



European Washington File

Public Affairs Section

Embassy of the United States, Stockholm, Sweden

Friday, October 22, 2004

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Text: United States Allocates \$871 Million to Support Iraqi Elections

(Funding reflects \$180 million increase from amount initially budgeted)

Following is the answer to a question taken at the State Department's daily briefing October 21:

(begin text)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
October 21, 2004

QUESTION TAKEN AT THE OCTOBER 21,
2004 DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

Iraq: Elections And Democracy Promotion Assistance

Question: How much are we spending on elections and democracy promotion in Iraq?

Answer: Altogether, a total of \$871 million in FY 2004 Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) resources are allocated to support democracy, governance and elections programs in Iraq. This level reflects an increase of \$180 million based on the Administration's recent strategic review of IRRF spending priorities. The increases include:

-- \$40 million to ensure the Iraqi Electoral Commission has the technical capacity to run and certify free and fair national elections;

-- \$20 million for a nationwide elections monitoring program, bringing the total for this activity to \$45 million;

-- \$100 million to support local and provincial government institutions, bringing the total for this activity to \$234 million; and

-- \$20 million to support Iraqi Interim Government national institutions, bringing the total for this activity to \$41 million.

The \$871 million also includes \$30 million for the National Endowment for Democracy to provide

technical assistance and training for moderate and democratic political parties in Iraq.

(end text)

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

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Text: U.S. Urges "Unrelenting" Global Effort Against Terrorism

("Deeds matter more than words," State's Rostow says)

The general counsel to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations says the global anti-terrorism campaign is better coordinated than ever before, but there is much more to be done.

Nicholas Rostow told the United Nations' Counter-Terrorism Committee in New York October 19 that more countries than ever "have the necessary legal and executive machinery in place to combat terrorism."

Rostow said nations, organizations, and even the committee itself, must examine their contributions "and see where they can do more."

The legal counselor told his audience: "Deeds matter more than words."

The global fight against terrorism, he said, "can only be won with the unrelenting collaborative efforts of all member states of this organization and of all other international bodies."

Following is the text of Rostow's remarks:

(begin text)

Nicholas Rostow: Statement on the Work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee
United States Mission to the United Nations

USUN PRESS RELEASE # 197 (04)
October 19, 2004

Statement by Nicholas Rostow, U.S. Legal Counselor, on the Work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee [CTC], in the Security Council
October 19, 2004

Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking our CTC Chairman, Ambassador Denisov, and Executive Director Ruperez for their informative briefings and leadership.

Mr. President,

These quarterly public Council meetings help ensure that counter-terrorism remains at the top of the Council's and the broader U.N.'s agenda. This practice should continue.

On October 8 of this year, [U.S.] Ambassador [James] Danforth spoke of the spate of horrific terrorist attacks against innocent civilians. The landscape he described was not a pretty one. The attacks continue despite the international community's efforts to thwart them. The day before the Security Council adopted resolution 1566, in which it delivered its strongest condemnation of the intentional targeting of civilians, more than 30 vacationing civilians were murdered in a horrific terrorist attack in Taba, Egypt. A week before that, the world saw the deliberate murder of 34 children and 7 adults in a terrorist attack in Baghdad and a terrorist attack at a Shiite mosque in Pakistan where dozens of worshippers were killed. Finally, on the day of adoption, terrorists in Iraq beheaded a British civilian hostage.

Strong U.N. resolutions and statements from the floor condemning terrorism and pledging action are meaningful only if they are followed up with action by all States. Only through concerted and coordinated action will we win the war on terrorism. To this end, my delegation calls upon all States and organizations to look at what they have done to contribute to the fight against terrorism and see where they can do more. The Counter-Terrorism Committee must do the same. Deeds matter more than words. This global fight can only be won with the unrelenting collaborative efforts of all Member

States of this Organization and of all other international bodies.

Despite the repeated calls by the General Assembly and the Security Council for States to join the 12 international terrorism instruments, only 57 States are parties to all 12 and 47 are parties to six or fewer of these instruments. Given that these conventions help facilitate cooperation among States to fight terrorism, no one should be satisfied with the current participation levels. We can and must do better. Resources exist to help. We encourage States to take advantage of these resources, including the facilities of the Terrorism Prevention Branch in Vienna. For those States that are party to a regional terrorism convention but not yet parties to all of the 12 international instruments, we reiterate what the Council said in resolution 1566: joining regional conventions cannot be viewed as an alternative to joining the international ones.

Some regional conventions would seem to justify attacks against civilians, depending on the political, philosophical, ideological, racial, or ethnic motivation of the perpetrators. This is not only contrary to the text and spirit of resolution 1566, but also to the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee as well. In Resolution 1566, this Council unanimously endorsed the proposition that the deliberate targeting of civilians is simply unjustifiable in any cause. Until everyone accepts this proposition, we shall not see truly universal collaboration against terrorism. Indeed, we shall not see the end of terrorism.

The United States is pleased to see that the revitalization of the CTC is nearing its final stages. We urge both the Secretary-General and the General Assembly to take the necessary action to ensure that the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate is up and running as soon as possible. An effective Executive Directorate lies at the heart of improving the CTC's ability to monitor States' efforts to implement their obligations under Security Council resolution 1373, to identify gaps in States' capacities, and to work with assistance providers to fill these gaps. We encourage States to take advantage of this opportunity and to reach out and invite Executive Director Ruperez and his colleagues to visit.

Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Following are a DHS press release and a fact sheet on the machine-readable passport requirement:

(begin text)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Press Office
Homeland Security
October 22, 2004

Press Release

DHS Announces Machine-Readable Passport Procedures for Visa Waiver Travelers

Beginning October 26, 2004, officers from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will begin enforcing requirements that travelers applying for admission under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) must be in possession of a machine-readable passport. Following procedures announced today, if, after October 26, 2004, a Visa Waiver Program national presents him or herself for admission to the United States without a machine-readable passport or non-immigrant visa, a CBP officer is permitted to grant a one-time exemption to admit the traveler to the United States. The traveler will be issued a letter explaining the U.S. entry requirements and his or her passport will be annotated that a one-time exemption has been granted.

"These interim procedures will allow U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers to effectively enforce the law and exercise discretion when appropriate," said DHS Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security Asa Hutchinson. "These are prudent steps to ease travelers into these new documentation requirements. The United States is a welcoming nation and we do not want to turn people away because they do not possess the newly required passport or a valid non-immigrant visa."

When granting the exemption, CBP officers will notify the traveler of the requirement for a machine-readable passport or that they can obtain a non-immigrant visa for subsequent visits. If a traveler fails to obtain a machine-readable passport or a

non-immigrant visa for subsequent visits, they may be refused entry under the VWP.

Each VWP applicant must present an individual machine-readable passport. This is a change for family members who have applied for admission under one passport in the past. As announced last year, families must have individual machine-readable passports for everyone, including children. CBP officers can apply the same onetime exemption to families as well.

The new machine-readable document requirement had been scheduled to go into effect last year. Since the U.S. announced it was extending the implementation date from October 1, 2003, until October 26, 2004, VWP countries have been taking steps to issue machine-readable passports and to communicate information about these new requirements to their citizens. To help their citizens comply with the new document requirements, some countries are even offering to issue new machine-readable passports on the spot to their citizens at departure airports.

Through April 25, 2005, U.S. Customs and Border Protection will not impose fines on transportation carriers for transporting VWP travelers from 22 countries to the U.S. without a machine-readable passport. The 22 countries are: Austria, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Congress has extended the deadline for the inclusion of biometrics in VWP-country passports until October 26, 2005. This does not affect the current requirements for machine-readable passports. An estimated 13 million visitors from Visa Waiver Countries enter the U.S. each year. Travelers from Visa Waiver Countries are allowed to enter the U.S. for up to 90 days for business or pleasure using only a passport.

[end text]

[begin text]

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Press Office
Homeland Security
October 22, 2004

Fact Sheet

Machine-Readable Passport Requirement

Effective October 26, 2004, travelers applying for admission under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) pursuant to section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) must be in possession of a machine-readable passport (MRP). As an alternative, travelers may obtain a non-immigrant visa in their current (non-machine-readable) passport.

If, after October 26, 2004, a Visa Waiver Program national presents him or herself for admission to the United States without a machine-readable passport or non-immigrant visa, a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer is permitted to grant a one-time exemption to admit the traveler to the United States. The traveler will be issued a letter explaining the U.S. entry requirements and his or her passport will be annotated that a one-time exemption has been granted. If a traveler fails to obtain a machine-readable passport or a nonimmigrant visa for subsequent visits, she or he may be refused entry under the VWP.

Travelers who receive an exemption and make an incidental trip to Canada, Mexico or the adjacent islands as part of their trip to the United States, should be advised that the exemption is applied for one entry in the U.S. only. Once they leave the United States, they may not be allowed to reenter without an MRP, despite the exemption on their I-94.

A number of factors may impact compliance with this requirement and will be considered regarding one-time exemptions:

-- Although outreach efforts have been made to advise travelers of this requirement, not all visa waiver travelers may be aware or may be confused by the various provisions.

-- Each VWP applicant must now present an individual passport. Some family groups that list minor children on one of the parent's passports may

be adversely affected. Families are encouraged to obtain individual machine-readable passports prior to travel.

-- Some countries do not issue official or diplomatic MRPs. Diplomats or Government Officials who are on travel for government business will have a nonimmigrant visa with an "A-1 or A-2" classification and do not qualify for admission under the VWP.

-- Travelers who apply for entry into the U.S. at an airport with a non-machine-readable passport for the purpose of departing on a cruise that makes multiple stops at various U.S. ports may be considered again for a onetime exemption at each successive location during their trip if they can establish continuous travel from the arrival through the period of the cruise and ultimate departure.

For a period of six (6) months beginning October 26, 2004 until April 25, 2005, CBP will not impose a fine on the transportation carriers (under Section 273(a)

of any one of twenty-two (22) designated countries applying for admission under the VWP without an MRP. The 22 countries are: Austria, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

As of October 1, 2003, nationals of the following four countries were required to present an NW for admission under the VWP: Andorra, Brunei, Liechtenstein, and Slovenia. Effective on that date, transportation carriers were liable for transporting nationals of these countries to the United States for admission under the VWP without an NW. This new procedure will not affect that policy, and CBP will continue to impose a fine in those circumstances.

As of May 16, 2003, nationals of Belgium were required to present an MW for admission under the VWP. Effective on that date, transportation carriers were liable for transporting these persons to the United States for admission under the VWP without an MRP. This new procedure will not affect that

policy and CBP will continue to impose a fine in these circumstances.

(end text)

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

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Text: New Passport Requirement Will Not Cause Border Disruption

(Travelers to United States need machine-readable passports October 26)

(begin text)

Washington -- The United States is working to ensure that travelers entering the nation will not be turned away at the border when a new document requirement takes effect October 26.

Visitors from 22 nations now able to enter the United States without a visa will need a passport with machine-readable encoded data starting on that date. The requirement for the new, more sophisticated documents was supposed to have gone into effect one year ago. But officials extended the deadline for compliance to allow travelers more time to obtain the proper documents from their governments and for governments to develop and issue such documents.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) immigration officers greet foreign travelers as they enter the country. DHS Under Secretary Asa Hutchinson told international reporters at a press briefing October 22 that he hopes foreign travelers have heard the message about the need for the new passports.

If they haven't, he said, "they will be allowed into the United States and not be turned back simply because there is noncompliance with the machine-readable passport requirement."

Hutchinson says immigration officers will offer noncompliant travelers a one-time exemption from the requirement and admit them to the United

States. Border officers will make note of the exemption on the passport and inform the travelers of their need for the updated passport or a visa. On subsequent visits, if travelers do not have a machine-readable passport or a visa, they could be refused entry, according to DHS.

"We want to accomplish our objective of full compliance as soon as possible, but we also want people to understand that their first experience in the United States will be a positive experience," Hutchinson said.

The United States is requiring the machine-readable passports because their encoded data makes them more secure documents than the traditional passport.

"The machine-readable passport has additional security features that are important, that minimize the ability to fraudulently use a passport," Hutchinson said. "That added security feature is important for compliance with our laws and for the nature of today's world."

U.S. officials have worked over the last year to encourage other governments to speed their conversion to the new passport. In doing so, the officials have pointed out that the entire international traveling public will be safer as more nations issue the high-security passports. Document forgeries will become more difficult, further constraining the black market in falsified papers needed by terrorists, smugglers and drug traffickers.

The October 26 requirement for conversion to the machine-readable passports applies only to visitors eligible to enter the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). This reciprocal agreement is in place with developed nations whose citizens are not likely to attempt illegal immigration to the United States.

Other nations are still working to make the conversion to the high-technology documents, and Hutchinson said the United States is striving to assist them. "The responsibility and the technical capability lies with the individual countries. We certainly have a good level of exchange from a technical standpoint, cooperation, and sharing of

best practices with those countries," Hutchinson said.

An estimated 13 million visitors from the VWP nations enter the United States each year. Travelers from the following countries are affected by the requirement for machine-readable passports: Austria, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

(end text)

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

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Text: Travelers to U.S. Need Visas or Machine-Readable Passports

(More information at http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_novisa_waiver.html)

Visitors entering the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) must have machine-readable passports by October 26, or the traveler must apply for a visa to enter the country. But immigration officers will offer noncompliant travelers from 22 VWP countries a one-time exemption from the requirement and admit them to the United States.

Border officers will make note of the exemption on the passport and inform the travelers of their need for the updated passport or a visa. On subsequent visits, if travelers do not have a machine-readable passport or a visa, they could be refused entry, according to DHS.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has announced it will not impose fines on transportation carriers for transporting VWP travelers from 22 countries to the U.S. without a machine-readable passport through April 25, 2005. The 22 countries are: Austria, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco,

Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Following is a statement on the program prepared by the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels:

(begin text)

U.S. Mission to the European Union
<http://www.useu.be>
October 22, 2004

Beginning October 26, 2004, officers from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will begin enforcing requirements that travelers applying for admission under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) must be in possession of a machine-readable passport. Following procedures announced today, if, after October 26, 2004, a Visa Waiver Program national presents him or herself for admission to the United States without a machine-readable passport or non-immigrant visa, a CBP officer is permitted to grant a one-time exemption to admit the traveler to the United States. The traveler will be issued a letter explaining the U.S. entry requirements and his or her passport will be annotated that a one-time exemption has been granted.

"These interim procedures will allow U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers to effectively enforce the law and exercise discretion when appropriate," said DHS Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security Asa Hutchinson. "These are prudent steps to ease travelers into these new documentation requirements. The United States is a welcoming nation and we do not want to turn people away because they do not possess the newly required passport or a valid non-immigrant visa."

When granting the exemption, CBP officers will notify the traveler of the requirement for a machine-readable passport or that they can obtain a non-immigrant visa for subsequent visits. If a traveler fails to obtain a machine-readable passport or a non-immigrant visa for subsequent visits, they may be refused entry under the VWP.

Each VWP applicant must present an individual machine-readable passport. This is a change for

family members who have applied for admission under one passport in the past. As announced last year, families must have individual machine-readable passports for everyone, including children. CBP officers can apply the same one-time exemption to families as well.

The new machine-readable document requirement had been scheduled to go into effect last year. Since the U.S. announced it was extending the implementation date from October 1, 2003, until October 26, 2004, VWP countries have been taking steps to issue machine-readable passports and to communicate information about these new requirements to their citizens. To help their citizens comply with the new document requirements, some countries are even offering to issue new machine-readable passports on the spot to their citizens at departure airports.

Through April 25, 2005, U.S. Customs and Border Protection will not impose fines on transportation carriers for transporting VWP travelers from 22 countries to the U.S. without a machine-readable passport. The 22 countries are: Austria, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Congress has extended the deadline for the inclusion of biometrics in VWP-country passports until October 26, 2005. This does not affect the current requirements for machine-readable passports. An estimated 13 million visitors from Visa Waiver Countries enter the U.S. each year. Travelers from Visa Waiver Countries are allowed to enter the U.S. for up to 90 days for business or pleasure using only a passport.

More information can be found at http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_novisa_waiver.html

(end text)

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

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Text: Global Group Urges Focus on Cash Smuggling to Combat Terrorism

(Financial Action Task Force cites some progress in Burma, Nauru)

Governments should take stronger measures to prevent cross-border currency movements that could be used to finance terrorism, says the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the international body that plays a leading role in the campaign against money laundering.

In an October 22 news release, FATF calls on countries to improve information sharing on the movement of illicit cash related to terrorist financing or money laundering.

"We want to put an end to cash smuggling used to fund terrorism and criminal activities," FATF President Jean-Louis Fort said in the release.

FATF, which issued the statement following a three-day meeting in Paris, say it had added a section on cash smuggling to its list of special recommendations for governments working to deny terrorists access to the international financial system. An initial list of eight special recommendations was adopted during a FATF meeting held in Washington shortly after the September 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States.

The organization also announced that its members had withdrawn countermeasures against Burma and Nauru, citing progress in those countries towards resolution of anti-money-laundering deficiencies. However, Burma and Nauru will remain the FATF list of noncooperative countries or territories (NCCTs) that do not meet international standards against money laundering, the release said.

The FATF list of countries that are designated as NCCTs includes: Cook Islands, Indonesia, Burma, Nauru, Nigeria and the Philippines.

In its release, FATF welcomed progress made by the Cook Islands, Indonesia and the Philippines and said it plans to visit these countries to confirm the effective implementation of their reforms.

NCCTs can be subjected to countermeasures, including heightened scrutiny by banks dealing with any transactions originating from an NCCT-listed country, FATF said.

The 33-member FATF comprises 31 countries as well as the European Commission and the Gulf Cooperation Council and is housed within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Following is the text of the FATF news release along with the text of its ninth special recommendation on terrorist financing:

(begin text)

FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE

FATF TARGETS CROSS-BORDER CASH MOVEMENTS BY TERRORISTS AND CRIMINALS

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), meeting in Paris from 20-22 October, has added a key element to the world's counter-terrorist financing defenses. The new measure, Special Recommendation IX, calls on countries to stop cross-border movements of currency and monetary instruments related to terrorist financing and money laundering and confiscate such funds. It also calls for enhanced information-sharing between countries on the movement of illicit cash related to terrorist financing or money laundering.

"We want to put an end to cash smuggling used to fund terrorism and criminal activities," said Jean-Louis Fort, President of FATF. "We're going to make it tougher to move terrorist money across borders and make it harder for terrorists to operate."

A webcast of the closing FATF news conference is available at: www.minefi.gouv.fr.

FATF members have withdrawn the counter-measures against Myanmar [Burma] and Nauru, as these countries have now introduced new measures to remedy anti-money laundering deficiencies. Myanmar has enacted rules for the Mutual

Assistance in Criminal Matters Law on 14 October 2004; Nauru has taken several significant steps to ensure that offshore banks previously licensed in Nauru no longer exist and no longer conduct banking activity. However, both countries will remain on the list of non-cooperative countries and territories (NCCTs) until they address remaining deficiencies and adequately implement the necessary laws. The FATF also welcomes the additional progress made by the Cook Islands, Indonesia and the Philippines and plans to visit these countries to confirm the effective implementation of their reforms.

The FATF continues to use the NCCT list to call on financial institutions to scrutinise transactions with persons, businesses, or banks in listed countries or territories with inadequate anti-money laundering infrastructures. The current list of NCCT countries is: Cook Islands, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nigeria and the Philippines. The FATF will continue to work towards ensuring that all countries implement effective anti-money laundering/counter terrorist financing (AML/CFT) systems.

FATF-style regional bodies are important components of the global network of international organisations and bodies that combat money laundering and terrorist financing. These bodies are committed to implementing the FATF Recommendations. To further increase its co-operation with such bodies, the FATF will hold a joint session with the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering in June 2005 in Singapore to highlight AML/CFT initiatives in the region.

At the beginning of October in Moscow, a new regional body, the Eurasian Group (EAG), was formed. Mr. Fort stated: "FATF very much welcomes the creation of the EAG and its admission as an observer to FATF. Initiated by the Russian Federation, the EAG also includes Belarus, the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It spans a huge area of the globe and provides a new and necessary mechanism for fighting terrorists and money launderers in this region."

FATF also looks forward to the creation of a new regional body in the Middle East and North Africa -

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(MENAFATF). A group of countries from the Middle East and North Africa will hold a Ministerial meeting to form this body on 29-30 November in Bahrain.(1) The FATF fully supports this initiative, and Mr. Fort will attend the inaugural meeting.

Before the end of the year, Mr. Fort will lead a high level delegation to Beijing to meet with senior officials. This is an important step towards China's membership in FATF. If successful, the visit would be followed by an evaluation of China's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing system.

ANNEX SPECIAL RECOMMENDATION IX: CASH COURIERS

Countries should have measures in place to detect the physical cross-border transportation of currency and bearer negotiable instruments, including a declaration system or other disclosure obligation.

Countries should ensure that their competent authorities have the legal authority to stop or restrain currency or bearer negotiable instruments that are suspected to be related to terrorist financing or money laundering, or that are falsely declared or disclosed.

Countries should ensure that effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions are available to deal with persons who make false declaration(s) or disclosure(s). In cases where the currency or bearer negotiable instruments are related to terrorist financing or money laundering, countries should also adopt measures, including legislative ones consistent with Recommendation 3 and Special Recommendation III, which would enable the confiscation of such currency or instruments.

A full text of the Interpretative Note is available at www.fatf-gafi.org.

(end text)

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

Text: U.S. Training Program Aims to Curb Illicit WMD Smuggling

(Training will begin in November for personnel in 11 nations)

The Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is expanding its program to train customs officials and border guards to curb illicit smuggling in biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and components.

The goal is to help partner countries pursue training programs for customs inspectors, investigators, border guards and other key personnel so they can help prevent the movement of technology and equipment associated with weapons of mass destruction to terrorists or proliferators, said NNSA Administrator Linton F. Brooks in an October 14 press announcement.

By the end of November, a new program called the Commodity Identification Training curriculum will be conducted in Lithuania, Latvia, Georgia, Turkey, Thailand and Ukraine.

Personnel will be trained in detection and interdiction techniques and ways to prevent trade in weapons of mass destruction and related components.

Following is the text of the NNSA announcement:

(begin text)

U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration
[Washington, D.C.]
[October 14, 2004]

NNSA Expands Efforts to Combat Illicit Smuggling of WMD-Related Equipment and Technologies

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is expanding its efforts to train border guards and customs officials worldwide to combat the threat posed by the illicit smuggling of WMD-related equipment and technology.

NNSA's export control office has designed a new Commodity Identification Training (CIT) curriculum to educate and train customs inspectors and border enforcement personnel from around the

world in techniques of detection and interdiction. This program supports the Bush administration's priority to prevent illicit trade in items and technologies needed to manufacture weapons of mass of mass destruction (WMD).

By the end of November, these trainings will be conducted in coordination with 11 countries, including Lithuania, Latvia, Georgia, Turkey, Thailand, and Ukraine. Latvia is NNSA's most recent success, and has formally added the training to the curriculum for its customs personnel, with plans to provide it to on-duty customs personnel on a rotating basis.

"Our goal is to help partner countries incorporate WMD training programs for customs inspectors, investigators, border guards and other key personnel. NNSA initiates these partnerships with our experts at the national laboratories, with the ultimate goal of preventing dangerous nuclear-related technology from falling into the hands of terrorists or proliferant nations," said NNSA Administrator Linton F. Brooks.

In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, NNSA's export control office, in coordination with the Department of State, expanded its cooperation with major supplier states like China and Turkey. Based on concerns heightened by the A.Q. Khan proliferation network, which provided illicit materials to Libya, NNSA established new partnerships with technical and enforcement organizations in a number of Asian countries. NNSA works in these and other countries in the Mediterranean and Middle East that may serve as transshipment points for proliferation-sensitive equipment. These projects reflect NNSA's core missions to promote international nonproliferation and reduce the global danger from WMD.

The CIT program itself is new, and expands NNSA's long-standing cooperation with Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan to support outreach to industries and scientific entities, and improve nuclear licensing practices. Through the CIT program, U.S. experts provide border enforcement organizations with technical training and support to help prevent export control failures. Border enforcement organizations serve as the last line of defense against illicit exports, and therefore play a

critical role in exposing and thwarting export control violators.

The Department of State's Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) program coordinates and partially funds the CIT program and other NNSA international export control trainings.

(end text)

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

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Transcript: U.S. Aid to North Korea Hinges on Dismantling Nuclear Program

("We must show patience," Powell says of talks with Pyongyang regime)

The United States is prepared to aid the North Korean people, but not until the Pyongyang regime abandons its nuclear weapons programs, says Secretary of State Colin Powell.

"We want to help the North Korean people who are having great difficulty," the secretary said during an October 22 interview on the Tony Snow television program, but "we're not about to do it right away."

President Bush "has made it clear he has no hostile intent, no desire to invade North Korea," the secretary said, adding that North Korea's accusation that the United States is displaying "hostile intent" is "a nice little cover line that they use."

"North Korea always wants us to make this a U.S.-North Korea problem, and people are forever accusing us of being unilateralist," Powell said. He noted, however, that North Korea's neighbors are "are at far greater risk" from North Korea's "unacceptable behavior" than the United States is and are just as concerned about the issue.

Powell emphasized that the Bush administration will not negotiate directly with Pyongyang.

"I think the six-party talks are the way to go. It's the only way to go. And the North Koreans have been told that repeatedly," he said. "They have had it demonstrated to them that the President is not going to blink. He is not going to be pushed into a negotiation merely because the North Koreans are acting truculent."

The Six-Party Talks involve China, Japan, Russia, North Korea, South Korea and the United States.

Noting that "even the North Koreans have agreed that we want a denuclearized Korean Peninsula," Powell said the participants in the Six-Party Talks are "essentially in a discussion, a debate, a negotiation, as to what they (North Korea) might get in return from different parties...."

"We are essentially in a negotiation in which we must show patience," he said.

Regarding the Middle East, Powell said the United States is urging the Palestinians to reform their government and put in place a prime minister who has the authority to establish in Gaza a political and security structure that will be able to work effectively when the Israelis leave that region.

President Bush "holds tight to his vision of a Palestinian state," Powell said. "I hope that if the Prime Minister of Israel is successful in getting this disengagement plan through, and if the Palestinians will act in a more responsible manner, then we could be on our way to an engagement in the road map and on our way to a Palestinian state, which, really, is what we want to see happen."

Acknowledging the disappointments from past efforts for peace in the Middle East, Powell said: "You must never give up that hope, and we will remain engaged in this process and try to get something moving."

Responding to a question about the U.N. investigation of the Oil-for-Food Program with Iraq, Powell called it "a real problem for the United Nations right now." The United States should withhold judgment until the investigation is complete, but clearly Saddam Hussein was cheating and people were profiting, he said, and "we've got to get to the bottom of that."

Asked about Iran's nuclear weapons development program, Powell said representatives from Iran, Britain, France and Germany met on the topic October 21, but he had not received a report on that meeting. The secretary said the United States believes "further action is required now," and that it should be referred by the International Atomic Energy Agency to the U.N. Security Council.

Full transcript is available at
<http://www.usemb.se/wireless/500/index.htm>

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Bush Signs Law Repealing U.S. Tax Breaks Ruled Illegal by WTO

(Measure aims to end retaliatory tariffs imposed by EU)

By Berta Gomez
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush signed a law repealing U.S. export tax breaks that were ruled illegal by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and have prompted retaliatory trade sanctions by the European Union (EU).

In an October 22 statement, the White House said that the president had signed into law the "American Jobs Creation Act of 2004," which repeals the disputed Extraterritorial Income Act (ETI), provides other tax breaks for business and reforms U.S. tobacco subsidies.

The WTO has ruled repeatedly that the ETI and its predecessor, the Foreign Sales Corporation (FSC) program, were de facto export subsidies that violate international trade rules.

Earlier efforts to resolve the EU/U.S. dispute failed, and the WTO authorized the EU to impose tariffs of up to \$4 billion on U.S. exports. The EU began in March to impose tariffs of 5 percent on a range of U.S. products and said the rate would increase by one percentage point per month up to 17 percent. As of October 1, the tariff rate was 12 percent.

The House of Representatives voted 280-141 on October 7 to pass the measure repealing FSC/ETI

provisions. The Senate voted 69-17 in favor of the bill October 11, completing congressional action and sending the measure to the president for his signature.

EU officials have said they will lift the retaliatory tariffs as soon as the United States complies with WTO rules, but it remains unclear whether they will accept the new law as fully satisfying U.S. obligations.

Under the new law, ETI export tax breaks for corporations will be phased out over two years and tax rates on domestic manufacturing reduced in phases over five years from 35 to 32 percent not only for corporations, but also for partnerships, sole proprietorships and other small businesses.

Controversy over the 650-page bill erupted because of numerous non-FSC/ETI provisions, which include tax breaks for individual U.S. industries from ethanol producers to manufacturers of fishing tackle boxes.

Supporters described the bill as revenue neutral because it offsets new tax breaks by shutting down abusive tax shelters, closing corporate tax loopholes, and extending customs and other government user fees.

(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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Foreign Aid, Other Issues Remain for Congress After the Election

(Mexican trucks, food sales to Cuba among the unresolved controversies)

Washington -- When Congress returns to a special session after the November elections it will have a number of foreign policy issues to decide, including foreign-assistance spending.

Already past the October 1 start of fiscal year 2005, Congress has yet to pass most of the 13 annual spending bills. To keep the government running, it

has passed temporary legislation to continue government spending at existing levels for a few weeks.

An effort to fold most or all of the remaining spending measures into a single compromise bill is a likely outcome when the House of Representatives and Senate return from recess November 16.

On foreign aid, the Senate and House already have passed their own versions of legislation. The House bill would spend \$19.4 billion, the Senate version \$19.5 billion, both below the Bush administration request but above the level approved for fiscal year 2004.

The two versions differ in some respects.

The Senate bill includes \$2.4 billion for programs to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, \$200 million more than the administration's request or the level approved in the House version.

The Senate would provide only \$1.1 billion, less than half of Bush's request, for the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), the new program giving additional development aid to countries that rule justly, invest in their people and promote economic freedom. The House version would allocate only \$1.3 billion to MCA for fiscal year 2005.

Some congressmen questioned the ability of the new Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), which administers the MCA, to effectively distribute and monitor the use of the full \$2.5 billion requested by the administration until the corporation has more experience.

For the Darfur region of Sudan, the Senate approved spending \$300 million, the House \$311 million. In the Senate version, \$200 million could be made available immediately for Darfur refugees and the remainder released after signing of a peace agreement between the government of Sudan and rebel groups. Under the House bill, all funds would be available immediately.

Both the Senate and House approved the administration's requests of \$2.6 billion for military and economic aid to Israel and \$1.8 billion for Egypt, slightly lower than current levels.

The Senate bill would also give the administration authority to move another \$360 million from the Iraq reconstruction fund to eliminate debt Iraq owes to the United States, but the House bill has no mention of this item.

The foreign aid bill also covers spending for export credits. Both the House and Senate versions have language that would prohibit the Export-Import Bank of the United States from spending to assist exports to Libya even though President Bush issued a September determination that such Ex-Im Bank spending was in the U.S. national interest.

Scattered through other spending legislation still needing final passage are a number of controversial foreign policy issues.

Both the Senate- and House-passed versions of agricultural spending bills would relax Treasury Department restrictions for U.S. persons to travel to Cuba to sell agricultural and medical products.

The House-passed version of the spending bill for the Treasury and Transportation departments would prevent spending any money to implement existing U.S. sanctions against private sales of food and medicine to Cuba. The Senate-passed version of that bill would prevent spending any money to enforce the U.S. ban on travel to Cuba.

The Bush administration has threatened to veto any bills relaxing sanctions against Cuba.

Provisions in both the House and Senate Treasury-Transportation bills would prevent the Bush administration from giving Mexican and Canadian trucks a two-year exemption from U.S. safety standards. President Bush has threatened a veto if any provision in a final bill violates U.S. commitments in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The United States had delayed the implementation of a NAFTA provision allowing Mexican trucks to enter the United States by 2000. An April 2003 Bush administration decision would let the trucks cross the border during the exemption period while phasing in compliance with U.S. safety standards.

Bills implementing two free trade agreements (FTAs) signed by the Bush administration in 2004 -- a bilateral pact with Bahrain and a regional agreement with the Dominican Republic and the countries of Central America (DR-CAFTA) -- are viewed as unlikely to be considered during Congress' post-election session.

The DR-CAFTA agreement especially faces fierce opposition because of differences over labor and environmental standards and industry concerns about increased sugar imports.

Consideration of the FTA with Bahrain, while far less controversial, could nevertheless be pushed onto the 2005 congressional calendar if the post-election session in Congress is limited to one or two weeks.

Prospects for both trade deals could also be affected by the outcome of the November 2 presidential election. Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, the Democratic presidential candidate, has vowed if elected to renegotiate the DR-CAFTA pact to improve labor and environmental standards in Central America. He has also said that he would impose a 120-day review of all pending U.S. trade agreements.

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

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Text: U.S. Continues Allowing Imports of Beluga Caviar

(Extends existing practice temporarily, delays permanent final rule to 2005)

A U.S. government agency will, temporarily at least, continue to allow U.S. imports of beluga caviar and beluga sturgeon meat even though beluga is listed as a threatened species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

An interim special rule was issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) October 21, the day the threatened species listing for the beluga sturgeon took effect, according to a USFWS news release.

The listing determination was made in April, but the effective date of the listing was delayed for three months to allow the agency enough time to promulgate a special rule under the authority of the Endangered Species Act.

A proposed special rule issued by the agency in June seeks to exempt countries around the Black and Caspian seas from strict requirements on shipment to the United States under the act as long as those countries develop beluga conservation and management plans.

The interim special rule just adopted allows trade in products derived from the threatened beluga sturgeon provided that trade is consistent with regulatory requirements already in force under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The interim rule also continues international cooperative conservation efforts to ensure the survival of the species in the wild, according to the agency.

USFWS said it would likely issue a final beluga imports special rule some time in January 2005.

The delay until January 2005 gives the agency "additional time to evaluate and consider all of the comments it received in response to the proposed rule," according to the release.

The exemption applies only to imports of caviar, byproducts such as cosmetics, and beluga meat from harvested wild fish -- not to live beluga or to products from commercially raised fish.

Countries currently exporting beluga sturgeon are Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Iran, Kazakhstan, Romania, Russia and Turkmenistan. Romania is expected to ship the most beluga exports in 2004, about 3,400 kilograms.

Under CITES, beluga sturgeon is in a category that allows controlled trade through a system of permits. All sturgeon and their byproducts must be accompanied by valid CITES documentation to be legally imported into or exported from the United States

Following is the text of the news release:

(begin text)

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
News Release
October 21, 2004

SERVICE ISSUES INTERIM RULE FOR THREATENED BELUGA STURGEON

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued an interim special rule that will allow trade in products derived from threatened beluga sturgeon as long as that trade is consistent with regulatory requirements already in force under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The interim rule also provides for the continuation of ongoing international cooperative conservation efforts to ensure the survival of the species in the wild.

A global agreement that monitors trade in endangered and threatened wildlife through a system of permits, CITES also regulates, when applicable, national harvest and export quotas for species in trade. Beluga sturgeon is listed in Appendix II of CITES, a designation which permits legal commercial trade in a listed species provided it is accompanied by valid CITES documentation. In order to issue a CITES Appendix II permit for commercial trade in beluga sturgeon and its products, an exporting country must ensure the specimens were legally acquired, do not exceed national export quotas registered with CITES, and are not detrimental to the survival of the species. Furthermore, exporting countries may not exceed national export quotas which are registered annually with the CITES Secretariat, an additional conservation measure required for all commercially traded sturgeon species.

The interim special rule is intended to notify the public of the procedures the Service is using to allow legal trade to continue during the interval between the effective date of October 21, 2004, for the listing of threatened beluga sturgeon under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (Act) and the publication of a final special 4(d) rule which is expected by the end of January 2005.

This interim notice does not address or discuss comments received during the public comment

period for the Special 4(d) Rule to Control the Trade in Threatened Beluga Sturgeon which was published in the June 20, 2004, Federal Register on the proposed special 4(d) rule. It does, however, give the Service additional time to evaluate and consider all of the comments it received in response to the proposed rule.

A final determination to list beluga sturgeon as threatened under the Act was published on April 21, 2004; however, the listing's effective date was delayed until October 21, 2004.

For more information on the proposed special rule and this interim rule, go to: <http://www.international.fws.gov>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 Fish and Wildlife Management offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

(end text)

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

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Text: International Consortium Awards \$5.5 Million for DNA Encyclopedia

(Compilation may allow use of genome to treat disease, health institute says)

The National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) has awarded \$5.5 million for new tools for an effort to produce a catalog of all parts of the human genome crucial to biological function, according to an October 21 NHGRI press release.

In an article published in the October 22 issue of Science, the Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) consortium outlined plans to build a "parts list" of all sequence-based functional elements in the human DNA sequence.

"Creating this monumental reference work will help us mine and fully utilize the human genome sequence. Such knowledge will lead to a far deeper understanding of human biology and stimulate the development of new strategies for improving human health," said NHGRI Director Francis Collins. NHGRI is part of the National Institutes of Health.

Completing the Human Genome Project in April 2003 and publishing the finished human genome sequence in Nature this week marked significant scientific achievements, but they are only the first steps toward the ultimate goal of using human genome sequence information to diagnose, treat and prevent disease.

Researchers have made major strides in using DNA sequence data to help find genes, which are the parts of the genome that code for proteins. But the protein-coding component of these genes makes up only about 1.5 percent of the human genome.

There is strong evidence that other parts of the genome have important functions, but little information exists about where the other "functional elements" are and how they work. The ENCODE project will address this critical goal of genomics research.

NHGRI will deposit all data generated for this project in free, public databases as soon as they are experimentally verified.

The ENCODE consortium includes several research teams in the United States and groups in Canada, Singapore, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The collaborative effort is open to all interested researchers in academia, government and industry who agree to abide by consortium's guidelines.

Information about the project is available at <http://www.genome.gov/ENCODE>

Text of the NHGRI press release follows:

(begin text)

National Institutes of Health
National Human Genome Research Institute
Press release, October 21, 2004

ENCODE consortium publishes scientific strategy

New grants will aid quest to find all functional elements in human DNA

BETHESDA, Md., Thurs., Oct. 21, 2004 -- A research consortium organized by the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), today published a paper in the journal *Science* detailing the scientific rationale and strategy behind its quest to produce a comprehensive catalog of all parts of the human genome crucial to biological function. Also today, NHGRI announced the award of \$5.5 million in technology development grants to provide new tools for the pioneering effort.

In a peer-reviewed article published in the Oct. 22 issue of *Science*, the ENCYClopedia Of DNA Elements (ENCODE) consortium outlines its plans for achieving its ambitious goal of building a "parts list" of all sequence-based functional elements in the human DNA sequence. The list will include: protein-coding genes; non-protein-coding genes; regulatory elements involved in the control of gene transcription; and DNA sequences that mediate chromosomal structure and dynamics. The ENCODE researchers also anticipate they may uncover additional functional elements that have yet to be recognized.

"Creating this monumental reference work will help us mine and fully utilize the human genome sequence. Such knowledge will lead to a far deeper understanding of human biology and stimulate the development of new strategies for improving

human health," said NHGRI Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.

While the completion of the Human Genome Project in April 2003, and the publication of the finished human genome sequence in *Nature* just this week, marked significant scientific achievements, these are only the first steps toward the ultimate goal of using information about the human genome sequence to diagnose, treat and prevent disease. Over the past several years, researchers have made major strides in using DNA sequence data to help find genes, which are the parts of the genome that code for proteins. The protein-coding component of these genes, however, makes up just a small fraction of the human genome -- about 1.5 percent. There is strong evidence that other parts of the genome have important functions, but very little information exists about where these other "functional elements" are located and how they work. The ENCODE project aims to address this critical goal of genomics research.

Launched in September 2003, the ENCODE project is being implemented in three phases: a pilot phase, a technology development phase and a production phase. In the pilot phase, which is expected to last three years, ENCODE researchers are devising and testing high-throughput ways of efficiently applying known approaches to identify functional elements. Their collaborative efforts are centered on 44 DNA targets, which together cover about 1 percent of the human genome, or about 30 million base pairs. The target regions were strategically selected to provide a representative cross section of the entire human genome sequence. Simultaneously, in the second phase of the ENCODE Project, the technology development component, other research groups are striving to develop new technologies designed to widen the array of novel methods and technologies available to be applied to the ENCODE project. Guided by the results of the first two phases, NHGRI will decide how to initiate the production phase and expand the ENCODE project to analyze the remaining 99 percent of the human genome.

"Major challenges lie ahead on the road to a complete encyclopedia of DNA elements," said Elise A. Feingold, Ph.D., NHGRI's program director in charge of the ENCODE project. "Such

work is well beyond the scope of any single group. However, by bringing together researchers with a broad range of interests and expertise to work in a highly collaborative setting, we expect that the ENCODE consortium will have the power to achieve a goal of this magnitude."

Among the many hurdles facing the ENCODE consortium is the complexity of the problem. No single experimental approach can be used to identify all functional elements, and many current methods may not provide a cost effective means of finding functional elements in a target as large as the human genome.

Furthermore, many functional elements are only active in certain types of cells or at certain stages of development, which means it may be necessary to analyze many different types of human cells. In addition, if a truly comprehensive inventory is to be created, more work needs to be done to learn about functional elements not surveyed in the pilot project, including centromeres (the middles of chromosomes) and telomeres (the ends of chromosomes). In their Science article, ENCODE researchers set forth their plans for addressing these and other challenges.

NHGRI has designated the ENCODE project as a community resource project, which means that all data generated for this project will be deposited in free, public databases as soon as they are experimentally verified. "During the Human Genome Project, our policy of rapid data release enabled researchers to take advantage of human genomic sequence data as soon as they were produced. Similarly, the ENCODE consortium will make valuable data rapidly available for use by scientists around the world," said Mark S. Guyer, Ph.D., director of NHGRI's Division of Extramural Research.

Also today, NHGRI announced the award of a second set of ENCODE technology development grants, which are intended to complement the first set of technology development grants made in 2003 by adding more novel methods and technologies to the consortium's "tool box." "These grants are aimed at broadening the types of functional elements that we are studying under ENCODE and also expanding the portfolio of technologies that we

can apply to them," said Peter Good, Ph.D., NHGRI's program director for genome informatics.

Recipients of the 2004 ENCODE Technology Development Grants and their total approximate funding are: Joseph R. Ecker, Ph.D., The Salk Institute, La Jolla, Calif. - "Genome Wide Analysis of DNA Methylation" - \$1.5 million (3 years) Vishwanath Iyer, Ph.D., University of Texas, Austin -- "Sequence Tag Analysis of Genomic Enrichment (STAGE) and Formaldehyde-Assisted Isolation of Regulatory Elements (FAIRE) for Regulatory Element Identification" - \$1.3 million (3 years) Yijun Ruan, Ph.D., Genome Institute of Singapore - "Di-tag Technologies for Complete Transcriptome Annotation" - \$1 million (3 years) Thomas Tullius, Ph.D., Boston University - "Structure of Genomic DNA at Single-Nucleotide Resolution" - \$870,000 (3 years) Madaiah Puttaraju, Ph.D., Intronn Inc., Gaithersburg, Md. - "Use of RNA Trans-splicing to Identify Splice Sites" - \$420,000 (2 years) Scott Tenenbaum, Ph.D., University at Albany, State University of New York - "Identifying Functional Regulatory Elements in RNA" - \$410,000 (2 years) The ENCODE consortium currently is comprised of several research teams in the United States, as well as groups in Canada, Singapore, Spain and the United Kingdom. The collaborative effort is open to all interested researchers in academia, government and industry who agree to abide by the consortium's guidelines.

For more detailed information on the ENCODE project, including a complete list of participants and the consortium's data release and accessibility policies, go to: www.genome.gov/ENCODE. ENCODE data that can be directly linked to genomic sequence will be made available at the University of California, Santa Cruz ENCODE Genome Browser (www.genome.ucsc.edu/ENCODE) and the ENSEMBL Browser (www.ensembl.org).

NHGRI is one of 27 institutes and centers at NIH, an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services. The NHGRI Division of Extramural Research supports grants for research and for training and career development at sites nationwide.

Additional information about NHGRI can be found at: www.genome.gov

(end text)

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Text: Earth Drags Space and Time as It Rotates, Scientists Say

(U.S., Italian researchers find direct evidence of bizarre effect)

An international team of NASA and university researchers has found the first direct evidence that the Earth drags space and time around itself as it rotates, according to an October 21 NASA press release.

The researchers believe they have measured the effect, first predicted in 1918 as a result of Einstein's theory of general relativity, by precisely observing shifts in the orbits of two Earth-orbiting laser-ranging satellites -- the Laser Geodynamics Satellite I (LAGEOS I), a NASA spacecraft; and LAGEOS II, a joint NASA/Italian Space Agency (ASI) spacecraft.

The research, reported in the journal *Nature*, is the first accurate measurement of a bizarre effect that predicts a rotating mass will drag space around it. The Lense-Thirring effect, named after Austrian physicists Joseph Lense and Hans Thirring, is also called frame dragging.

"General relativity predicts massive rotating objects should drag space-time around themselves as they rotate," Pavlis said. "Frame dragging is like what happens if a bowling ball spins in a thick fluid such as molasses. As the ball spins, it pulls the molasses around itself. Anything stuck in the molasses will also move around the ball. Similarly, as the Earth rotates, it pulls space-time in its vicinity around itself. This will shift the orbits of satellites near Earth."

The study is a follow-up to earlier work in 1998 in which the authors' multinational team reported the first direct detection of the effect.

Graphics and other material about this research are available at http://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/lookingatearth/earth_drag.html

Text of the NASA press release follows:

(begin text)

NASA
Press release, October 21, 2004
[Washington, D.C.]

AS THE WORLD TURNS, IT DRAGS SPACE AND TIME

An international team of NASA and university researchers has found the first direct evidence the Earth is dragging space and time around itself as it rotates.

The researchers believe they have measured the effect, first predicted in 1918 by using Einstein's theory of general relativity, by precisely observing shifts in the orbits of two Earth-orbiting laser-ranging satellites. The researchers observed the orbits of the Laser Geodynamics Satellite I (LAGEOS I), a NASA spacecraft, and LAGEOS II, a joint NASA/Italian Space Agency (ASI) spacecraft.

The research, reported in the journal *Nature*, is the first accurate measurement of a bizarre effect that predicts a rotating mass will drag space around it. The Lense-Thirring Effect is also known as frame dragging.

The team was led by Dr. Ignazio Ciufolini of the University of Lecce, Italy, and Dr. Eric C. Pavlis of the Joint Center for Earth System Technology, a research collaboration between NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md., and the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

"General relativity predicts massive rotating objects should drag space-time around themselves as they rotate," Pavlis said. "Frame dragging is like what happens if a bowling ball spins in a thick fluid such as molasses. As the ball spins, it pulls the molasses around itself. Anything stuck in the molasses will

also move around the ball. Similarly, as the Earth rotates, it pulls space-time in its vicinity around itself. This will shift the orbits of satellites near Earth."

The study is a follow-up to earlier work in 1998 where the authors' team reported the first direct detection of the effect.

The previous measurement was much less accurate than the current work, due to inaccuracies in the gravitational model available at the time. Data from NASA's GRACE mission allowed for a vast improvement in the accuracy of new models, which made this new result possible.

"We found the plane of the orbits of LAGEOS I and II were shifted about six feet (two meters) per year in the direction of the Earth's rotation," Pavlis said. "Our measurement agrees 99 percent with what is predicted by general relativity, which is within our margin of error of plus or minus five percent. Even if the gravitational model errors are off by two or three times the officially quoted values, our measurement is still accurate to 10 percent or better." Future measurements by Gravity Probe B, a NASA spacecraft launched in 2004, should reduce this error margin to less than one percent. This promises to tell researchers much more about the physics involved.

Ciufolini's team, using the LAGEOS satellites, previously observed the Lense-Thirring effect. It has recently been observed around distant celestial objects with intense gravitational fields, such as black holes and neutron stars.

The new research around Earth is the first direct, precise measurement of this phenomenon at the five to 10 percent level. The team analyzed an 11-year period of laser ranging data from the LAGEOS satellites from 1993 to 2003, using a method devised by Ciufolini a decade ago.

The measurements required the use of an extremely accurate model of the Earth's gravitational field, called EIGEN-GRACE02S, which became available only recently, based on an analysis of GRACE data. The model was developed at the GeoForschungs Zentrum Potsdam, Germany, by a group who are co-principal investigators of the GRACE mission

along with the Center for Space Research of the University of Texas at Austin.

LAGEOS II, launched in 1992, and its predecessor, LAGEOS I, launched in 1976, are passive satellites dedicated exclusively to laser ranging. The process entails sending laser pulses to the satellite from ranging stations on Earth and then recording the round-trip travel time. Given the known value for the speed of light, this measurement enables scientists to precisely determine the distances between laser ranging stations on Earth and the satellite.

NASA and Stanford University, Palo Alto, Calif. developed Gravity Probe B. It will precisely check tiny changes in the direction of spin of four gyroscopes contained in an Earth satellite orbiting 400-miles directly over the poles. The experiment will test two theories relating to Einstein's Theory of General Relativity, including the Lense-Thirring Effect. These effects, though small for Earth, have far-reaching implications for the nature of matter and the structure of the universe.

For graphics and other material about this research on the Web, visit: http://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/lookingatearth/earth_drag.html

(end text)

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

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Transcript: White House Daily Briefing, October 22

(Terrorism, Iraq, Afghanistan, President's schedule)

White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan briefed reporters on Air Force One October 22 as they accompanied President Bush on a campaign trips to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and Canton, Ohio.

Following are the transcripts of the White House briefings:

(begin transcript)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania)

For Immediate Release
October 22, 2004

PRESS GAGGLE BY SCOTT McCLELLAN

Aboard Air Force One En Route Wilkes-Barre,
Pennsylvania

9:42 A.M. EDT

MR. McCLELLAN: Okay, we'll dispense with the niceties. The President taped his radio address this morning. It will focus on the war on terrorism and intelligence reform. Then he had his briefings. And we go to Wilkes-Barre first, where we make remarks. I'm going to come back to that in just a second. Then he'll participate in a Focus on Medical Liability Reform and Health Care in Canton, Ohio. And then we have the Victory 2004 dinner in St. Petersburg, and we'll overnight in St. Pete Beach.

Let's see, today on the Wilkes-Barre speech, the President will have a new speech. Today's remarks are part of contrasting and clarifying the choices as election day approaches. The President will outline the way families will be looking at issues and making their choice on election day. He will talk about the choices in a way many moms and dads across America will make their final decision. And he will talk about the five commitments to families.

And those are, one, first and foremost on the minds of families, is their security. Without security, families cannot do the many other things they want to achieve. And so that's where he'll talk about the differences and the clear choice on the war on terrorism. He has a comprehensive strategy for winning the war. Senator Kerry has a narrow view of the war on terrorism.

And secondly, he'll talk about family budgets. It's important that we continue pro-growth policies that have put us on a path to greater prosperity. And the President, I expect, will talk about the importance of tax relief to help create an environment for strong job growth, and contrast that with Senator Kerry, as well.

Third, he'll talk about quality of life issues for our families, and the importance of improving the quality of life for our families. That's where the President will focus on health care and education, and contrast his approaches with Senator Kerry. Senator Kerry's view is based on a philosophy of bigger, more intrusive government, it's based on a status-quo approach. The President will talk about his reform approach and his approach that believe -- that is based on a philosophy of giving people more control over their lives. It's a philosophy based on trusting people.

And fourth, he'll talk about retirement, Social Security and Medicare. He'll touch on Social Security and Medicare in that portion of the remarks, and he'll talk about what we've done to strengthen and improve Medicare. And then he'll talk about the importance of saving and strengthening Social Security. I think you can expect that he'll talk about how grandparents want to make sure that their grandchildren are able to build a nest egg for their future, and have the same kind of benefits that they have today.

And fifth, he'll talk about values, the values of families. And I think he'll draw some sharp contrasts here, and he'll talk about how Senator Kerry's views are out of the mainstream when it comes to issues like marriage and partial birth abortion. Senator Kerry opposed the Defense of Marriage Act, for instance, and he opposed banning partial birth abortion. And Senator Kerry has talked about how Hollywood represents the heart and soul of America, and the President believes the heart and soul of America is found in our families and our communities and our religious institutions. And the values of families tend to be undermined by Hollywood, the values that they try to instill in their kids as they're raising them.

Full transcript is available at
<http://www.usemb.se/wireless/500/index.htm>

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**Transcript: State Department Noon Briefing,
October 22**

*(MEPI Funding Statement/OSCE/US Elections, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus,
Lebanon, Korea, Cyprus, Albania)*

State Department Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli
briefed reporters October 22.

Following is the transcript of the State Department
briefing:

(begin transcript)

U.S. Department of State
Daily Press Briefing Index
Friday, October 22, 2004
1:00 p.m. EDT

Briefer: Adam Ereli, Deputy Spokesman

DEPARTMENT

-- MEPI Funding Statement
-- OSCE Observers in United States
Elections/Query on whether OSCE Observers
Report to Department of State

RUSSIA

-- Russia's Ratification of Kyoto Protocol/U.S.
Policy Towards Kyoto Protocol

UKRAINE

-- Elections and Ukrainian Policy in Iraq
-- U.S. Policy Towards Ukraine and View of
Elections

BELARUS

-- Query on U.S. Reaction to Belarus Elections
-- Impact of International Assessments of Elections
and U.S. View

LEBANON

-- Airing of Programs by Al Manar Television in
U.S./Hezbollah's Role
-- Query on what Steps U.S. can take to Stop
Broadcasts

KOREA

-- Status of Six Party Talks/U.S. Position

CYPRUS

-- Air Connections/Travel from North Cyprus
-- Query on the Isolation of Turkish Cypriot
Community

ALBANIA

-- Destruction of Chemical Weapons Stockpile
-- Issue on Destruction of Chemical Weapons
Stockpiles/Involvement of International Observers

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2004
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE
NOTED)

1:00 p.m. EDT

MR. ERELI: Good afternoon, everybody.
Welcome to our briefing for today.

If I may, let me begin by saying we will be putting
out an announcement after the briefing calling
attention to the awarding of an additional \$18.5
million in economic support funds as part of the
Middle East Partnership Initiative. This money will
go to support projects in Jordan, Algeria, Morocco,
Tunisia, Egypt, the West Bank and Gaza that focus
on our effort to help these people -- civic
organizations, citizens groups, educational
institutions in these countries that reform and
develop.

Specific projects funded will include alternative
dispute resolution, training, women's leadership and
networking skills training, promoting primary and
secondary education. We will also be funding seven
university partnerships totaling just under \$700,000,
and we will be putting together with a Jordanian
institution an interactive curriculum for English as a
Foreign Language in the Jordanian educational
system.

So these are exciting projects, I think, that
underscore our continuing commitment to
supporting the peoples in the regions and desire for
progress, for change. It's an important program.

It's one we're committed to. And it's one that we continue funding and continue working on, so details will be available after the briefing.

Full transcript is available at
<http://www.usemb.se/wireless/500/index.htm>

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Text: White House Reports on Humanitarian Assistance in Darfur

(United States leads international relief effort)

The White House issued a statement October 21 that outlines current U.S. efforts to provide humanitarian relief to the Darfur region in Sudan and calls on members of the international community to work together.

The statement also praises the African Union peacekeeping force that has been deployed to bring security to the region.

The White House statement follows:

(begin text)

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
October 21, 2004

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

Humanitarian Assistance for the People of Darfur

The United States is working to reduce suffering from the Darfur crisis. With manpower and money, we continue to support the humanitarian efforts underway in order to avert an even greater loss of life in the region.

The United States leads the world in responding to the crisis in Darfur. We have provided over \$300 million in aid to date for food, shelter, access to clean water, and basic health services for the 1.5 million displaced people of Darfur. Recognizing the severity of crisis, the United States has already exceeded its humanitarian aid pledge for 2005 and will provide additional assistance.

The United States has disaster specialists on the ground, is assisting UN organizations and their efforts, is funding dozens of NGOs that directly assist people in need, is funding human rights monitoring, and is engaging the Sudanese government to further improve humanitarian access to the region. This support, combined with that of other countries, has made it possible for at least some assistance to reach 90 percent of Darfur's displaced people.

Though there has been some progress in reducing the suffering and loss of life, the crisis in Darfur continues. The world community must work together to bring an end to the crisis while simultaneously supporting persons already displaced. We commend the African Union's efforts to stem the violence and call on the world to support their efforts. We also urge the international community to respond generously to fund the vital programs that support the victims in both Chad and Sudan. Only when the people of Darfur can safely return home will the job be done.

(end text)

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

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Text: U.S. Dismayed by Undemocratic Election, Referendum in Belarus

(Ambassador Stephan Minikes addresses OSCE Permanent Council)

The United States is dismayed by the "systematic, egregious violations" of numerous OSCE commitments in the preparation for, and during, the October 17 parliamentary elections and referendum on abolishing presidential term limits in Belarus, Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes told the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) October 21.

Citing the "damning reports" by the OSCE International Election Observation Mission, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media,

and independent domestic and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) about "the intimidating electoral environment, the deficient and abusively implemented legal electoral framework and misconduct during actual voting and vote counting," Minikes said, "the Government of Belarus has called into question its own democratic authority and legitimacy and that of its constitution."

The OSCE Mission's preliminary report on the elections is available in English and Russian at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/>

Following is the text of Minikes' statement as provided by USOSCE:

(begin text)

United States Mission to the OSCE
Vienna, Austria
October 21, 2004

STATEMENT ON BELARUSIAN
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND
REFERENDUM

AS DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR STEPHAN
M. MINIKES TO THE PERMANENT
COUNCIL

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States feels compelled to express its dismay with the systematic, egregious violations of numerous OSCE commitments in the lead up to and during the October 17 parliamentary elections and referendum on abolishing presidential term limits in Belarus.

In the 1990 Copenhagen Document on the Human Dimension, the participating States declared that "the will of the people, freely and fairly expressed through periodic and genuine elections, is the basis of the authority and legitimacy of all government."

Yet, the OSCE International Election Observation Mission concluded, and I quote again here that "the Belarusian authorities failed to ensure the fundamental conditions necessary for the will of the

people to serve as a basis for authority of government." What a remarkable indictment.

In light of the damning reports from the OSCE International Election Observation Mission, of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and of independent domestic and international NGOs about the intimidating electoral environment, the deficient and abusively implemented legal electoral framework and misconduct during actual voting and vote counting, the Government of Belarus has called into question its own democratic authority and legitimacy and that of its constitution. Moreover, the post-election beating, arrest, and/or detainment of journalists, opposition leaders and other peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators, as well as the refusal of Belarusian authorities to broadcast news of the demonstrations, directly flouts the spirit and commitments of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman, this Delegation has been frequently accused by our Belarusian colleagues of prejudging events in Belarus, but, sadly, the events leading up to and on October 17 prove that many concerns raised by the U.S. and other delegations over the past year were completely well-founded and have unfortunately come to pass.

The OSCE/ODIHR and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly preliminary conclusions on the October 17 voting in Belarus speak for themselves. There is no need to recite the litany of violations of OSCE commitments found in those conclusions.

The United States commends the OSCE International Election Observation Mission for standing by its tested methodology and OSCE principles by providing an unvarnished assessment of electoral-related events in Belarus on and before October 17, despite the unprecedented and inappropriate pressure directed at the observation mission by its Belarusian hosts.

Indeed, the deliberate obstruction of OSCE observers by Belarusian authorities recounted in the preliminary conclusions was again, gravely disappointing.

The United States supports and respects the Belarusian people, their sovereignty and their right

to democratically decide their future. And we call on the Belarusian Government to recommit itself to its OSCE commitments and the ideals of the Helsinki process so that the people of Belarus have the real ability to decide their own future.

Thank you.

(end text)

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

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Text: U.S. Still Deeply Concerned Over School Crisis in Transnistria

(Ambassador Stephan Minikes addresses OSCE Permanent Council)

The United States remains deeply concerned about the schools crisis in the Transnistria region of Moldova, according to Ambassador Stephan Minikes.

Addressing the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna, Austria, October 21, Minikes acknowledged "some progress" in resolving the crisis but counseled against having any illusions about it having been fully resolved. "The international community must continue to put pressure on the Transnistrian regime," he said.

The crisis began in July, when Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking separatists forcibly closed a Moldovan language school in Tiraspol in Transnistria, threatened other minority language schools with closure and began impeding international assistance to a local orphanage.

The school in Tiraspol remains closed, Minikes noted, "ransacked and damaged ... to such an extent that it is now uninhabitable."

He urged both parties to the conflict to accept the invitation of the mediators -- Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE -- to hold consultations as soon as possible.

Following is the text of his statement as provided by USOSCE:

(begin text)

United States Mission to the OSCE
Vienna, Austria
October 21, 2004

STATEMENT ON SCHOOLS AND THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT PROCESS IN MOLDOVA

AS DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR STEPHAN M. MINIKES TO THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Since the last regular Permanent Council meeting on September 30, there has been some progress toward ending the schools crisis in the Transnistria region of Moldova. The Moldovan-language, Latin-script school in Rybnitsa was allowed to re-open in temporary facilities, and we welcome this long overdue development.

However, the school in Tiraspol remains closed, without a building in which to hold classes. The building that the school used to occupy was appropriated by the Transnistrian authorities, who, according to the reports that we have seen, ransacked and damaged it to such an extent that it is now uninhabitable.

Mr. Chairman, we remain deeply concerned over this ongoing situation. There has been progress, yes, but let us not have any illusions: the crisis has not been fully resolved by any means.

Another ongoing issue that the Permanent Council should not ignore is the Transnistrian militia's continuing illegal occupation of the train station in Bender.

The international community must continue to put pressure on the Transnistrian regime. We again call on Russia and on Ukraine -- as well as all other OSCE states -- to respect Moldova's authority to

grant or deny customs certification for Transnistrian enterprises.

The United States welcomes the joint statement signed by the mediators in Sofia on October 13, and we strongly urge both parties to the conflict to accept the invitation of the mediators to hold consultations as soon as possible.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

(end text)

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

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Text: U.S. Urges Full Support for OSCE Mission in Georgia

(Paul W. Jones addresses the OSCE Permanent Council)

The United States urged full support October 21 for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Georgia, including the OSCE Border Monitoring Operation (BMO).

American diplomat Paul W. Jones addressed the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna in response to presentations by Roy Reeve, the OSCE head of mission in Georgia, and Heikki Talvitie, the EU special representative for the South Caucasus.

"Let's give Ambassador Reeve the human and financial resources he needs to effectively fulfill his mandate and continue to assist Georgia in becoming a stable, democratic and prosperous state," Jones said.

He also urged the Russian Federation to reconsider its position that the Border Monitoring Operation should close at the end of 2004. "Particularly after the terrible tragedy of Beslan, it is vital that the border be as secure as possible," he said.

Following is the text of his statement as provided by USOSCE:

(begin text)

United States Mission to the OSCE
Vienna, Austria
October 21, 2004

RESPONSE TO OSCE HEAD OF MISSION IN GEORGIA, ROY REEVE, AND EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE SOUTH CAUCASUS, HEIKKI TALVITIE

AS DELIVERED BY DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION, PAUL W. JONES TO THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to join the other delegations in extending a warm welcome back to the Permanent Council for Ambassadors Reeve and Talvitie.

As Ambassador Reeve has so accurately noted, events in Georgia occur "rapidly and unpredictably." This has certainly been the case over the six months since Ambassador Reeve's last report to the Permanent Council.

The United States commends Ambassador Reeve and his staff for continuing their high standard of performance in all three dimensions.

I must disagree with the assertion by my distinguished Russian colleague that Ambassador Reeve has exceeded his mandate. The truth is that not only has he not exceeded his mandate, but unfortunately, and through no fault of their own, Ambassador Reeve and his staff are encountering obstacles to the effective fulfillment of the Mission's mandate. We have never seen indication that Ambassador Reeve and his staff have been anything but objective in carrying out their mandate or in reporting on developments.

Six Mission military monitors for all of South Ossetia are far too few. We urge the Permanent Council to give positive and prompt consideration to increasing that number.

The United States also urges the Russian Federation to reconsider its position that the Border

Monitoring Operation, or BMO, should close at the end of this year. It is clear from the high number of unauthorized border crossings observed by BMO personnel this year that there is a need for the operation to continue. The BMO may also have served as a deterrent, stopping even more unauthorized crossings.

Ambassador Reeve has outlined, and indeed has already implemented, measures in which the BMO can be made more efficient. We may also be able to improve the lines of communication so that both Georgian and Russian border enforcement personnel can respond in a timely fashion to illegal crossings.

While the Permanent Council never envisioned an indefinite mandate for the BMO, the United States believes that it is too soon to terminate this operation. Particularly after the terrible tragedy of Beslan, it is vital that the border be as secure as possible. We agree with the Georgian government that the BMO contributes to this goal.

The OSCE Mission in Georgia has also been actively engaged in the area of its mandate dealing with promoting negotiations aimed at reaching a peaceful political settlement in the South Ossetia conflict. We commend Ambassador Reeve for his tireless efforts toward this end.

Ambassador Reeve has reported that that two civilian casualties have resulted from land mines that were deployed, but not marked. We commend the declared intention of the new commander of the Russian Federation Peacekeeping Force to try to clear landmines that have been laid, and urge all sides to cooperate in that effort.

We regret the shooting deaths of two peacekeepers in South Ossetia on October 12. Fruitless violence like this points to the need for continued high-level political engagement.

In this vein, the United States was pleased to hear from Ambassador Reeves that the long-awaited meeting between Georgian Prime Minister Zhvania, and South Ossetian leader Kokoity will take place by November 10. We call on both sides to make every effort to end the delays and to ensure that

such a meeting results in an agreed next step toward a settlement process.

Ambassador Reeve has noted that an agreement was reached in Moscow to hold a high-level meeting of the JCC parties at the invitation of the Chairman-in-Office. This would be a logical follow-up to the Zhvania-Kokoity meeting. The United States appreciates the readiness of the CiO to host a high-level meeting of the parties and would welcome the opportunity, together with the EU, to participate.

With so many urgent and pressing issues facing the OSCE Mission, it would be easy to overlook some of the Mission's other important achievements. Fortunately, the Mission staff is aware that its work requires not just being reactive, but also being proactive, and taking initiatives with a long-term view.

Ambassador Reeve is to be commended for reacting quickly to events in Ajara and establishing projects in the area of democratic institution building. But equally important is his continued focus on the long term throughout the various crises his Mission has had to confront. For instance, the Mission's support to the regional offices of the Ombudsman is a crucial program that will yield its results over the long term with greater respect for human rights throughout Georgia.

Another such far-sighted program is the Young Entrepreneurs Scheme. The future of Georgia's economic growth a decade from now may lie in the hands of those young people starting businesses today.

The Mission's attention to anti-trafficking is another area of great importance to the United States. The efforts of the informal working group chaired by the Mission to develop a National Action Plan against trafficking are significant. We call on the Georgian government to adopt the Plan as soon as it is ready, and look forward to the fulfillment of Ambassador Reeve's expectation that the Plan will be approved by Presidential decree by the end of the year.

Nor should we overlook the Mission's ongoing efforts in the areas of counter-terrorism and weapons destruction and recycling. In the former area, the Mission's practical assistance to Georgian

authorities in spotting false documents and improving airport security and border controls is very valuable. In the latter area, the Mission is engaged on reducing weapons stockpiles, and the United States will, of course, remain a contributor to this effort.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Talvitie for keeping the OSCE informed of his activities. The United States greatly values your observations and insights, based on your long experience and your wide web of contacts throughout the Caucasus. The UN's engagement in the region is highly significant, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the United States feels strongly that Ambassador Reeve and his staff are doing a tremendous job in Georgia, despite numerous crises and obstacles. Let's give Ambassador Reeve the human and financial resources he needs to effectively fulfill his mandate and continue to assist Georgia in becoming a stable, democratic and prosperous state.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(end text)

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

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Text: U.S. Congratulates Bosnia on Successful Elections

(Says October 2 municipal elections are good sign for democracy, rule of law)

The United States congratulates Bosnia-Herzegovina on its successful October 2 municipal elections and commends the country for assuming sole responsibility in organizing and funding the elections.

"The United States views the successful conduct of elections as a sign of further progress toward the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina," said American diplomat

Katherine A. Brucker to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Permanent Council in Vienna, Austria, October 21.

Following is the text of her statement as provided by the USOSCE:

(begin text)

United States Mission to the OSCE
<http://www.usosce.gov/>
Vienna, Austria
October 21, 2004

STATEMENT ON MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

AS DELIVERED BY DEPUTY POLITICAL
COUNSELOR KATHERINE A. BRUCKER TO
THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States takes note of ODIHR's Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions on the October 2 municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The United States congratulates Bosnia and Herzegovina for the successful conduct of the elections, which were conducted in a generally calm and peaceful manner and without major irregularities. We are heartened that the BiH election authorities have been addressing the handful of cases where irregularities did occur. We also commend Bosnia and Herzegovina for assuming sole responsibility for the organization and funding of the elections.

The United States views the successful conduct of elections as a sign of further progress toward the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The United States would also like to take this opportunity to thank ODIHR for its efforts in observing the elections.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(end text)

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

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Text: Middle East Partnership Initiative Announces New Programs

(State's Ereli says \$18.5 million will fund the new MEPI programs)

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) has added new programs costing \$18.5 million to promote reforms in the Middle East and North Africa, according to a statement released by State Department Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli October 22.

From fiscal years 2002 through 2004, Congress allocated \$218 million to fund MEPI programs. Administration officials say they are seeking a congressional allocation of \$100 million in fiscal year 2005. MEPI is designed to promote reforms in politics, economics, and education with a special emphasis on women,

Following is the State Department announcement about the new MEPI programs:

(begin text)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
October 22, 2004

Statement by Adam Ereli, Deputy Spokesman

MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE FUNDS NEARLY \$20 MILLION FOR ADDITIONAL REFORM PROJECTS

The Middle East Partnership Initiative is announcing new awards for an additional \$18.5 million in Economic Support Funds as a fundamental component of its overall strategy to support indigenous reform in the Middle East and North Africa. MEPI is pleased to announce eleven new awards under the Standing Program Announcement, seven University Partnerships in six

countries or territories, one award for the Partnership Schools Program and a major program to develop and implement an online, interactive English as a Foreign Language Program in Jordan.

MEPI funds will support projects such as alternative dispute resolution training to advance legal reform; developing the capacity for outreach and community self-help; strengthening women's leadership, business and networking skills; and promoting inclusive primary and secondary education. Seven University Partnerships totaling just under \$700,000 will improve the quality of instruction, research, and materials in key reform areas and enhance Arab universities' administrative and managerial capacity. Awards will go to the regional Partnership Schools Program to enhance primary and secondary education throughout the region and for the development of an interactive curriculum for English as a Foreign Language as part of the Jordan Education Initiative.

Reform efforts will focus primarily on economic, political, and educational reform and women's empowerment in Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, the West Bank and Gaza. The grantees proposed creative linkages between non-governmental organizations, government ministries, civil society, and business.

MEPI is a Presidential initiative that supports economic, political and educational reform efforts in the Middle East and expanded opportunity for all people of the region, especially women and youth. For more information on these programs and the Initiative, please visit the MEPI site at <http://MEPI.state.gov>.

(end text)

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

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Text: American Astronaut Will Vote From Space on Election Day

(Texas lawmakers passed 1997 bill to let astronauts vote from space)

Floating around the Earth 360 kilometers up, NASA Astronaut Leroy Chiao is not too far from the polls to stand up and be counted on Election Day, according to an October 21 NASA press release.

Chiao, who is a few days into a six-month mission as commander of the 10th crew of the International Space Station, will cast his vote by secure e-mail in the Nov. 2 national election. His crewmate is Russian Cosmonaut Salizhan Sharipov.

Text of the NASA press release follows:

(begin text)

NASA
Press release, October 21, 2004
[Washington, D.C.]

Where There's a Will to Vote, There's a Way

Floating around the Earth 230 miles up, NASA Astronaut Leroy Chiao is not too far from the polls to stand up and be counted on Election Day.

From the International Space Station, Chiao will cast his vote in the Nov. 2, 2004, national election. Chiao is passionate about his civic duty. He hopes his ballot sets an example for others. From space, he has sent a special message to all eligible voters urging them to go to the polls. His get out and vote public service announcements will air on the NASA TV Video File starting today at noon EDT.

"A few years ago, the Texas State Legislature passed a bill allowing astronauts to vote from space," Chiao said from aboard the Space Station. "Why did they go to so much trouble for just a few people? Because voting is each citizen's most basic, yet most powerful tool for participating in America's cherished right to choose its leaders."

Chiao is only a few days into a six-month mission as commander of the tenth crew of the International Space Station. His Expedition 10 crewmate is Russian Cosmonaut Salizhan Sharipov.

NASA TV is available on the Web and via satellite in the continental U.S. on AMC-6, Transponder 9C, C-Band, at 72 degrees west longitude. The

frequency is 3880.0 MHz. Polarization is vertical, and audio is monaural at 6.80 MHz. In Alaska and Hawaii, NASA TV is available on AMC-7, Transponder 18C, C-Band, at 137 degrees west longitude. The frequency is 4060.0 MHz. Polarization is vertical, and audio is monaural at 6.80 MHz.

For NASA TV information and schedules on the Internet, visit: <http://www.nasa.gov/ntv>

(end text)

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Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)