



DO'STLIK



Issue 5

December 2007

In this issue:

American Musical Group Visits Uzbekistan.....1

Ramadan in the U.S......2-4

Digital Video Conference Explores Islam in the U.S....5

New U.S. Ambassador Presents Credentials.....6

Amb. Norland Congratulates Graduates of Training Program.....6

Amb. Norland Visits Samarkand.....7

Amb. Norland Addresses AmCham.....7

U.S. Elections 2008.....8-9

State of Iowa.....10

Leadership Specialist Yvonne Davis visits Uzbekistan.....12

United States Supports Cultural Heritage Preservation Worldwide.....13

U.S. Financial Contributions to the U.N......14

Nobel Prize for Al Gore Highlights New Environmental Awareness.....15

Rebuilding Afghanistan.16-17

Educational Opportunities in the U.S......18-19

U.S. Soft Drink Company Teaches African Teens About AIDS.....20

Work Is Changing as U.S. Companies Go Global.....21

Annual Book Lovers' Festival.....22

Project Gutenberg Digital Library.....23

Improving the World through Music: *American Musical Group “Bang on a Can” Visits Uzbekistan*

The contemporary American music group “Bang on a Can” kept audiences on the edges of their seats during their visit to Uzbekistan in October. The highlight of their visit was a performance at the U.S. Embassy on October 30 that was attended by Uzbek cultural figures, members of the diplomatic community, and alumni of U.S. government exchange programs. This was not the first time “Bang on a Can” has thrilled audiences in Uzbekistan, as the U.S. Embassy sponsored them on a tour in 2001. This time, “Bang on a Can”’s visit was arranged by the American arts organization CEC ArtsLink. They played several performances in Tashkent and Bukhara and held workshops at the Ilkhom Theater.



Bang on a Can performs for delighted audience at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent (U.S. Embassy photo).

Formed in 1987 by composers Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe, “Bang on a Can” is dedicated to commissioning, performing, creating, presenting and recording contemporary music. With an ear for the new, the unknown and the unconventional, “Bang on a Can” strives to expose new audiences worldwide to exciting and innovative music. The San Francisco Chronicle has called “Bang on a Can” “the country’s most important vehicle for contemporary music.”

During “Bang on a Can”’s performance at the Embassy, they played an eclectic mix of music by a variety of modern composers. Band members Robert Black (bass), David Cossin (drums and percussion), Mark Stewart (guitars), and Evan Ziporyn (clarinets) played music by Ornette Cole-

man, Don Byron, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich. With their relaxed and innovative performance style, the band began playing most of their songs using written musical scores, but almost inevitably transitioned to improvising by the end of each song, which kept audience members wondering what genre or instruments to expect. This casual style of mixing musical genres and instruments is symbolic of the many people, voices, and ideas that coexist harmoniously within America itself.

“Bang on a Can” often performs overseas, and has played concerts in countries such as Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Through these overseas performances and the band’s annual festivals in the U.S., they work to inspire a new generation of musicians also to break down the walls between different kinds of music that keep people apart. Their motto is “If you help fresh musical voices to be heard then the world will be a better place.”

President Bush Welcomes Guests at the White House Iftaar Dinner



President George W. Bush welcomes guests to the Iftaar Dinner with Ambassadors and Muslim leaders in the State Dining Room of the White House, Thursday, Oct. 4, 2007. White House photo by Chris Greenberg.

America is standing with mainstream citizens across the broader Middle East. We stand with nearly 12 million Iraqis who voted for a democratic future for their children. We're standing with Afghan people, as they defend their young democracy against the Taliban and al Qaeda. We're standing with the Lebanese people, who raised the banner of a Cedar Revolution to reclaim their freedom and independence. We're standing with all who seek the blessings of liberty -- and the peace that freedom brings.

Americans have a history of standing with Muslims facing suffering and hardship -- and it's a proud history. Our country defended Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo after the breakup of Yugoslavia. We supported Kuwait after it was invaded by Saddam Hussein. Americans came to the aid of victims of devastating earthquakes in Pakistan, India, and Iran. Americans responded with urgency and compassion to the wreck-

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
October 4, 2007

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT IFTAAR DINNER

State Dining Room

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Ramadan Mubarak. Laura and I are pleased to have you here for our seventh Iftaar dinner. Tonight we celebrate traditions of Islamic faith, which brings hope and comfort to more than a billion people. For Muslims around the world, the holy month of Ramadan is a special time of prayer and fasting. It is a time for charity and service to those less fortunate. It's a time to celebrate Islam's learned and vibrant culture, which has enriched civilization for centuries.

Ramadan is also a good time for Americans of all faiths to reflect on the values we hold in common -- including love of family, gratitude to the Almighty, devotion to community, and a commitment to religious liberty. The freedom of worship is central to the American character. It's the first protection in the Bill of Rights. It holds together the fabric of American society -- supporting every individual's right to practice his or her beliefs without fear.

Today, our world is at war with violent extremists who seek to tear the fabric of our society -- and stop the advance of freedom in Muslim societies around the world. They attack holy sites, destroy mosques and minarets, and kill innocent men, women and children -- including Muslims who do not share their radical views. They believe that by spreading chaos and violence they can frustrate the desire of Muslims to live in freedom and peace. We say to them, you don't represent Muslims, you do not represent Islam -- and you will not succeed.



Mrs. Laura Bush speaks with guests at her table during the Iftaar Dinner with Ambassadors and Muslim leaders in the State Dining Room of the White House, Thursday, Oct. 4, 2007. White House photo by Chris Greenberg.

age of the tsunami in Indonesia and Sri Lanka and Thailand. We're rallying the world to confront the genocide in Sudan, and deliver humanitarian aid for those in dire need. And we support the establishment of a Palestinian democracy to live side by side with Israel in peace.

As you break your Ramadan fast at this Iftaar dinner, let us renew our faith in the universality of freedom. Let us celebrate the millions of Muslims that we are proud to call American citizens. And let us honor the many Muslim nations that America is proud to call friends.

Laura and I are grateful you're here. Thank you for coming. We wish you a blessed Ramadan. And now I ask the Imam to say the blessing.

END

U.S. House Passes Historic Ramadan Resolution

A resolution recognizing the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and expressing the “deepest respect to Muslims in the United States and throughout the world” was adopted in the U.S. House of Representatives October 2 by a vote of 376-0.

The resolution acknowledging the importance of Muslims in America, the first of its kind, was introduced by Texas Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson and co-sponsored by 30 legislators, including Representative Keith Ellison of Minnesota. Ellison is the first Muslim to be elected to the U.S. Congress.

“It’s a sign of respect and recognition. It’s a very American thing to do. We are a nation of religious tolerance and religious inclusion,” Ellison told USINFO.

“The basic idea is to demonstrate not only to the Muslim world but to the whole world that the U.S. Congress is a place where all faiths are respected, all faiths are recognized, where we embrace our diversity and where we believe that the promise of America is that you may seek the Divine as you see fit within your own judgment, and in your own tradition and in your own way,” he said.

California’s Brad Sherman, who strongly supported the bill, said when presenting the resolution for discussion and a vote on the floor of the House: “The observance of Ramadan requires devotion to faith, community and family, truly universal values we all share.” He said it is “appropriate and necessary” for Congress to recognize the observance to express “the deep respect we all feel for Muslims in the United States and around the world.”

The author of the bill, Eddie Bernice Johnson, told the House, “The Muslim American community contributes to the vibrant growth of American society and culture. Muslim Americans play a significant role in our nation’s political process, economic growth, scientific development, free enterprise, religious tolerance, law enforcement and homeland security.”

“American pluralistic ideals, democratic institutions and multiculturalism are expanded and strengthened by the contribution of Muslim American civic participation,” she said, adding, “During this holy month, I’d like to say Ramadan Mubarak to all Muslims.”

Ellison told legislators that as a Muslim observing Ramadan, “I can tell you it is a time of reflection, a time of renewal, and regeneration,” adding, “It’s important to reassess your life, to contemplate your role in society and to benefit your neighbor.”

He described a joint breakfast held in this spirit by his mosque and Temple Israel in Minneapolis on the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur that drew 160 people. “We didn’t have enough chairs for everybody, but we had enough food because we shared it ... showing again that we’re not too far apart.”

New Jersey’s Bill Pascrell pointed out features Islam has in

common with other faiths and said, “It should be imperative for all of us non-Muslims to learn about this faith, which too often has been misunderstood and mischaracterized.”

“As the grandson of immigrants, I know true assimilation means preserving traditions while achieving success. I am in awe at how quickly the Muslim-American community has mastered both,” Texas Representative Nick Lampson said, attributing their success to “shared values of hard work, discipline, community, family and culture.”

The resolution reiterates support for American Muslims in the face of hate crimes, and maintains a strong stand against intolerance. “May Ramadan this year truly be a time when Muslims and people of all faiths embrace freedom and tolerance for all, and reject violence and extremism,” said Texas Representative Ted Poe.

A hate crime is “a violation of law, it’s a violation of our culture and a violation of the American way of life,” Ellison said later.

American Muslim reaction to the resolution is “overwhelmingly positive,” according to Corey Saylor of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. “It’s a sign that Muslims in America are growing in their recognition as being part of the mainstream fabric of the United States.”

“America is a pluralistic society, and it welcomes all different faiths, but it’s up to each of those different faiths to assert itself in the public sphere, and what this resolution does is shows that American Muslims are learning more and more how to assert themselves in the public sphere,” he said.

Executive Director of the Muslim Public Affairs Council Salam Al-Marayati said, “It’s definitely a milestone for America and a positive reinforcement for the tradition of religious pluralism in our country,” which has been a haven for diverse religious minorities. “It’s a sign of reassurance and a sign of inclusion and a sign of social harmony, and people are very pleased with the resolution for having accomplished these things.”

The House resolution, “Recognizing Commencement of Ramadan and Commending Muslims for Their Faith,” Ellison said, shows “solidarity between America and the Muslim community across the world.”



Congressman Keith Ellison, co-sponsor of Ramadan resolution, looks at the Quran once used by Thomas Jefferson (© AP Images).

For U.S. Muslims, Ramadan is Reminder to Help Local Communities

The sacred month of Ramadan, observed by Muslims worldwide, is a time of spiritual renewal, with a strong focus on performing good deeds and deepening ties with neighbors and local communities.

The evening meal, known as iftaar and held after sundown to break the Ramadan fast each day, often is a communal affair at mosques across the United States. Iftars also are hosted by most Muslim organizations in America, including those in the nation's capital.

At the Muslim Community Center (MCC) in Silver Spring, Maryland, iftaars "are open to the public," says MCC President Nehal Shah. The All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) Center, which has seven branches throughout northern Virginia, shares this approach.

An inclusive spirit informs these groups' charitable initiatives as well. Assistance is provided regardless of religious affiliation because, under Islam, "folks who aren't needy are required to help those who are," says Shirin Elkoshairi, co-chair of media relations for ADAMS.

Shah and Elkoshairi described how their groups apply Islamic precepts in a pluralistic society. MCC runs a clinic offering free medical care to people, regardless of their

I take the cost of a meal, multiply it by six, and donate it to the [ADAMS] center for distribution to needy families," Elkoshairi said.

"Among Muslims at the center, you'll find a lot of grassroots efforts to help needy people: inviting them over for meals, volunteering at homeless shelters and so forth," he added.



Ramadan prayer services are held at the Muslim Community Center in Silver Spring, Maryland (Ken White/State Dept.).



Muslim girls break the fast with dates before saying prayers at an iftaar at the Islamic Center of Passaic County in Paterson, New Jersey. Iftars are often communal affairs at mosques across the United States and are also hosted by most Muslim organizations in America. (© AP Images).

religion, who have no health insurance. "We are trying to strengthen our interfaith partnerships with churches and synagogues" to better serve the local community, Shah said.

Year-round charitable giving is one of the pillars of Islam, but during Ramadan, "the impact and rewards of your good deeds are magnified," said Elkoshairi. Muslims are urged to contribute whatever they can to ease the hardships of others. "For instance, my household consists of six people. So

Both MCC and ADAMS provide social services, including emergency aid to people coping with problems such as a health crisis or loss of employment or housing. Not long ago, the ADAMS Center helped a young woman whose husband died unexpectedly, Elkoshairi recalled. "We raised funds to help support her and her children until she could get on her feet again," he said. Similarly, the MCC donated \$1,000 to a man who lost his business, "and now we're following his progress," said Shah.

The groups also offer help on a larger scale. MCC has launched a disaster relief fund to aid victims of recent flooding in South Asia.

The group also raised more than \$75,000 for the victims of Hurricane Katrina (which struck the U.S. Gulf Coast in August 2005), and raised \$50,000 to assist victims of the tsunami that struck Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand in December 2004. ADAMS volunteers collected basic necessities for South Asia flood victims, and "we've sent trailerloads of clothing and blankets this year," said Elkoshairi.

Digital Video Conference Explores Islam in the United States



Deputy Chief of Mission Brad Hanson greets the guests at the digital video conference dedicated to the holy month of Ramadan (U.S. Embassy photo).

On October 10 a digital video conference (DVC) with Mr. David Hunsicker [a specialist in Religion, State and Society] was held at the U.S. Embassy Tashkent. To commemorate the holy month of Ramadan the event was held on the eve of the Eid al Fitr (the Festival of Fast-Breaking) holiday.

After Deputy Chief of Mission Brad Hanson made opening remarks, Mr. Hunsicker started his presentation with the perception of Ramadan in the U.S. and its spread across the country, citing the cases when even non-Muslims refrain from eating during the day and break their fast in the evening with Muslims in public places, such as universities, mosques, or offices.

The speaker told the audience that at the time when U.S. President George W. Bush hosted the 7th annual Iftaar Dinner in the White House on October 4, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted a resolution recognizing the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. It expressed the "deepest respect to Muslims in the United States and throughout the world". He also mentioned that the U.S. Congress already has the first Muslim elected to its office, a Democratic Representative from Minnesota, Keith Ellison.

After the presentation, Mr. Hunsicker responded to numerous questions from the audience, which included a number of local journalists. When asked how American society views Islam since the events of 9/11, he replied that Americans understand that terrorists and marginalized religious fanatics do not represent the majority of Muslims, who are peaceful and rational.

A local journalist also asked Mr. Hunsicker what he thought of last year's scandal over the Danish cartoons, to which Mr. Hunsicker replied that the principles of democracy grant everyone the right to freedom of expression, but he stressed that

with these rights come responsibilities, among which is respect for the religious feelings of other people.

Another guest asked how American Muslims perceive the ongoing military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. The audience listened intently as Mr. Hunsicker responded that the Muslim population in America is divided just like the rest of the country – one part supports the military operations, especially those who fled these countries because of the oppression they experienced there, whereas the other does not. Mr. Hunsicker stated his opinion that the wars are in progress and that ending them abruptly would derail all the progress that the coalition forces and host governments have made in these countries in eradicating terrorist groups and establishing democratic societies.

The journalists and students gathered at the event



One of the participants of the digital video conference held at the U.S. Embassy asks a question to the Religion, State and Society Specialist David Hunsicker (U.S. Embassy photo).

were able to learn that American Muslims enjoy opportunities to practice their religion just like Muslims in the rest of the world: mosques are plentiful in cities and towns, women are free to wear the hijab in public places, the state does not interfere with religion, and the very principles of American democracy and the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution grant people the right to observe any religion they want. Mr. Hunsicker emphasized that ordinary people think of Islam as a religion, rather than as a culture or a political movement.

New U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland Presents Credentials to President Islam Karimov

The new United States Ambassador to the Republic of Uzbekistan, Richard B. Norland, presented his credentials to the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, on Thursday, September 20, 2007.

Ambassador Norland is a career Foreign Service Officer. Prior to his nomination, he served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the American Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan (2005-2007). He has also served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the American Embassy in Riga, Latvia (2003-2005), and as Political Officer in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan (October 2002-January 2003) where he worked with U.S. Army Civil Affairs teams to promote political and economic reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Norland provided advice on the Northern Ireland peace process as Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council (1999-2001) and as Political Counselor at the American Embassy in Dublin, Ireland (1995-98). He served as a peacekeeping monitor in the Republic of Georgia with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1993) and visited Chechnya in a similar capacity in 1995.

Ambassador Norland has also served as Political Officer at the American Embassy in Moscow, USSR (1988-1990), as Chief of the U.S. Information Office in Tromso, Norway

(1986-88), and as Senior Arctic Official coordinating the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council (1998-99). His first tour was at the American Embassy in Manama, Bahrain (1981-82).

Ambassador Norland joined the Foreign Service in 1980. He graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1977. He has a Masters of International Public Policy degree from the Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies (1992) and a Masters of National Security Strategy degree from the National War College (2002). Amb. Norland speaks French, Russian, Norwegian and Latvian. He and his wife, Mary Hartnett, have two children.



Richard B. Norland
U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan

Ambassador Norland Congratulates Graduates of Emergency Response Training Program



Ambassador Richard Norland presents a certificate to one of the participants in the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) seminar in Tashkent (U.S. Embassy photo).

On September 21, the U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Richard Norland, presented certificates to 21 Uzbek participants

in the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Seminar held at Tashkent's Intercontinental Hotel.

Led by a highly-skilled, four-person team from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Office of Civil Military Emergency Preparedness (CMEP), the hands-on seminar taught Uzbek Ministry of Emergency Situations' (MES) personnel how to use the GIS for disaster planning, response, and recovery. The participants applied the remote sensing and geospatial technologies to create maps and develop real data to address possible future national emergencies in Uzbekistan and/or regional disasters in neighboring countries. The trainers also shared how U.S. officials rely on these technologies during emergency response operations. The Partnership for Peace Information Management System (PIMS) supplied the computers and GIS software for the training.

The U.S. training team was highly impressed by the skills, dedication and professionalism of the Uzbek MES personnel. They commented that very few countries have such talented and motivated MES teams. The U.S. team was very thankful for the hospitality of their Uzbek hosts, and they look forward to returning as well as hosting Uzbek delegations to the United States.

Ambassador Norland Makes His First Visit to Samarkand

On October 18 – 19, 2007, Ambassador Richard Norland made his first visit outside of Tashkent to Samarkand. The Ambassador received a warm welcome from the Acting Hokim of the Samarkand Oblast, First Deputy Azamkhon Usmanovich Bakhromov, and from the Hokim of Samarkand city, Sukhrob Abdugafarovich Rafikov.

In addition, during the course of the visit Ambassador Norland visited two projects the United States has been supporting in Uzbekistan. The first was the Center for State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance (SES,) which is a state-of-the-art center for identifying dangerous pathogens. The head of Samarkand SES, Khairulla Melievich Boimuradov, escorted both the Ambassador and the visiting head of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Cooperative Threat Reduction Directorate, Rear Admiral Byrd, USN, ret., on a tour of this impressive facility that, it is hoped, will contribute to developing the public health infrastructure in Uzbekistan.

The second facility Ambassador Norland visited was the Central Asia Seed Company (CASC), hosted by Mr. Tom Bryant, Director. The CASC facility processes cotton directly from the field into clean cotton bales and de-linted cotton seeds either for oil or planting.

In addition to his official visits, Ambassador Norland took the opportunity to visit the Samarkand Culture and History Museum where he viewed the exhibit, supported by previous U.S. Ambassadors under the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, of several historic Korans and other religious



Ambassador Norland observes a unique collection of Central Asian string instruments displayed at the Museum of History and Art in Samarkand (U.S. Embassy photo).

documents. At the Afrosiyob Museum, Ambassador Norland took the opportunity to browse the recently opened second floor of the museum, funded in part with grants from the people of the United States.

Ambassador Norland was accompanied by his wife, Mary Hartnett, and his daughter who was visiting Uzbekistan. The warm welcome he received in Samarkand coupled with the fascinating ancient artifacts convinced him that his first visit to Samarkand will certainly not be his last.

Ambassador Norland Addresses the American Chamber of Commerce



Ambassador Norland presents his speech at the Hotel Intercontinental in Tashkent (U.S. Embassy photo).

On October 25, U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan Richard Norland spoke to the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) at the Hotel Intercontinental in Tashkent.

Commending the business leaders for being "adventure capitalists" along a key byway of the Great Silk Road, he pledged the U.S. Embassy's support in working with AmCham to pursue a common goal of peace and prosperity for the people of Uzbekistan and the Central Asian region.

Ambassador Norland added that he believed U.S.-Uzbek relations do have the prospect of steady, gradual improvement. He outlined three steps which he feels are necessary for improved relations to become a reality: namely, to rebuild trust, to create greater transparency, and to galvanize the reform process to help Uzbekistan fulfill its potential as a pivotal state in Central Asia.

American College Students Embracing U.S. Political Process



Hundreds of NYU students attended a speech by Senator Barack Obama at Washington Square Park. (© AP Images).

New York University's (NYU's) Washington Square Park address meant that when senator and presidential candidate Barack Obama spoke in the park September 27, hundreds of NYU students were among the 24,000 supporters and curious onlookers.

"Having a Democratic presidential candidate in our backyard is something to be excited about," said NYU College Democrats treasurer Neil Schecter. Members of the College Democrats at other New York-area universities showed up as well to learn more about a campaign that is reaching out to young voters.

On campuses across the country, university students are joining branches of College Republicans or College Democrats to participate in the political process. Some have a longstanding interest in politics, while others are motivated by the 2008 presidential candidates to become involved for the first time.

The College Democrats at NYU, traditionally a liberal university, claim to have nearly 1,000 members, and membership is growing as interest in the 2008 elections rises. The club invites candidates to address the students and plans to hold mock elections, debates and voter-registration drives. Club vice president Mary Kearl also encourages members to volunteer at political events around New York City, where students can meet political leaders. Kearl's own volunteer activities have allowed her to meet former Senator John Edwards and Senator Hillary Clinton, President Bill Clinton and New York Governor Eliot Spitzer.

Despite the excitement about the presidential campaign, NYU Democrats say the club likes to remain focused on important issues, something many students wish the presidential candidates would do. Schecter, passionate about the current standoff between Congress and the White House over funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Plan, organized a rally in support of the Democratic plan. The rally drew participation from local congresswomen and

children's advocacy groups. Kearl feels strongly about global warming; other students cite immigration and the war in Iraq as important issues.

With about 400 members, the NYU Republicans are less numerous than the NYU Democrats, but they bring a lively conservative voice to the campus. With a nod to the university's liberal reputation, the Republican group holds weekly socials they call a "right-wing safe zone." In addition to those meetings, the Republican students work on local and national campaigns and join conservative lobbying groups like the Conservative Political Action Committee. Club president Sarah Chambers encourages members to volunteer for a Republican presidential candidate like Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney or John McCain.



Senator John McCain meets with students at Francis Marion University in South Carolina. (© AP Images).

Chambers remembers that club participation spiked during the 2004 campaign and told USINFO October 4 that she is beginning to see a similar increase during the 2008 campaign. The club plans an event in conjunction with the YouTube Republican debate and will hold an informal vote on the Republican candidates.

NYU Republicans are as "diverse in their interests," Chambers said, adding some are motivated by economic policy and fiscal issues while others care more about social issues. The group is planning a diaper drive as a part of a campaign to raise awareness about abortion.

As the primary season draws closer, political activity is picking up on college campuses. Princeton University students are managing "phone banks" to contact registered voters; Duke University lists 22 different clubs dedicated to political activism; and Amherst College students can take part in the "Summer Institute on Civic Engagement and Political Activism." Republican and Democratic students will engage in vigorous debates over the coming months, imitating the political candidates they support, and perhaps practicing for future careers in politics.

Presidential Campaigns Take to the Internet

The best way for the average American citizen to get involved in a presidential campaign used to be volunteering to distribute flyers or organizing local campaign events. Today, thousands of Americans are getting involved in the 2008 campaign by logging onto the Internet and writing blogs.

Web logs, commonly called blogs, are Web sites written by individuals (bloggers) to express their opinions or thoughts in an online diary. Individual bloggers write commentaries in support of their favorite candidates and debate the virtues of other candidates with other bloggers.

"What appeals to me about most blogs is ... that they are written by people who are not controlled in any way, shape or form," blogger Jeff Commaroto told USINFO September 7. "I like the idea that if they support a candidate or position, they tell me so. Not because they are employed by a campaign but because it's the way they feel."

Randy Calypso has been writing a blog supporting Hillary Clinton for president since May 2005, two years before she officially declared her candidacy. "I'm really excited about [this blog] and I'm really excited about the possibility of Hillary for America," he told USINFO September 24.

Of course, campaigns also have been quick to adopt this new medium. All the presidential campaigns now maintain their own blogs, which detail the daily activities on the campaign trail. The bloggers on these sites are campaign staffers paid to write in support of a particular candidate.



YouTube, a video-sharing service on the Internet, is playing a role in politics in the United States (© AP Images).

The difference between professional campaign blogs and blogs written by amateur enthusiasts is important. Blogger Ethan Demme, who maintains a site supporting Senator John McCain, points out that while official campaign bloggers must deliver a specific message, independent bloggers can offer "constructive criticism" and suggestions for candidates they support.

Demme wrote an open letter to McCain urging him to "write some short blogs that don't look like press releases" and to use the video Web site YouTube more often. Demme also noted that these sites are free; McCain's campaign has struggled to compete with other candidates in attracting financing.

The low cost of new media outlets like blogs and the instant access they provide to voters are two of the main reasons presidential campaigns have been keen to capitalize on them. Campaigns are looking to facilitate involvement for their supporters at every level through a variety of Internet tools. Supporters can connect through online forums, find local events and donate money with a few clicks of the computer mouse.

Every campaign has an automated letter that supporters can e-mail to their friends. These e-cards can be personalized depending on the issue in which the individual has the most interest: send a letter about Hillary Clinton's troop withdrawal plan; invite your friends to check out Rudy Giuliani's Web site; or express your support for John McCain.

Senator Barack Obama has been in the forefront of using new media tools that are popular among many of his young supporters. Obama's Senate Web site has podcasts (digital audio files) of his speeches in the Senate explaining his support for bills like new ethics legislation. Obama's official campaign blog also has sought dialogue with other bloggers.

On Facebook, a social networking site popular with college students, approximately 330,000 people have joined the "Obama 2008" feature. Of those supporters, nearly 330 people are daily contributors to the Obama section of Facebook, adding pictures and quotes and participating in online discussions. The group, started by Farouk Aregbe in February, grows daily; new member Michael Rubenstein wrote: "Great use of Facebook. I hope more campaigns do something like this."

Rubenstein's wish came true, and now most campaigns maintain a presence on the Facebook site and other networking sites like Myspace, YouTube, and Flickr. Small icons at the bottom of each campaign Web site allow viewers to register themselves, for instance, as Hillary Clinton supporters on Facebook, or Giuliani supporters on Flickr.

Not all blogging is positive, and many campaigns already have experienced how a statement by a campaign staffer on a Web forum or a video of a candidate posted on YouTube can blow up into a scandal. Many professional journalists resent the influence bloggers can have on the media, and they object to the fact that some influential bloggers have been given press credentials usually reserved for professional journalists. Nevertheless, new media tools like blogging are highly influential and likely will play a major role as the 2008 race continues.



The State of Iowa - the Hawkeye State



Iowa is a land overflowing with genuine hospitality, significant historic sites, sophisticated cities, beautiful rolling countryside, and four seasons of nature at its very best.

The word "Iowa" comes from the American Indian tribe of the same name. Iowa was part of the Louisiana Purchase, a deal arranged between President Thomas Jefferson and Napoleon Bonaparte of France that brought a vast tract of the continent under the control of the United States. The area was closed to white settlement until the early 1830s.



Devon Runyon of Omaha admires a John Deere lawn tractor at the Council Bluffs Home Show at Mid-America Center, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Saturday, March 3, 2007. (© AP Images).

Early explorers included the famed Lewis and Clark. Sergeant Charles Floyd's was the only death during that historic journey. A monument stands in Sioux City near the spot where Floyd was buried.

After white settlement began, Iowa became part of Michigan Territory. When Michigan achieved statehood in 1837, Iowa then became a part of Wisconsin Territory. Finally, two years later, Iowa Territory was carved out of the area of

Wisconsin Territory west of the Mississippi River. The first Iowa Territory legislature met in Burlington before a territorial capital city was finally selected in Johnson County. In Iowa City, the government seat was established in a grand structure known today as Old Capitol. Built in the early 1840s, Old Capitol served as the last capitol of Iowa Territory and the first capitol of the state. Under the 1857 Iowa constitution, the seat of state government was moved to Des Moines, a more central location.

IOWA IS A MANUFACTURING STATE

Iowa has a storied history as a leader in manufacturing, which contributes \$19 billion annually to the state's economy and comprising 25 percent of the Gross State Product. Today, more than 4,200 manufacturers employ over 230,000 Iowans. Some of the world's leading companies, such as John Deere, Rockwell Collins, Alcoa, Vermeer, HNI and others, currently engage in the manufacture of food products, recreational vehicles, aluminum, steel, plastics, printing, fabricated metals,

farm and construction machinery, appliances, wood products, chemicals and bioscience ingredients in Iowa.

Iowa is committed to promoting a strong advanced manufacturing sector that builds off of the state's existing workforce and skills base to create the jobs of the 21st century. The following are some of the many advantages that Iowa has to offer manufacturing companies:

- Iowa's skilled, well-educated and adaptable workforce provides higher-quality output and lower operational costs.
- Iowa's workers' compensation costs are among the lowest in the nation.
- Iowa's pro-business government is continually expanding tax incentive programs to offer manufacturers various tax credits and refunds.
- A single-factor corporate income tax applies only to profits on sales within the state.
- The state's community colleges are training 25,000 students per year for Iowa's targeted industry clusters - advanced manufacturing, biosciences and information solutions.

The state is ideally suited to export products all over the globe, with air, water, rail and highway systems designed for commerce. Iowa's central geographic location in North America makes it easier to move products around the world. Two major coast-to-coast, border-to-border interstate arteries pass through Iowa and are principal roads in America's transportation grid. Barge freight is accommodated via the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Iowa's vast transportation system



Cheryl Achterberg, second from right, inaugural dean of Iowa State University's new College of Human Sciences, gets help from Caroline Seward, president of the new college's student council, tying a bow to the ribbon connecting the two combined colleges Friday, July 1, 2005, in Ames, Iowa. ISU president Gregory Geoffroy is at right. The old colleges of education and family and consumer sciences merged into the new educational unit (© AP Images).



Grapes grow on a vine as Mike Killinger walks through his vineyard, near Carson, Iowa. (© AP Images).

allow trucks to carry 80 percent of all manufactured freight transported in Iowa. The rest is moved by five major air cargo carriers, 20 railroad companies and 69 barge terminals on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

AGRICULTURE

Centrally located in the heartland of America, Iowa has often been called "The Food Capital of the World." Iowa is the one of the wealthiest agricultural states in the nation, as total cash receipts from this industry valued \$14.6 billion in 2004. Iowa ranks 3rd in the nation for number of farms, with 89,700 farms.

Iowa is the top producer of corn, soybeans, hogs and eggs in the United States. In 2004, Iowa's farmers produced 2.24 billion bushels of corn. That same year, Iowa farmers produced 497.4 million bushels of soybeans.

There are more than 300 commercial vineyards and 56 wineries in Iowa. Iowa wineries produced 123,000 gallons of wine in 2005 and grape growers had over 600 acres of grapes planted.

Iowa's total agricultural exports for 2005 were valued at more than \$4.02 billion, ranking Iowa second in the nation in agricultural exports. (Source: USDA, Economic Research Service.)

EDUCATION

The very foundation of Iowa's thriving economy is its top educational institutions. A dedicated commitment to education contributes to its high school graduation rate - 16 percent above the national average. Iowa is one of the smartest states in the nation with its students consistently outperforming their counterparts on national standardized tests.

Iowa has a statewide system of 15 community colleges that offer comprehensive educational programs in three major areas of instruction: preparatory career programs of vocational and technical education for immediate employment in a wide variety of careers, and the college parallel program providing arts and sciences courses that may be transferred to other colleges and universities, and adult, part-time education.

Iowa colleges and universities rank high in several nation-

al rankings including the U.S. News & World Report 2006 College Rankings, Kiplinger Magazine's "Top 100 Public Universities for Value by Quality 2006." Besides traditional undergraduate and graduate programs, Iowa colleges and universities offer job training, continuing education programs, and senior auditing options.

Sources: <http://www.iowa.gov>
<http://www.traveliowa.com>
<http://www.iowalifechanging.com>
<http://www.census.gov>



U.S. Map, courtesy of U.S. Census Bureau.

Quick Facts

Abbreviation: IA

Capital City: Des Moines.

Governor: Chet Culver.

Date of Statehood: December 28, 1846

Population: 2,982,085 (est. 2006, U.S. Census Bureau).

Land area: 55,869.3 square miles.

Origin of State's Name: The word "IOWA" comes from the American Indian tribe of the same name.

Largest Cities: Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Sioux City, Waterloo, Iowa City, Council Bluffs, Dubuque, Ames, West Des Moines.

Economy:

Agriculture: corn, soybeans, red meat, eggs, milk.

Largest manufacturing industries: food processing, machinery (esp. machinery for agriculture, construction, and mining) and chemicals (particularly pesticides, fertilizers, and other agricultural chemicals).

U.S. Embassy Welcomes Leadership Specialist Yvonne Davis to Uzbekistan



Ms. Yvonne Davis speaks on leadership development at the Embassy's weekly Chay Chat Club (U.S. Embassy photo).

In September, U.S. Embassy Tashkent welcomed guest speaker Ms. Yvonne Davis, who traveled to Uzbekistan as part of the State Department Speakers' Program. Ms. Davis, who is the President and CEO of DAVISCommunications, visited Uzbekistan for five days for a series of speaking engagements. She spoke to audiences on topics ranging from leadership for women, achieving one's dreams, public relations, and business ethics.

On her first day in Tashkent, Ms. Davis held a workshop at the Embassy for prominent female leaders, among whom were a popular folk singer and a famous actress. Newly-arrived at post, Ambassador Richard Norland opened the event by welcoming the audience members to the Embassy. Ms. Davis then made a presentation on the Principles of Effective Leadership. She invited all audience members to take part in the discussion and get to know each other better by dividing them up into groups to discuss whether leadership is a born or learned skill and then present their conclusions to the entire audience. Through her dynamic presentation skills, Ms. Davis drew the women into a dialog on what makes a good leader. Many of the women in the audience said they were also happy to meet Ms. Davis in person after they had first "met" her through a Black History Month/Women's History month digital video conference that the Embassy held in February.

Ms. Davis also had the opportunity to speak to over 70 local university students while she was in Uzbekistan. As a businesswoman who runs her own public relations firm, she spoke to them on a topic that is near to her heart, public relations in business. She drew the students into the discussion by offering well-known examples from her own business experience, including her work with American hip hop artist Puff Daddy. Ms. Davis said after the event that she was impressed by the Uzbek students, commenting that she had not expected that they would already know so much about

public relations. Ms. Davis also made a separate presentation to students on business ethics. To teach her audience about the importance of ethics in business, Ms. Davis divided the students into small groups to analyze and present case studies that raised ethical dilemmas. The students reported that they enjoyed having this opportunity to practice their English with a native English speaker and also to expand their knowledge.

To conclude her visit to Uzbekistan, Ms. Davis addressed a crowd of approximately 70 young people at the Embassy's weekly Friday Chay Chat Conversation Club. In her presentation, she offered the audience strategies for "How to Achieve Your Dreams." She also once again involved all audience members in the conversation by breaking them into groups for an activity that challenged them to identify their fears and their most important life goals. Ms. Davis then presented the audience concrete strategies for overcoming those fears and achieving their goals. Ms. Davis offered the audience a message of hope and optimism and suggested ways that they can expand their own horizons. At the same time, the audience was able to practice their English skills with a native speaker. Afterwards, participants commented that "I've come from Ferghana, and am very happy that I got such a chance to participate here!" and "This was the best conversation that I have ever had."

Ms. Davis' visit was not all business – she also had a chance to visit some of the famous sites of Tashkent and Bukhara while she was in Uzbekistan. She appreciated the opportunity to see some of Uzbekistan's amazing historical sites and upon entering one courtyard in Bukhara, she was struck speechless by the beauty of the colorful tiled architecture.



Ms. Yvonne Davis is having her picture taken with passersby at Chor-Minor Madrasah in Bukhara (U.S. Embassy photo).

United States Supports Cultural Heritage Preservation Worldwide

The Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation is the only program in the U.S. Government that provides direct small grant support to heritage preservation in less-developed countries.

The program was established by the U.S. Congress in 2001 with \$1 million. To date, the Ambassador's Fund has supported 379 projects worldwide, totaling \$9.5 million. Funded projects include technical support for the restoration of historic buildings; assessment and conservation of museum collections; archaeological site preservation; documentation to save threatened traditional crafts; improved storage conditions for archives and manuscripts; recording oral history; and documentation of indigenous languages.



Kampir-Tepe Fortress is one of the sites supported by Cultural Preservation grant from the U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan (U.S. Embassy photo).

Through the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, U.S. Embassies can demonstrate America's respect for the cultural heritage of host countries and play an active role in protecting this heritage. Since its inception, the Fund has awarded 436 preservation grants in 119 countries.

This year the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation is giving awards supporting 57 projects in 54 countries including:

- Conservation of Pashto, Arabic, and Persian manuscripts dating back to the 16th century in the Pashto Academy, University of Peshawar, Pakistan;
- Provision of tools for site management of the ancient city of Busra in Syria, the northern capital of the Nabataean Empire in the 2nd century BC, which contains evidence from the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman periods;
- Restoration of the 18th-century Maria Magdalena Church, the oldest building in the province of Madriz, Nicaragua;
- Conservation of over 200 Buddha statues in the Museum of Vietnamese History in Ho Chi Minh City;
- Documentation of Romani culture and music that has been passed down through generations for six centuries in Romania; and
- Preservation of artifacts at the Henriette Bathily Women's Museum on Goree Island, Senegal.

In Uzbekistan the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation has already provided nearly \$125,000 to support five significant preservation projects, including:

- Preservation of Kampir-Tepe Fortress near Termez. The vast complex dating from the post-Alexandrian period to the Kushan era (late 4th century B.C. to mid-2nd century A.D.).
- Recreating Secrets from the Past – Supporting Uzbek

Pottery School to preserve the rich history of Uzbek pottery, recreating ancient techniques, utilizing traditional glazes and materials.

- Preserving Qurans – conservation of texts, constructing special climate controlled exhibition stands to house ancient Qurans at Samarkand's Cultural History Museum.
- Preservation of 25,000 manuscripts at the Abu Raykhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies.

In 2005, Dr. Edvard Vasilievich Rtveladze received a Cultural Preservation grant to help preserve and protect the excavated areas of the Kampir-Tepe Fortress near Termez. He also received funds to document the artifacts he and his team discovered there. Working with local officials, he hopes to eventually open the site to tourists and scholars as a museum complex.

The remains of Kampir-Tepe, a vast fortress complex dating from the post-Alexandrian period to the Kushan era (late 4th century B.C. to mid-2d century A.D.) lie not far from the banks of the Amu Darya River near Termez. Since the site was discovered some 35 years ago, Dr. Rtveladze has excavated nearly 15 hectares of it, unearthing military fortifications, a citadel, dwellings, a port and even a religious complex thought to be dedicated to Zoroastrian ceremonies. This work has helped shed light on the economic, cultural and political structures of a significant Central Asian culture.

The Cultural Heritage Center of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs administers the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (<http://exchanges.state.gov/culprop/afcp/>). This year's Cultural Preservation competition will begin soon. If you know of a site in Uzbekistan that should be preserved, please send an email to the U.S. Embassy at Tashkent-program@state.gov with "Cultural Preservation Fund" in the subject line.

U.S. Financial Contributions to the United Nations System

Accountability, transparency in management of U.N. funds vital, U.S. says

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, DC
September 20, 2007

Fact Sheet: U.S. Financial Contributions to the United Nations System

U.S. Leadership and Engagement in the United Nations

The United States co-founded and continues to be the leading financial supporter of the United Nations. The U.S. believes that the UN has an essential role to play in fostering international peace and security, fighting poverty through development, providing humanitarian assistance, eradicating disease, advancing freedom, and promoting human rights and democracy. The United States is committed to ensuring good stewardship of United Nations resources so that these universal goals are met effectively and efficiently.

Top Financial Contributor to the United Nations

The United States has been the largest contributor to the United Nations every year since its creation in 1945. In fiscal year 2006, the U.S. contributed over \$5.3 billion to the United Nations system to support UN agencies and peacekeeping operations. The U.S. contribution to UN peacekeeping alone totaled nearly \$870 million in fiscal year 2006.

In addition, the U.S. has called for a maximum of accountability and transparency in the management of all UN programs and funds. Stronger internal oversight and improved reporting require adequate resources and greater independence for the key Office of Internal Oversight Services. A fair and open procurement system is also necessary to ensure accountability and transparency.

In 2006, the United States contributed:

- 41.5%, or \$1.12 billion, of the budget of the World Food Program (WFP), which provides over 4 million tons of food to 87.8 million people in 78 countries each year;



An East Timorese worker carries food aid at a World Food Programme (WFP) warehouse in Dili, East Timor (© AP Images).

U.N. Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees, Judy Cheng-Hopkins, right, meets Afghan refugees at the U.N. Refugee Agency center in Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday, July 30, 2007. More than 4 million Afghans have been assisted home from the neighboring countries since UNHCR launched the voluntary return operation in 2002, making it one of the largest repatriation operation in the world (© AP Images).

- 24%, or \$346 million, of the budget of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to protect and safeguard the rights and well-being of 20.8 million refugees, returnees, stateless persons, and internally displaced persons in 116 countries; and
- 9.4%, or \$260 million, of the budget of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to feed, educate, and protect children in 157 countries, including providing over 3 billion doses of vaccines to children.

As the UN's largest contributor, the U.S. will continue to call for the accountable use of these funds. In particular, the U.S. has proposed using the General Assembly's biennial budget process to reward programs that achieve desired results, while terminating low priority, poorly performing, or unnecessary programs.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

Nobel Prize for Al Gore Highlights New Environmental Awareness

Former Vice President honored for helping draw attention to climate change



Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize (© AP Images).

By winning the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, former U.S. Vice President Al Gore joins a roster of prominent U.S. politicians and activists recognized by the Norwegian Nobel Committee. He shares the prize with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an international body of scientists from more than 100 countries.

Previous American Nobel Peace laureates include: President Theodore Roosevelt (1906); President Woodrow Wilson (1919); Secretary of State Cordell Hull (1945), known as “the father of the United Nations”; the civil rights advocate Martin Luther King Jr. (1964); Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (1973), who shared the prize with the then-Foreign Minister of Vietnam Le Duc Tho; and former President Jimmy Carter (2002).

Gore was awarded the prestigious prize for his environmental advocacy, exemplified by his Oscar-winning documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*. The main premise of the film -- that human activities, especially carbon dioxide emissions, put at risk Earth’s natural environment -- has gained widespread acceptance by scientific communities and governments, including the Bush administration.

“Vice President Gore has helped to bring attention to climate change,” said White House spokesman Tony Fratto. “The IPCC scientists have done remarkable work to bring scientific rigor to the questions surrounding climate change The next step ... is implementing climate change strategies that are effective and practical, and that allow ... countries to do the work that they need to do to lift people out of poverty,” he said.

Although the IPCC’s specific recommendations on environmental issues sometimes differed from the approach of the Bush administration, U.S. government investments in climate-related research con-

tributed to the development of IPCC’s reports, according to U.S. officials.

IPCC was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. The U.S. delegation to IPCC includes experts from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the State Department.

Made up of more than 2,000 experts, the IPCC does not conduct research, but collects and reviews data from other organizations, including the multiagency U.S. Climate Change Science Program, which has spent approximately \$9 billion on climate-change science.

Commenting in February on a recently issued IPCC report, the U.S. Department of Energy said the report “confirms what President Bush has said about the nature of climate change and it reaffirms the need for continued U.S. leadership in addressing global climate issues.”

The United States is devoting more than any other nation -- nearly \$29 billion -- to scientific research, technology, international assistance and incentive programs aimed at curbing dangerous emissions, according to the Department of Energy.

For more information on U.S. and international action on climate change and other environmental issues, see *Climate Change and Clean Energy* at http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/climate_change.html.



An iceberg melts off Ammassalik Island in Eastern Greenland in this July 19, 2007 file photo. Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore and the U.N.’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to build up and disseminate information about climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change (© AP Images).

Afghanistan-Tajikistan Bridge Links Central, South Asia

Structure expected to boost bilateral, regional trade



Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai, Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon and U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez lead a crowd across a new bridge between Tajikistan and Afghanistan (U.S. Embassy in Kabul photo).

They had not waited for the orchestra to play or for officials to cut the ribbon. They did not need much encouragement from their governments either. Business people in Afghanistan and Tajikistan had sensed new opportunity when they saw the 670-meter bridge rising over the Pyanj River between the two countries. New hotels on either side of the border, and a restaurant and a gas station on the Tajik side, had opened even before the \$38 million structure was finished.

The bridge, financed by the United States with a contribution from Norway, is expected to help alleviate poverty in Afghanistan and Tajikistan by stimulating small and medium-size businesses and farms. Bilateral trade, which amounted to \$25 million in 2006, is expected to double over the next five years, according to the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The two countries have agreed to create free economic zones on both sides of the bridge and ease customs and visa requirements, according to news reports.

The bridge also will have a “profound” impact on Tajikistan’s entire economy, as it will shorten by nearly half the distance Tajik goods have to travel to the nearest accessible seaport – in Pakistan rather than in Latvia, according to a 2005 World Bank study. It will make Tajik exports more cost-competitive in global markets and imports more accessible to Tajik consumers.

Afghanistan also will benefit greatly, according to Tajik, Afghan and U.S. officials.

At the bridge opening ceremony August 26, U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez said the bridge will become “the widest connection between Afghanistan and the rest of the world.” It will help that country broaden markets for its products and gain wider access to goods from Tajikistan, Russia and Kazakhstan. Afghanistan could see trade with regional countries increase by 25 times as a result of the new bridge, according to the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan William Wood.

With a capacity of up to 1,000 vehicles a day, the structure is expected also to become a critical part of a larger commercial route between two important Asian regions and bring stability and prosperity.

Gutierrez described the bridge as a “physical and symbolic link between Central Asia and South Asia,” while Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who also attended the ceremony, called it a link that “unites Central Asia with Southern and Eastern Asia.”

On the Tajik side, the bridge will connect to routes leading north, west and east through roads that Japan plans to build or modernize; on the Afghan side, it will connect to Afghanistan’s nearly completed ring road and Pakistan’s port of Karachi through roads constructed with Asian Development Bank financing.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Evan Feigenbaum told USINFO that opening new trade routes is important for land-locked Central Asian countries as they try to enhance their independence and expand their options for development.

Central Asian nations and Afghanistan have discussed cooperation on energy, telecommunications and transportation projects. The World Bank is leading a multinational project to construct high-voltage power lines that will carry electricity from future Tajik and Kyrgyz power plants to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are among countries with the highest hydroelectric potential in the world.

U.S., Tajik and Afghan officials hope the bridge also will help facilitate greater cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan on security issues.

At the Pyanj river bridge, modern border posts and custom facilities, co-funded by the United States and the European Union, will include state of the art scanning equipment for vehicles and cargo. Border facilities are expected to become operational later in 2007.

Stable Afghanistan Vital to Central Asia, Europe, United States

Long-term, comprehensive approach needed

The security and well-being of the trans-Atlantic community depend on successfully stabilizing Afghanistan so that it will not be a source of narcotics or a haven for terrorists, U.S. and European officials say.

The United States and its European allies have contributed \$26.8 billion to Afghanistan since 2001, enabling the country to make large strides in providing better lives for its people.

In health care, more than 80 percent of the population now has access to medical facilities, compared with 9 percent in 2004. More than 4,000 medical facilities have opened during the past three years and more than 600 midwives have been trained and sent to every province.

In terms of infrastructure, more than 4,000 kilometers of roads have been completed and construction has started for 20,000 new homes for Afghans returning to Kabul.

The private sector has begun to flourish, as indicated by the 10 percent of Afghans who now own cell phones. Multinational companies such as Coca-Cola, Siemens, Nestlé and Etisalat have invested. Strong consumer demand is boosting Kabul's economy, leading to heavy road traffic, new shopping malls and new hotels.

"We are making real progress in Afghanistan and, together, we and the Afghan people will succeed," Kurt Volker, principal deputy secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, said September 14 in Helsinki, Finland.

Yet Afghanistan remains the leading supplier of opium and heroin in Europe, where drug overdoses are one of the leading causes of death among young people and the cost of treating addiction exceeds \$750 million a year.

"This is a modern plague among the young people of Europe, and it illustrates how tackling the narcotics problem in Afghanistan can directly impact the health and well-being of Europeans," Volker said.

Britain's minister of state for the foreign and commonwealth office, Kim Howells, said defeating the drug trade in Afghanistan, which supplies 90-95 percent of the world's opium, will take at least a generation.

NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer underscored the importance of the international community's commitment to Afghanistan at a NATO foreign ministers' meeting on Afghanistan in January.

"The international community intends to keep the initiative in Afghanistan," he said. "That means more reconstruction. ... Clear commitments with more support for the government, for the Afghan national army, the security forces and the Afghan national police."

De Hoop Scheffer said the international community must

maintain a long-term commitment with a comprehensive approach in dealing with Afghanistan to prevent the country from again becoming a haven for terrorists who have staged attacks in both the United States and Europe.

Volker said al-Qaida is looking increasingly to Europe for opportunities to attack. "The Madrid train bombings of March 2004, which killed 119 and wounded more than 600, were undertaken by the Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigade, better known as the Secret Organization of al-Qaida in Europe. The London bombings of July 2005, which left 52 dead and more than 770 injured, also could be traced to this group," he said.

The NATO civilian spokesman in Afghanistan, Nicolas Lunt, said that although NATO is involved in military activities in Afghanistan, "its defining contribution will be roads, hospitals, schools, thriving markets, healthy children, wheat-filled fields, decent policemen and competent administrators."

Indeed, with the help of the international community, Afghanistan has made remarkable progress since the Taliban regime was toppled six years ago. The Afghan economy grows 12-14 percent a year, making it the fastest-growing economy in the region.

The latest success story in the development of Afghanistan is the completion of a new bridge connecting Afghanistan to Tajikistan and giving it access to Central Asian trade.

The 672-meter-long bridge, costing \$37 million, with customs buildings, inspection bays, and check points at both ends, spans the Oxus River. The United States provided the bulk of the funding, but Norway, Japan and the European Union also joined the effort. Before the bridge was built, the only way across this part of the river was by a limited-capacity ferry that did not operate throughout the year.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez attended the opening ceremony of the bridge and commented, "Much as the Silk Road was integral to the great civilizations in the past, the byways of the region are again proving to be the crossroads of commerce, of peace and of stability."

The U.S. Agency for International Development also plays a vigorous role in Afghanistan's development, overseeing a multifaceted program that supports agriculture, alternative livelihoods to opium poppy cultivation, democracy and governance, economic growth, education, health and infrastructure.

The full text of Volker's remarks in Helsinki is available on the Web site of the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki at <http://helsinki.usembassy.gov/events/volkerremarks.htm>.

New Educational Advising Center Opens at the U.S. Embassy

The U.S. Embassy has a new resource for people that want to learn more about educational opportunities in the United States. The Embassy's new Educational Advising Center (EAC)



opened its doors to the public in October. The EAC can provide information to students about degree or non-degree, undergraduate or graduate programs, as well as to anyone who is interested in education, training or research in the United States. A full-time educational advisor works at the EAC, and the center also houses an educational reference library and educational software. All of these resources aim to meet the needs of students, teachers or professionals that want to study in the United States.

The Embassy's new EAC is part of the worldwide network of EducationUSA centers that provide up-to-date information on the full spectrum of United States higher education opportunities for citizens of Uzbekistan. The EducationUSA center in Tashkent actively promotes United States higher education abroad by offering accurate, comprehensive, objective and timely information about educational opportunities in the United States and guidance to qualified individuals on how best to access those opportunities.

The EAC provides a number of services free of charge, including individual consultations on U.S. Education; advising in areas of study and course descriptions; test preparation materials for SAT, TOEFL, GRE and GMAT that can be used during consultation hours; a U.S. college selection database; supporting reference materials; financial aid resources; application guides; and guides to Distance Learning. In the future, the educational advisor plans to offer additional services, including seminars and workshops on topics such as how to write application essays, finding financial aid opportunities, and taking the TOEFL exam. The EAC also hopes to start an online forum for interested people all over Uzbekistan to communicate with the educational advisor and each other about studying in the U.S.

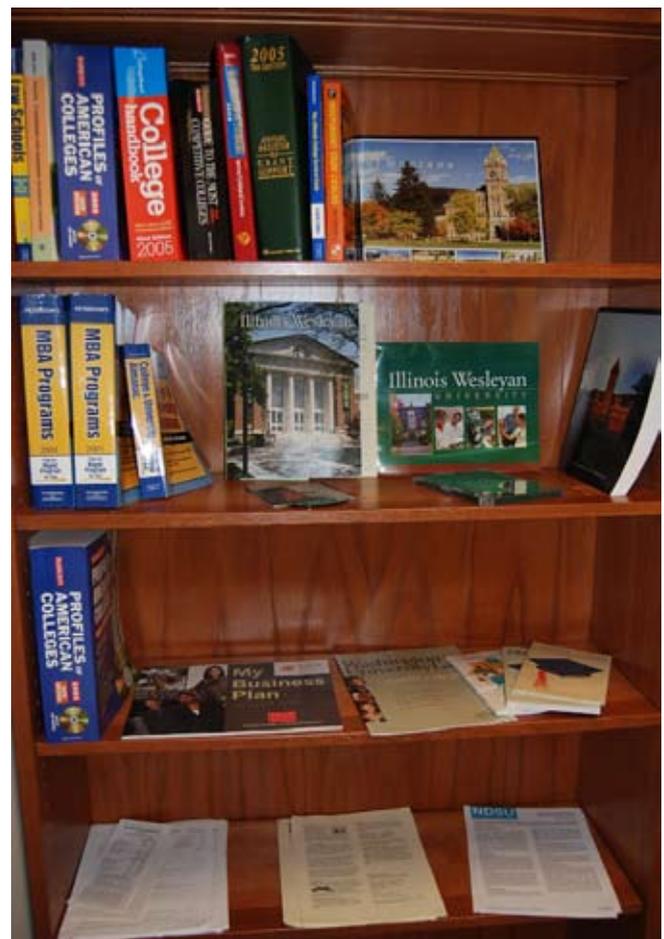
There are a number of ways that interested individuals can utilize the new Educational Advising Center right now. If you are in Tashkent, you can set up an appointment to meet individually with the advisor between 13:00-17:00, Monday to Thursday. To make an appointment, you should call the Embassy between 9:30 to 12:00 Monday through Friday or e-mail Tashkent-Advising@state.gov. Even if you are not in Tashkent, you can still take advantage of the EAC by calling the educational advisor by phone or sending an email with your questions.

Individuals that are interested in studying in the U.S. can also begin their research from any computer that has access to the Internet by visiting the EducationUSA webpage at <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/>. This website offers numerous helpful resources that address a wide range of common questions about educational opportunities in the U.S., including

undergraduate, graduate, specialized professional study, and short-term study. The website explains admissions processes, common standardized tests, the typical academic calendar, and the American grading system. The EducationUSA website also offers a useful feature called "Find a School" that allows a user to quickly search academic programs at thousands of colleges and universities to find those that match the individual's specific criteria. Finally, the website includes information and links to other websites on related topics, including living in the U.S, financial assistance, and visa information.

If you would like to receive weekly emails from the EAC with information about the center's services and other U.S. educational opportunities, please send an email with your name and email address to the educational advisor at

Tashkent-Advising@state.gov.



Some of the materials offered by the newly-opened Educational Advising Center at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent (U.S. Embassy photo).

Educational Opportunities in the U.S. for Uzbek Students

<http://uzbekistan.usembassy.gov/exchanges>

The United States Government offers educational exchange opportunities to students and scholars from countries around the world, including Uzbekistan. These programs, whether designed for high school students or post-Doctoral candidates, are intended to further the free flow of information and ideas and to enhance mutual understanding. They include:

J. William Fulbright Scholarship Program

(Deadline: November, 2008)

For more than 50 years, the Fulbright Program has given scholarships to college and university faculty as well as independent scholars to lecture and conduct research in the United States, generally for a period of four to 12 months. At the same time, the program provides support for American scholars teaching and conducting research overseas.

J. William Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Program

(Deadline: December 3, 2007)

The FLTA Program provides an opportunity for young, international teachers of English to refine their teaching skills, increase their English-language proficiency and extend their knowledge of the United States by engaging in a nine-month, non-degree course of studies. Besides studying, FLTA Fellows teach their native languages to students at their host universities. Among others, the program is available to native speakers of Russian, Uzbek and Tajik.

Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program

Deadline: July 2008)

Inaugurated in 1978, this one-year, full scholarship program is offered to mid-career professionals who have a proven track record of leadership, a commitment to public service, and the capacity to take full advantage of a self-defined program of independent study at a leading U.S. university. The program awards a certificate from the U.S. Government; it is not designed to deliver an advanced degree.



Over 200 Uzbek students participated in the International Education Week Fair 2007, organized by the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent on November 9, 2007 (U.S. Embassy photo).

Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP)

(Deadline: August 2008)

Since 1994, JFDP has provided university instructors with a semester-long opportunity to expand their knowledge and expertise in the humanities and social sciences by attending classes and working with faculty members at American universities.

Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA)

(Deadline: November 2008)

This six- to eight-week summer program allows secondary school teachers of English to develop their English language skills, enhance their teaching skills, and increase their knowledge about the United States.

Edmund S. Muskie / Freedom Support Act (FSA) Graduate Fellowship Program

(Deadline: November 2008)

Since 1992, the Muskie / FSA Graduate Fellowship Program has been providing citizens of the former Soviet Union with opportunities to pursue graduate studies at the master's level in the United States. Each year, more than 250 Muskie Fellows working in dozens of fields attend leading American universities.

Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD)

(Deadline: December 2007)

Established in 1992, UGRAD provides fellowships to first-, second- and third-year undergraduate students from the former Soviet Union. UGRAD Fellows complete one year of non-degree academic study at undergraduate institutions and community colleges in the United States.

Youth Exchange Opportunity Program

(Deadline: November 2008)

The Youth Exchange Opportunity Program provides Uzbek high school students (ages 15 to 17) with the opportunity to attend an American high school for one year. The students live with American host families.

U.S. Soft Drink Company Teaches African Teens About AIDS



A Dance4Life concert in South Africa delivers an AIDS-prevention message. The nonprofit is supported by Coca-Cola Co. (Miriam Mannak).

Coca-Cola, the largest multinational company on the African continent, has long offered HIV/AIDS education and treatment to its workers. But in recent years, it has put its corporate clout behind attempts to stem the tide of HIV infections among the next generation of workers.

According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, nearly 25 million of the 40 million people living with HIV are in sub-Saharan Africa.

With 650 employees across the African continent and another 60,000 employed by independent bottling companies licensed to use its trademark, Coca-Cola has long been committed to educating its workers about HIV/AIDS.

But, according to David Brown, director of employee relations for the Atlanta soft drink company, stigma keeps some HIV-infected employees from coming forward to accept free anti-retroviral treatment or counseling. "This is not a Coca-Cola issue only," he said, "but an Africa-wide issue." In fact, he said, experts are unlikely to report progress on erasing that stigma.

That is why, in recent months, Coca-Cola has tried to work on the problem by partnering with nonprofit groups that focus on youth, to help the next generation talk openly about sexual and reproductive health.

The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, with a donation of nearly \$3 million, formed a three-year partnership with Dance4Life. The group reaches young people in nine countries -- South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Sierra Leone -- with health messages delivered via the performing arts. Young participants in Dance4Life school programs learn sexual-reproductive health lessons before presenting them to peers in dramatic, dance or musical performances.

Dance4Life also holds concerts featuring disc jockeys, rock groups and traditional Arabic music. After one such event in

Egypt, an Islamic country in which dancing can be a sensitive issue, a 19-year-old girl named Heba approached organizers after the concert and said: "Tonight I've danced for the first time with other people. It was possible because I felt safe and connected."

On October 18, Tiësto, a Dutch-born DJ who performs to sold-out stadiums and is working on a documentary for Dance4Life's HIV-prevention project, will visit J.G. Zuma Secondary School in KwaMashu, South Africa.

Coca-Cola also has donated \$1.5 million to the Africa Network for Children Orphaned or at Risk (ANCHOR), which seeks to get AIDS orphans back into schools in their communities. "We would never have gotten off the ground without Coca-Cola," said Marion Bunch, an ANCHOR founder, who is affiliated with Rotarians for Fighting AIDS.

Bunch said that a representative from Coca-Cola has gone with her to homes in Johannesburg, South Africa, "where adolescent heads-of-households are common." She said they went into "grubby, dirty, horrible hovels of places," where children are "so bereft, so in need of help, so humble that it is hard not to cry."

Coca-Cola gave ANCHOR "seed money" -- \$50,000 -- in 2004, she said, which helped the group get enough results to attract even more partners: Emory University's School of Public Health and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief program.

ANCHOR seeks adults in the communities where the orphans live to care for them and help them go to school, but has no plans to build orphanages. The organization provides AIDS orphans with food, school supplies and "life-training skills" to make it easier for them to succeed at school. So far, ANCHOR, with the help of Coca-Cola, has helped 30,000 orphans in South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire.

Because of its marketing expertise, Coca-Cola has banded with the Africa Broadcasting Media Partnership to produce HIV/AIDS awareness messages.

The company also has a relationship with the Global Business Coalition, an organization of 220 companies working to fight AIDS. "Clearly, Coca-Cola knows how to market. It also has distribution networks; maybe we can tap into that core competency," said David Stearns, spokesman for the coalition, which is based in New York.

Stearns said the soft drink company received an award for work it did in China, designing and distributing decks of playing cards in which each card includes a message about sexually transmitted diseases. The target audience is Chinese migrant workers, who are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and are known to enjoy playing cards while waiting for their next job.

Work is Changing as U.S. Companies Go Global

“Research and development” is a term that has been displaced at Procter and Gamble Company (P&G). “Connect and develop” is the new mantra, as P&G, a company that makes a wide range of consumer products, seeks ideas from entrepreneurs worldwide.

So says Jodi Starkman, a talent-management expert for Organization Resources Counselors (ORC), which works with Fortune 500 companies. Work is changing for Americans who clock in at global companies, she said, whether those companies are multinationals or high-tech startups.

U.S. firms tap into a world talent pool and increasingly manage those workers with technology. They operate with fewer employees and facilities -- many workers do not report to offices, do not keep set hours or are not governed by a companywide vacation policy.

Experts interviewed by USINFO say other changes are in the offing, due to the increasing global nature of business: U.S. businesses will be led by foreign nationals, and even the notion of “U.S. headquarters” will fade.

Navi Radjou, of Forrester Research, cites International Business Machines’ (IBM) move from its traditional focus on activities in the United States. Today, the company’s Bangalore, India, unit designs business models with the aid of logistics experts in Switzerland and software engineers in Japan.

A global work force and the Internet mean manufacturers can make design changes on 3-D product models in 24 hours. Engineers on one continent make initial changes, others several time zones away offer feedback and a third group makes fixes.

Short product lifecycles put a premium on innovation. Projects get under way quickly, so companies want a nimble work force.

“Jobs are short-term,” said Paul Saffo, a Silicon Valley, California, technology expert and professor at Stanford University. More than half of IBM employees have been with the company less than five years.

Companies increasingly compensate with cash, rather than benefits, said Dallas Salisbury of Employee Benefit Research Institute -- they do not want people to stay for decades.

Day-to-day operations at IBM are changing, according to spokesman Clint Roswell, who said 40 percent of employees are “mobile” -- they do not report to an office. No one at the company abides by a set vacation policy; they take time off when needed. “Employees don’t have to be a certain place at a certain time; it allows us to be much more flexible,” Roswell said.

Starkman, who formerly worked at IBM, said that company’s database of employees’ expertise helps. When Starkman once was at a client’s workplace, a problem arose with

another vendor’s product. Using the database, she found IBM employees in Europe and Asia with experience with the application and e-mailed them. “The next morning, two of them made themselves available to speak with the client.”

U.S. companies are grooming foreign employees for leadership because the alternative is expensive; moving one American worker to China costs \$600,000 per year, according to Boston University economist Fred Foulkes. “The multinationals -- Procter & Gamble, Colgate Palmolive, GE -- are working to make sure they have non-Americans ready to move into executive positions. They don’t want leadership that has spent their whole careers in [New York],” he said. He holds up Swiss food company Nestle as a model: 35 of 100 executives are not Swiss.

As India and China become centers of innovation, it makes sense for P&G’s chief executive, A.G. Lafley, to set a goal of finding half of new-product innovations from worldwide entrepreneurs, outside the traditional P&G labs. Radjou reports that Lafley said, “We want P&G to be known as the company that collaborates.”

It is a cultural shift, but one that is paying off in product “hits,” Radjou says.

As U.S. companies become borderless -- in staffing, hours and strategies -- “they will have no meaningful geographic nexus, no headquarters,” Saffo predicts. Nokia, a Finnish company, has a chief executive in Helsinki, Finland, and a chief financial officer in New York.



Bollywood actress and brand ambassador of Procter & Gamble (P&G) Preity Zinta smiles during a charity event sponsored by P&G to benefit Child Relief and You (CRY) for the education of some 11,000 children in Bombay, India. Poster background reads 'education' (© AP Images).

Children, Teens Among Book Lovers at Annual Festival

Readers, authors meet in Washington



Sarah Baig, 10, meets Princess Presto from the PBS Kids preschool series *Super Why!* at the National Book Festival on the National Mall (Janine Sides/State Dept.)

How much children read and what they read have an effect on the future of any nation, says professional basketball star Al Harrington.

When Harrington is not playing for the Golden State Warriors basketball team in Oakland, California, he is in the community talking about the importance of reading and doing well in school.

"Kids need to read books to achieve whatever it is they want to do with their lives," Harrington told USINFO in an interview at the National Book Festival on the Smithsonian Mall September 29.

There are 430 jobs for professional basketball players in the National Basketball Association in the United States and a billion kids who want to shoot baskets for a living, Harrington said. "I tell kids they need to do well in school and on tests to be able to play ball at a university, which is the best route to professional sports. And you need a [university] degree so you can have a good backup plan."

Children need to read books that spark their imagination, Harrington said, adding that his all-time favorite book is *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss.

MEETING ON THE MALL

Seventy authors participated in the 2007 National Book Festival, sponsored by the Library of Congress and hosted by first lady Laura Bush. Pavilions arranged by genre were outfitted with stages and podiums where published authors told fans what inspires their work and what projects they have under way. The annual festival is free and open to the public, and fans wait in long lines for their favorite authors to sign copies of their books.

A highlight of the festival is the live performances of the Poetry Out Loud state champions. Amanda Fernandez, the

2007 Poetry Out Loud national champion, is a freshman at New York University. Fernandez captivated the crowd with her emotional recitations of three poems, including "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe.

Poetry Out Loud is a recitation competition that encourages the study of great poetry. More than 150,000 students participate in the annual challenge, which awards \$50,000 in scholarship prizes and school stipends.

Branden Emanuel Wellington, the second-place winner of the 2007 Poetry Out Loud national contest and the Indiana state champion, who recited "Analysis of Baseball" by May Swenson, told USINFO that the key to memorizing poems is to develop "sense memory." He agreed with actor Joshua



Poetry Out Loud champion Amanda Fernandez recites three poems, including "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe, at the National Book Festival September 29 on the National Mall (Janine Sides/State Dept.)

Kelly, the state winner from Montana, who told USINFO that memorization is easier when you can pinpoint moments or personal experiences in your life that help you remember words you are saying. Kelly recited "Playing Dead" by Andrew Hudgins.

"Instead of knowing the words in the poems, remember the feelings they remind you of," Kelly said.

According to the National Endowment for the Arts, which sponsors Poetry Out Loud, recitation helps students overcome stage fright and develop important public speaking skills.

Sisters Sbeen Baig, 11, and Sarah Baig, 10, of Woodbridge, Virginia, attended the festival with their mother, Zanobia Baig, who is observing Ramadan, the Muslim holy month. Baig told USINFO that her home is full of books and that while Sbeen prefers to read biographies and Sarah prefers to read books about the solar system, both girls love mysteries and ghost stories. Baig and her husband immigrated to the United States from Pakistan 18 years ago. Both sisters speak, read and write Urdu in addition to English.

Project Gutenberg Digital Library Seeks to Spur Literacy

Library hopes to offer 1 million electronic books in 100 languages

Thirty-six years ago, a student at the University of Illinois keyed the U.S. Declaration of Independence into a mainframe computer and offered it to others on the network that would become the Internet. Six users downloaded the file, inaugurating what its founder, Michael Hart, decided to call Project Gutenberg in honor of Johannes Gutenberg, the 15th-century German printer who started the movable type printing press revolution.

Using free computer time at his university, Hart keyed in the first 100 books himself and since has devoted his life to the project. Today, he often is described as someone who was a visionary ahead of his time; he has described himself as an "incurable romantic," a "natural-born workaholic and idealist." Hart grasped from the outset that his idea for a digital library could change the world, spurring literacy. Project Gutenberg became the first information provider on the Internet and is the oldest digital library with the largest single collection of free electronic books, or e-books.

Project Gutenberg gives away 3 million e-books a week from just one single site, www.ibiblio.org at the University of North Carolina, according to Hart. Most are books whose copyrights have expired in the United States, but there are also audio books, recorded music, sheet music, moving pictures and still pictures. The original video clip of the 1969 Apollo 11 moon landing, just four hours before American astronaut Neil A. Armstrong became the first person to step on the moon, is part of the collection, for example.

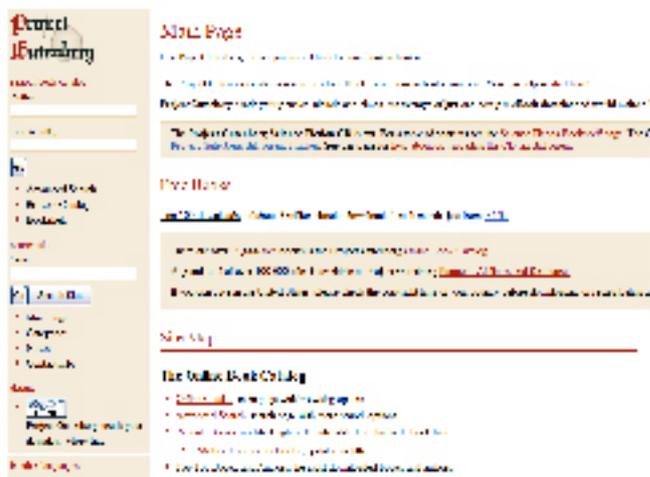
"The idea of Project Gutenberg is to bring the source of all information, and civilization, to the masses in the same way the Gutenberg press did in the middle of the second millennium, only in a modern manner," Hart said.

The collection includes books in many languages other than English. For example, there are 1,053 books in French, 451 in German, 396 in Finnish, 279 in Dutch, 155 in Spanish, 114 in Italian, 113 in Portuguese, 54 in Tagalog, and even books in Frisian, Catalan, Nahuatl, Sanskrit and Iroquoian.

Hart has said he expects eventually to offer 1 million books in 100 languages as well as everything else in the public domain including graphics, music, movies, sculpture, paintings and photographs.

Hart's goal is simple: "We want to provide as many e-books in as many formats as possible for the entire world to read in as many languages as possible." He added that e-books advance the dissemination of culture, literacy, democracy and civil society.

Project Gutenberg does not claim new copyright on titles it publishes. Hart instead has encouraged the free reproduction and distribution of the collection by such projects as the eGranary, which places Web resources on a server on university campuses in developing countries that have little or no Internet connectivity.



Hart does not ask for user fees or solicit large grants, insisting his collection's e-books be free, keeping the project a virtual, rather than physical, entity and relying on volunteers. So far, more than 50,000 people have helped – "there are no dues, no membership requirements and still only the most general guidelines to making eBooks for Project Gutenberg," he said.

Hart's project has inspired such other digital libraries as Projekt Gutenberg-DE for classic German literature and Projekt Runeberg for classic Nordic literature.

One of Hart's key principles is "noninterference" with volunteers. "Project Gutenberg's staff and the organization as a whole can do the most good by setting up a set of tools and infrastructure to create and distribute e-books, and then let creative and energetic volunteers do work as they see fit," he said.

A free DVD, whose contents also are available for downloading, contains 17,000 of the collection's first 19,000 titles.

Hart said he believes e-books are also an environmentally friendly alternative to printing traditional books. And, most of the world cannot afford the traditional book, he added. "When it comes to owning entire libraries, it's easier if they are e-books."

There are more than 20,000 free books listed in the Project Gutenberg Online Book Catalog. No special e-book readers, software or other devices are necessary. More than 100,000 titles are available at Project Gutenberg Partners, Affiliates and Resources. The Science Fiction Bookshelf is offering a new compact disk for downloading that includes most of the collection's science fiction titles.

Users also can create a CD or DVD image containing only the books they want, whether 20 or 2,000. For further information on how to download compilations of e-books, see Gutenberg: The CD and DVD Project at http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Gutenberg:The_CD_and_DVD_Project.

New Educational Advising Center Opens at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent



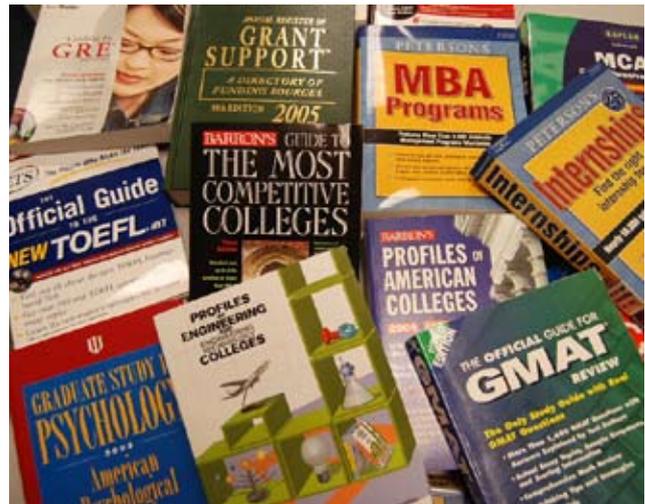
The Educational Advising Center offers the following services free of charge:

- general information about U.S. Education
- individual advising in areas of study and course descriptions
- test preparation materials for SAT, TOEFL, GRE and GMAT that can be used during consultation hours
- U.S. college selection database
- supporting reference materials
- financial aid resources
- application guides
- guides to Distance Learning

The center is supported by an educational advisor, a reference library, and educational software, all of which are geared to meeting the various needs of students that want to study in the United States.

Advising hours are by appointment from 13:00-17:00, Monday to Thursday. To schedule an appointment, please call 120-5450 between 9:30 to 12:00 Monday through Friday or e-mail

Tashkent-Advising@state.gov.



A sample of the materials offered by the newly-opened Educational Advising Center at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.



The Embassy of the United States of America has moved.

Our new contact information is:

Embassy of the United States of America

3 Moyqorghon Street
5th Block, Yunusobod District
Tashkent, 700093
Republic of Uzbekistan

Phone: (371) 120-5450
Consular Section: (371) 120-4718, 120-4719
Fax: (371) 120-6335

Website: <http://uzbekistan.usembassy.gov>
Email: dostlik@usembassy.uz