

# DAILY BULLETIN

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## U.S. PROVIDES SMALL BUSINESS LOANS TO PEOPLE WITH AIDS

Positive Partnership Program aims to reduce “stigmatization”

A new U.S.-led initiative aims to reduce the “stigmatization” of people living with HIV/AIDS by associating HIV-positive people with successful businesses and encouraging cooperation between those with the disease and others in the community.

Dubbed “Positive Partnership,” the program promotes economic development by encouraging entrepreneurship, especially among those recovering from the disease who might otherwise have trouble finding employment.

The program gives small loans to teams of two people, one an HIV-positive person, the other an HIV-negative person. The teams then develop their own business plans, but they are provided with career training, technical assistance and oversight.

In Bangkok, Thailand, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Randall Tobias and Assistant Administrator for Global Health E. Anne Peterson of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) visited a locally run AIDS project to distribute loans under the new program. Their July 13 visit came on the sidelines of the XV International AIDS Conference.

The program is funded by USAID and is a joint collaboration between the Bangkok’s Mercy Centre and

Family Health International, a nongovernmental organization that is a U.S. partner in AIDS programs.

Following is a fact sheet on the Positive Partnership program from the U.S. Embassy Bangkok:

#### Fact Sheet: Positive Partnership

Positive Partnership is a joint program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the Mercy Centre, the Population and Community Development Association (PDA), and Family Health International (FHI).

The rationale for the Positive Partnership program is twofold:

(1) to reduce the stigmatization of people living with HIV/ AIDS by associating HIV-positive people with successful businesses and encouraging cooperation between those with the disease and others in the community

(2) to promote economic development by encouraging entrepreneurship, especially among those recovering from the disease who might otherwise have trouble finding employment.

#### Background

In May 2004, USAID began funding of Positive Partnership, a program that gives small loans to teams of two people, consisting of one HIV-positive person and one HIV-negative person. The program is a joint collaboration between the Mercy Centre, PDA and FHI. Mercy Centre selects the participants and regularly conducts home visits to examine the status of their health. PDA provides career training to the participants, manages the finances, and distributes information about HIV/ AIDS. Finally, FHI provides technical, oversight and financial assistance for the project.

PDA runs other similar programs in Thailand, but with the assistance of USAID, this is a unique opportunity for PDA to partner with Mercy Centre and run an HIV/AIDS assistance program in depressed areas of Bangkok, which face both a high rate of AIDS and unemployment.

The program provides loans that range from 3,000 THB to 12,000 THB (about 75 USD to 300 USD). Participants are required to pay back the money according to payment plans uniquely designed for each couple and at an interest rate of 5%. After receiving these loans, participants

develop their own business plans - typically some type of handicraft or food business. Others have invested in a sewing machine or raw materials.

The first five loans were distributed on June 1, 2004 and an additional five loans were announced during Ambassador Tobias' visit to the Mercy Centre on Tuesday, July 13, 2004.

#### Partners

##### The Mercy Centre

The Mercy Centre is the home of The Human Development Foundation, which serves over 30 slum communities in Bangkok with a staff of 295. Its current director, Father Joe Maier, and Sister Maria Chantavarodom, founded the Human Development Foundation in 1974. Father Joe Maier, a Redemptorist Priest, operates the Human Development Foundation/ Mercy Centre as a nondenominational organization. The children in the foundation's care are raised in their native religions and taught to respect all religions.

The Centre includes four orphanages, a shelter for street children, a home for mothers and children with HIV/ AIDS, an adult AIDS hospice, a kindergarten for neighborhood children as well as the administrative offices of the foundation's community work. The foundation directly cares for over 200 children, aged 3 to 18, who live in orphanages in and around Mercy Centre. There are 48 children with AIDS that live at the Mercy Centre, and they attend school and participate in activities with other children, as they are willing and able.

The Mercy Centre also manages the largest free AIDS hospice and homecare system in Bangkok, reaching over 300 patients and their families every year, about half of whom eventually return home to their families. Moreover, the center provides a number of AIDS-center community outreach programs, including an education program in factories, schools, and youth detention centers that reaches approximately 10,000 high-risk individuals per year.

##### The Population and Community Development Association (PDA)

PDA was founded in 1974 and is based in Bangkok but operates 16 regional development centers and branch offices around Thailand. Senator Mechai Viravaidya, its chairman and founder, played a central role in formulating Thailand's AIDS policy in the late 1980s and early

1990s. PDA has traditionally endorsed family planning in rural areas to promote economic development, but naturally evolved into an AIDS advocacy organization with the arrival of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s. Many of PDA's projects are market-based solutions to poverty as developing the private sector is the route to community development. PDA runs other programs that are similar to the Positive Partnership program, including loan programs for people in rural areas and for women that are living with AIDS.

#### Family Health International (FHI)

FHI is a U.S.-based, non-profit organization working to improve lives through a program of research, education, and services in family health and HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support in 75 countries worldwide. In Thailand, FHI supports a number of programs, including the Positive Partnership program; behavior change interventions among the uniformed services; HIV prevention and support in the Akha hill tribes; a home care project in Bangkok slum communities implemented by the Mercy Centre; HIV prevention and prevention of mother-to-child transmission for Burmese migrants in Mae Sot; and HIV prevention among high-risk men and prison populations. The FHI Thailand program also serves as a regional learning site for other countries in the region and plans to share experiences from the Positive Partnership program with other countries.

#### KELLY RECAPS U.S. EFFORTS TO HALT NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMS

Bush administration committed to multilateral solution

In a July 15 hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, James A. Kelly, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, offered an update on the outcome of the latest round of the Six-Party Talks on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The talks, held in Beijing, concluded June 26. The countries involved in the process are the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and North Korea.

Kelly told the committee that the United States presented a step-by-step proposal at the talks that had been coordinated with South Korea and Japan. He emphasized that the Bush administration will accept "nothing less" than "the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement" of North Korea's nuclear programs and said this would be accomplished through multilateral diplomacy.

"Under the U.S. proposal," Kelly explained, "[North Korea] would, as a first step, commit to dismantle all of its nuclear programs. The parties would then reach agreement on a detailed implementation plan requiring, at a minimum, the supervised disabling, dismantlement and elimination of all nuclear-related facilities and materials; the removal of all nuclear weapons and weapons components, centrifuge and other nuclear parts, fissile material and fuel rods; and a long-term monitoring program."

After an initial preparatory period of about three months' duration, Kelly said, North Korea would be expected to: (1) provide a complete listing of all its nuclear activities and cease all their operations; (2) permit the securing of all fissile material and the monitoring of all fuel rods, and; (3) permit the publicly disclosed and observable disablement of all nuclear weapons/weapons components and key centrifuge parts.

All of these actions, he said, would be monitored subject to international verification.

North Korea would need to include its uranium enrichment program and existing weapons, as well as its plutonium program, under this dismantlement plan, Kelly stressed. He noted that North Korea continues to deny that it has a uranium enrichment program, and speaks of an existing "nuclear deterrent" without admitting to having nuclear weapons.

As North Korea began to carry out its commitments under the proposal, Kelly told the committee, non-U.S. parties would take provisional or temporary steps in response. "These would only yield lasting benefits to [North Korea] after the dismantlement of its nuclear programs had been completed," he said.

For example, Kelly explained, non-U.S. parties would provide heavy fuel oil to North Korea once it agreed to the overall approach. Upon acceptance of a declaration by North Korea, the parties would also provide "provisional multilateral security assurances."

“[I]t is reasonable to conclude that assurances given through the multilateral Six-Party process would have considerably more weight than would bilateral assurances,” Kelly pointed out.

In addition, a study would be undertaken to determine North Korea’s energy requirements and how to meet them by non-nuclear energy programs, the assistant secretary said. The parties would also begin discussions about lifting the remaining economic sanctions on the North Korea and removing the country from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, he added.

The Six-Party Talks, according to Kelly, “offer North Korea the opportunity to improve its relations with the United States and Japan, to end its self-induced political and economic isolation, and to harness the benefits of normal international trade and aid, including establishing relationships with the international financial institutions.”

The next round of talks is slated for September.

Kelly stipulated that “to achieve full integration into the region and a wholly transformed relationship with the United States,” North Korea would have to change its behavior on human rights, address the issues underlying its appearance on the U.S. list of states sponsoring terrorism, eliminate its illegal weapons of mass destruction programs, put an end to the proliferation of missiles and missile-related technology, and adopt a less provocative conventional force disposition.

“By addressing the world’s concerns about its nuclear programs and other issues,” Kelly said, “[North Korea] would have both new resources and opportunities to pursue policies for peaceful growth in the region that is already perhaps the world’s most vibrant, East Asia.”

Kelly said he remains “optimistic on where the talks could lead,” but added: “I personally could not say at this point that [North Korea] has indeed made the strategic calculation to give up its nuclear weapons in return for real peace and prosperity through trade, aid and economic development. My hope is that the serious and extensive discussions with the United States, [South Korea], Japan, China and Russia will convince [North Korea] that a truly denuclearized Korean peninsula is its only viable option.”

## WHITE HOUSE REPORT, JULY 15: PHILIPPINES, CHINA, OLYMPICS

Philippine troop withdrawal from Iraq, U.S. weapons sales to Taiwan, U.S. delegation to Olympics

### PHILIPPINE TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ DISAPPOINTING

“Despite the Philippines’ early removal of troops from Iraq, the United States will continue to work together with them on shared priorities,” White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan told reporters July 15.

“There are a lot of issues that we work closely with the Philippines on, and we will continue to work together on our shared priorities,” he said, “We certainly have worked together in the war on terrorism in a number of areas.”

McClellan expressed disappointment over the Philippine decision, saying it is “a decision that sends the wrong signal to terrorists. You cannot negotiate with terrorists or make a separate peace with terrorists.”

According to news reports, the Philippines began withdrawal of its troops July 14 by removing eight members from Iraq after the terrorist group extended a deadline for Philippine action on the group’s demands.

Many countries have been faced with similar kidnapping threats, but the Philippines is the first nation to remove troops based on these terrorist demands.

“The international community by and large recognizes the importance of confronting and defeating these terrorists,” McClellan said.

The spokesman said that the United States appreciates “commitment from many of the coalition partners who have troops in Iraq and are helping the Iraqi people to strengthen their security forces.”

McClellan called attention to the unanimously approved U.N. Security Council resolution that endorsed Iraq’s interim government, as well as NATO’s commitment to help train Iraqi security forces.

U.S. TO CONTINUE WEAPONS SALES TO TAIWAN

McClellan told reporters that there has been no change in U.S. policy regarding China and Taiwan, despite recent complaints by Chinese leaders about U.S. military assistance to Taiwan.

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice met with Chinese officials July 8. At that time, the officials urged the United States to discontinue the sale of advanced weapons to Taiwan.

According to reports, China has said that the only way for Chinese-U.S. relations to improve is for the United States to halt military aid to Taiwan.

U.S. officials have rejected the recent Chinese request, saying that the United States is adhering to the procedures outlined by the Taiwan Relations Act. Under the act, the United States acknowledges that Taiwan is part of China but also promises to provide weapons to help Taiwan defend itself if its security is threatened.

“In terms of our policy and our position, it remains what it has been,” he said, “We continue to support the one China policy, we continue to support the three communiqués, and we continue to support the Taiwan Relations Act. We have said that we do not support an independence for Taiwan, and our position remains the same on these issues.”

BUSH ANNOUNCES DELEGATION TO OLYMPIC GAMES

President Bush announced July 15 the U.S. presidential delegation to the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.

Former President George H. W. Bush will lead the delegation to the games, scheduled to begin August 13. Members of the delegation will include former first lady Barbara Bush, U.S. Ambassador to Greece Thomas Miller, NFL San Diego Chargers owner Alex Spanos and his wife Faye Spanos, tennis champion Chris Evert, and President Bush’s daughters, Barbara and Jenna Bush.

SEEDS OF PEACE CAMP FOSTERS FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS ENEMY LINES

Teens from Pakistan, Afghanistan, India take message of peace home

By Erin Block  
Washington File Writer

Washington -- Teenagers from Pakistan, India and Afghanistan have lived together, shared meals, shared feelings and become friends at the Seeds of Peace International Camp in rural Maine during the past three weeks.

For some of the teens, it took traveling to the other side of the world to sit at the same table with their neighbors.

Seeds of Peace is an organization working to dissolve animosity between nations in conflict by bringing together young people from both sides. The organization builds peace through people-to-people contact at a camp where they absorb the message of “coexistence.”

“Back at home I was told that Seeds of Peace was just an imaginary world where two enemies unite and it’s just a dream. But I came to camp and realized that this is not a dream. It is a reality working to exist,” said Divya Moorjaney, a member of the India delegation.

“We are the young Seeds, and we are growing into the trees of peace,” said Moorjaney, while addressing fellow “Seeds” and State Department officials on July 13 in Washington.

Dialogue sessions and the Color Games -- the camp Olympics -- facilitate understanding and respect for one another.

The camp breaks Seeds up into groups of 10 for 90-minute dialogue meetings, called coexistence sessions.

“Before I came to peace camp, I knew I would have to talk to my so-called enemy so I came into the camp with an open mind. Seeds of Peace taught me how to listen and how to be listened to. I realized that when you start to listen, your so-called enemy has a tendency to become one of your best friends,” said Ayyaz Ahmad, a member of the Pakistan delegation.

During coexistence sessions, facilitators help mediate conversation between the teens from the different countries. The coexistence sessions are a chance for the Seeds

to voice their concerns and express their feelings about issues and ideas.

Ahmad said that coexistence showed him that even though there were differences between him and the other Seeds, he knew that everyone, Pakistani, Indian or Afghan wanted peace.

“To get rid of the pain you have to face it and we did. All of us talked about the issues and came to a solution that we could live in peace regardless of our different religions or ideologies. It’s about being human, not whether you are a Muslim or an Indian,” said Ahmad.

Talking about issues like Kashmir proved to be the most difficult coexistence sessions for Ahmad.

“I was always scared to talk about issues because I was thinking, I’m such good friends with these guys. I thought the issues would disrupt our friendship, but it worked out so well. We were able to sit down together and talk about Kashmir, the partitions and our religions and we talked peacefully. In the end, it’s about working together not going separate ways,” he said.

He also said that one coexistence session gave the Seeds an assignment to role-play as leaders of their countries. They had to negotiate and try to find a common ground on the issues.

“Believe me, it was very difficult and now I know what the leaders go through. It’s not a one-man game; you need a team. You’ll always need a team and that’s what I realized here,” said Ahmad.

At the end of the three weeks, the Color Games are played. The Seeds are divided into two multi-national teams, the blue team and the green team, and the Seeds are encouraged to put aside their differences and work together as a team.

“Everyone was united irrespective of their countries or what borders they had to cross to get here and irrespective of their religion or nationality,” said Moorjaney.

Ahmad said that during the Color Games he forgot who was from Pakistan and who was from India or Afghanistan.

“I just knew that we had to work together and we did. I realized that at the end it’s not about winning or losing. It’s about teamwork,” he said.

At the end of the Color Games, the two teams celebrated by singing the Seeds of Peace song. Moorjaney said that the moment moved her and fellow Seeds to tears.

Camp gives plenty of time for the Seeds to go swimming, play sports such as basketball and soccer or participate in creative writing or drama activities.

Games and activities helped to break down barriers and allowed the campers to form bonds.

“We are just a bunch of teenagers so these were the things that got us going. We just needed a start and that was it,” said Ahmad.

The Seeds also have a chance to share their different traditions through a special event called cultural night. And all Seeds are invited to attend each other’s religious services conducted at camp.

The program does not end when the Seeds leave camp. Programs and initiatives are put in place for students to continue dialogue and make spreading peace the Seeds’ responsibility.

“Now I will go back home and I will either get criticism or I will get support,” said Ahmad. “But I will still convey my message. I will because it’s what I believe in. At a certain point, Seeds of Peace put me on a path toward peace. There is a ray of hope now. So I am going to pass on the message.”

Another Seed from Afghanistan said that his family and friends back at home were very excited about his participation in the Seeds of Peace program. Once he returns home, he hopes to share what he has learned and bring the hope of peace back to his country.

Seeds of Peace participants are able to keep in contact with their new friends through the Internet or coordinated regional events once they return home.

Last fall, Indian Seeds from Mumbai visited their Pakistani friends in Lahore for a one-week visit coordinated by Seeds of Peace.

A special Internet forum has been set up for all Seeds of Peace alumni to continue dialogue with their new friends and gives them a chance to meet other Seeds.

The South Asia Seeds of Peace program was started in 2001 through grants from the Department of State’s

Bureau of South Asian Affairs. The Afghan program was added later and is now in its second year.

The session concluded with a trip to Washington, where delegates met with State Department officials, visited national monuments and museums, and met members of the U.S. government as well as ambassadors from their countries.

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**Please Note:** Most texts and transcripts mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage [www.usmission.ch](http://www.usmission.ch). Select "Washington File" from the drop-down menu under "News."