

DAILY BULLETIN

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PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN U.S. ELECTIONS

Candidates Bush and Kerry to meet in three debates

By Carrie Lee
Washington File Staff Writer

President Bush and Senator John Kerry will face off in the first of three presidential debates on September 30 at the University of Miami in Florida, according to the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD). The focus of the first debate will be foreign policy and homeland security.

The three debates -- the second is scheduled for October 8 at Washington University in Missouri and the third for October 13 at Arizona State University -- will "address those issues that are of importance to the broadest spectrum of the public," said CPD Executive Director Janet Brown.

The third debate will focus on economic and domestic policy while the second debate will be a town hall meeting where "soft" supporters (voters who slightly favor a candidate) from both parties chosen by the Gallup Organization will pose questions. One vice presidential debate is also planned for October 5 at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio.

CPD works to ensure that the 90-minute debates are "absolutely straightforward and without any kind of bias in terms of an issue, candidate, party or anything else," said Brown. For example, candidates may not pose direct questions to each other and are prohibited

from walking around onstage or manipulating the stage to improve their own appearance. Except for the town hall meeting, a single moderator poses the questions to the candidates and monitors time limits. The candidates' statements and responses are timed, and there are audible cues and flashing lights to indicate time remaining.

Debates are the one election event geared specifically toward the general public, and in a close election year public interest is especially high, said Brown. Up to 2,500 journalists, many from international media, will cover each debate and make the debates a "focal point not only for people here but for people all over the world who are watching this election," she continued.

Presidential debates are a mainstay of the American presidential campaign process. The first televised debate between major party nominees Richard Nixon and John Kennedy in 1960 was broadcast on television and radio. It illustrated the potential impact of debates and the importance of style and form as well as substance. Even though most of the radio audience believed Nixon had won the debate, the larger television audience thought Kennedy won, a response that likely contributed to his narrow victory.

There were no presidential debates from 1964 to 1972, largely due to the reluctance of incumbents and frontrunners to give their opponents any potential advantage. Debates resumed in the 1976 presidential election and are now a fixture of the election process.

Since its founding in 1987, the CPD has organized the presidential debates and engaged in public voter education on debates. The CPD ensures that the debates are a fair and transparent process accessible to the public through a review every election cycle, said Brown. Based on its findings of public preferences, the CPD adopted the single moderator and town-hall-meeting formats and publishes criteria for participation in the debates a year in advance.

Brown said that the potential impact of the debates is so great that many of the up to 150 presidential candidates each year want to participate. Many of these third-party or independent candidates do not meet the set criteria to participate in the debates. The criteria include the candidate being on enough state ballots to have a mathematical chance to win the election (270 electoral votes), and the candidate's attaining at least 15 percent public support according to a predetermined set of opinion polls. The criteria are applied a week before each debate

to determine its participants. In 2004, no third-party candidates meet the criteria for participation.

Although the impact of presidential debates is difficult to quantify, they clearly play an important role in the U.S. election process. According to Brown, debates are consistently cited in exit polls as one of the most important factors influencing voters' decisions.

There is "no question that the very large number of people who watch the debates and the fact that they learn from the debates ... makes them an extremely important piece of the general election process," said Brown.

USAID ASSISTS CARIBBEAN NATIONS AFFECTED BY RECENT HURRICANES

Provided \$3.8 million to alleviate human suffering

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), has provided \$3.8 million to Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas to alleviate the human suffering caused by Tropical Storm Jeanne and Hurricanes Ivan and Frances.

The following September 28 USAID press release outlines the assistance that the United States has provided to its Caribbean neighbors throughout this time of increased hurricane activity:

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Washington, D.C.
September 28, 2004

USAID Expedites Disaster Aid to Caribbean Nations Affected by Hurricanes

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Throughout this time of increased hurricane activity, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) stands firm by its Caribbean neighbors to alleviate the human suffering caused by Tropical Storm Jeanne, and Hurricanes Ivan and Frances. To date, USAID, through its Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), has provided \$3.8 million to Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica, the Dominican Re-

public and the Bahamas for vital humanitarian relief and emergency resources, such as water, food and shelter.

USAID has provided \$2 million for the humanitarian response to Haiti. On September 23, U.S. Ambassador James Foley announced approximately \$2 million in disaster relief assistance to Haiti, provided through USAID. The announcement comes just two days after the ambassador's disaster declaration due to the damage caused by Tropical Storm Jeanne. This disaster declaration allowed an automatic release of \$50,000 to begin the immediate funding and distribution of hygiene kits, cooking sets, blankets, water containers and other relief supplies to those most affected by the floods.

On September 23, USAID airlifted 300 rolls of plastic sheeting for shelter, more than 5,000 ten-liter water jugs, and 3,660 hygiene kits to Port-au-Prince.

USAID has dispatched an expert disaster team from OFDA to help coordinate the U.S. relief efforts with local disaster officials. USAID has secured an aircraft through Air Serv International to provide aerial assessments and transport of personnel and relief supplies.

USAID has provided more than \$900,000 for the humanitarian response to Grenada.

As of September 24, USAID has funded four flights of emergency relief supplies to Grenada, carrying plastic sheeting for shelter, hygiene kits and emergency water supplies.

USAID has provided \$100,000 to the U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown to support the local purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies, in-country air transport and aerial assessments of affected areas.

USAID has provided \$50,000 to fund assessments of the island's electrical system.

USAID has secured an aircraft through Air Serv International to assist in the humanitarian response.

USAID has provided more than \$694,000 for the humanitarian response to Jamaica.

On September 12, U.S. Ambassador Sue M. Cobb issued a disaster declaration allowing for the automatic release of \$50,000 used for the immediate funding of shelter operation costs and initial relief activities.

USAID has funded two flights of emergency relief supplies, including special boats for search and rescue efforts, life vests, hygiene kits, jerry cans and plastic sheeting for shelter.

Through partners, USAID has provided nearly \$400,000 for the purchase and transportation of medical supplies, hygiene kits and plastic sheeting for shelter.

The USAID Mission in Jamaica has purchased \$25,000 in water tanks.

USAID has provided more than \$284,000 for the humanitarian response in the Bahamas.

On September 5, U.S. Ambassador John D. Rood issued a disaster declaration due to the effects of Hurricane Frances.

USAID has provided \$100,000 to support the local purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies, in-country air transport and aerial assessments of affected areas.

USAID has funded three airlifts of emergency relief supplies from Miami to the Bahamas, carrying blankets, hygiene kits, jerry cans, plastic sheeting for shelter and a water purification unit.

USAID has secured an aircraft through Air Serv International to assist in the humanitarian response.

USAID has provided \$50,000 for the humanitarian assistance in the Dominican Republic.

USAID has provided \$50,000 for the purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies, including hygiene kits, mosquito nets, kitchen sets, blankets, bedding, water containers and plastic sheeting for shelter.

The USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance now celebrating its 40th year, the U.S. Agency for International Development Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is responsible for providing humanitarian assistance in response to international crises and disaster. USAID Administrator Andrew S. Natsios serves as the President's Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance. In 2004, with a budget of more than \$300 million, OFDA Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) have responded to 69 disaster declarations in 58 countries.

USAID OFDA provides humanitarian assistance in response to a declaration of a foreign disaster made by the U.S. Ambassador or the U.S. Department of State. Once a declaration is made, USAID can immediately provide up to \$50,000 to the U.S. Embassy or USAID Mission to purchase relief supplies locally, or give a contribution to a relief organization in the affected country. USAID also deploys experts to the field, and in some cases, dispatches a DART.

The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance is housed in USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance.

NEW \$50 BILL ENTERS INTO CIRCULATION WORLDWIDE

All existing U.S. notes remain legal tender, officials say

The United States has put into circulation a new \$50 bill featuring enhanced anti-counterfeiting elements and subtle background colors of red, white and blue.

In a September 28 joint news release, the U.S. Federal Reserve and the Department of the Treasury said the new design -- the most recent in a series of updates to U.S. banknotes -- aims to protect the integrity of the notes against increasingly sophisticated counterfeiting networks.

The Federal Reserve -- the U.S. central bank -- estimates that for every 25,000 genuine \$50 notes in circulation less than one is counterfeit.

Nearly \$700 billion in U.S. banknotes are currently in circulation, two-thirds of them outside the United States.

A new design for the \$10 will be unveiled in 2005 and the \$100 note will be redesigned some time in the future, officials said. A redesigned \$20 bill was put into circulation in 2003.

The U.S. government is supporting a worldwide public education program to ensure a smooth transition for redesigned currency notes. Training materials such as

posters and brochures are available in 24 languages and can be downloaded from the World Wide Web at www.moneyfactory.com/newmoney

Outreach efforts include training for cash-handlers, merchants, business and industry associations, as well as the media.

The redesigned \$50 bill is the same size as the older version and still features former president Ulysses S. Grant on the front and the U.S. Capitol building on the back. The borders around both Grant and the Capitol have been removed.

In addition to fresh touches of color, new or upgraded elements of the design include a watermark, security thread and color-shifting ink.

U.S. officials stress that notes of both the new and old design will continue to be accepted as long as they remain in circulation. According to a Treasury fact sheet, all forms of paper currency issued by the U.S. government are considered legal tender and redeemable at full face value. The U.S. government has never devalued its currency.

"As we introduce this beautiful new note into the monetary system, we want the public to remember that the old designs will remain in circulation and maintain their full face value," Michael Lambert, the Federal Reserve Board's Cash Manager, said in the news release. "It has always been the tradition with U.S. currency for the old and new designs of the same denomination to circulate together -- all notes are good for good."

Following is the text of the Treasury/Federal Reserve news release:

Newly Redesigned U.S. \$50 Notes To Be Issued by the U.S. Government Beginning Today

Local Banks to Begin Distributing the Note over the Next Several Weeks

Washington, September 28, 2004 -- The newly redesigned U.S. \$50 note will soon be showing up in wallets around the world. Today marks the day the U.S. Federal Reserve System issues the new note and begins distributing it through the international banking system into the hands of consumers around the world.

The U.S. \$50 note includes enhanced security features, subtle background colors of blue and red, images of a waving American flag and a small metallic silver-blue star. "The stability and integrity of U.S. paper currency is something the U.S. government takes very seriously," said Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Samuel W. Bodman. "We believe that redesigning the currency regularly and enhancing security features is the way to keep U.S. currency safe and secure from would-be counterfeiters."

"As we introduce this beautiful new note into the monetary system, we want the public to remember that the old designs will remain in circulation and maintain their full face value," said Michael Lambert, the Federal Reserve Board's Cash Manager. "It has always been the tradition with U.S. currency for the old and new designs of the same denomination to circulate together -- all notes are good for good."

The new \$50 note is the second denomination in the Series 2004 currency, the most secure series of notes in U.S. history. The first denomination in the new design series was the \$20 note, which began circulating in October 2003. "The next denomination in the series will be a new \$10 note," said Tom Ferguson, Director of the U.S. Treasury's Bureau of Engraving and Printing. "We are currently working on the design and expect to unveil it in 2005." The \$100 note is also slated to be redesigned, but a timetable for its introduction is not yet set. The government has no plans to redesign the \$5 note at this time, and the \$1 and \$2 notes will not be redesigned.

Public Education

With as much as two-thirds of the nearly \$700 billion in U.S. currency circulating outside the United States, the U.S. government is supporting a worldwide public education program designed to inform people around the world about the note's updated security features. The program will ensure a smooth transition of each newly designed currency note into the public domain. The outreach includes cash-handlers, merchants, business and industry associations, and the media.

A variety of training materials such as posters and brochures are available in 24 languages. The materials can be downloaded from www.moneyfactory.com/newmoney or ordered through the website at no charge.

Since May 2003, more than 52 million pieces of training materials have been ordered by businesses and other

organizations to help train their cash-handling employees about the notes' enhanced security features.

The New Color of Money

While consumers should not use color to check the authenticity of their currency (relying instead on user-friendly security features -- see below), color does add complexity to the note, making counterfeiting more difficult. Different colors are being used for different denominations, which will help everyone -- particularly those who are visually impaired -- to tell denominations apart.

Security Features

The new \$50 design retains three important security features that were first introduced in the 1990s and are easy for consumers and merchants alike to check:

- Watermark: A faint image, similar to the portrait, which is part of the paper itself and is visible from both sides when held up to the light.
- Security thread: Also visible from both sides when held up to the light, this vertical strip of plastic is embedded in the paper and spells out the denomination in tiny print.
- Color-shifting ink: The numeral in the lower right corner on the face of the note, indicating its denomination, changes color from copper to green when the note is tilted.

Counterfeiting: Increasingly Digital

Through a combination of improvements in security features, aggressive law enforcement and education efforts to inform the public about how to check their currency, counterfeiting has been kept at low levels. About 1 in 25,000 \$50 notes is a counterfeit, according to the Federal Reserve.

However, since 1995, digitally produced counterfeit notes have increased from one percent of all counterfeits detected in the U.S. to 40 percent. To stay ahead of counterfeiters as advances in technology make digital counterfeiting of currency easier and cheaper, the government expects to redesign the currency about every seven to ten years.

NEW PROCEDURES AWAIT VISA-WAIVER VISITORS TO UNITED STATES

Additional entry, exit requirements begin
September 30

Visitors eligible to travel to the United States without a visa will encounter new procedures at U.S. ports of entry starting September 30, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security Under Secretary Asa Hutchinson says the changes will enhance both travel safety and security for U.S. citizens.

Under the US-VISIT program, travelers from 27 nations participating in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) will be digitally fingerprinted and photographed as they pass through immigration checkpoints. At a briefing September 27, Hutchinson said the procedures have been working well since first instituted in January for visitors traveling to the United States on a visa.

"It's clear that US-VISIT is working. It's clean, it's quick, it's simple and without question, it is enhancing the integrity of our immigration systems, while protecting individual privacy," Hutchinson said.

More than 280 persons with histories of criminal or immigration violations have been stopped at the borders since US-VISIT was initiated.

A full explanation of US-VISIT is available at:
http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/content_multi_image/content_multi_image_0006.xml

The press release issued by DHS September 27 follows:

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Under Secretary Asa Hutchinson Discusses Expansion of US-VISIT Program to Include Visitors Traveling Under the Visa Waiver Program

Office of the Press Secretary
September 27, 2004
[Washington, D.C.]

Under Secretary Asa Hutchinson today gave a briefing at Dulles International Airport in advance of the September 30 expansion of the US-VISIT program to include foreign visitors traveling under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP).

Under Secretary Hutchinson described how US VISIT procedures are fast, easy and clean and how the program enhances security for our citizens and visitors while facilitating legitimate travel and trade through our borders. He stressed that "one of our highest priorities at US VISIT is to make sure that the United States continues to be a welcoming nation and that travelers continue to come to the United States, whether for business, vacation or study."

Under Secretary Hutchinson noted that since deploying US-VISIT entry capabilities at 115 airports and 14 seaports on January 5, 2004, more than 8.5 million foreign nationals have been processed without adversely impacting wait times. He added that the systems are in place to ensure that the expansion to include visitors traveling under the Visa Waiver Program will maintain this track record of not adversely impacting wait times.

"It's clear that US-VISIT is working. It's clean, it's quick, it's simple and without question, it is enhancing the integrity of our immigration systems, while protecting individual privacy," Under Secretary Hutchinson said.

US VISIT is a continuum of measures that collect biometric and biographic information from foreign visitors at U.S. visa-issuing posts around the world and upon their arrival in and departure from U.S. air, sea and land border ports. It draws on eligibility determinations made by both the Departments of Homeland Security and State.

The goals of US-VISIT are to: enhance the security of our citizens and visitors; facilitate legitimate travel and trade; ensure the integrity of our immigration system; protect the privacy of our visitors.

Currently, US-VISIT requires that most foreign visitors traveling to the U.S. on a visa and arriving at an air or seaport have their two index fingers scanned and a digital photograph taken to verify their identity at the port of entry. By September 30, 2004, this process will also apply to visitors traveling under the VWP at all air and sea ports of entry.

An estimated 13 million visitors traveling under the Visa Waiver Program enter the U.S. each year. Travelers from Visa Waiver Program countries are allowed to enter the U.S. for up to 90 days for business or pleasure using only a passport. The following 27 countries are currently in the VWP: Andorra, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brunei,

Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (for citizens with the unrestricted right of permanent abode in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).

Since its launch in January, the US-VISIT program has helped intercept more than 280 persons with prior or suspected criminal or immigration violations. These included convicted rapists, drug traffickers, individuals convicted of credit card fraud, a convicted armed robber and numerous immigration violators and individuals attempting visa fraud.

The U.S. is not alone in using biometrics to enhance identity verification and security. The worldwide use of biometric technologies is the basis of an extensive array of highly secure identification and personal verification solutions.

Expanding enrollment of foreign nationals traveling under the VWP builds on the Department's progress to secure our ports of entry without harming our economic security.

For more information, visit DHS.gov/US-VISIT
<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=91>

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