

August 2, 2006

Recently at the Embassy

Hungary Supports Afghanistan Reconstruction



Afghanistan's need for further assistance from the international community was the theme of a one-day international conference organized by Hungary, the United States and Canada with representatives of 35 countries and international organizations – including diplomats of NATO countries, the United Nations, the European Commission and USAID. The conference held in Budapest on July 21, 2006 discussed the achievements and further responsibilities of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. [More▶](#)

(Photo by Béla Szandelszky/AP©)

Ambassador Welcomes Morgan Stanley's Service Center

On July 18, representatives of financial advising firm Morgan Stanley and Hungarian Minister of Economy and Transportation János Kóka announced the setting up of Morgan Stanley's new business and technology service center in Budapest. Morgan Stanley's decision to base their services support in Budapest follows a growing trend among international businesses that have moved similar operations to Budapest. [More▶](#)



Ambassador Walker Presented with Mensch Award

The Mensch Foundation awarded Ambassador George H. Walker with the Mensch Award on July 27, 2006, for serving his term as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Hungary with dignity and grace, for the programs he initiated or supported that are in harmony with the goals of the Mensch Foundation, and for his kind and decent personality. The word 'Mensch' means a true human being in Yiddish, and refers to "a person who gives another the shirt off his back." [More▶](#)



Embassy Officer Lays Wreath to Commemorate Roma Holocaust

On August 1, 2006 the U.S. Embassy paid tribute to the 62nd anniversary of the Roma Holocaust by laying a wreath at the memorial plaque of the victims of the Roma Holocaust, as part of a commemoration event organized by the National Roma Self-Government. [More▶](#)



Hubert Tubbs Performing in Pécs

The Embassy provided a grant for Hubert Tubbs, former lead vocalist for the soul group *Tower of Power*, to perform at the closing celebration of the International Culture Week in Pécs (ICWIP) on July 29. Over 300 students from 25 countries around the world were participants in the 10th anniversary of ICWIP, a week of activities designed to emphasize to young people the importance of cultural diversity and heritage in a global economy. [To ICWIP▶](#)



Looking Ahead

Exhibition and Film Festival opening in Balatonfüred

The *International Artists Residencies* program of the Hungarian Multi-cultural Center, Inc. offers participants from around the world a unique opportunity to interact with other artists representing a variety of cultures and backgrounds. The residency programs are followed by cultural programs such as film screenings and exhibitions featuring their work.

[To HMC▶](#)

Webchats

The State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) will host two webchats in the *Democracy Dialogues* series: ***Campaigns, Elections "U.S. Style"*** with James Thurber on August 8, at 10:00 a.m. EST (1400 GMT); and ***Elections and the Media*** with Jerry Hagstrom on August 10, at 10:00 a.m. EST (1400 GMT). [Webchats▶](#)

New Publications

Webpage: *The Voting Rights Act in Perspective*

Marking the August 6 signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, this new webpage offers an overview of the history of the Act, photos, a transcript of the Act, and related information, including its reauthorization, signed by President Bush on July 27, 2006. [Webpage▶](#)

IRC Newsletters:

Economic Issues [Newsletter▶](#)

NATO, Defense Issues and Response to Terrorism [Newsletter▶](#)

In the News... from Washington

U.S. Visa Process Should be Streamlined, Official Says

U.S. visa policies can and should be improved, concluded a group of experts during the July 24 discussion "Rethinking Visa Policy for the 21st Century." Stewart A. Baker, assistant secretary for policy at Department of Homeland Security, acknowledged that it could be difficult to obtain a U.S. visa. The visa process needs to be more efficient, streamlined and "a lot less hassle for people," said Baker. [More▶](#)

Doha Trade Negotiations Collapse; U.S. to Consult on Next Steps

U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab reaffirms U.S. commitment to an eventual conclusion of the Doha round and rebuts European Union statements blaming the United States for the collapse of the long-stalled World Trade Organization negotiations. [More▶](#)



We wish you all a relaxing and refreshing summer holiday!

