses increasingly want to buy wood and other forest products that are certified as being produced in an environmentally safe manner, it's become harder and harder to meet the growing demand.

Most of the forests where the wood, nuts, fruit, plants, and other materials are taken are in developing countries.

An \$8.6 million USAID grant to the Rainforest Alliance, an international not-for-profit conservation organization, will help address this issue in Mexico and Central America by expanding certification efforts for coffee, timber, and bananas and linking these products with markets.

Private-sector partners include IKEA, Kraft, Procter & Gamble, and Chiquita, and their participation is valued at over \$70 million. In addition to industry partners, local conservation groups are also participating in the three-year initiative.

The Certified Sustainable Products Alliance acts on several critical business, social, and environmental fronts in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. Program areas include responsible business practices, improved wages and conditions for farm and forest workers, enhanced participation and income for farmer associations, and reduced environmental degradation in production.

"By increasing the supply of certified products, promoting conservation, and improving conditions for workers and communities that neighbor farms and forestry operations, communities and cooperatives will see an increase in income that will provide them with an added incentive to practice sustainable agriculture and forestry," said Tensie Whelan, executive director of the Rainforest Alliance.

With staff based in Latin America and the United States, the Rainforest Alliance can carry out both certification and market linkage.

The Alliance helps local farmers and log-

gers develop the ability to produce certified products. Rainforest Alliance-trained auditors visit thousands of farms in four regions in Central America and Mexico and assess each one according to a baseline of over 200 indicators. Assessment reports identify processes that must be rectified prior to certification. Other processes must be improved continually from year to year.

One farm, for example, was instructed to plant hedges between the settlements and fields in order to absorb any chemicals that might waft from the fields. Another farm was required to allow for natural habitat belts along road and waterways.

With headquarters in the United States, the Rainforest Alliance also conducts outreach to secure buyers for certified products. Gibson Musical Instruments, for example, has sourced its mahogany and other rare woods from a forest in Peten, Guatemala, through Rainforest Alliance outreach efforts.

Kraft recently committed to purchasing 5 million pounds of coffee in one year from Rainforest Alliance-certified farms. Procter & Gamble has introduced a line of its retail brand "Millstone," which contains sustainable coffee certified by the Rainforest Alliance. Chiquita reached 100 percent Rainforest Alliance certification from company-owned banana farms in 2000, and has increased its share of certified bananas from independent farms from 33 percent in 2001 to 75 percent currently.

The Guatemala and Central American Programs (G-CAP) office recognized the acute need to link "responsible buyers for certified products with responsible suppliers in global markets," said Glenn Anders, mission director for G-CAP.

The regional mission is contributing \$6.6 million to complement \$2 million in GDA funding for the Rainforest Alliance to expand its work with producer communities and private-sector buyers in North America and Europe. ★



Raed Chris Wille, Rainforest Alliance

Children stand around a pile of boxes of Chiquita bananas. Some 75 percent of the plantations Chiquita contracts with are Rainforest Alliance-certified.

DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Afghan Women Report



Afghanistan Transition Initiatives, USAID

A woman hands out Morsal, a new national magazine that writes about women's issues.

KABUL, Afghanistan—On assignment for a newly established independent news agency, journalist Zainab Mohammadi entered a bustling market to interview locals from an array of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. She revealed her audio recording equipment and was soon surrounded by a group of men. Undeterred, Mohammadi kept her cool and got what she needed for her story.

"It is challenging to work with men in Afghanistan, but we women will struggle," she said. "I am sure we will make it; we will try to change them, to accept that women can do whatever they want."

Mohammadi is one of hundreds of women participating in media training courses and working for newspapers, magazines, and news agencies supported by USAID. Last year alone, the Agency spent \$14 million on media-related programs in Afghanistan, many of them focused on women.

Under the Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001, women were forbidden to work and were forced to cover themselves from head to toe. But the newly adopted Afghan constitution says that "the citizens of Afghanistan—whether man or woman—have equal rights and duties before the law," and women have been allowed to return to work.

USAID funded extensive civic education activities to provide the Afghan public with information on key issues, such as the Emergency Loya Jirga national council held in mid-2002, the Constitutional Loya Jirga in December 2003, and the October presidential elections.

Projects have helped train more than 800 radio and print journalists, media managers, filmmakers, and staff from several university journalism schools. USAID is also

supporting the establishment of the Tolo TV network, an independent commercial television station.

The Agency supports 41 state and private radio stations, 20 of which are community-run and four of which are managed by women.

Educational, news, and entertainment broadcasts are reaching not only remote Afghan regions but also areas of Iran and Pakistan that are home to large numbers of Afghan refugees. A newly created satellite distribution network keeps the local radio stations fresh on national news with a three-hour daily programming feed.

One project supported innovative and educational mobile cinemas that reach off-the-beaten track areas with films on health, education, human rights, civic education, and the October election.

The Agency has also supported seven print publications and media resource centers, two daily newspapers in Kabul, several independent publications focused on the establishment of democracy in a modern Islamic context, and two national news magazines. One of the national magazines, *Morsal*, covers women issues.

"Women who are working in media will bring a great change in society," said Mohammadi. "They can highlight the problems of other oppressed women who are inside their homes and have no choice or place to raise their problems."

Only 36 percent of Afghans can read or write. But while 51 percent of men are literate, that number among women is only 21 percent. ★

Elizabeth Callender contributed to this article from Kabul.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Paraguay Community Pharmacies Provide Low-Cost Medicine

ASUNCION, Paraguay—Although sick people in the developing world often cannot afford or find medication, Cecilia Gonzalez gets cheap medicine from her community's "social pharmacy" in the southern area of Itapua.

Gonzalez, a young mother, is from one of 26,000 low-income families who have access to the community pharmacies, where drugs cost about 50 percent less than at commercial pharmacies. Gonzalez's income is less than \$1,500 a year.

In 1996, USAID/Paraguay began working with local governments, health officials, and citizens to design the program. To date, the Agency has invested about \$1 million in technical assistance to set up more than 100 pharmacies in four regions of southern and central Paraguay.

"Poor people now have access to low-cost medicines," said Graciela Avila, the health program officer for USAID/Paraguay.

Money for the pharmacies is channeled through a revolving fund that is managed by local health councils. The fund's managers are responsible for stocking the pharmacies. They select, purchase, and distribute pharmaceuticals and supplies.

Prices at the community pharmacies are kept low because the revolving fund allows local government to buy medicines in bulk from suppliers.

"In Itapua, we started the social pharmacy program with 50 million guaranies [about \$7,500] provided by the departmental government and 18 basic medicines," said Victoria Baez, a voluntary coordinator of the program in Itapua. "Now we have more than 100 medicines and more than 300 million guaranies [about \$44,000] in the

revolving fund."

The pharmacies are typically housed within health posts or clinics run by the Ministry of Health. Some are also located in private houses.

They are run by volunteers who have some background in healthcare. Each community's pharmacy warehouse is also managed by volunteers who have the medical knowledge to administer pharmaceuticals.

Most communities in Paraguay suffer chronic shortages of drugs, contraceptives, and medical supplies. This often leads people to speculate on the causes and cures of what ails them and to self-medicate. Many people are also too poor to afford any drugs: Paraguayans annually spend only about 4.2 percent of their income for healthcare, according to the Ministry of Health.

The health ministry and donors such as the World Bank have expressed interest in replicating the USAID-funded community pharmacies program in other regions of the country.

Such pharmacies are just one way USAID has worked to improve access to affordable medicine for people in poor countries.

In Ghana, the Agency supported a program that developed a franchise to improve access to and use of essential medicines. And in Tanzania USAID funded a program that accredits non-pharmacy drug shops.

But programs supporting revolving drug funds, as in Paraguay, have proven particularly successful, said Anthony Boni, pharmaceutical management advisor with the Bureau for Global Health. USAID has supported a similar program in Nepal and Tajikistan. ★



Silvia Ocampos, CIRP

Cecilia Gonzalez, a young mother from the Itapua municipality, picking up medications from the community's pharmacy in October 2003. Gonzalez, who earns less than \$1,500 a year, gets her medicines at half price.

AFRICA

Schoolchildren in Guinea Get New Books, Improved Teaching Through U.S. Program

CONAKRY, Guinea—As the school year starts, every first and second grader in this West African country will have his or her own textbook to use in class.

Some 500,000 textbooks—paid for by USAID—have been distributed to schools throughout Guinea since May. The books are the fulfillment of a promise made by President Bush's Africa Education Initiative to provide African children access to quality textbooks and teaching materials.

The Africa Education Initiative aims to increase the number of young girls in school, train teachers, and produce and distribute textbooks and pedagogical materials.

Guinea, the first of six African countries to benefit from the initiative's textbooks, has a critical shortage of teachers and classroom materials. It is also seeing more and more students enroll in elementary school, as the government places greater emphasis on education.

"Providing quality textbooks in sufficient quantity helps us fulfill an essential part of our program—improving educational quality—and will help our children succeed in school," said Minister of Pre-University and Civic Education Galema Guilavogui.

Developing the new textbooks in Guinea is critical to promoting education, said Kadiatou Bah, one of the authors of the textbooks, which were produced by the

Guinean Education Ministry with technical assistance from USAID and Dillard University, one of the historically black U.S. colleges and universities.

"We were able to design learning activities and illustrations that are relevant to Guinean children's lives," Bah said.

Only 41 percent of Guinean adults are literate.

Rural children, especially girls, are often left out of the classroom. Only 58 percent of children outside of cities attend school.

To encourage Guinean girls to attend and stay in school, USAID is offering \$600,000 in scholarships this fall to some 6,000 girls. The money covers the costs of uniforms, school supplies, and learning materials.

The Agency plans to add an additional \$250,000 to carry out complementary activities promoting girls' education, mainly through community projects, the celebration of national girls' education day, and a mentoring program.

Teacher training programs to improve the quality of elementary education are also being carried out with the Ministry of Education. USAID is training 25,300 teachers in new instructional methods to increase student achievement in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. Teachers are also learning how to use interactive radio instruction and how to address sensi-



Laura Lartigue, USAID/Guinea

A representative from Dillard University helps a schoolgirl read her new book, which is illustrated and designed especially for Guinean children.

tive HIV/AIDS-related topics.

Since 2001, the Agency has sponsored a national program to improve reading instruction in grades one and two. Teachers are taught techniques to better engage students. For reading comprehension skills, for instance, they are taught word games so that students can read and respond to colorful poster-sized books and storybooks.

The books include animal fables and

stories about families, places, and situations familiar to young children. An accompanying guide shows teachers how to use the materials and generate additional support materials. More than 90 percent of first and second grade teachers nationally say they use the program and are seeing improvements in their students' reading abilities. ★

Laura Lartigue contributed to this article.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Onions, Carrots, Eggplant, Squash Raise Incomes for Small Farmers in Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras—After a year of farming onions, Rolando Avila, from San Marcos de Colón in the southern region of Honduras, has made enough profits to expand his business.

Some 21,000 small farmers are participating in a program with the Agribusiness Development Center (CDA), in which the

Agency over a six-year period is investing \$13.2 million. The center helps farmers move away from traditional crops such as coffee, sugarcane, corn, rice, and beans to other higher value crops. Among the new crops being grown are peppers (jalapeño and tabasco), carrots, cucumbers, eggplant, squash, sweet potatoes, and yucca.

Since the project began in 2000, CDA has helped generate \$12.09 in new sales for every dollar of USAID investment.

Avila is among 140 farmers who the CDA helped to grow yellow onions—a crop that is produced for the local market to substitute for imports.

The center helps independent onion growers like Avila get contracts with leading onion importers and distributors. Now Honduran onion farmers are competing with existing overseas onion suppliers such as the Netherlands, Spain, and Canada.

"This new activity has helped me to get ahead and solve my economic problems," said Avila, whose profits were \$26,000 at the end of his first onion harvest.

He is now investing in a drip irrigation system and a pump, hoping to increase production next year.

"I have big expectations with the investment I have made in the expansion of the farm," he added.

The CDA helped Avila set up an onion nursery and then walked him through the first year of harvesting and selling the crop. It also linked him to a group of producers

who have a contract with importers and distributors.

Now the onion farmer is expanding the planting area for his second cycle of onion production. He has six permanent employees, and can afford to hire another 30–40 on a temporary basis during the planting and harvest season.

Agriculture diversification will be crucial for the Honduran economy to be able to export to regional markets and the United States under the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which was signed earlier this year, said Mission Director Paul Tuebner.

For Avila, the switch to onions has been sweet. Before, he planted beans and made most of his income from dairy production. But falling dairy profits drove him to look for other options to earn a living.

Avila used to earn about \$1,100 per year from beans and \$2,500 per month from dairy production—money that barely covered the feeding costs for his 35 cows.

Aside from farmers, the CDA works with packhouse operators and exporters. ★



Ricardo Lardizábal, CDA

Workers harvest onions at Roland Avila's farm in San Marcos de Colón, Honduras.

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

Industry 'Cluster' Helps Sri Lanka Rubber Product Bounce into World Markets

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka—European and U.S. makers of surgical gloves and other rubber products are eyeing a new, high-quality variety of latex being produced from the country's traditional rubber tree plantations.

Lankaprene, a rubber of superior visual quality and improved consistency, fetches a substantially higher price than the traditional latex crepes or mats that Sri Lanka's rubber industry has produced for some 70 years. A recent order received a price of \$2 per kilogram—80 cents more than the price for traditional latex crepes.

To make Lankaprene, fresh field latex is bulked, strained, and diluted with filtered water, and a fraction is separated to remove non-rubber ingredients. The latex is then washed. The result is a product of unique properties such as high purity, lighter color, and pleasant odor.

Sri Lanka's rubber industry had seen significant declines in production and prices. The land on which rubber trees are grown had also diminished, and the latex crepe was increasingly losing market to synthetic products.

In 1999, USAID invested in the Competitiveness Initiative Project, which is reviving several Sri Lankan industries,

including rubber. Today, 13 of the country's 17 latex crepe producers are making Lankaprene. Four plants have been modernized, and 30 people were trained in manufacturing and quality control of Lankaprene.

The program helped form a rubber industry "cluster," and has held half a dozen workshops that brought together rubber growers, processors, manufacturers, shippers, packers, public-sector research institutions, and workers.

The cluster concept in development aims to get all sectors working together so all can increase production and profits.

"No single Sri Lankan firm acting on its own was capable of engaging in a product development and marketing venture with a U.S. firm. Even meeting the shipment quantity orders would have been difficult for the average firm," said Lionel Jayaratne of USAID/Sri Lanka. But "the consortium of Sri Lankan firms are now proving to be a reliable partner in the process of developing and responding to the new applications of [Lankaprene]," he added.

In July 2003, members of the rubber cluster traveled to Akron, Ohio, to look for potential customers. Trial batches of Lankaprene are now reaching the United



Gemunu Amarasinghe

Lankaprene samples in an oven undergoing tests for volatile matters content. The test ensures removal of water and residual moisture from rubber. It is one of two Lankaprene specification tests conducted at the Central Specifications Laboratory of the government-run Rubber Research Institute of Sri Lanka. All Lankaprene producers send their rubber samples to this laboratory for quality control and specifications testing.

States. Production of the new product is expected to generate \$16 million in export earnings.

Sri Lanka's rubber industry employs 300,000 people. Some 60 percent of the 100,000 metric tons of latex crepes are made by small growers.

Rubber producers intend to plant an addi-

tional 40,000 hectares of land, increasing production by about 78,000 metric tons per year.

The competitiveness project—carried out by Nathan Associates Inc. and their subcontractor, J.E. Austin Associates Inc.—works with eight industry clusters. ★

EUROPE AND EURASIA

Tours of Aid Sites Aim to Counter Radicals

ALMATY, Kazakhstan—To counter the rising influence of radical, anti-American groups in this mainly Muslim region, U.S. officials are bringing journalists, religious leaders, and other influential local figures to visit U.S.-sponsored development projects.

Modeled on USAID religious outreach in Bangladesh, the year-old program in

Central Asia has taken religious leaders and journalists on tours of projects in two cities in Kyrgyzstan, one in Tajikistan, and one in Kazakhstan. Another 10 tours are planned over the next year to regions of Kyrgyzstan, southern Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

Next year, the mission will also provide funds to bring together community and reli-

gious leaders, such as imams.

USAID has spent over the past decade about \$1 billion on health, democracy, small business development, rule of law, and community outreach in Central Asia.

"America will face challenges from Islamic radicalism for years to come," said regional Mission Director George Deikun. "USAID brings to bear the very best of America. Involving influential religious leaders in development activities helps to mitigate the influence of potentially terrorist organizations among vulnerable communities."

A tour in May, for instance, presented reporters to a media company where a USAID program to support the independent press had trained journalists and provided equipment. The tour included a visit to a microcredit lending program and meetings with two people who took out and repaid loans to grow their businesses.

The reporters also visited a school that USAID supplied with civic textbooks that teach democratic principles and a tuberculosis hospital where the Agency trained doctors to better diagnose and treat patients.

"The most common question is 'Who or what is USAID,'" said Saskia Funston of USAID's Central Asia regional mission. "By

introducing the media to our programs, the positive face of USAID foreign assistance is delivered directly to the local population. Similarly, by educating religious leaders in our purpose and scope of activities, they too are able to spread the word."

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 saw a renaissance of religious activity in Central Asia, as many people returned to the Muslim faith after years of being repressed by the antireligious Soviet system.

But recently, increased activity by radical groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Hizb ut-Tahrir has alarmed the region. There have been several bombings, including a suicide bombing at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent in July 2004.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's membership numbers about 15,000–20,000 throughout Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Western intelligence sources estimate IMU's membership at 3,000–5,000.

Funston said this increased presence of radical groups makes it "critical to initiate a dialogue with religious leaders and the media." Past participants of USAID-funded tours in the region agree.

"We should all come together to make it work," said Shokirjon Valiev, an imam from the Kokand region of Uzbekistan. ★



Rebecca Bridgeman, USAID

A tour of USAID activities in the southern Kazakhstan city of Shymkent January 20–22 included local religious leaders. The local mullah shown here told visitors about the benefits of a recently installed USAID-funded water system.

August 22, 2004–October 2, 2004

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IN MEMORIAM

S. Edward Hirabayashi, 81, died June 27, 2004, in Glen Ellen, Calif. Hirabayashi was a foreign service officer with USAID and served in Ecuador, Brazil, Ethiopia, Zaire, Yemen, and Washington, D.C., from 1967 until his retirement in 1987.

Flags, Seals, Cultural Taboos Are Task of First Protocol Officer



Protocol Officer Luigi Crespo (right) directs President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan (center) to sign the Agency's guest book, while Administrator Natsios looks on (left). Protocol Officer Crespo coordinated the logistics for Karzai's visit to the Agency, including a formal luncheon co-hosted by USAID and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Flags of every nation, seals of every possible size, portable staging, and name-cards are some of the things overseen by Luigi Crespo, the Agency's first protocol officer.

Until Crespo's position within the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) was created in 2003, a foreign dignitary visiting USAID headquarters was informally received by the Agency's desk officer for the country.

"Now, it's more standardized. Prior to 2003, we were not properly outfitted to receive a distinguished guest or organize a major function in the building. We are now as prepared and proper as State Department or the United Nations," said Crespo.

At official functions, he manages a long list of duties, including the coordination of invitations and responses, flag and seal etiquette, seating arrangements, name tags, and catering. He helps pick menus, coordinates with the Office of Security, and

arranges a photographer to cover special events.

Crespo is directly involved with the logistics of all meetings involving visiting Administration officials and foreign dignitaries at the cabinet level or higher. For other events, such as swearing-in ceremonies of mission directors, Crespo offers guidance to the officer arranging the event.

In creating a protocol officer position, USAID follows the lead of the State Department, which has over five protocol specialists just to handle ceremonials.

Since joining the Agency, Crespo has organized and supported more than 70 events. Among them are the recent 50th Anniversary of the Food for Peace program, the George C. Marshall Distinguished Lecture Series with Nobel Prize-winning Dr. Norman Borlaug, and the visits of 30 foreign dignitaries including seven heads of state or government. ★

<http://inside/LPA/events>

Karzai Wins First Election in Afghanistan

▲ FROM PAGE 1

was peaceful, and election officials were able to resolve problems swiftly. Millions of Afghan women, who had been barred from all public life by the Taliban until 2001, lined up by the thousands to also cast their votes.

Oct. 27, two weeks after the election, with 99 percent of votes counted, interim President Hamid Karzai had won more than 55 percent of votes, far ahead of the 16 percent won by his nearest rival, making a runoff between the two top candidates among the 19 running for office unnecessary, election officials said.

With a \$56 million contribution, USAID was the largest donor country to the \$200 million election process.

The first Afghan to vote was a young woman—19-year-old Moqadasa Sidiqi—who was one of the 750,000 Afghan refugees in Pakistan and another 500,000 in Iran registered to vote by the International Organization for Migration. Refugee turnout in Pakistan was 80 percent; in Iran

it was 50 percent.

One-third of election centers were monitored by groups supported by USAID, including

the Free and Fair Election Foundations of Afghanistan, the Asian Network for Free Elections, and the International Republican Institute.

Agency funding to the National Democratic Institute trained 10,000 poll watchers and printed 50,000 field manuals for all candidates.

The Asia Foundation also used USAID funds to hire Global Risk Strategies to provide operational and security planning support to the U.N. voter registration and election effort. U.S.-funded civic education programs also aided the smooth voting process, despite the fact that many Afghans are illiterate and have never used a pen before the election day.

In fact the poll watchers appointed by the candidates often broke ranks with their candidate and refused to support calls to

invalidate the elections after permanent ink—used to mark voters' hands to prevent re-voting—was reported to be washing off in some cases. The opposition candidates agreed to submit the dispute to a panel for investigation.

USAID's Democracy and Governance Office in Kabul has played a vital role in Afghan's emergence from Taliban rule: it supported two Loya Jirga national councils to set up the government and write a constitution, and it helped prepare for and run the Oct. 9 presidential election.

The election commission declared Oct. 27 that with 99.7 percent of the eight million ballots counted, Karzai won 55.4 percent. Former minister Yunus Qanooni had 16.3 percent. Mohammad Mohaqeq, a warlord and leader of the Hazara ethnic minority, was third with 11.6 percent, followed by Uzbek military strongman Abdul Rashid Dostam at 10.0 percent. The only woman running, pediatrician Masooda Jalal, was sixth with 1.2 percent of the votes. ★

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Readers are encouraged to send in stories, feature articles, photos, nominations for “First Person” or “Mission of the Month” columns, and other ideas.

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New Policy for the Displaced

▲ FROM PAGE 1

“Refugees get protection from UNHCR [the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees], but there has never been one U.N. agency to protect the IDPs,” said Roger Winter, Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance.

There are about 13 million refugees in the world today—people who have crossed an international border in fear of persecution and who then get aid and protection from UNHCR under a 1951 international convention.

However internally displaced people such as the 1.5 million Sudanese in Darfur—who fled marauding raiders that burned their villages but did not leave Sudan—have been in an unclear status, Winter said.

“We have a responsibility for the IDPs,” and that has led to USAID’s new strategy, he said.

The International Committee for the Red Cross, UNICEF, and other humanitarian agencies have taken on the lead role of helping IDPs in specific emergencies. But they must seek permission, visas, and access from the very government that may be persecuting the IDPs.

“The principle that IDPs are the internal affairs of a sovereign state sometimes keeps other countries and U.N. aid agencies out,” said Winter, a former head of the American Refugee Committee.

“But the world is changing. There is a growth of concern internationally about human rights broadly, and it is no longer the case that a rogue government can do what it wants to its population.”

However most countries outside of North America, Europe, and Australia do not like imposing sanctions or intervention to halt abuse of IDPs, Winter said.

The State Department has formal responsibility for aiding refugees. USAID has traditionally helped IDPs and now has for-

malized that role.

In Iraq, for example, USAID deployed its first abuse prevention officers, as part of the Office of Transition Initiatives, to help prevent ethnic cleansing and protect displaced Kurds and Arabs.

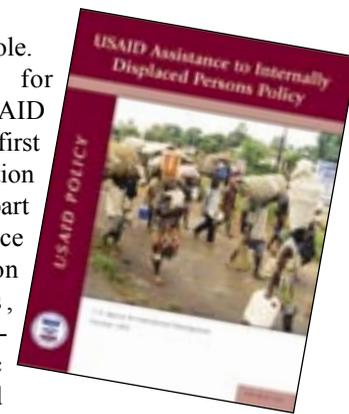
The new strategy broadens the USAID focus on IDPs to address all phases of displacement, ranging from emergency relief to transitional aid to long-term development assistance after resettlement and reintegration.

As the lead U.S. government agency for addressing internal population displacement, USAID will advocate

- lifesaving humanitarian access to needy populations
- information sharing to forge common understanding of the problems and build consensus on policy and strategic approaches
- the protection of IDPs during all phases of displacement
- wider international recognition of the U.N. Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

If the host country, United Nations, and other international organizations do not protect and assist IDPs, USAID will advocate the use of bilateral diplomacy to galvanize support and end human suffering, said Ann Ralte of the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination and one of the authors of the strategy.

The policy was approved September 24 by Administrator Natsios. ★



U.S. Fights Locusts in West Africa

▲ FROM PAGE 1



Locusts at work.

Richard Nyberg/USAID

Food and Agriculture Organization and regional governments.

The damage caused by the locusts is affecting families of many farmers and herders throughout the region.

Six Air Tractor airplanes, which can each spray up to 2,500 hectares a day, were dispatched to the region to treat infestations in Mauritania, Senegal, and, potentially, Mali.

In October, USAID’s Office of Food for Peace participated in a United Nations’ assessment that looked at damage to crops and pastures and recommended a response.

In Senegal, villagers have tried fighting the bugs.

In Ndjingué Sissé, people tried chasing larvae into long trenches and used pesticides provided by the local government.

In Keur Sambou, the community rushed to apply pesticides to the hatched hoppers (young locusts) and dug trenches to bury them. But they were overwhelmed by the second generation.

“The principal problems facing us are starvation and famine,” said Cheikh Ba, a village elder who said that locusts have destroyed the crops of about 70 percent of Keur Sambou farmers.

Mbaye Ba, 70, a farmer with 11 children, watched the locusts devour his peanut, green bean, and millet crops.

“It is painful,” he said. “How can I repay my loans and feed my family?”

After poor rains in 2002 and 2003, this is the third year Ba has earned nothing from harvests on his six hectares of land. He was hopeful this year, because it rained. His children planted crops June 11. But thick, yellow clouds of locusts swept into view

August 18 and quickly went to breed and lay eggs everywhere. In days, the crops were gone.

Contemplating this year’s peanut crop, Ousseynou Diop, an official of the state Plant Protection Unit, said: “It’s finished; it’s a catastrophe.”

The armies of locusts are driving Senegal’s

director of the government’s regional rural development office in St. Louis.

Many farmers have had to sell off cows, goats, and sheep to make ends meet, he added.

A bumper harvest in many regions of the Sahel last year could help offset locust damage. ★



Locust-damaged crops and vegetation in West Africa.

Richard Nyberg/USAID

Tim Born Reflects on 15 Years in Mozambique

BY TIM BORN

In introspective moods, I ask myself why I've spent 15 years at USAID/Mozambique—a USAID record, I believe, shared only by my wife, Julie, for continuous service by an American in one country.

As the child of a foreign service officer, I grew up in Haiti, Australia,

Turkey, and India from the late 1950s to the early 1970s—when the world was a bigger place. Four years of boarding school in New Hampshire left me with a conviction that whatever I did in life, it would take me out of the United States.

This led me later to the Fletcher School, where I dabbled in economics and discovered that I had no idea what it was that I wanted to do. Halfway through the two-year program, I joined the Peace Corps, serving in Aioun el-Atrous, Mauritania, some 90 kilometers north of the better-known Niore du Sahel, Mali. I returned to Fletcher and focused on development.

Through a friend's chance rejection of an internship in Kinshasa, I went to USAID/Zaire in the summer of 1982 and stayed for nearly six years as a PSC. USAID's program was a model of politically motivated aid—"kleptocracy" was coined for Mobutu's regime—one of our favorite examples of why aid's failures are not our fault.

But for several years I had the time of my life. Part of the fun was our conviction that no matter how bad the government, we were making a real difference. This proved to be largely an illusion, although many of the NGOs we worked with somehow survived the 1990s.

On to Liberia, where I learned to appreciate the advantages of Doe's laissez-faire, incompetent government over Mobutu's interventionist, incompetent government.

Through luck and good advice from my director, I moved to Mozambique before chaos and tragedy shattered the illusion that you can get away with really bad government of whatever kind.

So I found myself in Mozambique in September 1989—a country that was at the very bottom of the human development index; with a nasty, if simmering, civil war; a massively interventionist and incompetent government; but also a place with no easily pillaged natural resources; a tradition of social inclusiveness and tolerance; and a fondness for debate.

Again, USAID has been the right place for me.

I moved from the railroad project I was hired for to demobilization and demining during the 1992–94 peace process; and then to programs that generate growth, such as trade policy, the business environment, and some key sectors with good prospects.

Things have changed dramatically since we first arrived in Maputo, and mostly for the better. There are now more than two stores and one restaurant. We have traffic jams. Kruger Park is an hour and 15 minutes away by private toll road.

We have settled in. I joined the South African cycling scene in a fairly serious way. Our oldest son is at the University of Cape Town, our 8-year-old daughter, Margaret, has followed her two brothers to the now much bigger École Française de Maputo, and our middle son is reconstructing a ruin in northern Mozambique. Julie has spent the last two years as the head of USAID's HIV/AIDS office.

So here I have stayed—15 years on—guaranteeing that my children, like me 30 years ago, wonder where they ought to spend their lives. ★



Tim Born at the Limpopo National Park, March 2004

Sidney Kwiram, Carr Foundation

INSIDE USAID

Tim Beans Receives Award

Tim Beans, former director of the USAID Office of Acquisition and Assistance, was presented with the prestigious Public Sector Partner of the Year Award by the Northern Virginia GovCon Council, an initiative of the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, the Professional Services Council, and Washington Technology magazine.

Beans was selected for this award based on his outstanding innovation and leadership in the federal procurement community over two other finalists from the departments of Defense and Energy.

"This honor is an impressive feather in Tim's cap, and it's also a very positive reflection on USAID, the Bureau for Management, and, most importantly, the hard-working professionals in Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA), who have responded so heroically to Tim's inspirational leadership over the past two years," said John Marshall, the Agency's Assistant Administrator for Management.



Beans is now mission director at USAID/Thailand. In his acceptance speech, Beans noted that he shares the tribute with his OAA colleagues.

More than 700 leaders from industry and government attended the ceremony, held in Virginia October 13. ★

Nancy Barnett contributed to this article.

70,000 Deaths in Sudan

▲ FROM PAGE 1

improving. But we must remain vigilant and assistance flows should remain at a higher level or mortality rates will again begin to climb."

The rainy season, which bogged down relief trucks, has ended and the number of humanitarian workers has more than doubled in the last three months, largely due to U.S. pressure on Sudan's government.

U.S. and other international aid teams have recently gained access to 500,000 more displaced people in rebel-held areas.

"A week ago," Winter said in an Oct. 15 interview with *FrontLines*, "an agreement was signed between the government of Sudan and the rebels to give access to these people."

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, who called the Darfur crisis "genocide," said in July there were 1.1 million internally displaced people. Now U.N. officials say it has grown to 1.5 million.

Another 200,000 are refugees across the border in Chad.

Administrator Andrew S. Natsios visited Sudan in September (see Notes from Natsios, p. 3), where he saw first-hand the rage of the displaced.

In one camp, while interviewing residents, a Sudanese official tried to tell the people not to talk about the attacks they experienced and their fears of government-backed militia forces called Jangawit. The residents then attacked the official, and Natsios and other USAID officials had to intervene to save the man's life.

Humanitarian activities in Darfur continued despite risks. In mid-October, two staff members of the British aid group Save the Children-UK, a USAID partner, were killed in an explosion believed caused by a land mine. ★

Beleaguered Nepal Gets Natsios Support

KATMANDU, Nepal—As this Himalayan kingdom struggles with a Maoist insurgency, the head of the U.S. aid program visited the country in a show of support.

“USAID has been a steady and reliable development partner to Nepal for over 50 years,” said USAID’s Administrator Natsios at a press conference Oct. 8.

“We currently provide approximately \$40 million per year in development assistance. This assistance includes quick impact programs that provide strategically targeted economic, governance, and humanitarian assistance in areas suffering from the conflict.”

Natsios visited the Terai, Nepal’s southern plain, which became Nepal’s food basket after USAID helped eradicate malaria in 1960s.

The Agency is still investing 60 percent of its budget on health programs to increase the voluntary use of family planning, improve maternal and child health, reduce transmission of HIV in high-risk groups, monitor infectious disease, and address the psychological needs of children in conflict. Additional funds are being used to increase agricultural and forest production, protect natural resources, encourage hydro-power development, strengthen democracy, improve rule of law, and combat trafficking of women and children.

It was the first time a USAID administrator had visited Nepal.

Berger Gets Iraq Economic Aid Contract

The Agency announced a \$188 million contract with The Louis Berger Group Inc. to assist Iraq’s interim government in stimulating the economy through private-sector growth, employment-generating activities, and vocational and technical training programs.

The U.S.-based firm will help restructure and privatize state-owned enterprises, develop capital markets, formulate trade policy, and build business management skills. The firm will also help micro, small, and medium businesses.

A separate \$88 million award was made to Berger for vocational education. The firm will also provide experienced personnel, equipment, and funding to assist the Iraq Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to run existing vocational and employment centers.

The three-year contracts were competitively bid, and are part of U.S. government reconstruction assistance to Iraq.

Banks Concerned About Debt

International efforts to lighten the debt burden on the world’s poorest countries are not providing the expected level of relief, according to the latest annual progress report by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

The cost of topping up relief to reach this level—estimated last year at \$860 million—is now expected to be more than \$2 billion, the report says.

Last year’s report estimated that countries entering the process would spend \$2.4 billion servicing their debts last year. Instead they spent \$2.8 billion—an average of 15.2 per cent of government revenues and higher than the expected 14.6 per cent.

The Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) was set up eight years ago with the aim of eliminating \$100 billion of the debt of the poorest countries. About a third of the debt has been cancelled, and some estimates suggest HIPC countries still have about \$90 billion in debt.

Indonesia Getting Major Aid Programs

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Some \$468 million in U.S. development assistance will go to Indonesia over the next five years, mostly administered by USAID for programs in education, health, water, nutrition, and the environment.

Under the Education Initiative, announced by President Bush in October 2003, the United States will provide \$157 million to improve basic education in public and private schools. Under another program, the United States will provide \$236 million, along with \$75 million in food assistance, to improve the quality of basic human ser-

vices related to health, water, and nutrition delivered to Indonesians most in need.

Cambodian Finance Aid Signed

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—USAID, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and Cambodia’s largest bank, Canadia, signed Sept. 20 two agreements aimed at strengthening the country’s financial sector.

IFC, the private-sector arm of the World Bank, will provide Canadia with a loan of up to \$5 million to expand its mortgage operations and a \$600,000 technical assistance project, funded by IFC and Canadia Bank, aimed at strengthening effective financial services in Cambodia.

USAID signed a \$5 million Micro and Small Enterprise Development Initiative agreement with Canadia, under which the Agency will provide 50 percent guarantee coverage of up to \$5 million on loans that the bank will provide to small and micro-finance businesses.

Fight Against Corruption Urged

Developing countries must take action to reduce corruption and cronyism in order to improve their investment climates and promote growth and poverty reduction, the World Bank’s newly released annual report says.

Investment, innovation, and the creation of new businesses was hampered by corruption and improper links between government officials and politically connected companies, the Bank’s report says. It also calls for developing countries to reduce red tape, make state regulations more predictable, and deliver the basics of stable political environments and secure property rights.

The report, based in part of surveys of more than 30,000 companies in 53 developing countries, says that costs associated with crime, corruption, over regulation, weak contract enforcement, and inadequate infrastructure can amount to over a quarter of company turnover, or more than three times what companies typically pay in tax.

Uganda HIV Surge Linked to War

KAMPALA, Uganda—The rate of HIV/AIDS infection in northern Uganda is nearly double that in the rest of the country because of devastation caused by 18 years of civil war, the faith-based NGO World Vision said.

Whereas the national rate of infection is estimated at 6.2 percent and declining, it said, the rate in the north is 11.9 percent and rising. Uganda—often praised for reducing the HIV infection rate from around 30 percent in the early 1990s—could see many of those gains evaporate, World Vision warned.

\$100 Million for Abstinence War

Some \$100 million in new grants for abstinence-focused programs—as part of President Bush’s \$15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief—was announced Oct 5. Eleven organizations, including nine faith-based groups, won the 5-year grants through a competitive awards process.

Catholic Relief Services, Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, Food for the Hungry Inc., Fresh Ministries, International Youth Foundation, Pact Inc., Program for Appropriate Technology in Health, Salesian Missions, Samaritan’s Purse International Relief, and World Vision are the U.S. groups receiving funds. A South African faith-based group, HOPE Worldwide, also won a grant.

The organizations will use the funding to work with teens and young adults, teaching abstinence. The 15 countries of the Emergency Plan have the world’s highest risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Most of them are in Africa.

“Faith-based and community-based organizations have a reach, authority, and legitimacy that make them crucial partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS,” said Ambassador Randall Tobias, the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. “America will continue to take advantage of the expertise of faith-based service providers to turn the tide of HIV/AIDS worldwide.” ★

Ambassador Pascual Rolls Out New U.S. Office for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Stabilization at State Department

Ambassador Carlos Pascual, the first Coordinator for the U.S. Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization at the State Department, presented his strategic vision Oct. 20 for enhancing U.S. post-conflict capacity at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C.

Pascual’s talk, cosponsored by CSIS’s Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, served as an initial public introduction to his office, which has been charged by the National Security Council with leading, coordinating, and institutionalizing U.S. civilian government capacity to

prepare for post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization efforts.

Pascual, a former USAID overseas officer, underscored the unique interagency mandate of his office, which has 30 staff members from the departments of State, Defence, and Treasury, the CIA, USAID, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Pascual’s office will also coordinate reconstruction and stabilization efforts by civilian and military arms of the U.S. government, as well as with international organizations.

The goal is to be able to manage two or three reconstruction and stability operations simultaneously by forging key partnerships

and developing a management structure that allows for rapid deployment as well as rapid phasing out.

Although the office is not active in either Iraq or Afghanistan, it will work with the National Intelligence Council to select which countries pose the greatest risk of future instability.

Pascual emphasized the importance of civilian participation in Department of Defence post-conflict planning activities. “If we can figure out how to embed CNN reporters [with military units],” the ambassador quipped, “we ought to be able to embed State Department officials as well.”

Citing the example of the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives for its swift work in crises, he said the new office will stress both speed and effectiveness during mobilization.

Along these lines, the new office will create and co-chair an interagency Reconstruction and Stability Group that will take the lead in particular post-conflict efforts.

With regard to training, the office—known by its acronym S/CRS—intends to increase four core capacities: leadership, diplomatic operations on the ground, technical programming, and implementation. ★

Craig Cohen of the CSIS contributed to this article.