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## **U.S. citizens killed in Kenya remembered at service**

By Bob Allen

ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, Md. (ABP) -- Twelve Americans killed in a terrorist bombing of the U.S. embassy in Kenya were remembered as "the best America has to offer" and "what America is all about" at a memorial service Aug. 13.

Secretary of Defense William Cohen said the dead embassy workers "were the best that America has to offer" at the service at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington. "They were the better angels of our nature."

President Bill Clinton repeated a statement made to him by a classmate of one of the victims. "They were what America is all about."

The 12 Americans were among at least 247 people killed in the Aug. 7 attack on the U.S. embassy in Nairobi. Another attack in Tanzania, apparently coordinated with the bombing in Kenya, killed 10 people in Dar es Salaam. More than 5,000 people were injured, mostly in Kenya.

The United States has offered a \$2 million reward for information leading to the capture of the terrorists responsible for the attacks.

"No matter what it takes, we must find those responsible for these evil acts and see that justice is done," Clinton said at the memorial service.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright decried a "plague of terror" which "has claimed victims on every continent."

"Make no mistake, terror is the tool of cowards," Albright said. "It is not a form of political expression, and certainly not a manifestation of religious faith. It is murder -- plain and simple. And those who perpetrate it, finance it or otherwise support it, must be opposed by all people."

Clinton said U.S. embassy employees around the world "do hard work that is not always fully appreciated and not even understood by many of their fellow Americans."

"They protect our interests and promote our values abroad," the president said. "They are diplomats and doctors and drivers, bookkeepers and technicians and military guards. Far from home, they endure hardships, often at great risk."

Clinton said terrorists target America "because we act and stand for peace and democracy."

"The spirit of our country is the very spirit of freedom," he said. "It is the burden of our history and the bright hope of the world's future."

"We must honor the memory of those we mourn today by pressing the cause of freedom and justice for which they lived," Clinton said. "We must continue to stand strong for freedom on every continent. America will not retreat from the world and all its promise, nor shrink from our responsibility to stand against terror and with the friends of freedom everywhere. We owe it to those we honor today."

Clinton closed his remarks with a quotation from Ben Sira, a Jewish writer who lived two centuries before Christ.

"As it is written: 'Their righteous deeds have not been forgotten. Their glory will not be blotted out. Their bodies were buried in peace, but their names shall live forever,'" Clinton said.

The quotation is from the book of Sirach, also called Ecclesiasticus. It is part of the Apocrypha, a section which is included in Catholic Bibles but is not in most Protestant translations.

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## **House adds voucher provision to D.C. bill**

By Kenny Byrd

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- After failing the last two years in their efforts to include a school-voucher provision in an appropriations bill for the District of Columbia, backers of the plan are poised for battle once more.

On Aug. 6, the House of Representatives approved an amendment to this year's D.C. appropriations bill which would provide 2,000 children from low-income families up to \$3,200 to attend private and parochial schools.

The full \$6.8 billion funding measure, which outlines how the nation's capital will spend its federal and local dollars, was approved by the House Aug. 7. It includes \$485 million in federal funds. President Clinton is expected to veto the bill if it passes the Senate.

The \$5.4 million voucher provision, sponsored by House Majority Leader Richard Arney, R-Texas, passed on a 214-208 vote.

During debate, Arney said the plan would give low-income families "the right and the privilege of seeking a better school opportunity for their children and moving their children to another school."

Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., spoke in favor of the voucher plan. "By what right does the government say to a child, 'We will cripple your future in the information age, you will not learn how to read, you will not really have a work ethic, you cannot do math?' But yet, that is what you do on behalf of the unions," he said.

Opposing the plan, Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., said Congress should be "creating academic opportunities for all students and not just a handful." She said the plan would provide vouchers to 2,000 students and leave 76,000 other students in public schools. "Vouchers will not solve the problems in our schools, they will create new ones," she said.

Several religious and civil-liberties groups oppose vouchers, arguing that using tax dollars to fund religious schools is unconstitutional -- whether the money flows directly to the school or indirectly through a parent endorsing a check to the school. Other religious groups disagree and support vouchers as constitutional.

Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., said she believes the plan is unconstitutional and asked lawmakers not to hold up the D.C. funding measure by arguing over vouchers.

In recent years, the voucher initiative has been attached to the D.C. measure and in some cases has delayed passage of the bill past the fiscal-year deadline, leaving the district's government scrambling to carry on its business.

"There is something this House can do for D.C. kids," said Norton. "You can get on the train that is breaking through with tough, new standards and higher scores for our kids. You can get off the voucher train, which you know is headed straight for a veto."

The Senate is expected to take up the D.C. appropriations bill in September and a voucher amendment is expected to be offered.

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## **Senate measure would deny visas to religious persecutors**

By Kenny Byrd

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The United States would deny travel visas to officials from foreign governments that have been involved in religious persecution under a Senate-approved amendment to the Department of Defense appropriations bill.

The measure, approved July 30 by a unanimous voice vote, would deny visas to officials from countries involved in either coerced abortion, sterilization, genital mutilation or religious persecution. It also included provisions addressing religious persecution in China.

"By voting to deny visas to foreign officials involved in forced abortion or religious persecution, the United States has courageously taken a stand for the noble cause of human rights," said Senate sponsor of the amendment Tim Hutchinson, R-Ark.

The amendment would require the U.S. State Department to raise, in multilateral forums, the issues of individuals imprisoned, detained, confined or otherwise harassed by the government of China because of their faith.

According to a Hutchinson press release, the measure would also require the State Department to ask the Chinese government about the location and condition of individuals whom the State Department believes have been charged with crimes because of religious beliefs. The department would inquire about the charges and sentences imposed on those individuals.

To become law, the amendment would have to remain a part of the Department of Defense appropriations bill, which is awaiting a conference where lawmakers will resolve differences between House and Senate versions of the funding bill. The amendment is not in the House version.

Religious persecution abroad has remained a high priority for several religious advocacy groups and for Republican leaders in Congress. Two competing bills have emerged to address how the United States should deal with religious persecution abroad.

The Freedom From Religious Persecution Act has already passed the House. The measure, sponsored by Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., and Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., would put in place an officer who could automatically impose economic and other penalties against countries that endorse religious persecution.

The International Religious Freedom Act, sponsored by Sen. Don Nickles, R-Okla., would establish a State Department office, an advisory committee and a White House adviser to evaluate and monitor persecution abroad. The State Department office would report annually on those countries and the president would be required to choose from a list of sanctions and other penalties to impose on those nations.

Groups including the National Association of Evangelicals and the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission support a vote on either measure.

Other religious groups, such as the Baptist Joint Committee and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., have criticized provisions in both bills that would impose automatic and unilateral actions. They also oppose placing religious persecution above other international human-rights concerns.

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## Survey of journalists challenges stereotype of 'liberal' media

By Bob Allen

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The so-called liberal media don't view themselves as liberal, according to a survey of Washington journalists by a media watchdog group.

Instead, a majority of Washington-based bureau chiefs and reporters who cover national politics for major news media said they are centrist on both social and economic issues, according to the study by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR).

Asked to characterize their political orientation on social issues, 57 percent said they are in the center. On economic issues, 64 percent described themselves as centrist.

Of the minority who did not view themselves as being in the center, journalists tended to have left leanings on social issues, but on economic issues actually tilted toward the right. On social issues, 30 percent said they leaned to the left and 9 percent to the right. On economic issues, 11 percent identified themselves with the left and 19 percent with the right.

In addition to evaluating their own positions, the journalists were asked a series of questions regarding recent policy debates, and their responses were compared to surveys of the general public. The journalists tended to be more conservative than the general public on economic issues such as protecting Medicare and Social Security, health care, tax hikes for the rich and the expansion of NAFTA.

The journalists were slightly to the left of most Americans on one area in the survey, regarding the environment. When asked to choose between whether stricter environmental regulations "cost too many jobs and hurt the economy" or "are worth the cost," 79 percent of the journalists said such laws are worth the cost and 21 percent disagreed. In an October survey by the Pew Research Center, only 63 percent of the public said such laws are worth the cost and 30 percent said they are not.

The study's author, Virginia Commonwealth University's David Croteau, said the findings contradict the conservative claim that journalists are to the left of the public. "There appear to be very few national journalists with left views on economic questions like corporate power and trade -- issues that may well matter more to media owners and advertisers than social issues like gay rights and affirmative actions," he wrote.

Croteau said the "liberal media myth" has been perpetuated by well-funded conservative rhetoric selectively highlighting journalists' personal views while downplaying the actual content of news stories and "by diverting the spotlight away from economic issues and placing it instead on social issues."

Given the study's findings, Croteau said, "one of the central elements of the conservative critique of the media is exposed to be merely sleight of hand."

Croteau said the findings were not surprising. Earlier studies have established that higher-educated people tend to be more liberal on social issues and wealthier people are more conservative economically. As a group, the journalists were both highly educated and well paid. Ninety-five percent of those surveyed were college graduates and 31 percent had post-graduate degrees. Only 5 percent reported a household income of under \$50,000 and 14 percent had incomes of \$200,000 or more.

Croteau suggested the study may explain why an earlier survey found that journalists tended to vote for Bill Clinton in high numbers. "Clinton's centrist 'new Democrat' orientation combines moderately liberal social policies (which brings criticism from conservative anti-gay, 'pro-life' and other activists) with moderately conservative economic policies (which brings criticism from labor unions, welfare rights advocates and others). This orientation fits well with the views expressed by journalists," the study said.

The survey was targeted at Washington bureau chiefs and Washington-based journalists who cover national politics and/or economic policy at national and major metropolitan news outlets. In all, 444 questionnaires were mailed. Of those, 141 were returned, representing 78 different news organizations. In order to

keep the emphasis on the largest and most influential media, half of the surveys were sent to journalists at 14 news organizations, targeting the major television and radio networks, newspapers and wire services.

Data for the survey was gathered from late February through April this year.

Whether journalists are liberal or conservative, the study suggested their personal views have minimal impact on the content of news stories. In the model of "objective" journalism, it is news sources, and not the journalist, whose views are represented. The study found no liberal bias in sources to which national journalists typically turn.

Further, journalists "do not work in a vacuum," the study observed, suggesting that content is more likely to be shaped by corporate and advertiser interests than by a reporter's personal views.

"It is here, at the structural level, that the fundamental ground rules of news production are set," the study concluded. "Of course, working journalists sometimes succeed in temporarily challenging some of those rules and boundaries. But ultimately, if they are to succeed and advance in the profession for any length of time, they must adapt to the ground rules set by others -- regardless of their own personal views."

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