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Binder- The Trip of the First Lady to Liberia, Accra, and Ghana, 01/14/2006-01/18/2006, Press
Clips [2]

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DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
001	Email	Trip of the First lady - Pool Report #1 - To: DL-WHO-First Lady - From: Sarah A. Culvahouse	2	01/18/2006	P6/b6;

COLLECTION TITLE:

Office of Laura Bush - Chief of Staff

SERIES:

McBride, Anita

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Binder- The Trip of the First Lady to Liberia, Accra, and Ghana, 01/14/2006-01/18/2006, Press Clips [2]

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the First Lady

For

Immediate Release

January 15, 2006

PRESS BRIEFING BY THE FIRST LADY
EN ROUTE ACCRA, GHANA

Aboard Plane

2:35 P.M. (Local)

MRS. BUSH: Well, first, of course, we're going for the inauguration of the first woman president on the African continent. Dr. Rice will be joining us. We're really, really excited to be at such a historic inauguration. Her election followed a very competitive, but from all international observers, said free and transparent election, which was really great, especially under the circumstances of the recent history of Liberia. She ran on a platform of reconciliation and reconstruction, and it's going to take the help of a lot of countries, including the United States, which has a special relationship with Liberia, for her and the people of Liberia to be able to do the reconstruction they need.

And so I'm really thrilled to be able to bring the best wishes of the American people to her as she's sworn in as their President, and also to bring her the commitment from the United States government to stand with her, to stand with the people of Liberia as they rebuild their country.

So the centerpiece, really, of this trip is women's empowerment, with Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as an example, a shining example for all of us, for women around the world, not just women on her continent, but for women everywhere. And we will continue, when we go to Ghana and then Nigeria, to talk about education, to talk about the treatment of HIV/AIDS, all the ways that boys and girls can be educated so that they can protect themselves from deadly diseases, so they can make an economic impact in their countries, and so that they'll be able to live successful lives.

The problems that we'll see in each of these countries are problems that we also have. One problem in Liberia is there's so many unemployed young people, and the young people were

overwhelmingly for George Weah, the soccer player, the American soccer player, even though Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf won by 59 percent of the vote. So she, in her country, and her colleagues will have to do what all of us are doing in countries around the world, where we're reaching out to young people, especially boys, to help them find employment, help them find a successful way to live, and then, on the continent of Africa and around the world, reaching out to girls to make sure girls are educated and that girls get basic rights.

Liberia recently passed rape legislation, anti-rape legislation. It was the first time they'd had legislation like that. And violence against women is a problem across the continent, just like it is around the world. But it's a problem that they're starting to address. And we all know that if girls are educated and empowered, they also are able to avoid violent situations easier than if they're not educated and vulnerable.

Then we'll go on to Ghana, and in Ghana, we'll be doing an event with six university presidents from the United States. They're minority-serving universities, and they will each adopt a specific country -- and in the speech, when I give it day after tomorrow, I'll introduce those presidents and talk about the countries they're going to work with. They are getting funds from USAID, the American universities are, to work with African countries so they can write and develop their own curriculum and their own textbooks for K-8. It's a way for countries to develop curriculum that's traditional, that's insidic to their own traditions, and that meets the needs the needs of their own children.

So I think it's a very, very exciting project, and I know the American university presidents that are involved are really excited about it, as well. So we'll hear more about that when we get to Ghana.

Then in Nigeria, we're going to visit a hospital, St. Mary's Hospital, that was one of the first hospitals that PEPFAR had a strong association with, and we'll deliver, actually deliver antiretroviral drugs as part of the PEPFAR program that they -- drugs they've already been receiving, as well, for their patients.

But overall, our themes are women's empowerment, girls' education, as a way to treat HIV/AIDS, as well as to let boys and girls develop into successful adults.

So now I'll take your questions.

Q I was wondering if I could ask you about Liberia. You mentioned the U.S. -- bringing the commitment of the United States to stand with Liberia. Are you bringing any specifics with you? You talked about the unemployment problem and the incredible reconstruction that has to happen. What can the U.S. do to help?

MRS. BUSH: Well, the United States has already invested a lot of money -- Jendayi can probably tell you exactly how much -- over the last two years through the election period -- actually over many years, but specifically through the election period as they establish free elections in a democracy. And then we have a commitment for the year 2006, as well, to help them in their reconstruction as they start to try to have electricity again and potable water and all the things that are so crucial for basic survival in Liberia.

MS. FRAZER: It's \$1 billion from 2004 to 2006, and \$840 million last year.

Q Mrs. Bush, I'd like to get you on another subject, the NSA program, the National Security Agency eavesdropping program. Your husband seemed upset when that was disclosed. And I was just wondering if you could tell us what his initial reaction was to that disclosure, and whether you think that disclosure is undermining or will undermine the effectiveness of that program.

MRS. BUSH: Well, of course, that was his initial reaction, and that was -- of course, the problems that might come when you're in the situation that we're in, where we're constantly on the alert for an attack like what happened on September 11th. And I think the American people expect the United States government and the President to do what they can to make sure there's not an attack by foreign terrorists.

Q Was he initially worried that it would have to be eliminated -- stopped, because --

MRS. BUSH: I think he was worried that it would undermine our efforts by alerting terrorists to what our efforts are.

Q Can I ask you another unrelated question? I wanted to ask you about Vice President Cheney. Do you think that he's

going to be here until the end of the administration? And do you think that --

MRS. BUSH: Absolutely. I think Vice President Cheney's in great health and he's doing great.

Q You don't think that he -- the President would be upset if he decided to step down at this point?

MRS. BUSH: Yes, I'm sure the President would not like for him to step down, obviously. The Vice President has been an excellent Vice President, he's solid as a rock.

Q So you think he'll stay.

MRS. BUSH: Yes.

Q Mrs. Bush, I'd like to ask you about the President's global AIDS initiative. There's been some criticism that it focuses too heavily on abstinence rather than condom use, and some people have equated this with Christian moralism. Do you think there's a fair divide, unequal? Do you think there should be more emphasis on condoms?

MRS. BUSH: I think it's a very fair divide. The whole plan all along has been Uganda's plan, which is the ABC -- abstinence, be faithful, and correct and consistent use of condoms. In a country or a part of the world where one in three people have a sexually transmitted deadly disease, you have to talk about abstinence, you really have to. And in continents, on a continent, and in many countries where girls feel obligated to comply with the wishes of men, girls need to know that abstinence is a choice. It's really very, very important to have all three -- abstinence, be faithful, and the consistent use of condoms.

But when girls are not empowered, when girls are vulnerable, they have very -- their chances of being able to negotiate their sexual life with their partners and to encourage or make their partners use a condom are very low. So it's really important for all three to be part of a successful eradication of AIDS, and that is to be faithful -- abstinence, be faithful to your partner, and then use condoms, correctly and consistently.

So I really -- I'm always a little bit irritated when I hear the criticism of abstinence, because abstinence is

absolutely 100 percent effective in eradicating a sexually transmitted disease.

Q How do you think the American women view this Liberian inauguration? Do you think that they're --

MRS. BUSH: Even know?

Q Yes.

MRS. BUSH: I do think so, I hope so. I hope you all will spread the word in your papers.

Q Why should they feel it's important?

MRS. BUSH: I think it's really important worldwide. I think it's particularly important on the continent of Africa, because traditionally women have been excluded in many African cultures -- not all of them, but in many. And I think it's important to -- that she serves as a very important role model for little girls on the continent, as well as around the world. And I'm really, really thrilled to have the opportunity to be the one that gets to represent the United States, along with Dr. Rice, at her inauguration.

Q Did you ask to go?

MRS. BUSH: I asked to go. No, I asked to go.

Q Quick follow on Liberia. What, if anything, does it tell us, that this country that was founded by freed American slaves is now electing its first woman president, and in our country we haven't gotten to that point yet? Is there anything that could be drawn from that?

MRS. BUSH: I don't know that there is. I mean, I can't -- I don't think you can extrapolate something from one to the other. But we'll have one sometime.

Q Did you hear from Dr. Rice about your comment?

MRS. BUSH: I'm probably going to have to take over her correspondence department, when she gets all the letters -- (laughter.)

END

2:47 P.M. (Local)

Africast WEST REGION NEWS

January 16, 2006

HEADLINE: Laura Bush on Ghanaian soil

ACCRA, January 16 -- The first lady of the United States of America, Mrs. Laura Bush yesterday arrived in the country.

On arrival at the Kotoka International Airport, the U.S first lady who was accompanied by U.S Secretary of State, Condoleza Rice, six university presidents from the United States, U.S Security and intelligent officers and thirty journalists were met by the usual Ghanaian cultural hospitality with traditional dance and song. The First lady and her entourage were obviously thrilled by the little they saw of Ghana's rich culture.

The Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Accra last week disclosed to the press that the first lady is in the country to formally launch the Africa education initiative.

This initiative said the Public Affairs Section is to allow students from Africa to study in the United States and also learn about the life style of their US counterparts.

The three day visit will see Mrs. Bush travel to Liberia to witness the inaugural ceremony of Miss Ellen Sir-Leaf Johnson, the President-elect of Liberia today in Monrovia.

The United States strongly supported the recent democratic elections in Liberia and Mrs Bush's presence there reflects her husband's continued commitment to democracy and support for countries making the difficult transition from war to peace and from tyranny to liberty.

The Public Affairs media briefing disclosed that, "The United States looks forward to working with the new President and the people of Liberia to rebuild their institutions, establish stability and prosperity, and create an environment for reconciliation".

Mrs Bush is expected to meet President J.A Kufuor tomorrow for a formal welcome. During the meeting, the delegates will unveil Textbooks and Learning Materials Program. This program links minority-serving colleges in the U.S. with institutions in Africa to provide textbooks and school supplies for African students. By working together, the U.S. government and institutions of higher education can introduce people around the world to the US.

From the Osu Castle the US first lady would move to the University of Ghana, Legon, where she will address the Accra Teacher Training College. From the University, Mrs. Bush will tour the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, where she will talk to people living with HIV/AIDS.

The U.S.A's first lady and her delegates will then depart to Nigeria after the Kole-Bu tour to end their three-day visit to the Country.

Laura Bush is actively involved in issues of national and global concern, with a particular emphasis on education, health care, and human rights. In March 2005, Mrs. Bush made an historic trip to Afghanistan, witnessing firsthand the progress achieved by the Afghan people after the fall of the Taliban regime.

She visited the Women's Teacher Training Institute in Kabul, which is training women to lead classrooms that girls were once forbidden to enter.

She also met with President Hamid Karzai and expressed America's continued support for Afghanistan's new democracy, which ensures equal rights for women and men.

Mrs. Bush also speaks on behalf of public/private partnerships between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Project Hope, and other private health care organizations that are equipping and training pediatric health care professionals worldwide.

She strongly supports the initiative to build a National Children's Hospital in Iraq. Laura Bush is Honorary Ambassador for the Decade of Literacy of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), serving as an international spokesperson for efforts to educate people throughout the world, especially women and girls.

As the leader of President Bush's Helping America's Youth initiative, Mrs. Bush is listening to the concerns of young people, parents, and community leaders throughout the country and drawing attention to programs that help children avoid risky behaviors like drug and alcohol use, early sexual activity, and violence.

She's highlighting the need of every child to have a caring adult role model in his or her life - whether that adult is a parent, grandparent, teacher, coach, or mentor.

A hiking and camping enthusiast, Mrs. Bush helped to start Preserve America, a national initiative to protect cultural and natural heritage.

She highlights preservation efforts across the US and encourages Americans to get involved in preserving main streets, parks, and community heritage treasures.

Laura Bush was born on November 4, 1946, in Midland, Texas, to Harold and Jenna Welch. Inspired by her second grade teacher, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in education from Southern Methodist University in 1968. She taught in public schools in Dallas and Houston. In 1973, she earned a master of library science degree from the University of Texas and worked as a public school librarian. In 1977, she met and married George Walker Bush. They are the parents of twin daughters, Barbara and Jenna, who are named for their grandmothers.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the First Lady
(Accra, Ghana)

For Immediate Release

January 17, 2006

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE AFRICA EDUCATION INITIATIVE
TEXTBOOKS PROGRAM

Accra Teacher Training College
Accra, Ghana

8:45 A.M. (Local)

MRS. BUSH: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very, very much for your welcome to your beautiful country. And thanks to everyone in Ghana for their very, very warm welcome.

Elizabeth Ohene, the Minister of State for Education, thank you so much for your warm welcome, as well, and for your introduction. Chief, thank you for letting us be here in your beautiful part of the country. And I also want to thank the Presidents of the American universities who have joined us today who will be working in partnership with African countries on this textbook project.

I'm especially happy to be at the Accra Teacher Training Institute. As a teacher and librarian myself, I know what a joy it is to help children learn to read and write, to become proficient in mathematics, and to develop a love of history and science. A pioneering American teacher named Christa McAuliffe famously said, "I touch the future. I teach." Each of you touches the future of your country by teaching Ghana's children.

As teachers, as parents, and as citizens, all of us have the responsibility to ensure that every child has access to education, an education that will lead to a happy and healthy life. And when we say "every child," we must mean every child, whether boy or girl, rich or poor. Educated children grow up to be adults who have more opportunities to work, to support their own families, and to fully participate in the life of their country. It's so important to educate boys and girls, because boys and girls can make important contributions to our world.

Education produces many social benefits, and perhaps none greater than better health. Education is our greatest ally in the effort to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. The United States is working with governments and private organizations throughout Africa to achieve this goal. We know from experience that educated girls and boys are more likely to know what HIV is, and how to avoid infection. Girls who are educated have more economic and social resources to rely on, and, therefore, have more power to negotiate their own sexual lives. In fact, educated young women have lower rates of HIV/AIDS, healthier families, and higher rates of education for their own children.

Sadly, too many children around the world do not have access to education or schooling. The problem is particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa. More than one-third of primary school-age children are not enrolled in school at all, and of those who do enter the first grade, fewer than half will complete primary school.

In Ghana, more children are going to school today than ever before. The enrollment rate for school-age children has risen from 73 percent in 1998 to more than 86 percent in 2004. This is a very positive development. (Applause.)

Of course, there are many problems and challenges that every country still faces. Books and other learning materials are often in short supply. It's not uncommon in rural areas to see just one textbook for a whole classroom. Girls, especially girls in rural villages, are much less likely than boys to attend schools. And students who live in poverty have few opportunities for schooling because their parents cannot afford the school fees or buy uniforms or books.

The people of the United States believe in Africa's future. We know, as you do, that education is vital to a better future for all of the world's children, and we're working with you to make education available and accessible to more children in Africa.

Representatives from six American universities are here today because their schools are now partners in education with six nations in Africa. In the United States, our higher education institutions welcome students from around the world. Their campuses are filled with men and women who strive to improve life for people everywhere.

I'd like to introduce you to the university Presidents:

Dr. Elnora Daniel, the President of Chicago State University. (Applause.) Chicago State University will partner with Ghana. (Applause.)

Dr. Mickey Burnim, the President of Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina. (Applause.) Elizabeth City State University will partner with Senegal.

Dr. Beverly Hogan, President of Tougaloo College. (Applause.) Tougaloo College is part of the Mississippi Consortium, and they'll partner with Zambia.

Dr. Andrew Hugine, President of South Carolina State University. (Applause.) South Carolina State University will partner with Tanzania.

Dr. Richard Romo, President of the University of Texas at San Antonio. (Applause.) The University of Texas at San Antonio will partner with South Africa.

Dr. Mary Spor, the Program Coordinator for Reading and Literacy at Alabama A&M. (Applause.) Alabama A&M University will partner with Ethiopia.

These schools and nations will work together as partners in the Textbooks and Learning Materials Program to produce and distribute 15 million primary school textbooks for African students. (Applause.)

These textbooks will be created in Africa so they will represent the unique experiences of African students. The text will be written with African cultures at the center, and the illustrations will depict African scenes. The subjects will include reading, mathematics, science and language arts. We emphasize these subjects because it's essential that every child learns how to read, learns how to add, subtract, multiply and divide, and learns about the world around us. Teaching materials, such as flash cards, charts and teaching guides will supplement the books and will give teachers more options in their classroom work.

The Textbooks and Learning Materials Program is part of President Bush's efforts to expand access to education in Africa. His African Education Initiative is a \$600 million commitment to provide books, scholarships, school uniforms and teacher training so that more children can attend school. The

African Education Initiative includes funding to train 920,000 teachers in 20 countries in sub-Saharan African. As of December, more than 300,000 new and experienced teachers had received training.

In addition to the textbook program announced today, the African Education Initiative has already facilitated the shipment of over two million books to African schools and libraries. When I visited Tanzania and Rwanda last summer, I announced the donations of books in those countries. And today, I'm pleased to announce the donation of 25,000 books for school libraries in Ghana. (Applause.) And by the way, these are new books that are carefully selected and vetted to be appropriate for school-age children in Africa.

A major goal of President Bush's African Education Initiative is to enroll more girls in school. To meet that goal, the United States sponsors the Ambassadors Girls' Scholarship Program, which will provide 550,000 scholarships to girls at the primary and secondary school level. So far, 120,000 scholarships have been provided in 40 countries. The scholarships pay for tuition, fees, books, uniforms, and other essential supplies.

The American people support these scholarships because we believe that investing in a child's education will produce benefits many times over in the future. An educated woman is better able to provide for her family economically, and to be an advocate for her own children's education. She has the knowledge and the skills to find new ways to improve life in her community. She's prepared to be an active participant in society, and perhaps even a national leader.

Yesterday, I attended the inauguration of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia's new President. President Johnson-Sirleaf is the first woman to be elected President of an African nation. (Applause.) This is a historic time for Liberia, for Africa, and for women everywhere. President Johnson-Sirleaf is an example for young women around the world of a woman who has risen to the very top of her government through hard work, faith in democracy, and belief in the power of education.

Children everywhere need positive role models, and they need the love, support and advice from caring adults. Girls and boys will look to teachers in this room as role models. They'll see that you value education, and because you value education, they'll value their own education.

I hope that when you reach the classrooms where you'll teach, you and your students will benefit from the partnership with Chicago State University that we're launching today. The people of the United States stand with you as you help more students fulfill their dreams. Together, we can build a future of peace and prosperity for both of our countries.

I wish you success in your studies at Accra Teacher Training College, and great happiness in your careers that lie ahead. Thank you very, very much.

END

8:57 A.M. (Local)

17 January 2006

HEADLINE: US Launches African Textbook Initiative

BYLINE: Scott Stearns

The Bush administration has joined six American universities with six African nations to develop new primary school curricula. U.S. first lady Laura Bush announced the plan during a visit to Ghana.

The partnership matches American universities in the states of Illinois, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Alabama with educators in Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa and Ethiopia.



Laura Bush, right, sits with Ghana's President John Agyekum Kufuor at the Accra Teacher Training Center

They will develop individual curricula for children between kindergarten and eighth grade, ultimately producing 15 million primary schoolbooks.

"These textbooks will be created in Africa, so they will represent the unique experiences of African students," the first lady explained. "The text will be written with African cultures at the center, and the illustrations will depict African scenes."

Mrs. Bush says the subjects will include reading, mathematics, science, and language arts, with additional funding to produce flash cards, charts, and teaching guides to give instructors more options for individual students.

Its part of the Bush administration's Africa Education Initiative, a \$600 million plan to provide books, scholarships, school uniforms, and teacher training. Speaking at the Accra Teacher Training College, Mrs. Bush said the initiative includes funds to train 920,000 teachers in 20 Sub-Saharan countries.

It is also focused on getting more African girls in school with 550,000 primary and secondary school scholarships for tuition, fees, books, and uniforms.

"The American people support these scholarships because we believe that investing in a child's education will produce benefits many times over in the future," she said. "An educated woman is better able to provide for her family economically, and to be an advocate for her own children's education. She has the knowledge and the skills to find new ways to improve life in her community. She is prepared to be an active participant in society, and perhaps even a national leader."

Laura Bush attended Monday's inauguration of Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first female head of state. The first lady said the new Liberian president is an example for young women around the world as she rose to the top of her government through hard work, faith in democracy and belief in the power of education.

The Associated Press

January 17, 2006

HEADLINE: First lady highlights education, AIDS in West Africa

BYLINE: Deb Riechmann

In a muggy college auditorium, first lady **Laura Bush** on Tuesday announced a U.S.-backed program to provide 15 million textbooks for students in sub-Saharan Africa where more than one-third of primary school aged children are not enrolled in school.

"It's not uncommon in rural areas to see just one textbook for a whole classroom," Mrs. Bush said at Accra Teacher Training College.

"Girls, especially girls in rural villages, are much less likely than boys to attend school. And students who live in poverty have few opportunities for schooling because their parents cannot afford the school fees or buy uniforms and books."

Mrs. Bush was joined by representatives of six U.S. colleges and universities that are receiving USAID funds to produce and distribute textbooks in Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa and Ethiopia. The colleges are: Chicago State University, Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina, Tougaloo College in Mississippi, South Carolina State University, the University of Texas-San Antonio and Alabama A&M University.

"These textbooks will be created in Africa so they will represent the unique experiences of African students," Mrs. Bush told about 500 students, all dressed navy pants or skirts, white shirts and navy ties stamped with the school emblem.

The president of Ghana, John Kufuor, wiping sweat from his brow, thanked the first lady for visiting Ghana to underscore U.S. commitment to education in Africa, especially for girls.

"Madam, we know how you feel about educating the girl child," he said. "We share this passion of yours."

The program is part of President Bush's Africa Education Initiative, a \$600 million commitment to provide books, scholarships, school uniforms and teacher training so that more children in Africa can attend school. Mrs. Bush said the initiative already has helped ship more than 2 million books to African schools and libraries.

Later, Mrs. Bush visited the Korle-Bu clinic, which treats 150 to 220 AIDS patients three times a week. She met a woman who cares for children who have lost their parents to AIDS, HIV-positive women taking antiviral drugs and children with the disease who are struggling to maintain normal lives.

"A big problem here is stigma and discrimination," Dr. Nii Addo, program director for national AIDS control in Ghana, said, adding that people still fear shaking hands with AIDS sufferers.

"It's really important to reach out to people who are HIV positive or who have AIDS and also to

reach out to people around the world who don't to get the word out and get the education out so that people can avoid ever getting AIDS," Mrs. Bush said. "When somebody who has AIDS speaks, then you put a real face on the disease."

Brakebill, Elizabeth B.

From: Culvahouse, Sarah A.
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2006 9:19 AM
To: DL-WHO-FirstLady
Subject: FW: TRIP OF THE FIRST LADY - POOL REPORT #1, 1/17/06

From: bounce-160178-1264421@list.whitehouse.gov [mailto:bounce-160178-1264421@list.whitehouse.gov] **On**
Behalf Of White House Press Releases
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2006 7:59 AM
To: Culvahouse, Sarah A.
Subject: TRIP OF THE FIRST LADY - POOL REPORT #1, 1/17/06

Pool Report #1
 First Lady Laura Bush in Ghana
 Jan. 17, 2006

After spending another night at the U.S. ambassador's residence in Accra, First Lady Laura Bush and her daughter, Barbara, began their day with a visit to the Accra Teacher Training Center. Mrs. Bush gave a speech on education to 500 teachers-in-training, who wore uniforms of blue and white and sat in neat rows of folded chairs in a muggy auditorium. (See transcript.) Other speakers included Ghana President John Agyekum Kufuor and Dr. Elnora Daniel, president of Chicago State University. After the speeches, Mrs. Bush watched the ceremonial signing of a memorandum of agreement for the university to provide textbooks to Ghana schoolchildren.

Next it was off to a clinic to visit HIV/AIDS patients. En route, the First Lady's motorcade drove through a seaside slum that featured a prison, a lighthouse and crumbling buildings with their roofs long gone. The motorcade then pulled up to a walled complex with scores of people out front, selling their wares to passersby. These included women balancing baskets on their heads.

Entering the complex, Mrs. Bush headed for a building that houses AIDS patients. After a brief tour, she entered a room of 16 AIDS patients sitting in chairs that had been arranged in a circle. The First Lady and her daughter took seats on either side of a boy who looked to be around 8. Barbara gave him a smile and a good-natured pat on the back. Behind them was a wall of windows covered with drapes that were stenciled with the words "FEVERS UNIT."

The patients were mostly female, ranging from young girls to older women. One lady held a baby. The discussion was facilitated by Dr. Nii Addo, Ghana's AIDS control director. A handful of the patients told Mrs. Bush their heartbreaking stories of not only contracting the disease, but also losing family members to various tragedies. Mrs. Bush spoke of the importance of education in battling AIDS and emphasized that many women have difficulties dealing with the stigma as well.

Now we're off to visit a castle.

Bill Sammon
 The Washington Times
 wdsammon@aol.com

1/17/2006

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

January 17, 2006

HEADLINE: U.S. First Lady Laura Bush visits AIDS patients in Ghana

U.S. First Lady Laura Bush in Ghana on Tuesday launched a school textbook programme at an Accra teacher training college and visited HIV/AIDS sufferers in the country's largest hospital.

Mrs. Bush, on an official visit to West Africa that on Monday saw her attend the inauguration of new Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, pledged the commitment of the United States to improving education in Africa, and particularly in Ghana.

She said every child, whether rich or poor, must be given the opportunity of education in order to enable them to contribute to the development of the country.

Mrs. Bush launched the Textbook and Learning Materials Programme (TLMP), which was a component of the Africa Education Initiative (AEI) announced by President George W. Bush in June 2002.

The AEI is a 600-million-dollar eight-year initiative that focuses on increasing access to quality basic educational opportunities in Africa through three main programmes: teacher training, educational scholarships for girls and development of textbooks and learning materials.

About 25,000 books are to be given to the libraries in Ghana and 300,000 teachers will receive training under the AEI programme.

Under the AEI banner, the TLMP programme meanwhile matches U.S. universities with educators in Africa to develop primary school curricula and associated materials, ultimately producing 15 million schoolbooks.

She was accompanied at the college by Ghanaian President John Agyekum Kufuor, U.S. Ambassador to Ghana Pamela Bridgewater as well as local education officials and representatives of six U.S. universities involved in the programme.

An agreement was signed Tuesday between Chicago State University, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Ghanaian ministry of education, youth and sports for the commencement of the programme in Ghana.

Also Tuesday, Mrs. Bush accompanied by her daughter Barbara visited the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra, where she met staff and caregivers as well as HIV/AIDS patients.

HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in Ghana, but it is far worse in other sub-Saharan countries like South Africa and Botswana.

But even so, UNAIDS noted that Ghana had 350,000 people living with HIV and 30,000 deaths in 2003.

Ghana's HIV infection rate has dropped for the first time in five years, and is now down countrywide to 3.1 per cent from 3.6 per cent in 2003, according to a survey released in April 2005.

Mrs. Bush was to leave Ghana on Tuesday afternoon for Nigeria and the final leg of her West African tour.

BBC Monitoring Africa - Political

January 17, 2006

HEADLINE: Ghana: Laura Bush to launch education program in Accra 17 January

Excerpt from report by Ghanaian GBC radio on 17 January

The US First Lady, Laura Bush, will today launch the Textbook and Learning Materials Program under the African Education Initiative at the Accra Training College.

President George Bush originally pledged 200m dollars over five years but this has been increased to 600m dollars over an eight years period.

The current focus is on six Sub-Saharan nations, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia until 2008. Already more than two million text books have been provided under this initiative. [Passage omitted]

Source: Radio Ghana, Accra, in English 0600 gmt 17 Jan 06

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

January 18, 2006

HEADLINE: U.S. to supply Africa textbooks

BYLINE: Bill Sammon

ACCRA, Ghana -- First lady Laura Bush yesterday hailed six American colleges for agreeing to produce and distribute 15 million textbooks for primary-school students in poverty-stricken Africa.

"Sadly, too many children around the world do not have access to education or schooling," Mrs. Bush told 500 trainees at the Accra Teacher Training College. "The problem is particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa."

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will provide funding for the program, which will send textbooks to Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa and Ethiopia. The books will be printed in English or French, depending on each country's official language, according to a spokeswoman with USAID.

"These textbooks will be created in Africa so they will represent the experiences of African students," Mrs. Bush said.

While the first lady was joined onstage by college presidents in this impoverished African nation, her textbook announcement was being criticized in Washington.

"The initiative she has launched is rather narrow in scope," said David Bryden, communications director for Global AIDS Alliance. "We believe the U.S. should be thinking much bigger when it comes to supporting effective basic-education programs. We need to go beyond textbooks."

But the first lady said textbooks are just one aspect of President Bush's \$600 million African Education Initiative, which also pays for scholarships, school uniforms and teacher training. She said the program, started in 2001, is already paying dividends.

"In addition to the textbook program announced today, the African Education Initiative has already facilitated the shipment of over 2 million books to African schools and libraries," she said.

Still, in sub-Saharan Africa, at least a third of the children are not enrolled in primary school. Of those who do enroll in first grade, fewer than half actually graduate from primary school.

Mrs. Bush said children who are taught reading, math and science end up with fewer sexually transmitted diseases, which are rampant in Africa.

"Education is our greatest ally in the effort to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS," she said. "Educated girls and boys are more likely to know what HIV is and how to avoid infection."

The colleges and universities participating in the program are Chicago State University,

Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina, Tougaloo College in Mississippi, South Carolina State University, the University of Texas at San Antonio and Alabama A&M University.

Mr. Bryden acknowledged that Mrs. Bush "is correct that education is one of our most effective weapons in the fight against AIDS." But he called on Mr. Bush, who has pledged \$5 billion to fight AIDS, to do even more.

"We see a key opportunity over the next two weeks, as President Bush is preparing his State of the Union address," he said. "We, along with a wide range of other groups, have appealed to him to announce a new presidential initiative on expanding access to basic education."

After delivering her speech, Mrs. Bush visited the AIDS ward of a clinic in Accra. She and her daughter Barbara met with 16 AIDS patients to discuss ways to fight the disease and cope with the stigmatization of victims.

The first lady later flew to Nigeria, where she will visit a school and hospital today.

Reuters- Associated Press

January 18, 2006

HEADLINE: Universities to help develop Africa school texts

BYLINE: Patricia Wilson

Six U.S. universities will apply their academic weight to help create school textbooks for Africa, U.S. first lady Laura Bush said on Tuesday as she announced an education aid partnership for the continent.

Visiting a teacher training college in Ghana during an African tour, Bush announced that the American universities would collaborate with six African counterparts to develop primary school textbooks that would reflect African reality.

"These textbooks will be created in Africa so they will represent the experiences of African students," Bush said as she visited the college in Accra with Ghana's president, John Kufuor. "The text will be written with African cultures at the center and they will depict African scenes," said the U.S. first lady, a former elementary school teacher and librarian who has made improving education around the world one of her priorities.

Africa is the world's poorest continent and literacy rates in many of its countries are among the lowest on the planet. Many rural African schools lack even the most basic materials and because of widespread poverty, attendance is often low.

The joint development of the school texts, which will cover mathematics, reading, science and language arts, is part of a \$600 million Africa Education Initiative launched by U.S. President George W. Bush.

The program will bring together U.S. universities in Illinois, South Carolina, Mississippi, North Carolina, Texas and Alabama with African universities in Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa and Ethiopia.

Laura Bush, who on Monday attended the inauguration in Monrovia of Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female head of state, also announced a donation of 25,000 books for school libraries in Ghana.

Bush and her 24-year-old daughter Barbara, who worked at a pediatric AIDS clinic in South Africa last year, also visited an AIDS treatment center in Accra where they listened to moving stories from patients that included adults, children and a baby.

When one HIV positive woman described how her family had isolated her in a separate room and another talked of her "two lives" -- one before she was diagnosed and another after -- Bush thanked them for speaking out.

"You put a real face on the disease," she said.

She visits Nigeria on Wednesday.

Abuja, Nigera

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the First Lady
(Gwagwalada, Nigeria)

Immediate Release

January 18, 2006

For

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
AT A VISIT TO ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL

Gwagwalada, Nigeria

9:20 A.M. (Local)

MRS. BUSH: I'm so happy to be here today with Sister Elizabeth and everyone here at St. Mary's to announce the shipment of the antiretrovirals and drugs that are behind me that are the first part of a shipment of antiretroviral drugs to St. Mary's Hospital. The United States -- PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief -- has had a relationship with St. Mary's Hospital for a while. We started out by funding the mother-to-child transmission -- or the stopping of the mother-to-child transmission of HIV. And then our support has grown, as St. Mary's has grown.

So today, what's behind me will be the first of a shipment for antiretroviral treatment for 500 people. Already in Nigeria, about 29,000 people have been treated with funds from PEPFAR. Behind you, in a little bit, we'll inaugurate the opening of St. Mary's new laboratory because comprehensive drug treatment with antiretrovirals requires laboratory tests to make sure people are really receiving the treatment they need. And the United States, through PEPFAR, is proud to have been able to help St. Mary's by buying some of the laboratory equipment that will be in this new lab.

I met earlier this morning with President Obasanjo who stood with President Bush and Kofi Annan in the Rose Garden in Washington, D.C., as they announced the Global Fund for AIDS. He has been a partner all along in trying to get treatment to as many people as possible in Nigeria to stop the spread of AIDS and to treat people so people can live a normal life with AIDS.

I also want to announce today -- and this is new -- that the United States will commit \$163 million this year to Nigeria

to treat AIDS, treat people with AIDS, to try to prevent the spread of AIDS and to make HIV/AIDS treatment possible for many more people here in Nigeria.

So it's my honor to get to be here today with you. Thank you for your very, very good work.

END

9:22 A.M. (Local)

Agence France Presse -- English

January 18, 2006

HEADLINE: Laura Bush meets Nigerian president, announces AIDS package

DATELINE: ABUJA, Jan 18 2006

First Lady **Laura Bush** on Wednesday announced the United States government will provide more than 163 million dollars in AIDS funding to Nigeria this year after meeting Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo.

"In 2005, we provided more than 110 million dollars. I am pleased to announce that in 2006, the US is providing more than 163 million dollars (135 million euros) to overcome HIV-AIDS in Nigeria," the wife of US President George W. Bush told a meeting of government ministers and women's groups.

"In 2004, the US provided Nigeria with almost 71 million dollars through President George Bush's emergency plan (PEPFAR) to help people prevent, treat and manage the effects of HIV-AIDS."

Nigeria has about 3.5 million people living with AIDS virus, according to a 2003 survey.

But many organisations are critical of PEPFAR funding policy, arguing it comes with strings attached and goes to inexperienced organisations preaching "abstinence only" policies.

At the International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA) in Abuja last month, the US-based Centre for Health and Gender Equality criticised "the larger and larger share of PEPFAR funding going to faith-based organizations which have no track history of preventive activity."

But at a meeting with Obasanjo earlier Wednesday, Bush commended the Nigerian leader who also presides over the African Union, saying the continental body "has made a lot of progress" under him, an official statement said.

The first lady and the Nigerian leader shared experiences on education and health issues, especially the fight against HIV-AIDS, and regional politics, the statement said.

Bush, who was accompanied by her daughter, Barbara, also gave Obasanjo her condolences over the death of his wife, Stella, in a Spanish hospital last October, it said.

She was visiting the country as part of an African tour that has taken her to Liberia and Ghana.

Bush also met a group of female students and women as part of her efforts to promote female education in mainly Muslim northern Nigeria and presented gifts at a model secondary school in the Maitama district of the Nigerian capital.

A statement by the US embassy in Nigeria said the first lady would "emphasise empowering

girls and women through literacy and HIV and AIDS treatment" during her 24-hour visit.

She left the country in the afternoon, embassy officials said.

ola-ade/eg/jac/

UPI

January 18, 2006

HEADLINE: U.S. first lady talks education in Africa

U.S. first lady **Laura Bush** concluded her trip to Africa Wednesday by meeting with a Nigerian women's group and talked of role models and education.

Bush was part of the U.S. delegation at the inauguration Monday of Liberia President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, whom Bush called "an example for young women around the world."

"The question we must answer now is how do we nurture the development of the next generation of women leaders in Africa and worldwide," Bush said. "The answer begins with education. ... Educated children grow up to be adults who have more opportunities to work, to support their families, and to fully participate in the life of their communities."

After leaving Nigeria, Bush was asked about comments Monday by Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., who claimed Republicans were running the U.S. House of Representatives "like a plantation."

"I think it's ridiculous, it's a ridiculous comment. That's what I think," the first lady said.

She also said her next travel from Washington would likely include a trip to the hurricane-damaged U.S. Gulf Coast to visit schools that have recently reopened.

NBC News Transcripts- Today

January 18, 2006

HEADLINE: First lady **Laura Bush** visits Nigeria, pledges aid

ANCHORS: ANN CURRY

ANN CURRY, anchor:

In Africa, first lady **Laura Bush** announced that the US will provide \$163 million in assistance to fight AIDS in Nigeria. **Mrs. Bush** met with Nigeria's president and visited AIDS patients and health workers at a small clinic.

Africa News

January 18, 2006 Wednesday

HEADLINE: PanAfrica;

Laura Bush Defends Anti-Aids Abstinence Programmes

BYLINE: UN Integrated Regional Information Networks

US First Lady **Laura Bush** defended the focus on sexual abstinence in her government's emergency plan for HIV/AIDS relief (PEPFAR), at the start of her trip to Liberia, Ghana and Nigeria earlier this week.

"I really have always been a little bit irritated by criticism of abstinence, as it is absolutely, 100 percent effective in fighting sexually transmittable illnesses," the New York Post quoted Bush as saying.

PEPFAR is a US \$15 billion initiative that provides funding for AIDS treatment, prevention, and orphan and palliative care projects in 15 developing countries, mostly in Africa.

However, a recent analysis of PEPFAR spending over the past three years by the Centre for Health and Gender Equity (Change), a US-based NGO, said there were moral strings attached to the financial aid, and some aspects of prevention were being undermined.

According to Change, abstinence programmes had received the lion's share of prevention funds during this period, while the total budget for condom procurement and distribution had not increased by a single dollar.

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]

Brakebill, Elizabeth B.

From: Culvahouse, Sarah A.
Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2006 8:47 AM
To: DL-WHO-FirstLady
Subject: TRIP OF THE FIRST LADY - POOL REPORT #1, 1/18/06

Pool Report #1
First Lady Laura Bush in Nigeria
Jan. 18, 2005

Mrs. Bush began the day by traveling from the Hilton in Abuja to the presidential villa for a bilateral meeting with Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. There was scheduled to be coverage by the pool, but that coverage was canceled and so your poolers cooled their heels outside the enormous walled compound.

Afterward, the First Lady was taken to St. Mary's Hospital in Gwagwaladu, Nigeria, where boxes of medicine for AIDS patients were stacked on the sun-scorched lawn.

"Today, what's behind me will be the first in the shipment of antiretroviral treatment for 500 people," she told patients and medical officials after touring the facility. "That's so important, if we can stop the transmission from mother to child - it really protects the next generation."

She added. "I also want to announce today - and this is new - the United States will commit \$163 million this year to Nigeria to treat AIDS."

Mrs. Bush and her daughter, Barbara, sat under a shade tree and listened to the harrowing stories of AIDS patients.

(b)(6)

"It's really important for people who are HIV positive to reach out, to let other people know that they can be tested, they can find out," Mrs. Bush said. "They can still live a life, a positive life, a happy life. And that's the message we need to get out around the world."

After the discussion, as the First Lady got up to leave, Barbara slipped a couple of gifts to a young African boy, asking him to "share them with your sister," who was nearby. One of the gifts was a box of crayons signed by Laura Bush.

Later, the Bushes returned to Abuja and went to Model Secondary School. They walked into a worn science lab and sat down on lab stools among the students. Barbara hoisted a small African girl onto her lap.

Next the First Lady went into a grassy courtyard to watch a presentation by dancers, singers and drummers, all dressed in colorful costumes and some wearing face paint. Then it was on to another classroom, where Mrs. Bush had another roundtable discussion with girls in neat uniforms, including one who recited a poem.

The First Lady then returned to the Hilton while the pool filed. She was expected to travel to the National Center for Women's Development for a speech and photo op with UNESCO officials. According to her schedule, this will be followed by a farewell to embassy officials and a long flight back to Washington.

Bill Sammon

1/18/2006

The Washington Times

(b)(6)

1/18/2006

Brakebill, Elizabeth B.

From: Culvahouse, Sarah A.
Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2006 8:46 AM
To: DL-WHO-FirstLady
Subject: REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY AT A VISIT TO ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the First Lady
(Gwagwalada, Nigeria)

For

Immediate Release

January 18, 2006

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AT A VISIT TO ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL

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1/18/2006

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So it's my honor to get to be here today with you. Thank you for your very, very good work.

END

9:22 A.M. (Local)

Brakebill, Elizabeth B.

From: Culvahouse, Sarah A.
Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2006 8:46 AM
To: DL-WHO-FirstLady
Subject: AP - Laura Bush speaks out on women's issues across two continents in 10 months

Laura Bush speaks out on women's issues across two continents in 10 months

By Deb Reichmann

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) _ She's far from being tagged a feminist, yet Laura Bush, the librarian-turned-first lady who's often seen reading aloud to children, is raising her voice on women's issues around the world.

In travels over the past 10 months from Afghanistan to the Middle East to Africa, Mrs. Bush has broadened her focus on education, her trademark issue, to push equal opportunities for women in nations where they often have second-class status.

Discussing women's issues is a bit more challenging than reading "Make Way for Ducklings" to schoolchildren. Mrs. Bush, soft-spoken and polite, has found herself in frank chats abroad about sexuality, AIDS and rape in addition to less-sensitive topics like helping women gain access to education, health care and jobs.

It was the jarring accounts of severe repression and brutality against women in Afghanistan that piqued her interest in women's lives abroad.

"I think that what happened to me really happened also to the other people in the United States," Mrs. Bush said, reflecting on her plane during a four-day swing through West Africa, a trip that ends on Wednesday.

"After Sept. 11, when we all looked at Afghanistan and saw the oppression of women there, it awakened a lot of people to the plight of women around the world," she said.

The first lady took just two solo foreign jaunts _ both to Europe _ during President Bush's first term. So far in his second, she's made four trips abroad to talk mostly about women's issues and education.

"I would say there's a B plot that's been going on with Laura Bush that maybe people haven't been noticing," said Carl Sferrazza Anthony, a historian and student of America's first ladies. She's shining a light on inequality among women living in traditionally male-dominated cultures. He's dubbed it a kind of "international feminism."

Mrs. Bush is among the most private of American first ladies. She prefers to play cheerleader for her husband and refrains from disclosing her own personal views.

"The hints are that she is somewhat more liberal than her husband, and this interest in women's issues may be a way for her to realize some of her own interests," said Barbara Kellerman, author of "All the President's Kin."

But Kellerman adds: "I would not put Laura Bush at the forefront of the rank of well-known American feminists. ... It's all very ladylike and very proper. I don't mean to diminish its symbolic importance, which I think is of some value, but I think we should label it accurately."

Mrs. Bush isn't the type to grab a placard and run out to join a women's rights march. She takes a much softer approach.

Noelia Rodriguez, the first lady's former director of communications, said Mrs. Bush often gets her work done with a "velvet hammer."

Mrs. Bush's advisers say privately that while she's stepped up her international travel, she hasn't turned her back on her beloved domestic projects _ fostering literacy and preventing young boys and girls from choosing lives of crime and drugs.

There's no second-term makeover under way for Mrs. Bush, they say. Nor is she being sent out to do public events to score political points with women voters.

The first lady is genuinely interested in seeing a better life for disenfranchised women, they say. Her interest in Africa, in particular, is fueled by her daughter Barbara, who recently worked in an AIDS pediatrics hospital in South Africa .

Mrs. Bush began her second-term travel in Afghanistan in April 2005. She visited a teacher training institute in Kabul and talked positively about how millions of women and girls had returned to work and school after the Taliban regime was ousted. Still, especially outside the capital, women are forced to adhere to restrictive Islamic traditions, including wearing burkas.

A month later in Jordan, Mrs. Bush told Middle Eastern leaders that if the right to vote is to have meaning, it cannot be limited to men. "Freedom, especially freedom for women, is more than the absence of oppression," she said.

On her first trip to Africa in July 2005, Mrs. Bush urged South African women to take control of their sex lives and advertised a new initiative to provide real protections for abused women.

In Rwanda, she promoted the rights of women by standing with female legislators. And she offered hope to girls seeking education and a new way of life following a 100-day massacre in 1994 when 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by the Hutu militia. Many women raped during the conflict contracted AIDS.

Mrs. Bush made this trip to Africa to witness women's history. On a muggy afternoon in Liberia's capital of Monrovia, she applauded the swearing-in of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the new president of Liberia _ and the first woman ever elected to lead a nation in Africa.

At later stops in Ghana and Nigeria, Mrs. Bush visited AIDS treatment facilities and highlighted a U.S.-backed program that provides millions of textbooks to African students.

Ritu Sharma, director of Women's Edge Coalition, which oversees how U.S. international aid programs work for women, applauded Mrs. Bush for talking about empowering women, but she worries it's just part of a diplomacy campaign to burnish America's image abroad.

Mrs. Bush's words need to be backed by funding, Sharma said. Her organization is waiting to see how well women and girls fare in the next budget Bush submits to Congress.

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To unsubscribe send a blank email to leave-whitehouse-news-wires-1264435G@list.whitehouse.gov

BBC Monitoring Africa – Political

January 18, 2006

HEADLINE: Visiting Laura Bush donates AIDS drugs to Nigerian hospital

Text of report by Radio Nigeria from Abuja on 18 January

The US first lady and wife of President George Bush, Mrs Laura Bush, has donated antiretroviral drugs worth 2m dollars to the St Mary's Catholic Hospital, Gwagwalada, Abuja.

She made the donation today when she visited the hospital as part of her visit to Nigeria.

The drug is to be used in the management of the HIV/AIDS cases in the hospital [words indistinct].

Source: Radio Nigeria-Abuja in English

Associated Press

January 18, 2006

HEADLINE: Mrs. Bush announces \$163 million in AIDS funds for Nigeria

BYLINE: Deb Riechmann

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) First lady Laura Bush announced Wednesday that Nigeria will receive \$163 million in U.S. assistance to fight AIDS as she heard a young woman at a small AIDS clinic tell how medications helped her avoid death from the disease.

Mrs. Bush, standing next to four cartons of anti-retroviral drugs, visited with health workers and AIDS patients at St. Mary's Hospital on the dusty outskirts of the capital. The four boxes enough to treat 500 people is the first U.S.-backed shipment of the drugs St. Mary's has received through President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

Mrs. Bush sat under shade tree to hear the stories of clinic workers and patients, including Toyin Yomi, 26, whose frail body was clad in a colorful navy dress and shawl. She tested positive for HIV in 1999 and started her first round of drug treatment in 2003.

Mrs. Bush nodded as the woman, who spoke in a near whisper, told her tragic, yet uplifting story. When stocks of the drug Yomi was taking were depleted, she nearly died three times. Yomi, who has been hospitalized a number of times, started a second round of drugs in April 2004 and is back on her feet.

"It's really important for people who are HIV positive to reach out to let other people know that they can be tested, they can find out they can still live a life a positive life, a happy life," Mrs. Bush said. "That's the message we need to get out around the world."

An estimated 3.6 million Nigerians are infected with HIV, according to the State Department. About 310,000 people die each year in Nigeria, which has one-fifth of Africa's population.

Nigeria is one of the largest recipients of funds from PEPFAR, but there is serious concern that testing, monitoring and health care systems are not adequate to reach people at high risk of contracting the disease. People in their teens and 20s account for most HIV infections.

On the final day of her four-day swing through West Africa, Mrs. Bush met with Nigerian President Osegun Obasanjo at his residence, and visited a public school where young people, dressed to represent different ethnic groups in the nation, performed a welcome dance for her in a courtyard.

Walking past a sign that said "Remember that the girl child has a right to basic education," Mrs. Bush spoke with students who receive U.S.-backed scholarships that help pay for school fees, uniforms and supplies so they can attend school.

Her daughter, Barbara, at her side, Mrs. Bush advised the students, including one who said she dreamed of being a lawyer, to read many different types of books to prepare themselves for future education.

Before heading back to Washington, Mrs. Bush spoke at the National Center for Women's Development, the same place where President Clinton spoke about fighting AIDS in 2000.

Associated Press

January 18, 2006

HEADLINE: Laura Bush speaks out on women's issues across two continents in 10 months

BYLINE: Deb Reichmann

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Mrs. Bush made this trip to Africa to witness women's history. On a muggy afternoon in Liberia's capital of Monrovia, she applauded the swearing-in of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the new president of Liberia _ and the first woman ever elected to lead a nation in Africa.

At later stops in Ghana and Nigeria, Mrs. Bush visited AIDS treatment facilities and highlighted a U.S.-backed program that provides millions of textbooks to African students.

Ritu Sharma, director of Women's Edge Coalition, which oversees how U.S. international aid programs work for women, applauded Mrs. Bush for talking about empowering women, but she worries it's just part of a diplomacy campaign to burnish America's image abroad.

Mrs. Bush's words need to be backed by funding, Sharma said. Her organization is waiting to see how well women and girls fare in the next budget Bush submits to Congress.

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HEADLINE: Behind rising oil cost: Nigeria

BYLINE: Abraham McLaughlin Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Want to know why the price of oil is climbing again?

For part of the answer, drive three hours from Port Harcourt, the capital of Nigeria's oil-rich delta region, past swampy rivers with fishermen in dugout canoes, down a bumpy dirt track to Iwhrekan, where 1,000 villagers live in run-down concrete and mud-brick buildings.

On July 21, 2005, the pipeline that runs near here ruptured. Streams of black goo oozed into farmers' fields and a fishing creek. Because of a complicated dispute between villagers and the major oil company in this region, Royal Dutch Shell, the oil hasn't been cleaned up. Black residue still covers thousands of plants.

Residents are angry. "We will face Shell," says village chairman Daniel Oweh surrounded by agitated young men. "The next stage will be violent."

Threats like this are increasingly being carried out - helping drive oil to \$66 per barrel this week. Four international oil workers were taken hostage by armed men in speedboats last week. Nigeria's production has dropped by nearly 10 percent.

It could get worse. "The loss of more Nigerian oil could send the price to \$80 or \$95 per barrel or higher," says David Goldwyn, a former US assistant energy secretary who now consults in the region. Given the instability here, he says, "The likelihood of a significant disruption" to Nigeria's output of about 2.6 million barrels per day "always has to be counted as relatively high."

Militants warn of more attacks

Militants calling themselves the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta are holding the four hostages - an American, a Briton, a Bulgarian, and a Honduran. They have threatened even more aggressive moves against oil workers and their families soon. Shell has evacuated 330 employees.

Already, two attacks in recent days on some of Shell's roughly 1,000 oil wells and 80 pumping stations caused a drop of 220,000 barrels a day in output - nearly 10 percent of Nigeria's 2.5 million barrels a day in exports.

Tensions over Iran are also driving the global price higher. Iran is the second-largest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and exports about 4 million barrels a day. Oil markets are jittery over fears Iran might cut exports if hit with UN sanctions for resuming its nuclear program, which it announced it would do last week.

A major oil exporter to the US

Nigeria, meanwhile, is the fifth-biggest supplier of US oil imports - and Africa's largest oil exporter. In 10 years, by some estimates, the US will get a fourth of its oil from Africa. Nigeria is not, however, in the same league as Iran or Saudi Arabia, which exports about 10 million barrels per day. "Unlike [an attack on] Saudi Arabia," adds Mr. Goldwyn, "the world could manage around a major attack on Nigerian oil suppliers." Still, what happens here reverberates to gas stations across the world.

On Monday, one of the four hostages read a list of the captors' demands, including local control of oil wealth, a \$1.5 billion payment by Shell to compensate for pollution, and the release from jail of an oil-region militia leader. Negotiators said Tuesday they had made contact with the captors and expected a peaceful end.

Yet in Iwhrekan, tensions continue.

The dispute grew out of a disagreement over which contractor should clean up the oil spill. In the wake of the accident, the village council appointed a contractor to do the job. Shell appointed another, and when he arrived, villagers chased him away. The reason: The village-appointed firm had agreed to do such things as fixing the village's defunct water wells and providing plastic chairs for residents sit on.

Then, villagers say, the Shell-appointed man came late one night with a bevy of drunken soldiers - and Shell's approval - and ransacked the village, leaving one teenager hospitalized and four houses and two cars destroyed.

Shell, in a statement, denies inviting "any security agents into the community" and says the villagers have impeded cleanup.

Now it's a stalemate.

Residents are getting more and more angry - despite having the choice to allow the cleanup.

"Is this road fitting for an oil-producing community?" asks indignant village chairman Mr. Oweh, pointing to the bumpy dirt track that is his village's main street.

Yet Shell and other oil companies pay the government royalties and taxes that amounted to a whopping \$27 billion in 2004. This is one of the world's most corrupt countries, however, and much of the oil money disappears into personal accounts of officials.

Nor is there much international pressure for peace and reconciliation in the area. Although, amid growing concern about terrorism, that could change.

There are fears that rising fundamentalism in Nigeria's Muslim north could combine with discontent in the southern oil region to bring international terrorist targeting of oil facilities. Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden even mentioned Nigeria as a potential target in a 2003 video. So

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