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## METRO

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Principal Patricia Tucker congratulates the Banneker High team, from left, Brandon Jones, Zainep Mahmoud and Andrei Munteanu.

## It's Academic' Goes Diplomatic

Teen Quiz Show Visits State Department for Contest on World Affairs

By SYLVIA MORENO Washington Post Staff Writer

aryland and the District were just about neck and neck yesterday-with Virginia in respectable third place—until that final grab-bag round on the coun-try's longest-running high school quiz show, "It's Academic."

. . Japan's parliament is known by what other name?" Diet.

... the home of British prime ministers, located at Number 10 on what London street?" Downing

... what other division of Islam is followed by most of the population of

"The winner of the 1982 Nobel liter-ature prize was what Colombian author whose works include 'One Hundred Years of Solitude' . . . ?" Gabriel Garcia

It was a show like no other produced by "It's Academic," a program in its 42nd season. It was created by Washington lawyer Sophie Altman in 1961, the year that John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as president, the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba, the Soviet Union sent the first man into space and Germany was divided by the Berlin Wall.



Sarah Bassford, 17, and Heather Dougalewiez, 16, show support for the team from J.E.B. Stuart High before the special taping, part of International Education Week,

Yesterday, the program's producers took more than 300 students from the Washington area to the U.S. State Department to talk about the world and to let the teenagers show off their knowledge of today's foreign affairs. The special program was co-sponsored by the World Affairs Council to celebrate International Education Week

Although the department's bestknown faces-Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and agency spokesman Richard Boucher-were not able to attend, the students got a welcome from Togo D. West Jr., a former secretary of the Army and the Veterans Affairs Depart-

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Longtime "It's Academic" host Mac McGarry chats with Lizzie Slenker, 16, of Langley High School.

## Students Display Knowledge Of World

STUDENTS, From B1

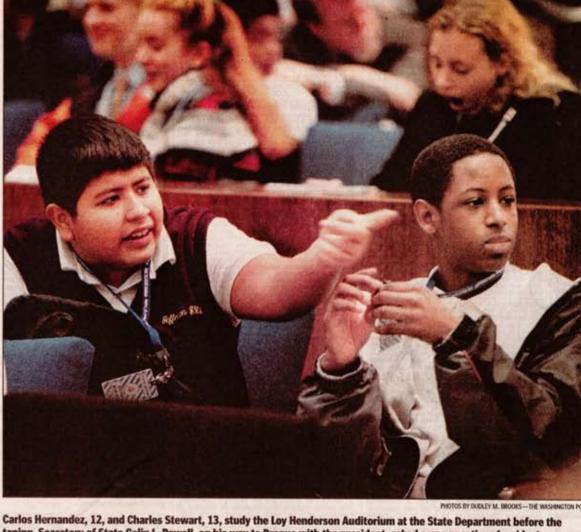
ment, and a 50-minute briefing and question-and-answer period with deputy State Department spokesman Philip Reeker.

Powell, on his way yesterday to Prague with President Bush to attend a NATO summit meeting, appeared by videotape to ask the first round of four questions.

Thomas A. Farrell, a deputy assistant secretary for educational and cultural affairs, took the opportunity to urge students to apply for the various foreign study or foreign volunteer programs sponsored by the United States and to look into the Foreign Service as a career. "We depend on you to participate in them ... to use them for leadership and development . . . to help forge bonds across nations," he said. "I hope you take up your personal responsibility as leaders in this country and participate in making this world a better place."

Reeker's briefing quickly spanned the transformation of world politics from the Cold War to the post-Sept. 11 battle against terrorism. He defined the three principles underlying U.S. foreign policy as the security of the United States; the prosperity or economic security of the United States; and the values of the United States-which prompted the first question from the student audience:

"How does Iraq fit into the three



taping. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, on his way to Prague with the president, asked some questions by videotape.

principles of foreign policy?"

The students' questions only got tougher from there:

"If you had a breakthrough in fuel cell technology, how would that affect the Western world's relations with the Middle East?"

"After the Iraqi disarmament, what country will be the next tar-

"Why is there still a trade embargo with Cuba? If we trade with China, when will it be over?"

"Does the United States intend to improve relations with the Middle East and how?"

The Q & A ended and the exhibition game began, with one fun round of questions for the audience and six competitive rounds of questions for the D.C., Maryland and Virginia teams. Among the queries:

"He is the fourth king of the royal Hashemite dynasty in Jordan." (Answer: Abdullah.)

"In 1939, the Trans-Iranian Railway linked the [Persian] Gulf with this 'sea' that is actually a lake." (Answer: Caspian.)

"Farming is difficult in much of Africa because the soil is shallow and has insufficient amounts of nitrogen and what other element whose symbol is 'P'?" (Answer: phosphorus).

In the end, it was D.C. in the house-the State Department house, that is-out-buzzing and outanswering the girls from the Holton-Arms School in Bethesda and the trio from J.E.B. Stuart High School in Fairfax County.

Soft-spoken, bashful Brandon Jones, a 16-year-old junior at the District's Banneker Senior High, attributed the win to this: "It's a lot of studying."

It was all the practice, insisted the Banneker captain, Zainep Mahmoud, a 15-year-old junior.

It was those "couple of high-pressure situations" in which the team found itself at other academic competitions, said Andrei Munteanu, a 16-year-old junior at Banneker. "I'm used to it."

The final scores, which do no count toward qualification for the "It's Academic" championship gan at the end of the school year, we 560 points for the District, 430 fe Maryland and 340 for Virginia.

The show has been broadcast of WRC-TV (Channel 4) since it w created and now is also produce with local schools and aired in Balt more, Charlottesville and Pitt burgh. Holton-Arms was last year Washington area champion.

Banneker created an "It's Ac demic" extracurricular team 1990. The school does not boast championship, but it does hold th "It's Academic" record for highe single-game score with 865 point The Banneker team also compete in academic contests across the mi Atlantic region several times month.

"We haven't won the entire sho as of yet," said Banneker team coad Douglas Tyson, a chemistry and b ology teacher. "But we're planning