

Belgium Today

Volume 13, Issue 3

A Publication of the Embassy of Belgium in Washington, DC

September-October 2008

MINISTER OF DEFENSE VISITS UNITED STATES

In June, Belgian Minister of Defense Pieter De Crem came to the U.S. for a one-week visit dominated by discussions of transatlantic relations and operations carried out by the Belgian army, in particular in Afghanistan and in Lebanon.

His initial stop was Norfolk, Virginia, headquarters of NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) to which 10 Belgian officers are assigned. ACT is responsible for coordinating the modernization process of the 26 allied armies.

Moving on to Washington, the Minister met with Senator Joseph Lieberman, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and with Deputy Secretary of State William Burns in charge of political affairs.



At the Pentagon, he was received by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates; their meeting highlighted Belgium's re-energized bonds with the United States and Belgium's role as a "small but trustful" partner in the management of crises and international military operations. The Belgian government has, for instance, sent 4 F-16 fighter-bombers to Kandahar, Afghanistan, to provide air support to the International Security Assistance Force

(ISAF), directed by NATO and committed to the fight against the insurrection of the Taliban.

In a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, Minister De Crem (shown above, left, with Ambassador Struye) paid homage to the American veterans who fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

In New York, his last stop, the Minister met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who thanked Belgium for its contribution to peace keeping operations in Lebanon, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

BELGIUM CONTRIBUTES TO PENTAGON 9/11 MEMORIAL

Belgium has found numerous occasions to express its solidarity with the American people after the September 11 attacks, and in this spirit has made a donation of \$5000 in support of the memorial which has just been constructed at the Pentagon to preserve the memory of those who lost their lives there.

When terrorists hijacked American Airlines Flight 77 and crashed it into the Pentagon 184 people were killed. Positioned near the site of impact, the two-acre memorial is a park with 184 granite-topped benches, each dedicated to and inscribed with the name of an individual victim. At night, the benches are illuminated by lighted reflection pools below.

The memorial acknowledges the horrific attack that took place at the Pentagon and the day's tremendous significance in U.S. history. Its designers also seem to have successfully met the challenge of the victims' families who requested "a place of solace, peace and healing."

Ambassador Struye was among the dignitaries who attended the official dedication ceremony which took place on the seventh anniversary of the attack. He found the memorial "an impressive space of calm and quiet, conducive to reflection about the tragedy it commemorates."

ANHEUSER-BUSCH INBEV IS BORN

Anheuser-Busch, the largest beer maker in the U.S., agreed last July to accept a \$52 billion takeover bid by Belgium-based Inbev. The deal creates the world's largest brewer, uniting the maker of Budweiser and Michelob with the producer of Stella Artois, Bass and Brahma. Together the two companies have sales of about \$36 billion a year. This is the biggest takeover in the U.S. economy this year, and the third largest ever.

Inbev is based in Leuven, Belgium. The company's origins date back to 1366

and today it manages a portfolio of more than 200 beer brands. The combined new company will be named Anheuser-Busch Inbev. Anheuser will be given two seats on the board, including one for August A. Busch IV, Anheuser's chief executive whose family has controlled Anheuser for more than a century. Inbev CEO Carlos Brito, of Brazil, will lead the new company. The transaction is subject to the approval of company shareholders and other customary regulatory approvals, but Inbev expects the process to be completed by the end of 2008.

The Inbev takeover of A-B initially caused quite a stir in the U.S. Thanks to a huge advertising budget and a strong distribution network, few brands are as omnipresent in American daily life as Budweiser and its more popular sibling, Bud Light. Anheuser is, for example, the largest buyer of Super-bowl ads.

Inbev has pledged to keep Budweiser as the new company's flagship brand and St. Louis as its North American headquarters.

(continued on page 2)

REGISTRATION WILL BE REQUIRED OF BELGIANS COMING TO U.S.

ESTA is an electronic registration system requiring travelers who are part of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) – 27 countries including Belgium – to register before boarding a plane or cruise ship destined for the United States.

The ESTA program started on a voluntary basis on August 1, 2008; registration will become mandatory as of January 12, 2009. Registration is free and may be done by third parties (travel agencies, family, friends).

Registration should preferably be done 72 hours prior to the beginning of a trip but it is in principle possible to register at any moment before departure. A last minute departure for the United States will always be possible.

Registration is valid for 2 years and for multiple entries. It is possible to bring your data up-to-date at any time. An answer will be given immediately in the majority of cases. The person who does not receive authorization will need to go to an embassy or a consulate to apply for a visa. The ESTA authorization does not, however, mean that access to the United States is guaranteed.

The ESTA program does not apply to Belgians who are holders of a visa for the United States. Registration should be done on the following site: esta.cbp.dhs.gov

WELCOME TO NEW REPS

The beginning of September marks a new academic year and is also the time for rotation in the diplomatic corps. There are a number of new faces representing Belgium in the United States.



Jan Grauls has succeeded Johan Verbeke as Belgium's Ambassador to the United Nations in New York.

At the Embassy, Sigurd Schelstraete has been appointed Deputy Chief of Mission and heads the political section while Patrick Herman has taken over the helm of the economic section. Patrick Stevens is the new Counselor for the Belgian Police.

Each of Belgium's Consulates has new leadership. In New York Herman Portocarero is Consul General, and Jean-Michel Colas is the new Deputy Consul General. In Los Angeles Geert Criel, formerly head of the Embassy's economic section, has become Consul General, while in Atlanta, Benoît Standaert has taken up the function of Consul.

Welcome, also, to new Honorary Consuls Patrick Didier in Salt Lake City and Elisabeth Townsend Briggs in Milwaukee, and to the director of the Flemish House in New York, Philip Fontaine.

ANHEUSER-BUSCH INBEV

(continued from page 1)

All U.S. breweries will remain open, Inbev has stated, and the takeover will enhance global market access for Budweiser. However, Inbev will sell the entertainment division of Anheuser-Busch, including Sea World, Busch Gardens and other theme parks.

While Inbev's takeover has received a lot of attention, several American beers were already taken over by larger overseas rivals in the last decade. The Miller Brewing Company was sold to South African Breweries in 1999, and the Adolph Coors Company was bought by Molson of Canada in 2005. In addition, Inbev and Anheuser already had some commercial ties. Inbev distributes Budweiser in Canada, and the two companies have a successful U.S. distribution partnership for Inbev's European premium import brands including Stella Artois, Beck's and Bass. In 2006, Inbev sold its Rolling Rock brand to Anheuser-Busch for \$82 million.

Together with the newly combined MillerCoors company, Anheuser-Busch InBev is certainly going to make the U.S. beer business more competitive than it is already. One of the biggest battles in the transformed U.S. beer business will be in the light beer aisle: Miller Lite and Coors Light will go up against the biggest beer brand in the world, Bud Light. It's going to be a hard-fought contest.

BELGIAN CULINARY DELIGHTS HAVE CAUGHT ON IN DC

In a recent article in the *Washington Post*, food critic Tom Sietsema observed "...Belgian restaurants are among the trends Washington has embraced with gusto in recent years. The appeal is simple: We love steamed mussels, double-cooked fries, beers of distinction and chocolate mousse." In the past few months there have indeed been several notable additions to local favorites **Belga Café** (www.belgacafe.com) and **Brasserie Beck** (www.beckdc.com).

Chefs Claudio Pirolo and Mickael Cornu have launched **Et Voilà!** which, within weeks of opening in the Palisades neighborhood, garnered two and a half stars and a very positive review in the *Washington Post*. (etvoilade.com)

The Piferoen family's **Locolat**, purveying fine Belgian chocolates and pastries (made on the premises), is now located in a gleaming new building in Adams Morgan. (www.belgiumlocolat.com)

Other newcomers include **Dr. Granville Moore's**, which describes itself as "a gastropub with a healthy Belgian fetish" (granvillemoores.com) and **Marvin**, offering what is perhaps the country's only mix of Belgian cuisine and soul food. Together with **Café l'Enfant**, whose outdoor banner boasts a "world famous Belgian happy hour" (lenfantcafe.com), these eateries offer extensive selections of Belgian beers.

And there's also the artisanal breads and communal tables of **Le Pain Quotidien** (painquotidien.com), with stores in Georgetown, Alexandria and Bethesda.

It was back in 1992 that the first Belgian restaurant in the Washington area, **Bistro Belgique Gourmande**, opened in Occoquan, Virginia. Like **Mannequin Pis**, which Bernard Dehaene started in Olney, Maryland, in 1999, it is no longer Belgian-owned, but still serves Belgian-style food.

BELGIAN DESIGNS WORLD'S LARGEST LAND-RECLAMATION PROJECT

Belgian architect Alexander D'Hooghe, currently assistant professor in architecture and urbanism at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has won a competition for the design of the largest land-reclamation project in history.

Over the next few decades, 155 square miles of new land are to emerge from South Korea's Saemangeum Bay. Situated on the Korean peninsula's West coast, the bay's new port will open the area to trade with the region's nascent superpower, China.

The project will be eight times larger than the current record holder, the Palm Deira, which is under construction in Dubai. Saemangeum is the largest land-reclamation project in Asia since the construction of Chek Lap Kok, Hong Kong's new airport, which opened in 1998. Because Korea is 75% mountainous, land for development is precious.

With his MIT colleague Nader Tehrani, Alexander D'Hooghe formed one of three international teams that won the South Korean government's design contest for the project in August. Their plans include industrial, residential and agricultural areas, new wetlands, and even a space port. The South Korean government also selected design teams from New York's Columbia University and London Metropolitan University. Ultimately, the government may elect to use any combination of the winning teams, or none at all.

The MIT team's design calls for the construction of seven islands and peninsulas, ranging in size from 4.8 to 36.9 square miles, enough space for half a million people, and with room to grow for two to three million more. Construction could begin in 2011. The northern half of the area is reserved mainly for industrial, scientific, and residential purposes. In addition to port facilities and factories, it would include theme parks, a technical university, research and development facilities, a Formula 1 racetrack, and, most notably, a space port, where the budding local aeronautics industry may follow Virgin Galactic's lead in launching space tourists. Agriculture and tourism are the focus of the southern half, which D'Hooghe labels New Tuscany. Much as in the real Tuscany, the new townships will be on hilltops overlooking the surrounding landscape.

BREVIA

◀Belgium is the tenth largest donor to United Nations programs to combat AIDS. Charles Michel, Belgium's Minister for Development Cooperation, said that Belgium attaches much importance to the fight against the disease which has claimed so many victims in Belgium's partner countries.

◀Princess Mathilde, wife of Crown Prince Philippe and mother of four, was included on *Vanity Fair's* International Best-Dressed List 2008. "Always brilliant! A stylish and fresh appearance," exclaimed the American monthly.

◀On August 25, Starbucks opened its first coffee shop at Brussels Airport. Wilfried Van Assche, Airport CEO, said that "Starbucks will mark the arrival of an internationally esteemed, first class brand that our customers have been demanding... [and] its American roots will also bring an extra international dimension to our Departures Hall."

CULTURAL UPDATE

When Rita Bral, Belgium's Honorary Consul in San Francisco, was asked to donate an item from Belgium representing peace to the new chapel at the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi, she immediately thought of a dove. She also thought about lace, an art form in which Belgians have excelled throughout the centuries. Her inspiration and a fortuitous contact with the lace center at the St. Charles Borromeo Church in Antwerp resulted in the lovely lace work pictured above which will be in place when the chapel opens to the public on September 27.



Max Vandervorst is the Willy Wonka of the music world. Constantly inventing extraordinary instruments out of ordinary objects, he challenges our traditional concepts of musical performance while delighting us with his playfulness and imagination. He will present his *Symphony for Abandoned Objects* three times as part of Kids Euro Festival at the Embassy of France. While two of the concerts will be for school children, there will be a performance for families on Sunday, October 26 at 6 p.m. (Please See "Events of Interest" on page 4.)

Primimoda, a gallery specializing in Africanist paintings, sculpture and decorative arts, located in Washington, DC, features early twentieth century Africa-inspired works. Over twenty Belgian artists are represented in the gallery's collection. Among them is Arthur Dupagne (1895-1961) who sculpted the bronze *Porteuse d'Eau* featured here. The Gallery has donated proceeds to benefit Action Aid in its school-building program in Congo and has also made contributions to the Institute of Tropical Medicine, located in Antwerp. www.primimoda.com



EVENTS OF INTEREST

Through September 25 — New York, NY

Catalina Delacroix' first solo show in the U.S. at Sutton Gallery. Info: 212 753-0884; www.catalinadelacroix.be

Through October 11 — New York, NY

Recent paintings by Bram Bogart at the Jacobson Howard Gallery. Info: 212 570-2362; www.jacobsonhoward.com

Through October 18 — New York, NY

Abstract paintings by Marc Van Cauwenbergh at the Kathleen Cullen Gallery. Info: 212 463-8500

Through October 26 — Washington, DC

Close Encounters: Facing the Future — a compelling dialogue on social issues disguised as a contemporary art exhibition, curated by Don Russell and Niels van Tomme, at the Katzen Center, American University. Info: www.provisionslibrary.org.

September 27 — Washington, DC

Pianist Anna Vinnitskaya, top laureate of the 2007 Queen Elisabeth Competition, will perform at the Terrace Theatre, Kennedy Center at 2 p.m. For tickets (\$ 40) call 202 785-9727.

September 28—October 5 — Silver Spring, MD

Three sound artists from Ghent — Mieke Lambrijs, Jeroen Vandesande and Pauwel De Buck— will perform in the Sonic Circuits Festival, at the Pyramid Atlantic. Info: www.dc-soniccircuits.org

October 4 — Washington, DC

The Smithsonian Resident Associate Program presents an all-day seminar *The Northern Renaissance: Ways of Painting as Ways of Thinking*, including illustrated lectures on Van Eyck, Bosch and Bruegel by Aneta Georgievska-Shine, adjunct lecturer in art history, University of Maryland, at the Smithsonian. To order tickets: 202 633-3030 or ResidentAssociates.org.

October 6 — Washington, DC

Dutch language courses, at the beginning, intermediate, and

advanced level, will resume at the Embassy. Registration and mandatory level testing for new students (except beginners) will take place on October 1. Info: 202 625-5850 or franm@wizard.net.

October 14 — Miami, FL

A colloquium *Chantal Akerman and the Disclosure of the Everyday*, followed by a screening of the film *From the Other Side* (2000) and including a Q & A session with the director, will be held at the Cosford Cinema, University of Miami. Info: consubel_miami@earthlink.net

October 17-19 — Arlington, VA & Washington, DC

Some 30 walkers from Belgium will participate in the three-day *U.S. Freedom Walk Festival 2008*. Info: www.ava.org/clubs/usfreedomwalk.index.htm

October 17 — Washington, DC

The Collegium Vocale Gent, with Kristian Bezuidenhout fortepiano and guest director, will perform selections from The Haydn Songbook and solo keyboard works, at the Library of Congress. Tickets (for a nominal service charge of \$2.75) are available through Ticket Master at 202 397- SEAT.

October 18 —Cambridge, MA

The Collegium Vocale Gent, with Kristian Bezuidenhout fortepiano and guest director, will perform (the above-mentioned program) in the Boston Early Music Festival, at First Church in Cambridge, Congregational. Info: www.bemf.org/pages/concerts.htm

October 26 — Washington, DC

Creative musician Max Vandervorst will perform his *Symphony for Abandoned Objects*, at the Maison française, Embassy of France, at 6 p.m. Free Admission. (See page 3.) Info: 202 625-5864

October 26 — Washington, DC

Cyclocross racers are invited to join this year's DCCX Cyclocross race, held on the grounds of the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Info: www.dcmtnb.com/blog/dc-cx

BELGIUM TODAY

A bi-monthly publication
of the

Embassy of Belgium
3330 Garfield St. NW
Washington, DC 20008
Phone (202) 333-6900
Fax (202) 333-3079

Email
BelgiumToday@diplobel.org
WWW
www.diplobel.us



BELGIUM CONTRIBUTES TO 9/11 MEMORIAL

First Class
US Postage
PAID
Permit #670
Washington, DC