



DO'STLIK



Issue 11

June 2009

In this issue:

Artists in Tashkent Region Create Images of America..... 1

U.S. Trade Representative Official Visits Uzbekistan..... 1

Obama Marks His First 100 Days..... 3

Uzbek Students Develop English Writing Skills..... 4

Language Institute Uses Latest Teaching Materials 5

Doctor Shares Experience in Emergency Heart Care..... 6

USAID Cooperates with Ministry of Health to Combat TB 7

The State of Ohio..... 8

Fulbright Alumni Discuss Environmental Issues..... 11

American Librarian Visits Uzbekistan..... 12

World Digital Library Offers Cultural Treasures from Around Globe..... 13

Musician Taught and Performed During Uzbekistan Visit..... 14

History of Jazz Draws Record Crowd to Chai Chat..... 15

Global Energy Hopes Focus on Central Asia..... 16

Native Americans Perform at Festival of Cultures..... 17

AmCham Serves International Businesses..... 18

G20 Pledges \$1.1 Trillion for Economic Recovery..... 19

Embassy Supports NGOs in Uzbekistan..... 20

U.S. Embassy Staff Enjoy Kup Kari Tournament..... 22

Alex Ovechkin Leads New Wave of European Hockey Stars..... 23

Karshi Welcomes Ambassador Norland..... 24

Artists in Tashkent Region Create Images of America

The stained-glass art is a fusion of red sand, undulating blue sea and a silvery city towering on the horizon. Camels move among the outlines of domed mosques, giving rise to the name of the piece: “The Silk Road to America.”

Maryana Ibraeva’s piece took one of the top prizes in the recent art competition “My View of America.” The contest invited women artists and middle- and high school students from around Tashkent region to paint, sculpt or otherwise create their images of the United States. The contest was organized by the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, the Women’s Committee of the Regional Hokimiyat (municipal government) and the Women’s Club “Concord.”



Students from the Tashkent region examine pieces of art submitted to the art contest “My View of America.”

The art was on display when winners were announced in ceremonies on March 30. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Continued on next page

U.S. Trade Representative Official Visits Uzbekistan

Claudio Lilienfeld, the Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for South and Central Asia, discussed issues of bilateral trade and investment when he met with senior government and business leaders during a visit to Uzbekistan on April 28-29.

Lilienfeld met with the Government of Uzbekistan’s First Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Azimov and Nasriddin Najimov, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade, along with leaders of the Central Bank of Uzbekistan and chambers of commerce. His goal was to better understand regional trade issues and identify opportunities to enhance trade and investment opportunities between the two countries, he said.



Claudio Lilienfeld (left), the Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for South and Central Asia, and Duane Butcher, the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy Tashkent, met with leaders of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan on April 29. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Continued on page 10



U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland and Mary Hartnett present first-prize winner Maryana Ibraeva with an award at the ceremony March 30. (U.S. Embassy photo)

ARTISTS, continued from front page

The competition commemorated Women's History Month. It was the latest in a series of events called "The World Around Us" that the Women's Club has sponsored to promote understanding of the cultures and traditions of different nations.

About 20 professional and amateur female artists and 250 students entered "My View of America." On March 30, they gathered at the Regional Hokimiyat building and later at U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland's home to view the artwork and attend ceremonies announcing the winners.

The art provides an interesting view of how women and young people in Uzbekistan see the U.S. and which images from America have made an impression on them. Many of the pieces are renditions of the Statue of Liberty; others show Native Americans or cowboys on horseback set against the wide landscapes of the American West.

There are images from pop culture like actress Marilyn Monroe, bustling cityscapes and a 10-year-old's vision of Disney World with the words "I love you forever." First-prize crafts winner Gulzor Sultanova's sophisticated abstract sculpture shows a woman reaching the top of a staircase, entitled "Road to a Dream."

The winning pieces will be on display at the U.S. Embassy, and they have been compiled into two calendars for the year 2010.

Mary Hartnett, the wife of Ambassador Norland, sat on the board of judges consisting of representatives from the Hokimiyat, Women's Club "Concord," the Embassy of Italy, and a curator of the art gallery at the National Bank of Uzbekistan. Hartnett said she was impressed with the high quality of the artists' work and was happy to see that the pieces showed such a wide range of aspects of U.S. culture. One of the pieces even showed her own hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, she said.

Hartnett said she liked that many of the pieces captured the idea of opportunity for women, and that many focused on traditional culture, something that is held in high esteem in both Uzbekistan and the U.S.

"One of the themes we liked as judges was 'East Meets West' and the common things we share," she said. These shared values help artists reach across cultural differences.

"Almost none of these artists has ever been to the U.S.," Hartnett said. "But they were able to create images that resonate with someone like me who grew up there."

The art was judged on criteria such as creativity, depth of knowledge and aesthetic perception. Winners received prizes including a laptop computer, art supplies and easels.

Winners were:

WOMEN WINNERS (BEST PAINTING)

First Place – Maryana Ibraeva – Silk Road to America
 Second Place – Maria Lukyanova – Media: Street Life
 Third Place – Lola Alimova – Aspiration and Power

WOMEN WINNERS (BEST CRAFTWORK)

1st place – Gulzor Sultanova – America: Road to a Dream
 2nd place – Natalya Ignatova – Heart of Mother Earth (felt work)
 3rd place – Natalya Kopilova – Lasso: The Bridge Between Friends (broach)

STUDENTS (CATEGORY 1)

1st place – Zuhra Islamova – Statue of Liberty, beadwork
 2nd place – Ekaterina Katisheva – Statue of Liberty, view from window
 3rd place – Timur Saitjanov – Wild West

STUDENTS (CATEGORY 2)

1st place – Katya Uskenbaeva – Cowgirl
 2nd place – Abdulla Djurabaev – Statue of Liberty
 3rd place – Charos Shaymatova – Los Angeles: The Modern City

Obama Marks His First 100 Days

Marking an odyssey that began 100 days ago when he became the first African-American president in U.S. history, President Obama reflected for long moments before the nation on what his presidency has achieved and what still needs to be done.

"I think we're off to a good start. But it's just a start. I'm proud of what we've achieved, but I'm not content," Obama said in an April 29 hourlong, nationally televised press conference from the East Room of the White House.

"We still confront threats ranging from terrorism to nuclear proliferation as well as pandemic flu. And all this means you can expect an unrelenting, unyielding effort from this administration to strengthen our prosperity and our security — in the second hundred days, and the third hundred days, and all the days after that," the president said.

THE FIRST 100 DAYS

The first 100 days is not an official measure of an American presidency. By tradition, it has become a way of taking stock, of pausing to reflect on the words and actions of a candidate-turned-president who no longer is running for office. The tradition dates back to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who, after taking office in 1933, was able in the first 100 days to push through 15 major pieces of legislation aimed primarily at helping America recover from the economic devastation of the Great Depression.

Some news media analysts have tried to compare Obama's first hundred days to those of Roosevelt, but historians and political scientists say there is nothing magical about the number.

For Obama, it has been a period marked by significant changes in foreign affairs, and difficult but straightforward economic policies. And now his administration has had to develop a rapid response to the H1N1 flu, commonly known as swine flu, which is sweeping across the world.

A FRESH APPROACH ON FOREIGN POLICY

"I campaigned on the promise that I would change the direction of our nation's foreign policy — and we've begun to do that," the president said.

While campaigning for president, Obama set three overarching goals for U.S. foreign policy: re-establish America's standing in the world; create an open dialogue with friends, partners and adversaries based on mutual respect; and work together in building and strengthening partnerships.

The United States has begun to end its combat mission in Iraq, fulfilling a significant pledge Obama made to the American people and one that he said was essential to strengthen U.S. security and to strengthen the Iraqi people. In the first month of his new administration, Obama pledged to remove U.S. combat forces from Iraq in a responsible way. And in

a speech to U.S. Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Obama said, "Let me say this as plainly as I can: By August 31, 2010, our combat mission in Iraq will end."

On Afghanistan and Pakistan, Obama said he forged with NATO allies a new strategy targeted at the terrorist group al-Qaida and the former Taliban regime. It is believed that the remnants of both groups are hiding in the rugged mountains that divide the two nations in Southwest Asia. Before leaving for the G20 Financial Summit in London in early April, Obama announced a comprehensive strategy that focuses not only on the military and the need to ensure the security of the United States and its allies, but also one that addresses the very real problems that exist there.

The president told reporters that he is "gravely concerned about the situation in Pakistan, not because I think that they're immediately going to be overrun and the Taliban would take over in Pakistan; [I am] more concerned that the civilian government there right now is very fragile and [they] don't seem to have the capacity to deliver basic services — schools, health care, rule of law, a judicial system that works for the majority of the people."

For those reasons, Obama said, it is imperative that the United States and its allies help Pakistan help Pakistanis. "We will provide them all the cooperation that we can," he said.

GUANTÁNAMO DETENTION CENTER

In the first 48 hours of the Obama presidency, he issued executive orders to close the detention center on the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, within a year, to address the treatment and legal status of detainees, and to ban enhanced and exceedingly harsh interrogation methods.

"We have rejected the false choice between our security and our ideals by closing the detention center at Guantánamo Bay and by banning torture without exception," the president said.

A transcript of the president's press conference is available on America.gov.



U.S. President Barack Obama.
(© AP Images)

Uzbek Students Develop English Writing Skills



English Language Fellow Dennis Johnson leads a seminar on English composition at Urgench State University. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Dennis Johnson teaches English-language writing in Uzbekistan, and he loves it.

He is teaching English composition to students at the Institute for English Language Teacher Education (IELTE) at the Uzbek State University of World Languages. Most of his students will become English teachers.

He is working with IELTE to revise its writing curriculum and introducing new composition teaching methods to his teaching colleagues.

He teaches composition seminars to other English teachers in the Uzbek Teachers of English Association. He meets with English instructors at other institutions around Tashkent, and he is taking his message on the road to universities in Samarkand, Bukhara, Urgench, and cities in the Ferghana Valley, he said.

"I've just been working my tail off," he said, using a common idiom in English for working very hard. "I decided to make teaching writing my mission of the year."

Johnson, an enthusiastic man who has taught English to non-native speakers for more than 25 years, came to Uzbekistan on the English Language (EL) Fellow Program sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent. The program links advanced English instructors with one-year projects proposed by language institutions. IELTE has hosted two EL Fellows in the past, but Johnson is the first EL Fellow to come to Uzbekistan since 2005.

IELTE was founded in 2000-2001 as a joint project between the U.S. Embassy and the Uzbek State World Languages University, one of the largest universities in Uzbekistan. IELTE's mission was to reform training for English teachers and bring its language-education practices in line with international standards. IELTE is the only four-year English-teacher training program in Central

Asia in which all courses are taught in English, and it has become one of the most prestigious language programs in the country.

For the 2008-2009 academic year, IELTE requested an EL Fellow to help it develop a new syllabus for its writing component and to train students and teachers on writing methods. In student and teacher evaluations of IELTE's program, writing had been identified as an area that needed improvement, said Saida Irgasheva, the curriculum and faculty development manager at IELTE.

"None of the universities and schools in Uzbekistan had or have writing as a separate course, or they always ignored it as a skill," she said. "Our teachers didn't have enough knowledge and skill on how to teach it, and especially how to provide feedback on students' writing."

Along with developing the new writing curricula, Johnson teaches writing classes to students in all four years of the program and works with other teachers to implement the methods. Irgasheva said he has been a great help in strengthening their program.

"Thanks to Dennis, now we have a very good four-year curriculum on writing and very specific guidelines on research writing and evaluation of students' work," she said. "We are 'infected' with his work, and next year all IELTE teachers will teach one or two groups, so that we will have 13-15 specialists in this field."

IELTE also plans to start personal- and professional-development courses for English teachers who want to strengthen their teaching of writing in universities, she added.

In the writing courses, Johnson's students go through three drafts of each paper, editing each draft and having other students edit them as well. Rather than being graded on the quality of the first attempt, the focus is on improving toward a final draft. Teaching composition through student editing is the standard pedagogy in U.S. schools and universities, Johnson said.

"When you look at the first draft and the final draft together, there's just no comparison," Johnson said, adding that his fellow teachers have seen the value in teaching composition through the editing process. "They've been very easily convinced that this works."

Along with his work at IELTE, Johnson has been leading writing seminars for other English teachers at universities across the country. The goal of the EL Fellow program is to help as many people as possible improve their English by building on the skills of English teachers, said Stephanie Fitzmaurice, the Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent. Learning English can open up any number of opportunities, she added.

“Those who can speak English are better able to take part in the global economy and the global discourse on a variety of subjects,” Fitzmaurice said. “Learning a foreign language can enable professionals in all spheres to share innovations across borders, such as in medicine or agriculture. Learning languages can also enhance trust and understanding between peoples of different countries.”

Along with the EL Fellow Program, the U.S. Embassy also brings English-language specialists to Uzbekistan to teach seminars and provide learning materials to education partners around the country, Fitzmaurice said.

IELTE has proposed hosting an EL Fellow for the 2009-2010 academic year, as well. The institute plans to develop an English for Special Purposes curriculum, in which students take English-language courses such as law, economics and history. The new curriculum would train students to teach these content-based courses in English at universities and institutes around the country, according to the project proposal.

The desire to strengthen its curricula in writing and English for Special Purposes are just two examples of why IELTE remains among the nation’s top institutions of higher education, Johnson said.

“I’m in a program in the forefront of the country, and they want to remain at the forefront,” he said. Along with being amazed at the warmth of his reception among the faculty at IELTE, Johnson said he has been impressed with the quality of his students.

“These students are bright; they’re really bright,” he said. As much as he has tried to help his students, though, his experience in Uzbekistan has been just as rewarding for him.

“I really enjoy getting out there and doing new things, experiencing new cultures,” Johnson said. “This has just been a marvelous opportunity for me. It has been endlessly fascinating.”

Language Institute Uses Latest Teaching Materials

The faculty and students of the Institute for English Language Teacher Education (IELTE) will benefit from having access to more than 150 books, digital education materials and computer hardware donated to the institute’s resource center.

Representatives of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent made the donations at a reception April 9 at IELTE, which is part of the Uzbek State University of World Languages. IELTE trains future English teachers in a four-year program of coursework conducted in English. It is one of the premier foreign-language institutes in Uzbekistan.

The donations included many books on English instruction, from strategies for teaching grammar to curriculum development and dictionaries of regional American English. There were CDs and DVDs to assist with spoken English, histories of the language and guides to distance-learning resources.

Along with the books and disks, the Embassy also donated 10 computer monitors, equipment for conducting digital video conferences and various computer accessories for use in the institute’s resource center.

At the reception, IELTE faculty members gave a presentation on the history of collaboration between the institute and the U.S. Embassy. IELTE was founded in 2000-2001 with the help of the Embassy, with the goal of training English teachers in a program that follows international standards. Since then, IELTE has hosted several American English Language Fellows, and many students and faculty have taken part in Embassy-sponsored academic exchanges.



Saida Irgasheva, the curriculum and faculty development manager at IELTE, accepts some of the donated books from Cultural Affairs Officer Stephanie Fitzmaurice. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Stephanie Fitzmaurice, the Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, said that it has been great to see how IELTE has evolved over the years, growing into an innovative, independent and prestigious institution.

“We’re very pleased to be able to collaborate with such professional and dedicated teachers,” she said.

Several leaders of IELTE and the Uzbek State University of World Languages attended the reception, including Abdulla Ismailov, Rector of the University; Toir Ikromov, Dean of the English Philology Department; and Muhamadavav Iriskulov, Director of IELTE.

Doctor Shares Experience in Emergency Heart Care

The screen shows an enlarged image of an electrocardiogram (EKG) strip that tracked the irregular heartbeat of a patient in an emergency room. The tiny spikes and valleys that make up the pattern can tell a doctor a great deal about the nature of the heart problem and give important clues about how to treat it. Dr. Thomas Elder tells an audience of doctors and professors at Tashkent Pediatric Medical Institute.

"Now, this rhythm here is a ventricular tachycardia," he says, as he points out the tell-tale spikes of that particular arrhythmia. His lecture is simultaneously translated into Russian, and all of his presentation materials will be available in Russian to download onto flash drives brought by his listeners.

Elder, a retired cardiologist from California, spent about two weeks in Uzbekistan in March lecturing to heart doctors, emergency room doctors, and other health-care providers. With support from the Ministry of Health, he spoke about emergency cardiology at the Republican Scientific Center of Emergency Medical Care, the Republican Specialized Center of Surgery and at the Tashkent Pediatric Medical Institute.

Elder is a volunteer for Medical Teams International (MTI), a non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon, that provides medical care to those in need and training for health-care workers in about 70 countries around the world. His visit to Uzbekistan was the latest in a series of lectures set up by MTI in Uzbekistan to provide training in emergency care.

Between 25 and 100 doctors attended each lecture, Elder said. Along with learning from the lectures themselves, they received a Russian translation of the American College of



Dr. Thomas Elder (center; in ceremonial robe) with Uzbek heart and emergency room doctors, and other health-care providers. They attended his lectures on medical care for patients with heart problems. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Cardiology guidelines for treatment of a variety of heart conditions.

"This is the first time these guidelines have been translated into Russian," he said, adding that the guidelines would be an invaluable resource.

Elder has been a volunteer with MTI before, delivering medicines and consulting on cases in the Andes mountains of Bolivia, he said. On this trip to Uzbekistan, he said he developed a great respect for the doctors here who, at times, work with outdated equipment.

"I have a lot of admiration. The doctors here are doing great work," he said.

MTI has had a representative office in Uzbekistan since 2002, said Komiljon Khamzayev, an emergency care and kidney doctor and project manager for MTI in Uzbekistan. With the support of the Government of Uzbekistan and funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, MTI in Uzbekistan has been involved in projects to supply clean drinking water, training for emergency medical providers and other projects. USAID currently funds a project of MTI to support greater independence for children with disabilities.

Since 2007, MTI has brought 11 teams of U.S. doctors and health-care workers to Uzbekistan to conduct training in areas, including dermatology, physical therapy and emergency medical care, according to information from MTI.

The group also is working on a pilot project for cervical cancer screening and prevention, and on creating a unified emergency-response system in Tashkent based on the U.S.-style "911" system, in which people can call a single number in case of fire, medical or other emergencies, Khamzayev said.

MTI in Uzbekistan has trained more than 9,000 people in First Responder and other emergency medical care in its 10 training centers in cities across Uzbekistan. The various training and education programs have bolstered the emergency care here, Khamzayev said.

He noted that most doctors and other health-care workers in Uzbekistan do not speak English, which can be a barrier to keeping current on the latest medical practices.

"These volunteers share the best practices. We can ask them questions: 'What would you do? How would you treat them in America?' Our doctors can get good training this way," Khamzayev said. "Hopefully, this will save more lives. That's our main goal."

USAID Cooperates with Ministry of Health to Combat TB in Uzbekistan

The 30-second, animated TV spot begins with an Uzbek farmer working in the fields with his hoe. He is coughing and so tired he has to stop his work to return home and lie down.

The voiceover – in Uzbek, Russian or Karakalpak – describes the farmer's symptoms: coughing, pain, loss of energy, a high temperature. These can be the symptoms of tuberculosis (TB), and if you have them, you should see a doctor to be tested. TB can be cured, and the treatment is free of charge, the narrator assures the viewers.

In recent months, this public service announcement (PSA) has been shown about 6,000 times on 22 regional TV stations that cover nearly all of Uzbekistan. Two more PSAs will air soon: the first telling that those infected with TB can be cured if they follow the treatment plan; and the second addressing possible stigmatization by explaining that TB is an airborne disease that anyone can get.

The TV spots are one of several components of the USAID-funded Project HOPE's efforts to combat TB in Uzbekistan. The nation has a network of TB hospitals and clinics, about 1,400 doctors trained in the treatment of TB and availability of medicines to fight the disease, said Artur Niyazov, the TB Program Manager of Project HOPE in Uzbekistan. With an effective infrastructure in place, what is needed now is for people to report TB so they can be properly diagnosed and then to follow through with their treatment until they are cured, he said.

"This is a curable disease, and all the resources and political support are now here," he said. "The only need is to mobilize doctors and increase community awareness. With all these together, the TB situation can be changed quite soon."

On March 24, the World Health Organization (WHO) commemorates World TB Day. The annual event marks the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced the discovery of the bacteria that causes TB. World TB Day highlights the gains made in treating the disease, publicizes programs to combat the disease, and acknowledges the challenges ahead.

More than 1.7 million people die from TB every year, making it the world's second-deadliest infectious disease, behind only HIV/AIDS. Although an effective cure for TB exists, the disease is often diagnosed late and is poorly treated, if treated at all.

The U.S. Government, with USAID as its lead agency, is at the forefront of combating TB worldwide. In 2008, Congress authorized spending up to \$48 billion to combat HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, according to the U.S. State Department. The U.S. has contributed \$3.3 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, about 27 percent of the total funding. USAID supports active TB programs in more than 40 countries, including Uzbekistan.

The Global Fund has authorized more than \$50 million to purchase TB medicines and provide other services to fight



Participants in Project HOPE's training course for nurses on WHO-recommended TB treatment programs. (U.S. Embassy photo)

TB in Uzbekistan over the next five years, according to Niyazov. USAID spent about \$1.5 million on TB projects in Uzbekistan in 2008, according to Benjamin Mills, the Health Advisor for USAID in the country.

The WHO estimates a rate of 121 cases of TB per 100,000 people for Uzbekistan in 2006, or a total of about 33,000 cases. The mortality rate was reported at 17 per 100,000 people, or about 4,600 deaths from TB. The relatively high mortality rate and prevalence of multi-drug resistant TB indicate that a high percentage of TB cases in Uzbekistan are not being fully treated, Mills said. Ending treatment before a patient is fully cured can lead to a relapse with multi-drug resistant TB, which is much harder to cure.

"It is particularly important to fight TB here in Uzbekistan because of the rise in multi-drug resistant TB. It is becoming more and more common to see these new strains," Mills said. "If this continues, we won't be able to say any longer that TB is a curable disease."

USAID, working through Project HOPE, has been assisting the Government of Uzbekistan to combat TB since 2000. Its programs include the public awareness campaign, education of TB patients about the disease and its cure, training of doctors and nurses in following WHO-recommended treatment programs, and implementation of a computerized system to track medicines needed for every TB patient in the nation.

Each of USAID and Project HOPE's programs follows the WHO's world-wide strategy to cut the number of TB cases in half by 2015, relative to 1990 levels, and to eliminate TB as a public-health concern by 2050.

"We try to cover as much as possible with what we have," said Niyazov from Project HOPE. "We can't just educate doctors or the patient population. If the community doesn't come in for observation and treatment, then the TB rate will just increase. That's where we're trying to make an impact."



The State of Ohio - The Buckeye State



From Lake Erie to the mighty Ohio River, Ohio offers visitors an amazing variety of world-class travel experiences. Visitors can take in cutting-edge architecture, theater and culinary delights in Ohio's lively cities and minutes later find themselves among rolling hills, browsing Appalachian artisan treasures or hiking amid spectacular forests and waterfalls.

Only in Ohio can visitors see the field where Dayton's Wright Brothers perfected motorized flight, see the progression of flight at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, or immerse themselves in the world's largest Amish community. It is here visitors can gain perspective on freedom at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, celebrate the heroes of rock and roll, cheer on American football greats at the Pro Football Hall of Fame and ride the highest, fastest roller coasters in the world in Cedar Point and Kings Island.

Columbus -- Ohio's capital city -- offers energetic districts ripe for exploration including the brick-lined streets of German Village; the Short North Arts District; Franklin Park Conservatory and the Columbus Museum of Art downtown; and the Arena District, an exciting concert venue and home to the National Hockey League Columbus Blue Jackets.

Cincinnati stands proudly on the banks of the Ohio River and boasts such wonders as the Cincinnati Museum Center, which

houses three museums under the incredible art deco roof of the Union Terminal train station: the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, the Zaha Hadid-designed Contemporary Arts Center and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden.

HISTORY

The first settlements in Ohio were Marietta, in 1788, and Cincinnati in 1789, on the Ohio River. However significant migration into the state didn't occur until after the Revolutionary War. The state's northern part bordered Lake Erie, the south had the Ohio River, and there were abundant resources in be-



A SPAD XIII, a World War I-era plane originally constructed by piano makers, is shown on display at the U.S. Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. (© AP Images)

tween. Shipping flourished in the 1820s and 1830s thanks to a network of canals connecting the Ohio and Lake Erie.

By 1850, Ohio was the third most populous state in the nation. Industry grew (steel in the north, meat-processing in the south) and some families got rich (Rockefeller in the north, Messrs Procter and Gamble in the south). North and south still define the state's politics today: the north is typically more liberal and pro-union, while the south is more conservative.

Seven U.S. presidents were born in Ohio, leading to the state's sometimes-heard moniker, 'Mother of Presidents.'

ECONOMY

Although Ohio's economy has traditionally been well balanced between agriculture, industry, mining, and trade, the recession of the early 1980s weakened manufacturing, triggered flight from the industrial cities, and saw a dramatic shift to a service economy and to high-tech industry. Farming is decreasing, with farmland being sold to residential and commercial developers. Among Ohio's main cash crops are corn and soybeans, wheat, fruits and vegetables.

Coal is Ohio's leading mining product, followed by oil and natural gas, gypsum and clays, sand and gravel, and building stones, such as sandstone. Ohio's principal manufacturers include transportation machinery, rubber tires and other products, metals parts, electrical machinery, machine tools, ceramics, plastics and chemicals.



The Procter & Gamble Company headquarters building in Cincinnati. (© AP Images)



Former Washington Redskins cornerback Darrell Green, left, uncovers his bronze bust with his son Jared Green at the Pro Football Hall of Fame on August 2, 2008, in Canton, Ohio. (© AP Images)

Ohio's businesses are well represented among *Fortune* 500 Companies (61), including Cardinal Health, Procter and Gamble, AK Steel Holding, Macy's, American Electric Power, NCR, Timken, American Financial Group, Goodyear Tire and Rubber, Eaton, Nationwide, Kroger, Limited Brands and others (<http://money.cnn.com>, 2009).

POPULAR ATTRACTIONS

National Museum of U.S. Air Force (Dayton, OH)

Planes, planes... and more planes, in front of you, behind you, above you! "Ohio's largest free attraction" could be the largest free attraction in America, or at least the most imposing. It's not every day you get to stand next to a replica of a nuclear bomb, or a plane that actually dropped one. The National Museum of the United States Air Force is a complex of vast, interconnected hangars on the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, exhibiting 100 years of aircraft.

Pro Football Hall Of Fame (Canton, OH)

Serving as a hallowed honoring spot for the greats of the pro football world, the two large galleries in the five-building complex are devoted to the display of the niches of the enshrines of the Hall. Included in the 83,000 square-foot complex are: the Exhibition Rotunda, Photo-Art Gallery, Pro Football Adventure Room, Enshrinee Mementos Room, Super Bowl Room, interactive exhibition area, museum store and much more.

Columbus Museum of Art (Columbus, OH)

The Columbus Museum of Art features works from an outstanding collection of Impressionists, German Expressionists, Cubists, American Modernists and contemporary artists, including works by Degas, Monet, Matisse, Picasso, Bellows, Hopper, Marin and O'Keeffe. Highlights include *Eye Spy: Adventures in Art*, which takes key works from the museum's collection and fuses them with fun interactive games for children.

Hopewell Culture National Historical Park (Chillicothe, OH)

A group of 24 cone-shaped ceremonial burial mounds of the Hopewell Indians date from between 200 BC and AD 500, in south-central Ohio, U.S. The mounds lie along the Scioto River, just northwest of Chillicothe. Numerous pottery utensils, copper ornaments, and other artifacts have been recovered from the site. The park, established as a national monument in 1923, occupies an area of 109 hectares.

Sources: <http://www.ohio.gov>,
<http://consumer.discoverohio.com>,
<http://www.discoveramerica.com>,
 The New York Times Almanac, 2007,
 USA, Lonely Planet, 2008.



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

QUICK FACTS

Abbreviation: OH

Capital City: Columbus

Governor: Ted Strickland

Date of Statehood: March 11, 1803

Population: 11,353, 7th highest

Area: 44,825 sq.mi., 34th largest

Origin of State's Name: The state is named after the Ohio River. The Iroquois word *oheo* means "large" or "beautiful river."

Largest Cities: Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, Akron, Dayton, Parma, Youngston, Canton, Lorain.

Major industries: Transportation equipment, fabricated metal products, machinery, food processing, electric equipment.

Agriculture: Soybeans, dairy products, corn, hogs, cattle.

TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, continued from front page

His visit to Uzbekistan was part of a tour of all five former Soviet Central Asian nations.

Lilienfeld said his meetings in Uzbekistan and throughout the region were very positive, and that he saw many opportunities to expand trade. He would be taking back to Washington, D.C., ideas that could be included in a reevaluation of U.S. trade policies affecting Central Asia and Afghanistan, he said.

"I see many opportunities for more commerce and trade between Uzbekistan and the United States," he said. "I'm optimistic that we can work on this."

Lilienfeld said it was obvious that the economy of Uzbekistan had grown enormously since he was last here in 1997. The fact that several large U.S. companies are doing business here – including General Motors and Boeing – and the Government of Uzbekistan's stated interest in attracting more foreign direct investment are excellent signs that opportunities exist to expand trade, he said.

Among the obstacles to expanded trade with Uzbekistan are issues surrounding the convertibility between soum and U.S. dollars and some complicated customs procedures. Lilienfeld said he believed even slight changes to these policies could mitigate some of the problems.

He noted that Uzbekistan seems to be weathering the global economic crisis fairly well, and that further growth would be enhanced by greater trade within the region, as well as bilateral trade with the U.S. He also expressed the hope that Uzbekistan and the U.S. could find ways to strengthen economic ties to Afghanistan.

"We're looking for opportunities to expand trade and commerce with Afghanistan," he said. "It would be beneficial for both Uzbekistan and the United States to take part in this."

The U.S. has Trade and Investment Framework Agreements (TIFAs) with the five Central Asian nations, but those agreements call for trade and investment issues to be addressed largely on a regional level. Lilienfeld said that process could be cumbersome, and that his office was considering whether it might be more productive to address issues more bilaterally, on a country-to-country basis.

The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is a Cabinet-level position that serves as the President's chief advisor and negotiator on foreign trade and investment issues. The USTR negotiates directly with foreign governments and is the U.S. representative to the World Trade Organization and other international organizations dealing with trade issues.

The USTR is tasked with expanding markets, negotiating trade policies and overseeing trade agreements.

OFFICE OF THE U.S. TRADE REPRESENTATIVE: *Building Partnerships and Prosperity through Trade*

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) negotiates directly with foreign governments to create trade agreements, resolve disputes and participate in global trade policy organizations. Its representatives also meet with governments, business groups, legislators and public interest groups to gather input on trade issues and explain the U.S. President's trade policy positions. The agency was founded in 1962 and has offices in Washington, Geneva and Brussels.

American trade policy works toward opening markets throughout the world to create new opportunities and higher living standards for families, farmers, manufacturers, workers, consumers, and businesses. The United States is party to numerous trade agreements with other countries, and is participating in negotiations for new trade agreements with a number of countries and regions of the world.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is responsible for developing and coordinating U.S. international trade, commodity, and direct investment policy, and overseeing negotiations with other countries. The head of USTR, Ambassador Ron Kirk, is the U.S. Trade Representative, a Cabinet member who serves as the president's principal trade advisor, negotiator, and spokesperson on trade issues.

USTR is part of the Executive Office of the President. Through an interagency structure, USTR coordinates trade policy, resolves disagreements, and frames issues for presidential decision. USTR also serves as vice chairman of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), is a non-voting member of the Export-Import Bank, and a member of the National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Policies.

USTR provides trade policy leadership and negotiating expertise in its major areas of responsibility, including:

- Bilateral, regional and multilateral trade and investment issues
- Expansion of market access for American goods and services
- International commodity agreements
- Negotiations affecting U.S. import policies
- Trade, commodity, and direct investment matters managed by international institutions such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Trade-related intellectual property protection issues
- World Trade Organization (WTO) issues

Fulbright Alumni Discuss Global Environmental Issues

Academic leaders, representatives of non-governmental organizations and students met on March 27, to discuss environmental challenges and to share ideas about how to address them. About 20 people attended the forum "Global Environmental Issues and Economy" organized by the Fulbright Association of Uzbekistan.

Presentations included "Ecological Aspects of Water Management," "Environment Modeling of Urban Sprawl" and "New Environmental Initiatives of the U.S. Government," which was presented by a representative of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.

The roundtable was the latest in a series of discussions organized by the Fulbright Association, which has organized scholarly activities in Uzbekistan since 2001. Many of its members are students and scholars who participated in the Fulbright programs, the U.S.-government's premier academic exchange program.



Jeremiah Maurer, a member of the Green League Committee at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, speaks about the committee's goals to reduce energy consumption and waste at the Embassy. (U.S. Embassy photo)

On Friday, Guli Yuldasheva, a professor of political science and international relations at the Institute of Oriental Studies, spoke about water management and the challenges it poses for the nations of Central Asia. Issues of water use and economic development are inevitably tied together, she said, especially in a country like Uzbekistan that has seen significant economic growth in recent years.

"Such rapid economic development can't help but affect the ecological balance," Yuldasheva said. At the same time, ecological challenges such as water shortages affect economic development in the region. "Water deficiency is slowing the rate of growth in Central Asian countries." Yuldasheva spent the 2001-2002 academic year as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

Lola Gulyamova, who chairs the Board of the Fulbright Association of Uzbekistan, spoke about using geographic infor-



Jeremiah Maurer from the U.S. Embassy and Guli Yuldasheva (right), a professor at the Institute of Oriental Studies, listen as Lola Gulyamova of the Fulbright Association of Uzbekistan speaks at the "Global Environmental Issues and Economy" roundtable. (U.S. Embassy photo)

mation systems (GIS) to compile and track environmental data on maps. As examples, she showed traffic patterns and air-quality levels on maps of Tashkent. Gulyamova studied rural populations in arid zones as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar in 1996-1997. She studied at the National Center of Geographical Information and Analysis at the University of California – Santa Barbara.

Jeremiah Maurer, a member of the Green League Committee at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, spoke about the committee's goals to reduce energy consumption and waste at the Embassy, and how this is part of a movement throughout the U.S. Government to work more cleanly and efficiently.

U.S. President Barack Obama has outlined plans to spend \$150 billion on clean energy programs, with a goal to reduce oil consumption in 10 years by the amount the U.S. now imports from the Middle East and Venezuela, Maurer said.

Participants in the roundtable discussed whether alternative energy and recycling programs can be profitable ventures, and ways in which Uzbekistan can benefit from environmentally friendly projects.

The Fulbright Association organizes roundtables and seminars about four times a year, Gulyamova said. Participants generally include Fulbright alumni as well as representatives from non-governmental organizations, the Ministries of Justice and Education, the Institute of Study of Civil Society, academia and business.

The events are a way to share ideas on important issues, which is a continuation of the goals of the Fulbright academic exchanges, Gulyamova said.

"It's a good opportunity to exchange experience, knowledge and ideas on theoretical, scientific and practical problems," she said. "These programs help to see science and technology from different perspectives."

Librarian Builds On Links Among Libraries in U.S. and Uzbekistan



William Middleton speaks with Shakhodat Akhmedova, director of the Samarkand Information and Library Center. (U.S. Embassy photo)

A librarian from the United States was in Uzbekistan in April to strengthen ties between libraries in the two countries and to promote finding information through next-generation tools on the Internet.

William Middleton is a librarian for the U.S. State Department who oversees Information Resource Centers (IRCs) in the countries of South and Central Asia. IRCs, such as the one at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, are libraries of English-language books and magazines, electronic databases and resource materials. The IRC is open to the public.

This month, Middleton visited Uzbekistan as part of a tour of the region. Along with consulting with staff of the IRC here, he was looking for ways to further integrate the IRC into the library network of Uzbekistan, he said.

Middleton visited the Information and Library Centers in Samarkand and Bukhara and the National Library in Tashkent, which serves as the central library for the country. Among his goals was to talk with his counterparts in Uzbekistan about ways the libraries in the two countries can improve existing linkages and create new ones, he said.

The National Library in Tashkent currently is linked to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and to the library at Northeastern University in Boston, allowing them to exchange publications. In the last four years, six librarians from Uzbekistan have taken part in professional exchange programs with libraries in the U.S., and Middleton said he hoped such professional exchanges would continue.

Middleton's visit also corresponded with the donation of English-language materials to the library in Samarkand, and libraries in Tashkent and Fergana will receive similar donations in the next few weeks. Each of the three donations consists of more than 150 English-language titles including novels, English textbooks and materials for professional librarians.

These donations were first the IRC has made to these libraries, and Middleton added that he hoped to see more of such support.

"There's a huge interest in the English language in Uzbekistan, and that's an advantage for us," he said. If the interest is there, the U.S. State Department is better able to contribute English-language resources to libraries.

While here, Middleton also led the weekly Chai Chat (the IRC's English conversation club) called "Social Media: The Rise of Interactive Web 2.0 Technologies." New web-based research tools such as Wikipedia, networking sites like Facebook, and blogs are changing the way people find information and leading to an explosion of the amount of information available, he said.

In Uzbekistan, interest is growing in several networking sites and blogs, and this is just the beginning of a whole



Director of the Samarkand Information and Library Center Shakhodat Akhmedova presents a traditional Uzbek gift - "doppi" - to her American colleague William Middleton. (U.S. Embassy photo)

new way of classifying and finding information, he said. Whereas traditional websites are one-directional – the user receives information from the site – Web 2.0 tools allow the user to contribute information, thus creating online communities.

"That changes the nature of the way we're using the Internet," he said. "This is a whole new technique for finding information."

Whether it's through use of the Internet or strengthening traditional libraries, Middleton said his goal is to open doors for people to find the information they need.

World Digital Library Offers Cultural Treasures from Around the Globe

Library of Congress, UNESCO, other partners cooperate on ambitious project

The World Digital Library (WDL) offers free online access to important, rare and interesting cultural treasures from around the planet.

Starting April 21, a vast multilingual collection of manuscripts, maps, rare books, sound recordings, films, prints, photographs and other cultural and historical materials can be viewed with the click of a computer mouse — and this is only the beginning of an ambitious project to share the contents of the world's libraries and cultural institutions.

The WDL's Web site functions in seven major languages, permitting users to conduct searches and read descriptions of the content in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish (the official languages of the United Nations) and Portuguese. All materials are presented in their original languages. For selected items, there are videos featuring discussions by expert curators.

More than two dozen libraries around the globe contributed the 1,200 digitized items from different eras and places that are now available for viewing. Among the treasures are calligraphic works in Arabic, Persian, Chinese and Japanese from the eight to the 19th centuries; early films, by the Lumière brothers in France, 1897–98, and Thomas Edison in the United States, 1899; and Miroslav's Gospel, a Serbian illuminated manuscript created around 1180.

The World Digital Library was launched April 21 at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris — four years after the project was proposed by James Billington, head of the U.S. Library of Congress.

Billington envisioned a Web site that would “bring together in a single place what is most interesting and most important of the world's varied cultures.”

“The focus of the project is on rare and one-of-a kind cultural items that are locked away in the great libraries of the world: oracle bones from China, ancient woodblock prints from Japan, scientific manuscripts from the Arab world, Columbus' letter announcing his discoveries in the New World,” he said.

By increasing the quantity and diversity of cultural materials on the Internet — and making them available in the original languages — the World Digital Library aims “to improve international understanding across cultures,” Billington said.

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Both UNESCO and the Library of Congress emphasize that another important goal of the project is to help bridge the digital divide among countries.

Universal access to information and knowledge is a funda-



People talk during the launch of the World Digital Library in Paris on April 21. (© AP Images)

mental principal for UNESCO, said Abdul Waheed Khan, UNESCO's assistant director-general for communication and information.

“There are hundreds of thousands of libraries,” he said. “Once you empower them through the digitization process, then you create almost unlimited opportunities for people to access information and knowledge.”

When a prototype of the WDL was unveiled in 2007, Billington said that “many countries will need to build capacity, both technical and human,” to be able to create and access digital content. “This is part of the challenge and one that we welcome,” he said.

The WDL prototype was developed by the Library of Congress, UNESCO and five other partners — the Bibliotheca Alexandrina of Alexandria, Egypt; the National Library of Brazil; the National Library of Egypt; the National Library of Russia; and the Russian State Library.

Currently, the WDL has 32 partners, including institutions that contributed cultural content, funding or technological or other assistance. It hopes to expand participation to all UNESCO member countries.

Speaking at the April 21 launch ceremony, UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura said the World Digital Library “offers a platform for the free flow of information, for international solidarity, for the celebration of cultural diversity and for the building of inclusive knowledge societies,” and that it highlights “the social and cultural potential of digital technologies.”

The World Digital Library is now live at <http://www.wdl.org/>.

Musician Taught and Performed During Uzbekistan Visit



American composer and musician Demetrius Spaneas (left) played with pianist Obid Jumaev and his band "Silk Road" in Bukhara. The session was part of Spaneas' visit to Uzbekistan, where he played concerts and led masters' classes. (U.S. Embassy photo)

American contemporary music composer and performer Demetrius Spaneas performed pieces he wrote to accompany movies by an Uzbek filmmaker, led master's classes, lectured and jammed with local jazz ensembles during a recent visit to Uzbekistan.

His trip to Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand in February was Spaneas' third visit to Uzbekistan since 2007, and the latest in a series of visits to Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union. Many of these tours, including the recent one in Uzbekistan, have been sponsored by the U.S. State Department as part of its cultural exchange programs.

On February 25, Spaneas was the featured composer and performer at the annual Black Box Music and Vision Festival at the Ilkhom Theater in Tashkent. He performed two scores he had composed to accompany films by Uzbek filmmaker Sukhrob Nazimov.

He and the Omnibus Ensemble performed another of his scores to a movie by Greek filmmaker Eri Skyrgianni. Spaneas said he felt the performance was a great success, and that



Demetrius Spaneas plays a solo at a performance in Bukhara. (U.S. Embassy photo)

it was an honor to work with the Ilkhom Theater and Omnibus Ensemble, artists whom he called "wonderfully gifted people who are doing tremendous work."

In Bukhara, he played a concert organized by the Bukhara State Music College with pianist Obid Jumaev and his band "Silk Road."

Popular pianist Edward Musaelyan helped organize a concert with Spaneas at the Blues Café club in Samarkand.

Back in Tashkent, Spaneas led a master's class for about 200 students and teachers at the Tashkent Music College. The class and discussions focused on composition and playing wind instruments, and he answered questions about views on music and life as a professional musician.

Spaneas, a native of Massachusetts, plays various wind instruments including the saxophone, clarinet and flute. He is a well known composer who has taught and performed at Harvard University, the Tanglewood Music and Jazz Festival,



Spaneas signed autographs for fans at a performance in Bukhara. (U.S. Embassy photo)

and many other venues. He is, currently, on the music faculty at Northeastern and Suffolk universities, and is composer-in-residence for the Bay Area Chamber Symphony.

Spaneas indicated that he felt that many of the performances on this trip were great successes, and that he was glad he had the chance to play with the musicians in Bukhara and Samarkand. For him, the trip was about communicating ideas, and he plans to return to Uzbekistan in the future.

"We can only gain from this," he said of the artistic dialogue. "We can only evolve as souls by learning from each other."

History of Jazz Draws Record Crowd to Chai Chat

The U.S. Embassy's February 6th Chai Chat drew a record number of participants who came to learn about jazz music and its roots in African-American culture.

U.S. Embassy Foreign Service Officer Sean O'Hara had the crowd singing and providing rhythm, as he led them through the history of jazz, a quintessentially American musical form that has taken root in the hearts of music lovers around the world. The Youth of Uzbekistan ("Yunost") Big Band played several American jazz classics and Uzbek tunes played in the jazz style.

O'Hara explained that while the roots of jazz rhythms could be found in the era of African-American slavery, the music has expanded, influenced and permeated all of American popular culture, from modern music to fashion.

"Jazz incorporates African heritage and European heritage," he said, noting that jazz was the single most popular music throughout the middle of the 20th century. Since then, jazz rhythms have shaped blues music and the rock and hip-hop popular today. "It's had a huge influence on American music."

Through photos and music, O'Hara introduced the audience of students, musicians and others to jazz legends such



U.S. Foreign Service Officer Sean O'Hara performs Duke Ellington's "It Don't Mean a Thing", while the audience sings along. (U.S. Embassy photo)



Sean O'Hara performs with the Youth of Uzbekistan ("Yunost") Big Band at a Chai Chat called "Jazz Rhythms: Born in America." (U.S. Embassy photo)

as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Miles Davis and Tito Puente. He split the audience into sections to sing the various musical parts that make up Count Basie's "One O'Clock Jump," and taught the gathering "doo-whop" part sung by Fitzgerald in Duke Ellington's "Don't Mean a Thing."

The weekly Chai Chat discussions usually last 1 ½ to 2 hours, but the audience stayed longer for the jazz presentation. Toward the end, the Embassy thanked the band members by presenting them with some American sheet music and CDs. In return, the band gave O'Hara sheet music of some of their favorite Uzbek music.

The Youth of Uzbekistan ("Yunost") Big Band has performed around the country, introducing jazz to listeners from all walks of life. The musicians train at the Glier Music Lyceum in Tashkent.

Jazz, and music in general, is a great way to reach across cultures, O'Hara said. He noted that the Yunost band often plays Uzbek musical pieces in a jazz style, and that jazz can be played on different regions' traditional instruments, just as music from around the world can be played on instruments normally used by American musicians.

"That's one of the reasons jazz is a great medium for sharing American culture," he said, noting that the influences go in both directions. "It's a great way to show collaboration."

The U.S. Embassy hosts Chai Chats every Friday. The public is invited to learn about a wide variety of topics of American culture while practicing their English in an enjoyable, entertaining environment. For more information about Chai Chats, contact the Information Resource Center at 120-5450 or email Tashkent-IRC@state.gov.

Global Energy Hopes Focus on Central Asia

Analysts see growing diversification of export routes

At a time of global energy insecurity, resources from Central Asia may play an important role in the energy equation.

Countries in this region have abundant oil and natural gas reserves, as well as some uranium deposits and hydropower resources. However, these reserves are located in some of the most extreme and technically challenging conditions in the world, and extracting them requires advanced expertise that only a few international oil companies possess, analysts say.

Developing these resources and exporting them to global markets will strengthen the independence, sovereignty and economic development of Central Asian nations, U.S. officials say.

Some analysts, however, while recognizing the contribution the region can play in European energy diversification, caution against unrealistic expectations.

Financing for foreign direct investment in Central Asia has dried up as the global economic downturn has caused prices for commodities, including energy, to fall substantially, according to Johannes Linn, an analyst with the nonprofit public policy research group The Brookings Institution and an adviser to the Asian Development Bank.

Greater access to a wider variety of markets, including Europe, India, China and Russia, will serve the Central Asian republics from an economic-development standpoint and increase the region's ability to negotiate better prices for its energy, Linn told America.gov.

Both private and government experts agree that Central Asia is poised to realize its enormous energy-production potential and that once global markets are on the mend, energy needs and security considerations are likely to trump financial costs and help overcome occasional political barriers.

Kazakhstan already is self-sufficient in natural gas and produces half of all oil in the Caspian Sea region, the Department of Energy (DOE) said in a February 2008 report. With the formation of Tengizchevroil in 1993, Chevron Corporation became the first major Western oil firm to establish a presence in Kazakhstan. Today, Chevron holds major stakes in the nation's two biggest oil and gas field projects — Karachaganak and Tengiz.

The DOE reports that a surge in oil production in Kazakhstan is expected in the next decade, and new oil-export infrastructure is critical for the country's sustained growth.

Turkmenistan is the second-largest producer of natural gas among the former Soviet republics, after Russia, and has one of the largest gas fields in the world. According to an October 2008 study by Gaffney Cline and Associates, an oil advisory firm, the South Yolotan-Osman field in the southeast of Turkmenistan contains an estimated 6 trillion cubic meters of gas and possibly as much as 14 trillion.

If Turkmenistan is able to develop its vast gas resources, it could become a major contributor to the "Southern Corridor" of gas infrastructure, designed to provide an independent export route for Caspian oil and gas while easing Europe's dependence on Russia for gas.

However, Turkmenistan, according to a February 2008 analysis by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), still suffers from "a lack of sufficient foreign investment, geographical challenges, inadequate export pipeline infrastructure, and political instability," which continues to deter it from becoming a major energy exporter.

Uzbekistan has similar infrastructure problems, and most of its production goes to meet domestic demand, according to the EIA. The country has an estimated 594 million bar-



A worker at the Tengiz oil refinery. Kazakhstan's Tengiz oil field is the world's sixth largest. (© AP Images)

rels of proven oil reserves and more than 66 billion cubic feet of proven gas reserves. Most of Uzbekistan's known oil fields are in the Bukhara-Khiva region, including the Kokdumalak field, accounting for about 70 percent of Uzbekistan's oil production. Uzbekistan also has oil fields in its northeast Ferghana valley region, in the Ustyurt plateau, and along the Aral Sea.

Further east, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have less abundant but potentially significant energy assets. Although Kyrgyzstan imports oil and gas, it has large sources of hydroelectric power and some deposits of uranium. Tajikistan also is a net importer of energy. The country has limited oil and uranium resources, but great hydroelectric potential.

In the oil and gas sectors, experts note that investment is under way by Western companies in Kazakhstan and in nearby Azerbaijan and the Malaysian-owned Petronas Corporation is looking into projects in Uzbekistan.

Linn said projects are being considered to develop hydro power in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan with help from the Asian Development Bank and World Bank.

Native Americans Perform, Educate at Festival of Cultures in Tashkent



Buffalo Big Mountain and his son, 4-year-old Zander Kicking Horse, performed Native American dances at the "Day of Culture, Traditions and Food" on May 2. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Buffalo Big Mountain's grandfather broke horses and performed Native American dances in the Wild West Shows of the early 20th Century. His father danced and taught Europeans about Indian heritage during overseas tours decades later.

Now, Big Mountain and his children are in Uzbekistan, where he is looking to teach another generation and another people about the history, culture and modern life as a Native American.

Big Mountain and his 4-year-old son Zander Kicking Horse performed two dances at the "Day of Culture, Traditions and Food" sponsored by the Government of Uzbekistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday. The diplomatic communities of many nations set up booths, offered their national foods and performed at the event in Tashkent.

The dance called simply "Traditional" shows a very old style of native dancing from the Southwestern United States, Big



U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland talks with Buffalo Big Mountain and his son, Zander Kicking Horse at the "Day of Culture, Traditions and Food." (U.S. Embassy photo)

Mountain said. The second, called "Sneak Up," portrayed warriors sneaking onto a battlefield to retrieve their wounded, followed by a chase and a victory dance when they escape the enemy.

Big Mountain, whose mother is from the Mohawk nation in New York State and whose father was a Comanche from the State of Texas, has been performing native dances since his childhood. For him and his children, it is both part of their heritage and a way of educating others about Native American culture, he said.



"It's something I can pass down to my kids," he said, adding that he welcomes his three children to dance with him whenever they want. "It's part of their culture. I want the culture to not be something 'different' to them."

Big Mountain and his family are in Uzbekistan because his wife, Mary Big Mountain,



works at the U.S. Embassy as the head of the Office of Military Cooperation. While here, he plans to take every opportunity to perform and educate people about life as a Native American, he said.

"This is the chance of a lifetime for me to represent my culture, to be a diplomat for America and for Native American culture," he said. He is also looking forward to learning about the traditional dances and heritage of Uzbekistan, he said.

Carol Fajardo, the Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy, said she appreciated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' hosting such an enjoyable event highlighting the cultures of many nations, and that she loved seeing how much interest people had in watching the dances and talking with Big Mountain.

The U.S. Embassy also had a booth featuring foods, photos, information and items highlighting American heritage.

American Chamber of Commerce Serves International Businesses



Oybek Khalilov, the vice-president of AmCham, speaks at a recent AmCham business mixer. With him are (from his left) AmCham President Donald Nicholson II, Igor Pilyugin from the Unitel Co. (Beeline), and Ivan Smolentsev from Buzton. (U.S. Embassy photo)

There's not a large American business community in Uzbekistan, but many of the businesses that are here are active in AmCham: The American Chamber of Commerce in Uzbekistan. As one of the only business service groups in the country, AmCham has become an important voice for the needs of international business in Uzbekistan.

American businesses make up only a small part of AmCham's more than 80 members. Along with corporations with roots in the U.S., like UzTexaco and UzAIG, AmCham's members include foreign-based multi-nationals like Siemens, CNH France and the Royal Bank of Scotland. Members span the business spectrum, from hedge funds to law firms, agricultural companies, hotels and Internet service providers. It includes individuals and international organizations like the UN Development Programme and the World Bank.

Each of them has a stake in strengthening business relationships and overcoming obstacles to doing business in the country, said Donald Nicholson II, the president of AmCham and manager of the Central Asian Small Enterprise Fund private equity firm. AmCham exists to help them do that.

"The business community needs a service organization. Any town or business in the U.S. has a business forum," Nicholson said. "We ask: 'What can we do for the business community?' Our goal is to be of assistance to that community."

AmCham Uzbekistan, a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, has been operating in the country since 1997. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce also has affiliates in Tajikistan (which the leaders here assisted in opening), Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Nicholson said.

The U.S. Embassy in Tashkent works closely with AmCham to monitor the business climate and to assist American businesses that express interest in working in Uzbekistan, said Robert McCutcheon, the Economic Advisor at the U.S. Embassy. He estimated that as much as a third of his time is devoted to issues that also pertain to AmCham, and that U.S.

Ambassador Richard Norland and other senior U.S. Embassy officials regularly attend monthly AmCham gatherings.

AmCham holds monthly meetings and business mixers for its members and guests to mingle and to build business relationships. They host speakers and sponsor special meetings, such as a 2008 event when representatives of the U.S. military came to Uzbekistan and wanted to meet potential suppliers of goods and services to support the mission in Afghanistan. AmCham worked with the U.S. Embassy to identify potential suppliers, then arranged a meeting for the military representatives to meet the business leaders.

AmCham also publishes the quarterly magazine "Business Connections," with articles about its activities and topics related to the business environment, from new tax requirements to tips on selling Uzbekistan as a tourist destination.

The group has committees on Trade and Investment, Banking and Finance, Tax and Accounting, and Tourism. Some of its members sit on the board of the Kelajak Ilmi International School of Business, and AmCham leaders work to establish lines of communication between its members and the Government of Uzbekistan on key issues for the business community, Nicholson said.

One of the main issues is currency conversion, he said. Foreign companies, at times, have difficulty converting the Uzbek soum they receive into a foreign currency. Likewise, it can be difficult to convert enough of their foreign currencies into soum to pay their workers or to purchase goods and services locally, he said.

"One of our goals is to have a dialogue with the Government and try to find suitable solutions," Nicholson said. "If we can find solutions, the business community will grow. And if you have success stories, other businesses will come."

Nicholson said he expected that warming relations between the governments of the U.S. and Uzbekistan would only help the climate for international business. He saw the recent agreement between the two governments to transport non-military cargo through the territory of Uzbekistan to Afghanistan as a clear sign of this warming, he said.

"If U.S.-Uzbek relations improve as we hope they will, the entire business community will improve," he said, adding that leaders of the Government of Uzbekistan have repeatedly expressed the hope for greater foreign investment.

There are many things to attract foreign investment here, he said. Nicholson cited the reliable, well-educated workforce in Uzbekistan, ample natural resources and an economy that has been growing robustly even during the world economic downturn.

As the climate for economic growth and foreign investment change, AmCham will continue to be one of the main voices of the international business community, he said.

G20 Pledges \$1.1 Trillion for Economic Recovery

Leaders of the world's most powerful economies have pledged \$1.1 trillion to restore credit, economic growth and jobs in the world economy.

"Together with the measures we have each taken nationally, this constitutes a global plan for recovery on an unprecedented scale," the leaders said in a communiqué issued April 2 at the conclusion of the G20 London Summit. The gathering of leaders was held in the Docklands, a former shipping area on the Thames River that has undergone major redevelopment.

An emergency resources account of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which is the emergency lender for nations in financial crisis, will be expanded to \$750 billion, with an additional \$250 billion for new Special Drawing Rights — an international reserve asset used by the IMF to supplement the existing reserves of member countries. The G20 leaders also agreed to provide at least \$100 billion of additional lending to multilateral development banks, and ensure \$250 billion of support for trade finance.

The leaders also agreed to get additional resources from IMF gold sales for finance for the poorest countries.

"By acting together to fulfill these pledges we will bring the world economy out of recession and prevent a crisis like this from recurring in the future," the communiqué said.

Both IMF and World Bank economists have forecast that the world economy will shrink in 2009 for the first time since World War II.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who hosted the financial summit of the most advanced and largest emerging-market countries, said after the meeting that this accord, which also includes regulatory reforms of financial institutions, "reflects a very high degree of consensus and agreement between all of us."

"Today the largest countries of the world have agreed on a global plan for economic recovery and reform," Brown said. The plan addresses two broad areas of concern raised by the United States and several European nations — more economic stimulus paired with more regulatory reform.

The London Summit Leaders' Statement calls for the following measures:

- More regulation of financial institutions, instruments and markets, including hedge funds, which are unregulated investment vehicles used by institutional investors and the wealthy.
- New principles on executive pay and compensation to avoid schemes that encourage excessive risk taking and reward failure.
- A new Financial Stability Board with a strengthened mandate that includes all G20 countries, Spain and the European

Commission to collaborate with the IMF and provide early warning of significant economic changes and financial risks that need to be addressed.

- Encouraging tax haven countries to comply with rules and regulations from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to fight money laundering and tax evasion, or face public condemnation and potential economic sanctions.
- After recovery occurs, encouraging commercial banks to build up more capital reserves during healthy economic times to act as a buffer against future economic downturns.
- Requiring credit rating agencies to adhere to an international code of good practices and eliminate conflicts of interest with other financial institutions to avoid providing unrealistic ratings of securities.
- Aggressively discouraging trade protectionism among nations, and remaining committed to reaching an ambitious and balanced conclusion to the international-trade-liberalizing Doha Development Round of trade negotiations, "which is urgently needed." Finishing work on the trade agreement could boost the global economy by at least \$150 billion annually, according to the statement.

"For the first time, we have a common approach to cleaning up banks around the world, to restructuring of the world financial system. We have maintained our commitment to help the world's poorest," Brown said at a news briefing. "This is a collective action of people around the world working at their best."

The G20 nations represent the world's most powerful economies, with 90 percent of the world's economic output, 80 percent of world trade and two-thirds of the world's population.

The full text of the leaders' statement is available on a G20 Summit Web site at <http://www.londonsummit.gov/>.



G20 leaders pose for a group photo at the G20 Summit in the Excel Center in London on April 2. (© AP Images)

Scholar Provides Insights on Social Work

Dr. Diana Pearce has spent her life working to understand poverty and its effects on women and families. She has set up programs that help U.S. government agencies provide help to the families who need it most and has trained social workers to deliver that help.

Now, with the support of the Fulbright Specialist program, she is bringing her experience helping women in the United States to helping women in Uzbekistan.

For three-and-a-half weeks in January and February, Pearce led seminars and worked with educators at the Institute of Culture in Tashkent and the State Universities of Samarkand and Fergana. Those institutions are developing programs in social work, where students learn to help families as they cope with poverty, domestic violence, health problems or other difficulties families may face. She offered perspectives on what social work is in the U.S., and what programs are available for families.

Pearce has been consulting with the Uzbek higher-education institutions since 2004, when the social work programs were beginning. These programs have been approved by the Uzbek Ministry of Higher Education and have received support from the Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children and the United Nations Children's Fund.

She returned in 2006, and notes that in February 2008, the first class of social workers graduated from the Institute of Culture. All of them are working in orphanages, which can serve as resource centers for the families of the children staying there.

"Part of what I'm trying to do here is to prepare people to be social workers, and to develop programs and support," said Pearce, who is a senior lecturer in social work at the University of Washington and director of the school's Center for Women's Welfare. "People are training to become leaders in establishing programs in social welfare."

Pearce's experience with Uzbekistan goes back more than a decade. She taught as a Fulbright professor at Tashkent State University and the University of World Economy in 1996-1997. She has written several academic articles on the state of women in Uzbekistan, including pieces on domestic violence and on women in higher education. She speaks some Uzbek, too: "I can get around," she said.

Pearce also sits on the Board of the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association. Among other projects, she helped establish an exchange focused on domestic violence issues, including visits with police and health workers.

She said she believes the difficulties women face in the United States and in Uzbekistan are very similar: Women in both countries are disproportionately affected by poverty; they may face domestic violence; they carry a heavier burden when relationships at home break down, she said.

These problems can manifest themselves differently in the two countries, she continued.

For example, domestic violence in the U.S. is most often perpetrated by a woman's husband or boyfriend, whereas in Uzbekistan abuse may stem from a mother-in-law. In the case of a divorce, a woman in the U.S. may be on her own to raise her children, whereas the additional burden in Uzbekistan may fall partly to the woman's parents if she returns home, Pearce noted.

For social workers, such differences in culture can present different challenges. In the U.S., for example, group homes where women may find shelter from domestic violence can serve as a center for receiving social services. In Uzbeki-



Fergana State University's teachers and students welcome Fulbright Specialist Diana Pearce. (U.S. Embassy photo)

stan, cultural norms may discourage women from leaving their homes to stay in such shelters, Pearce said.

"The dynamics are different, but the issues are similar," Pearce said. "Any place where women are not equal, they are disproportionately impacted."

The Fulbright Specialist program is organized through the Fulbright Commission and U.S. embassies around the world, including the Embassy in Tashkent. The program brings leading U.S. scholars and professionals to host nations, where they lead seminars, consult on curricula, establish contacts and take part in other academic and professional activities.

Please go to the website of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent at <http://uzbekistan.usembassy.gov/> to learn more about Fulbright programs.

NGOs Work Toward a Healthier Global Environment

Whether it's protection of endangered species, finding sustainable patterns of water use or simply thinking about where you throw your garbage, the first step in caring for the environment is getting people to think about it.

And two of the most effective ways of doing that are through stories in the mass media and teaching children in the schools about the environment.

The U.S. Embassy in Tashkent is supporting several programs in which Uzbek NGOs are working to raise environmental awareness among the population. The programs focus on training for journalists and offering young people fresh ways to learn about the environment. The NGOs work with state agencies such as the Uzbek Ministries of Education and Committee for the Protection of Nature to teach about environmental issues.

Leaders of the NGOs say that building awareness is the first step in protecting the environment and in addressing ecological problems as they emerge.

"The first thing in environmental protection is information," said Saidrasul Sanginov, the director of Logos, an environmental NGO founded in 2001 that has received embassy support for a program to encourage environmental journalism. "Our mission is to build a partnership with journalists."

Another of these ongoing programs is using an innovative way to teach students about the environment. Eko-Maktab, or "Eco-School," has trained 30 Tashkent-area teenagers in the basics of journalism and the environment. These budding journalists are now passing these skills along in classes at their schools – reaching about 1,200 other students, according to Natalia Shivaldova, the group's project director.

These students are then encouraged to go out and write articles about the environment. Eko-Maktab is now collecting these articles and working to place some of the best ones in youth-oriented newspapers and magazines, such as "Klass" and "Uzbekistan Youth," she said.

Eko-Maktab also is launching the journal "Young Ecologist," which will be an outlet for these young journalists' stories about the environment, she said. The NGO believes that stories written by young people for young people will make environmental issues more accessible.

This initiative for young journalists is just one of Eko-Maktab's programs. The NGO was founded in 2004 to improve environmental education in the Tashkent area. The group produces teaching materials and provides instruction for children and educators, including educational trips into nature. By expanding the children's knowledge of environmental matters, Eko-Maktab also hopes to reach parents and mahallah neighborhood organizations, Shivaldova said.

Sanginov's Logos NGO is also running another U.S.-supported environmental education program. Each year, the group



One of the projects at Eko-Maktab, or "Eco-School," is teaching young people to become environmental journalists. (U.S. Embassy photo)

holds the National Contest for Environmental Journalism. The contest attracts submissions from about 40 journalists from around Uzbekistan each year, and the winners sometimes go on to compete in contests throughout Central Asia, said Sanginov, a professor of philosophy at the Tashkent Information Technology University.

As part of the contest, the NGO also holds training seminars in environmental journalism. These seminars – most recently held in Nukus and Urgench – provide journalists with resources for finding information on the environment and skills to help them build stories, he said. The goal of the seminars and contest is to both improve the quality of reporting on environmental issues and to give incentive to journalists to approach these issues, Sanginov said.

"There are very few journalists here who can do environmental reporting," he said, adding that he thinks most editors have little interest in environmental stories, thinking their readers or viewers aren't interested. "They think it's not important; it's secondary."

Sanginov disagrees. The issues are not only important, they make for interesting pieces, he said. He points to last year's winner, "Alone with Nature," a video documentary by Sergei Shavlev that also won top prize at the Central Asian Festival of Environmental Journalism. The documentary covers issues in the Aidarkul-Arnasai lake system, an area of lakes and wetlands in Jizzakh Province that is particularly sensitive to changes in water level.

Other U.S.-supported environmental education programs include training about best practices in water usage from irrigation canals and publication of environmental materials for use in university curricula. Each of these programs works toward the embassy's goal of helping to improve environmental education in the country.

U.S. Embassy Staff Enjoy Kup Kari Tournament



U.S. Embassy staff and their families enjoyed watching the Spring Kup Kari tournament near the town of Piskent on March 29. (U.S. Embassy photo)

A group of about 30 diplomats, staff and their families from the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent spent a beautiful spring day watching the incredible horsemanship and athleticism of Kup Kari.

The annual Spring Kup Kari tournament held on March 28-29 near the city of Piskent outside of Tashkent featured teams from around the region. A crowd estimated at 2,000-3,000 brought picnic lunches, roasted shashlik (meat kabobs) and enjoyed the competition.

Kup Kari, also known as buzkashi, is a popular equestrian

sport in the nations of Central Asia. Teams of riders fight for possession of a goat or calf carcass, then carry it to a designated area of the field. They score by dropping the carcass within that area.

The sport demands great strength, agility, well-trained horses and courage. Kup Kari gets rough, as the horsemen battle for the carcass, often at a full pounding gallop.

U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan Richard Norland was among the visiting Americans, several of whom said they and their families had a great time.

"I was awed by the quality of the horsemanship – such a high level of professionalism reflects the deep roots of this game in Uzbek culture," Norland said.

Col. Jeffrey Hartman, the U.S. Defense Attaché in Uzbekistan, said he loved watching the horses, which seemed to enjoy the sport as much as the riders.

"It was fantastic!" said Hartman, who took his five children to the event. "They're horses with a rugby or football attitude," he said, referring to two of the rougher sports often played in the United States.

Nancy Ellrich, a nurse in the Medical Unit of the Embassy, said it was such a great experience partly because the sport is so different from anything played in the U.S.

"You could just feel the tradition, a really ancient tradition," she said. "There's really nothing like it."

American Competes in Uzbekistan Equestrian Championships

Alemka Berliner represented the United States in the Individual and Team Equestrian Sport Championship of Uzbekistan on April 4.

Berliner, the spouse of Foreign Service Officer Nicholas Berliner at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, placed fourth in the 115 cm jumping competition, in which she cleared all 10 obstacles without penalties. She was the only international competitor in the tournament, which served as a qualifying event for Central Asian regional and Asia-wide championships.

Berliner has been riding since she was 10 years old, but this was her first jumping competition. She has been training with Ibrahim Yuldashev, an internationally renowned equestrian trainer and competitor, who encouraged her to join the competition.

"This was a great opportunity, and the people at the hippo-

drome were very kind in giving me the chance to compete," she said. She rode "Block," the horse she has been riding at the hippodrome about twice a week.



Alemka Berliner and the horse "Block" clear an obstacle during the Individual and Team Equestrian Sport Championship of Uzbekistan. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Alex Ovechkin Leads New Wave of European Hockey Stars



Alex Ovechkin, left, jokes with teammate and countryman Alexander Semin during a team portrait session. (© AP Images)

Forget about the state of diplomatic relations between the United States and Russia. Much of Washington is wildly embracing Russians these days, specifically hockey superstar Alexander Ovechkin and his fellow Russian players on the Washington Capitals as they compete in the playoffs for the National Hockey League (NHL) championship, the coveted Stanley Cup.

THE “WASHINGTON RUSSIANS”

Ovechkin, born in Moscow and previously a star with Dynamo Moscow, “could be the seminal player of his generation,” according to a profile in the Washington Post newspaper. Only 23 years old, Ovechkin, nicknamed “Alexander the Great,” is already in a league of his own, winning hockey’s most valuable player (MVP) award in 2008 with 65 goals and a total of 112 points (goals and assists). He is one of the few players to record 200 goals and 200 assists in his first four NHL seasons.

The numbers don’t tell the whole story, however. Ovechkin’s creative shot making is a staple of hockey highlight films, including one instant-legend move in February “when he passed the puck to himself off the sideboards, made a spin move on a defenseman and then deposited the puck in the net from his hip while sliding on his side,” the Washington Post reported.

Ovechkin is one of a powerful lineup of Russian athletes playing for the Capitals this season. They include 39-year-old Sergei Federov, former star with the Soviet Red Army team, who holds the record for most NHL goals by a Russian-born player; another veteran, Viktor Kozlov; 25-year-old Alexander Semin from the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk; and rookie goalie sensation Simeon Varlamov.

Even more remarkable, perhaps, is that Ovechkin’s two main rivals for 2009 MVP are also Russians. Evgeni Malkin of the Pittsburgh Penguins, drafted by the NHL in 2004 with Ovechkin, led the league in total points and assists this year. “Malkin is a force of nature. Size, speed, hands, vision,

strength — he has it all,” said a commentator for the ESPN sports television network.

The third candidate for MVP honors is Pavel Datsyuk, 30, of the Detroit Red Wings, considered perhaps the best defensive forward in the game today, setting the season record in 2008 with 144 takeaways of the puck from his opponents. Datsyuk, born in Sverdlovsk, Russia, “is a special, special talent,” said his coach Mike Babcock to ESPN. “And his God-given ability is beyond scary, but it’s his strength and conditioning that allows him to do the things he does.”

HOCKEY AND GLOBAL COMPETITION

The number of Europeans playing in the NHL has declined in the last several years, especially for Russian-born players. One reason is a new requirement that foreign teams pay for the rights to acquire a player from the Russian professional leagues.

Without a formal transfer agreement with the Russian Ice Hockey Federation, the NHL has been reluctant to sign new players from Russia, according to news reports. The current global economic recession has also slowed progress on agreements between the NHL and European hockey federations.

The NHL drafted only nine Russian-born players in 2008, for example, compared to more than 30 each year from 2000 to 2003.

Another factor is the growing international competition in hockey from professional leagues in Russia and elsewhere in Europe. The new Russian-run Continental Hockey League, which replaced the Russian Super League in 2008, has been paying young players salaries comparable to those in the NHL and offering big bonuses to convince established Russian stars to return home.

“From my perspective, there is a competition between Russian clubs and the NHL for the best product on the ice,” hockey star Alexi Yashin told the New York Times newspaper. Yashin recently left the New York Islanders for the Lokomotiv team in remote Yaroslavl, Russia, which now has several former NHL players.

“Hockey is not just a sport, but a part of our great history, our national consciousness and a part of our pride,” said Russian official Sergei Naryshkin in the New York Times. Naryshkin sees professional hockey in Russia rivaling the NHL.

The NHL, for its part, remains confident that it can compete with European hockey for players and fans, according to NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly, who points to such stars as Ovechkin and Malkin.

The NHL plans to strengthen its international ties. The league has announced that it will send at least six teams to three European cities to launch the 2009–2010 season, ESPN reports. Possible sites include Berlin, Prague and Helsinki.

Karshi Welcomes Ambassador Norland

On March 17, Ambassador Norland visited Karshi in Kashkadarya Province for a series of meetings with local officials. First Deputy Hokim E. Mamadiyurov and other staff members from the Hokimiyat gave him a warm welcome and discussed conditions in the province.

Ambassador Norland also accompanied a Defense Threat Reduction Agency delegation led by Rear Admiral John Byrd (ret.) and Cooperative Threat Reduction Policy Director Jim Reid to the recently completed Karshi Joint Human/Veterinary Regional Diagnostic Laboratory. This laboratory was constructed in collaboration with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Biological Threat Reduction Program and is an excellent example of U.S.-Uzbek cooperation in countering the threats of bio-terrorism and bio-agent proliferation.

The students and teachers at the Nodirabegim elementary school in District 7 put on an impressive show to welcome the Ambassador. They took him on a tour of the school's grounds and classrooms, where students showcased their expertise in mathematics, geography, science, and other fields. Ambassador Norland delivered several boxes of books and posters to support the school's English language program.

Ambassador Norland then visited Karshi's NCO Academy, where U.S. army combat medics provided demonstrations to medics from Uzbekistan's Armed Forces on how to treat combat wounds. Ambassador Norland presented certificates to 30 medics.

This was the eleventh of Uzbekistan's fourteen administrative units that Ambassador Norland has visited since his arrival in Tashkent on September 13, 2007.



Ambassador Norland met students and teachers at the Nodirabegim elementary school in Karshi. (U.S. Embassy photo)



Embassy of the United States of America

3 Moyqorghon Street
5th Block, Yunusobod District
Tashkent, 100093
Republic of Uzbekistan

Phone: (+99871) 120-5450
Consular Section: (+99871) 120-4718, 120-4719
Fax: (+99871) 120-6302

Website: <http://uzbekistan.usembassy.gov>
Email: Tashkent-IRC@state.gov