



DO'STLIK



Issue 15

June 2010

In this issue:

Volunteers Plant Trees to Celebrate Earth Day..... 1

Ambassador Norland Speaks on Foreign Policy..... 1

Embassy Adopts Practices to Reduce Waste and Conserve Energy..... 3

Washington Muslims Promote Environmental Awareness 4

U.S. Helps Make Rare Afghan Documents Available Online..... 5

U.S. Ambassadors Visit Free Economic Zone in Navoi..... 6

Ambassador Visits Ancient Fortress and Holy Springs..... 7

The State of Florida..... 8

U.S. Scholar Speaks About U.S. Policy in Central Asia..... 12

Foreign Policy Expert Speaks on Events in Central Asia..... 13

U.S. Delegation Participates in ADB Conference..... 14

Global Economy Remains Fragile..... 15

Global U.S. Assistance Is Strategically Focused..... 16

Leaders Endorse Securing of All Nuclear Material by 2014..... 17

U.S. Grants Help Preserve Central Asian Cultures..... 18

U.S. Scholar Teaches Engineering Classes in Uzbekistan..... 20

English Language Fellow Takes Writing Methods on Tour 21

Soccer or Football?..... 22

Social Media Sites Open Access to Information About U.S...... 23

Author Presents Book About American Experiences to Ambassador..... 24

Volunteers Plant Trees to Celebrate Earth Day

More than 70 volunteers gathered in Seattle Peace Park on April 22 to plant young trees, enjoy artwork created by school children from around Uzbekistan and celebrate Earth Day 2010, the day commemorating the founding of the modern environmental movement in the United States 40 years ago.



The group planted juniper, meta sequoia, green ash, northern catalpa, and tulip trees, all of which are species native to North America that are well adapted to the climate of Central Asia. The choice of trees seemed appropriate to decorate the park that was created as part of the ongoing Tashkent-Seattle Sister City partnership, said Natalya Shivaldova, the project coordinator for the non-governmental group Eco-Maktab (Eco-School), which organized

Regional Environmental Officer Bruce Hudspeth gives a certificate and a gift to a student of School No. 47 in Paryariq District of Samarkand Oblast who participated in an Earth Day art competition. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Continued on next page

Ambassador Norland Speaks on Foreign Policy at Academy of State and Social Construction

U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland touched on a wide range of foreign policy and diplomatic issues April 1 during a speech and discussions with civil servants at the Academy of State and Social Construction.



The Academy -- which trains mid-level managers and senior officials of government offices in areas such as financial management, socio-economic processes, and management principles -- invited Norland to speak as part of an ongoing series of discussions with Ambassadors.

U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland (right) speaks with Dr. Saifiddin Juraev, the Deputy Director of the Academy of State and Social Construction, before the Ambassador's speech April 1, 2010. (U.S. Embassy photo)

In his speech on "American Foreign Policy and Diplomacy", Ambassador Norland spoke about the historic balance in U.S. foreign policy between isolationism on the one hand and interventionism on the other.

Continued on page 10

Volunteers Plant Trees to Celebrate Earth Day

Continued from front page

the event with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.

Eco-Maktab plans to bring groups of young people to the park to learn about the different types of trees and the environmental benefits of planting trees as part of the school's environmental education efforts, Shivaldova said.

Artwork depicting environmental themes was on display at Seattle Peace Park during the Earth Day celebration. Schoolchildren in Tashkent and Namangan, Samarkand, and Bukhara Regions created the drawings.

The Earth Day activities also included an exhibit of environmental-themed drawings by students in schools around Tashkent and in Namangan, Samarkand, and Bukhara Regions. About 230 students wrote essays and created the drawings as part of environmental education classes. The drawings included bright, beautiful pictures of farmers caring for animals, a pair of hands planting a flower, and a pastoral scene of a young woman in a meadow surrounded by butterflies. One picture showed the endangered saiga antelope, while another darker one showed a family of waterbirds trying to survive in a waterway polluted by a factory.

Earth Day and other environmental events are celebrated



Artwork depicting environmental themes was on display at Seattle Peace Park during the Earth Day celebration. Schoolchildren in Tashkent and Namangan, Samarkand, and Bukhara Regions created the drawings. (U.S. Embassy photo)

each year in Uzbekistan as a way of raising awareness about environmental issues, said Sergei Samoylov, a member of Uzbekistan's Parliament (Oliy Majlis) from the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan. He attended Thursday's Earth Day ceremonies.

“The most important thing is to get the widest pos-

sible segment of the public involved,” Samoylov said. “As government, we can make the policies and set the agenda, but without public support and understanding, it comes to nothing.”

Earth Day has been celebrated each year since 1970, when about 20 million people gathered in the U.S. to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment. Rising environmental awareness at that time led to the creation of the federal Environmental Protection Agency and later to landmark legislation like the Clean Air Act of 1970 and the Clean Water Act of 1972.

The success of those legislative actions, which continue to provide important environmental protections in the U.S., has led many to regard that first Earth Day as the



Group photo with students from School No. 5 in Payariq District of Samarkand Oblast who won Earth Day certificates and gifts. (U.S. Embassy photo)

start of the modern environmental movement.

The U.S. Government is currently addressing environmental concerns by pushing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, engaging in climate change negotiations, and helping to finance efforts to adapt to climate change, said Duane Butcher, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent. He also noted that the U.S. has supported many environmental projects around Uzbekistan.

“Our planet needs international dedication and commitment to preserve and protect the earth's resources – be it air water, plant, or animal,” he said during the Earth Day ceremony. “While we take time to recognize our achievements, we should not lose sight of the challenges that remain, and continue to build upon the legacy of the modern environmental movement started 40 years ago.”

Embassy Adopts Practices to Reduce Waste and Conserve Energy



The U.S. Embassy Tashkent's recycling and conservation initiatives are meant to raise awareness of environmentally friendly activities.

raise awareness of the steps that people and organizations can take to reduce their impact on the environment. Taken together, conservation and recycling will be important parts of the global efforts toward living on a cleaner, healthier planet.

“We’re trying to increase the level of awareness about environmental protection,” said Jeremiah Maurer, a member of the Green League.

“It’s an attempt to change minds and influence people’s way of thinking about the environment in the right direction,” he added.

The Green League was launched in April 2009 to reduce the environmental impact of the Embassy in Tashkent.

It began by recycling paper and cardboard products, and later expanded by adding receptacles to recycle glass and plastic products. Many American and local staff of the Embassy have begun to bring paper, glass, and plastic from home to recycle.

The Embassy now recycles about 4,000 pounds of paper and cardboard a month. The Green League has earned about \$1,500 so far from the recycling programs, and it has used that money to purchase energy-efficient light bulbs for the homes of American staff. These light bulbs use only 1/4 the electricity of regular light bulbs, saving the Embassy more money over time, Maurer said.

Other programs launched by the Green League in Tashkent include:

- A new system on the Embassy’s computer network that allows more than 150 terminals to shut down at night, saving electricity that had been wasted while the computers were not being used;

One year after its founding, the Green League of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent is now recycling more than two tons of waste each month, has implemented several programs to reduce energy consumption, and has changed the landscaping on part of the Embassy grounds to cut water use.

Each of the programs is meant to both further the conservation goals of the Embassy and to

- Reconfiguring the network to reduce the number of computer printers drawing power. Each printer is now used by more people, reducing the need for electricity and saving on ink that dries out before it is used;

- Parts of the Embassy grounds have new landscaping that replaces grass with gardens of rock and drought-tolerant plants, allowing the Embassy to save water;

- The Embassy is shifting from gas-powered lawnmowers to more efficient electric ones where feasible.

In March 2009, Ambassador Richard Norland agreed to include the Embassy in Tashkent in the League of Green Embassies. These Embassies – more than 30 around the world – have pledged to find ways to reduce their environmental impact. This is part of an effort to reduce Embassies’ energy consumption by 30 percent and water use by 16 percent by 2015.

The U.S. State Department is evaluating the water and energy use of 193 posts around the world and studying the feasibility of solar power and other projects. The U.S. Embassy in Geneva, Switzerland, for example, uses an array of solar panels on its walls and roof to power its operations.

“This is all part of a wider U.S. Government ‘green diplomacy’ initiative. I think just about everyone supports this, as long as it doesn’t interfere with their operations,”



In the last year, the Green League of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent has started several recycling and conservation programs, including landscaping part of the Embassy grounds with rocks and drought-resistant plants in an effort to save water. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Maurer said. “This is a way to make us think about our conservation efforts.”

Washington Muslims Promote Environmental Awareness

DC Green Muslims and local groups partner to protect the environment



Members of DC Green Muslims work to beautify a Washington park. (Photo courtesy of DC Green Muslims)

A recent series of record-breaking snowfalls in Washington has sparked debate among global climate change observers — both its believers and detractors — as to the extent of humanity's impact on the environment.

While the pundits debate, environmentally conscious Washington-area Muslims are promoting a message of environmental stewardship to both Muslims and non-Muslims in their community. As it turns out, a strong connection exists between Islam and protecting the Earth.

DC Green Muslims was born in October 2007 when a group of friends gathered for a vegetarian, environmentally friendly iftar. In the following months, the group held more environmentally friendly meals, attracting up to 150 people. Today, the group, which has a blog, is an active member of Washington's environmental awareness community.

But what is a green Muslim? "A green Muslim is someone who realizes that being aware of their impact on the Earth is something that is not a foreign concept to Islam but knows that it is rooted in Islam," Ryan Strom, an organizer with DC Green Muslims, said.

Strom said his loosely affiliated organization partners actively with other like-minded Washington-area groups dedicated to environmental preservation. DC Green Muslims has worked with Washington Parks and People to revitalize neglected parks and participated with Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light on a number of environmental programs.

In step with its community activities, DC Green Muslims also plans to work with Washington-area mosques to further educate Muslims about Islam's connection with environmental issues.

"We are hoping to hold environmental workshops for peo-

ple who give khutbas [sermons] in mosques," Strom said. "We are trying to outreach to community leaders at mosques in and around Washington, D.C., to get them to incorporate environmental stewardship from an Islamic perspective."

For green Muslims, environmental consciousness in Islam is rooted strongly in both the Quran and the hadith (tradition of the Prophet Mohammad). Among the Quranic concepts that support environmental protection is that of khalifa, or stewardship, and amana, or trust.

Environmentally aware Muslims cite a Quranic verse that says amana was offered to the heavens, the earth and the mountains. However, they refused to accept such a burden and it was transferred to humankind.

They propose that in this situation, humanity becomes a fulcrum for the Earth. If humanity is centered and whole, the Earth is balanced. But if humanity is not balanced — by harming the environment and not promoting social justice — corruption will spread on Earth.

A desire to protect and preserve their environment is not new among Muslim Americans.

In the late 1960s, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, currently a professor of Islamic studies at George Washington University, wrote *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man*. In his groundbreaking work, Nasr explored the consequences of the environmental crisis and called for a restoration of balance between humanity and nature.

In September 2007, Ibrahim Ramey of the Muslim American Society (MAS) joined thousands of people in the Climate Emergency Fast to bring awareness to the global environmental crisis. On his blog, entitled Ibrahim Abdil-Mu'id Ramey — Voice of Reason, Ramey encouraged Muslims to fast just days before Ramadan.

"I believe that this additional act of fasting is necessary because, as Muslims, we are called to pray for the well-being of all mankind, and if we pray for humanity, fasting is, indeed, our most powerful and sincere form of prayer," wrote Ramey, director of the MAS' Freedom Foundation Human Rights and Civil Rights Division in Washington. "Believe me when I say that the Earth itself is in crisis. Real crisis. And this crisis threatens the delicate balance of nature that sustains all life on the planet."

Whether Washington-based Muslim Americans are defending the Earth through prayer and fasting, authoring pioneering environmental awareness books or beautifying local parks, a common thread binds them all.

"At the core, our religion tells us that God has given us such a great natural resource, and it is our job to protect and maintain it," Strom said.

U.S. Helps Make Rare Afghan Documents Available Online

New York University's digital library preserves published Afghan history

Afghanistan's location at the center of land routes between Iran, China, Central Asia and South Asia places the country at a geographical crossroads, which has made for a turbulent, but rich, history.

While the stories date back centuries, the published record of Afghanistan's colorful past begins hundreds of years later, in 1870. It is this published history that the Afghanistan Digital Library at New York University (NYU) seeks to preserve and make accessible to all via the Internet. The library has worked to retrieve and restore the first 60 years of Afghan publishing, through 1930, and is continuing with more modern publications.

"The goal is fundamentally to make the published history of Afghanistan as visible as possible to the world," said Michael Stoller, director of collections and research services at NYU Libraries.

Established in 2003, the library archive to date contains more than 380 books, as well as documents and newspapers. Readers can view the text and artistic details of the materials by searching the library's Internet database. The project is sponsored by NYU Libraries and has received two funding grants from the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as support from several U.S.-based charitable foundations.

The library came to fruition after NYU professor Robert McChesney discovered that no major library in the world held much of Afghanistan's published work from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The library has succeeded in capturing a global audience, according to Stoller. "Scholars from all over the United States, Europe, South Asia and Afghanistan have approached us saying they know of materials we should know about," he said.

While an Internet connection provides full access to the library, the Afghanistan National Archives in Kabul also holds a DVD copy of the materials. In 2007, NYU Librarian for Middle Eastern Studies Peter Magierski, along with a digital library specialist and a conservator, traveled to Kabul to train the staff of the National Archives in modern conservation and digitization techniques, such as DVD preservation. Training the Afghan staff in preservation has paid off, as the laboratory in Kabul has added early imprints and documents not available outside of Afghanistan to its digital library, Magierski said.

RICH COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS COMPLEX PAST

Between contributions from private holders, some national libraries, and Afghanistan's own historical records, the Afghanistan Digital Library has amassed a comprehensive array of materials. Initially, library staff focused on digitizing "the great majority of what we know to exist from 1871 through 1930," Stoller said. This period includes Afghanistan's neutrality throughout World War I and its independence from the British Empire in 1919.

Among the noteworthy publications in the library are several newspapers. These selections include an 1873 issue of the first printed Afghan periodical, *Shams al-Nahar*. The site also boasts near complete collections of *Siraj al-Akhbar*, published between 1911 and 1918, and *Ittihad-i Islam*, circulated in Mazar-i-Sharif in the early 1920s.

Complementing the newspaper chronicles are several unique books from the early 20th century. *Siraj al-tawarikh* by Fayz Muhammad Katib is a "very important work for the history of Afghanistan," Magierski said; its three volumes, published 1913 to 1915, detail Afghan events from 1747 through 1896. A gazetteer, *Rahnama-yi Qataghan va Badakhshan*, describes the Qataghan and Badakhshan provinces through hand-colored pages and fold-out maps.

NYU Libraries also has an original copy of a map of Afghanistan, issued on October 29, 1898, by Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan, who ruled the country from 1880 to 1901. The map measures 6 feet by 6 feet (1.83 meters by 1.83 meters), and soon will be added to the digital collection. The amir distributed the map to all of his regional governors for posting in a public place "for the edification of his subjects," Magierski said. Abd al-Rahman Khan readily used the printing press to produce documents to train his administrative staff, instruct the armed forces and address issues of statehood and other matters of royal importance. The digital library houses several of his works.

Following in his father's footsteps, Amir Aman Allah Khan, Abd al-Rahman Khan's third son, relied on the printing press to bring order to his domain during his reign from 1919 to 1929. Aman Allah Khan issued hundreds of small decrees, called *nizamnamahs*, many of which NYU has digitized. "Our collection of *nizamnamahs* is probably [the] most complete [of] anywhere in the world," Magierski said.

With much of the published material from 1870 to 1930 safely preserved in the digital archive, the library is now focused on amassing and archiving publications from 1931 to 1950. According to Stoller, most post-1950 works are already available in libraries and pose copyright concerns since the rights must be obtained to use the materials. Still, Stoller said, "Our goal is to continue to expand the available body of material."

The Afghanistan Digital Library can be accessed at

<http://afghanistandl.nyu.edu/index.html>.



An image from the newspaper *Shams al-Nahar*; the first periodical published in Afghanistan in 1873. (Photo courtesy of Afghanistan Digital Library)

U.S. Ambassadors Visit Navoi Airport and Free Economic Zone

U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland and Kathleen Stephens, the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, recently visited the Navoi International Airport and adjacent Free Industrial Economic Zone to see for themselves the rapid expansion of the facilities and to explore opportunities for future business investment in the area.

The airport at Navoi is being converted into a primary inter-continental cargo transportation hub for Korean Air and other carriers, with state-of-the-art facilities set to open that will link air, railway, and road cargo distribution systems.

At the same time, the Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone (FIEZ) that was created by presidential decree in December 2008 has gone from being an idea on paper to becoming the foundation for a working industrial zone.

Both projects have great potential to spur economic development and are important components in strengthening commercial ties and expanding the transportation infrastructure that connects the nations of Central Asia with South Asia, Europe and the Far East.

“The U.S., South Korea and Uzbekistan share a common interest in promoting economic development and regional stability among all the states of Central Asia including Afghanistan,” said Ambassador Norland when asked why he wanted to visit the airport and FIEZ in Navoi.

“By working together, the three countries multiply their efforts and create new synergies that we hope will benefit the region and all parties concerned.”

On April 21, the two ambassadors visited the airport, where they met with representatives from Korean Air, which has been managing the airport since January 2009. There the ambassadors saw the newly expanded runway and upgraded control tower, along with the new freighter apron, fueling facilities and cargo terminal set to open in May.

The new cargo terminal will be able to handle up to 10 fully-loaded Boeing 747 freighters a day, according to information prepared by Korean Air and Uzbekistan Airways. The terminal includes loading areas for trucks and a railway line, making the facility a transit center for cargo being transported throughout the region.

“I was struck by how rapidly the vision of a transcontinental air cargo hub is taking shape – the new cargo terminal at Navoi Airport seems to have sprouted up overnight since my last visit only a few months ago,” Norland said.

The facilities are designed to turn the Navoi airport into a hub for cargo transport throughout Asia and Europe. Since 2009, the airport’s network has expanded to include flights to Bangkok, New Delhi, Mumbai, and Frankfurt. A map shows that the airport is within four hours of Dubai, Mos-

cow, and major cities in India, and about six hours from major cities in Europe, making the Navoi hub far closer to those commercial areas than Korean Air’s main cargo hub at Incheon International Airport near Seoul.

After the airport visit, the two ambassadors joined Naim Niyazov, the head of the Navoi office of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, Investment, and Trade, for a tour of the Navoi FIEZ, an ambitious project to attract foreign investment through tax incentives, simplified customs procedures, and relaxed foreign-labor requirements.

When Ambassador Norland first visited in May 2009, the FIEZ was still mostly an empty space where workers had recently installed gas and water lines.

On this visit, the newly built Uzbekneftegaz plant was producing polyethylene pipes, and construction was underway on six other factories. About 20 companies have signed up to do business in the FIEZ.



U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Kathleen Stephens (right, closest to screen) and U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan Richard Norland (to her left) meet with representatives of Korean Air and the Navoi International Airport during a visit to Navoi in April. (U.S. Embassy photo)

A subsidiary of U.S.-based General Motors has committed to investing in the FIEZ, and Norland said he sees that as a hopeful sign that other American investors will take greater interest in the months ahead.

“As always, American investors will want to be sure that the investment climate lends itself to success –and I believe over the long term, such a view is justified,” he said.

Ambassador Stephens and Ambassador Norland also visited the petro glyphs at Sarmysh Gorge outside Navoi, as well as Samarkand, Bukhara, and the mountains near Tashkent during Stephens’ stay in Uzbekistan. She met with Korean business leaders in Uzbekistan, representatives of the Korean Embassy and officials from Uzbekistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs during her visit.

Ambassador Visits Ancient Fortress and Holy Springs on Trip to Nurata and Lake Aiderkul



U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland (right) visits the ancient town of Nurata in Navoi Region. The town traces its history back to fortresses built by Alexander the Great in the Fourth Century B.C. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Taking advantage of the opportunity to travel across the great steppes of Central Asia, U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland and his wife, Mary Hartnett, recently drove to the ancient holy town of Nurata.

The road from Jizzakh to Nurata traversed the spectacular open plains for hundreds of kilometers, with a dramatic escarpment of mountains lining one side and endless steppe on the other. In the small town of Jangikishlak, an enterprising restaurant owner had placed an old car painted orange on top of a high pole outside his restaurant, attracting visitors from all around.

Nurata is a town of about 25,000 people situated in Navoi Region near where the western edge of the Gissaro Alai moun-



A bright orange car attracts visitors to a restaurant in the village of Jangikishlak. (U.S. Embassy photo)

tains tapers away into the expanse of the Kyzyl Kum desert. The town features two ancient mosques at the foot of a citadel built by Alexander the Great during his siege of Samarkand in the 4th Century B.C.

Part of the holy complex involves a remarkable phenomenon: An underground spring feeds a small well and larger pond in which thousands of fish (marinka) swim. The water is considered holy, and so are the fish, so they are untouched – indeed, they can be found swimming throughout the town's above-ground water distribution system linked to this holy spring.

“The site is one that no American visitor will ever forget,” Norland said.

About 50 kilometers from Nurata is the enormous Aiderkul Lake, whose clean water and empty, sandy beaches remind an American of the South Carolina coastline. The lake was formed in the 1960s from overflow from the Syr Darya River



Thousands of fish swim in the spring-fed well and pond of the Chashma (Tajik for “spring”) holy complex in Nurata. The water and fish are considered sacred. (U.S. Embassy photo)

and has become an important ecological site for migratory birds and wildlife.

Ambassador Norland stayed overnight in a yurt camp near the shore of Aiderkul and had the chance to explore the area on foot.

“The chance to spend the night in the yurt camp located near the village of Dongelek offered wonderful insights into the traditions of the nomadic people of that region,” Norland said.

Since his arrival in Uzbekistan in 2008, Ambassador Norland has visited all 14 administrative regions of Uzbekistan. His travels in Uzbekistan have ranged from archeological sites near Termez to the Uzbek mountain enclave of Shakhimardan and across the desert regions of Karakalpakstan.



The State of Florida - The Sunshine State



Florida is the southernmost state on the U.S. mainland. Its coasts are on the Gulf of Mexico, the Straits of Florida, and the Atlantic Ocean. The state is home to Disney World, Cypress Gardens, the wealth-laden resort of Palm Beach and the Okefenokee Swamp. The pleasant climate and proximity to the Caribbean and Latin America have attracted tourists, large populations of the elderly and immigrants.

Most of Florida is a peninsula - a long stretch of land surrounded by water on most sides. Its major natural features include the Florida Keys, a chain of coral and limestone islands, and important wetlands such as the Everglades and Big Cypress Swamp.

The state's climate is warm and sunny throughout the year. This led to the nickname "the Sunshine State", which was officially adopted in 1970.

PEOPLE

About 85 percent of the state's residents live in or near the metropolitan areas of Miami - Fort Lauderdale, Tampa - St. Petersburg - Clearwater, and Orlando. About seven percent of the population is Native American.

Refugees from Cuba and Haiti, and many retirees, have added to Florida's growing population. It has expanded sixfold since 1950 and is now the fourth most populous state in the country. This growth has put great pressure on the state's natural resources.

HISTORY

For thousands of years Native American people lived on the peninsula. Spaniards arrived in the 1500s, searching for gold and, possibly, the mythical fountain of youth. In 1513, Juan Ponce de Leon claimed the region for Spain. It was Ponce de Leon who named the area La Florida ("the flowery land"). Later, the explorer Hernando de Soto traveled up the pen-



A tourist on a beach in Key Biscayne, Florida, enjoys a sunny day. (© AP Images)

insula, becoming the first European to reach the Mississippi River in 1541.

There were many conflicts between the Spanish and the French, and later the English. Creek Native Americans sided with the English. Later they settled in Florida and became known as Seminoles. In 1763, Spain traded Florida to the English in exchange for Cuba. In 1783, it was traded back to Spain in exchange for the Bahamas, and finally transferred to



In this image released by Disney, Mickey and Minnie Mouse are decked out in their newest Halloween party wear in front of the Haunted Mansion at the Magic Kingdom in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. (© AP Images)

the United States in 1821. A war with the Seminoles followed from 1835 to 1842.

On March 3, 1845, Florida became the 27th state of the Union. It joined the Confederacy in 1861, but escaped most of the military action during the Civil War (1861-65). Florida was readmitted to the Union in 1868. Railroads aided the development of Florida in the 1880s, and it became a major center for agriculture, especially the growing of citrus fruits. By the 1920s the population of Florida had grown to over a million. Hotels were built, and scores of new cities were founded.

The first U.S. space satellite was launched from the missile base at Cape Canaveral in 1958. Since then the John F. Ken-



The space shuttle Discovery sits on launch pad 39A Friday, March 19, 2010, at Kennedy Space Center, Florida. (© AP Images)

Space Center at the cape has been the center of launch activities.

ECONOMY

Agriculture was the main industry in Florida for many years, but now makes up less than 2 percent of the goods produced. However, Florida remains the foremost U.S. producer of citrus fruit such as oranges. The climate, beaches, and attractions such as Walt Disney World have contributed to a massive increase in tourism. Important manufactured products include electronic and electrical goods and food, especially citrus products.

TOP TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Kennedy Space Center

NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center is located in Brevard County on Florida's east coast. It is one of ten NASA centers and serves as America's Spaceport. Each year, millions of visitors from across the world make the trek to this hub of technology and discovery, where many of mankind's greatest accomplishments take place. At Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, you get the unique chance to tour NASA's launch and landing facilities. Experience interactive simulators, live shows, and jaw-dropping encounters with massive rockets and have the opportunity to meet a real member of NASA's Astronaut Corps.

Walt Disney World

At over 8,000 hectares, Walt Disney World is not just the Happiest Place on Earth, but the largest theme park resort in the world. It includes four parks, two water parks, six golf courses, a number of hotels, numerous restaurants and even a mega-Disney entertainment district. Disney's life-sized characters, Magic Kingdom, Epcot Center, Animal Kingdom and lots of other attractions are there for visitors to see and enjoy throughout the year.

The Florida Aquarium

As aquariums go, The Florida Aquarium in Tampa is truly

one of the finest. This expansive facility boasts more than 18,580 square meters of exhibits and about 20,000 aquatic plants and animals from around the world, especially Florida. It opened in 1995 and last year welcomed a record 675,000 visitors.

Sources: <http://www.census.gov>
<http://www.flheritage.com>
<http://www.50states.com>
 The New York Times 2009 Almanac
 Grolier Student Encyclopedia, V.6
 Encyclopedia Americana, V.11



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

QUICK FACTS

Abbreviation: FL

Capital City: Tallahassee

Governor: Charlie Crist

Date of Statehood: March 3, 1845 (27th)

Population: 18,537,969 (4th highest, 2009 estimate)

Area: 151,670 sq. km, 22nd largest

Origin of State's Name: Named by Ponce de Leon in 1512, "la Florida," is Spanish for flowery, covered with flowers, or abounding in flowers

Largest Cities: Jacksonville, Miami, Tampa, Saint Petersburg, Hialeah, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, Tallahassee

Economy:

Agriculture: Citrus, vegetables, nursery stock, cattle, sugarcane, dairy products

Industry: Tourism, electric equipment, food processing, printing and publishing, transportation equipment, machinery

AMBASSADOR SPEAKS, continued from front page.

Each of these tendencies grows out of aspects of American history, he said, but in today's world of increasing globalization, it is making less sense to hold on to such a dichotomy.

"No country can truly be isolated and survive. And no country can take unilateral action in total disregard of the wishes of the international community," he said. "The broad swings in U.S. foreign policy between those two extremes are beginning to abate."

Interlinked economies and global challenges such as combating terrorism and addressing climate change are pushing nations to work together toward common solutions, he said.

The students asked a wide range of interesting and insightful questions about the U.S. perspective on economic relations between the two countries, the role of civil society in Uzbekistan, and the path forward in Afghanistan.

Norland spoke about the important role Uzbekistan is playing in the efforts to stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan, including its work on building transportation infrastructure and forming a link in supply lines. He emphasized that the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) of supplying materials to Afghanistan would provide economic opportunities in Uzbekistan, and that the transportation links through Afghanistan would be of enormous benefit in connecting the markets of Pakistan and India to the economies of Central Asia.

"The NDN has great economic potential," Norland said. "I believe this network, developing little-by-little, is very important to your future."

Ambassador Norland also spoke about the continuing progress being made in Uzbek-U.S. relations through the framework of the Annual Bilateral Consultations. The two nations are engaged in fruitful discussions in areas including trade and investment, military-technical cooperation, and academic exchanges, he said.

As part of that, the Academy of State and Social Construction expressed interest in exploring the possibility of short-term academic exchanges with American research centers.

The Academy, which falls under the Office of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, was founded in 1995 to train managers of local government offices (hokimiyat), ministries, and other public institutions to improve their professional backgrounds. Through classes that range from 5-day seminars to 12-month courses, the Academy helps prepare graduates to take on leading positions in the Government of Uzbekistan.

**AMBASSADOR RICHARD NORLAND'S
REMARKS TO ACADEMY OF STATE AND SOCIAL
CONSTRUCTION****American Foreign Policy and Diplomacy**

April 1, 2010

It is an honor for me to have this opportunity to address this distinguished group. I was asked to speak about the Foreign Policy and Diplomacy of the United States. Sometimes people confuse the two, as if foreign policy and diplomacy were the same thing. I congratulate you for distinguishing between them. Foreign policy is what a country tries to achieve in its relations with other countries; diplomacy is the art of how the country goes about doing this.

American foreign policy has historically swung between the extremes of narrow isolationism on the one hand, and an almost messianic interventionism on the other. This reflects the impulses which led to the creation of our country more than 200 years ago. As you know, America is a land of immigrants – except for the Native Americans, all Americans are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. Those immigrants were fleeing religious persecution, poverty or war in the Old World. They sought opportunity in the New World and believed that the best way to achieve prosperity and security was to leave the Old World and its troubles as far behind as possible. This led to an isolationist approach to foreign policy. Except for the treaties needed to consolidate U.S. territory or expand trade, we had as little to do as possible with the colonial powers of Europe or the countries of the Far East. America was slow to enter World War I and World War II, again reflecting this desire not to get entangled in the affairs of the Old World.

So, isolationism is one trend in our foreign policy. But interventionism is another. This reflects the view held by most Americans that the ideals which formed our nation – "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," as stated in our Declaration of Independence – are universal. Many actually believe that it would be morally wrong for us to just sit back and enjoy our wealth and prosperity – that we have a duty to share our good fortune and to make sure that others around the world can also enjoy freedom and democracy. Most countries now accept this, as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But on occasion throughout U.S. history, we can observe that in the name of liberty the United States intervened aggressively in certain situations, and the results were not always positive. Vietnam is now accepted as perhaps the best example of this phenomenon.

During the Cold War, American interventionism was strong. But this was because we believed it was necessary to protect our country and our allies from Soviet Communism which appeared determined to take over the world. The foreign policy doctrine of "Containment" defined by the great American diplomat, George Kennan, was intended to stand up to this aggression where necessary. At the same time, under Containment, we hoped that transparency and open communication about life in the West would ultimately bring down the bar-

riers that divided us. When the Berlin Wall fell, that is exactly what happened.

Many Americans believed that after the Cold War, we could return to isolationism, focusing on the social problems in our own country, on schools, on infrastructure and so forth. But when conflicts flared up in the Balkans, in East Timor, in Rwanda, in Somalia and elsewhere, people around the world and in the United States felt we could not ignore these problems. Usually under UN mandate, peacekeeping operations were authorized and the United States found itself deeply involved in trying to resolve these conflicts. The debate between those who wanted little to do with foreign involvement, and those who felt we had to intervene on moral and political grounds, grew very intense. Efforts to build the institutions of the United Nations to handle these situations also grew, but never fast enough to take care of the problem.

The events of September 11, 2001, brought this debate to a shocking end. Temporarily, at least, isolationist sentiment died. Americans were united in the belief that military force should be deployed to Afghanistan to end the Taliban regime that supported Al Qaeda's attack. This attitude carried over into Iraq. But, nine years later, we are realizing that military force alone will not end terrorism or bring stability to the region. President Obama is hearing calls from some supporters to bring our forces home and refocus on our own domestic problems, such as health care. American interventionism has reached its high point.

Now, to be clear, the U.S. has no intention of withdrawing all its forces from Afghanistan anytime soon, but the pullout of some combat forces is expected to begin in July 2011. How fast our forces withdraw will depend on conditions on the ground. Some forces will remain to train and advise Afghan security forces. We are not going to make the same mistake we did in the 1990's, of abandoning Afghanistan, because we do not want to have to return again. And we are fortunate that we are not in this alone – the support of partners like Uzbekistan is key.

In an age of increasing Globalization, it makes less and less sense to talk about "isolationism" and "interventionism." No country can truly be isolated and survive. And no country can take unilateral action in total disregard of the wishes of the international community. The United States, like most countries, recognizes this. The broad swings in U.S. foreign policy between these two extremes are beginning to abate. To be sure, there will always be those who call for the U.S. to withdraw from the world, just as there will always be those who try to remake the rest of the world in America's image. Neither approach is realistic. Economies and currencies are too interlinked. Common challenges such as climate change create incentives to work together. And common threats such as terrorism and extremism force us to find common solutions to bring senseless violence to an end.

Let me turn now to the subject of American diplomacy. By "diplomacy," I mean the tools by which we implement our foreign policy, and these encompass a broad range of instruments. Like

Uzbekistan, we negotiate basic agreements to guide relations between nations, both at a multilateral and a bilateral level. For example, we seek agreements to allow our companies to compete equally with other companies in the international market place, because we believe free and open economic competition is the engine of growth. We pursue negotiated settlements in the Middle East, Nagorno-Karabakh and many other places where U.S. interests are at stake. We seek to strengthen the UN and other multilateral organizations, so that nations do not have to work alone to solve the problems they face.

American diplomacy is not just a matter for the President and the Executive Branch. In our system, Congress plays a key role. It controls the budget, so it can control the number of diplomats we have, as well as the amount of money devoted to specific programs, such as aid programs, deliveries of military equipment, and so forth. Ethnic lobbies and think-tanks can often influence how Congress acts on specific issues. The U.S. Senate has the right to approve or disapprove U.S. Ambassadors nominated by the President. American diplomacy is somewhat unique, by the way, in terms of the high number of ambassadors who are not career diplomats but who have a connection to the President through party politics.

The core of any country's diplomacy, however, is its diplomats. Even in an age of e-mail, Internet and television, there is still an important place for inter-personal relations between representatives of various countries. I have found this is especially true here in Central Asia. Diplomacy means drinking tea. It means visas. It means student and faculty exchanges. But diplomats are also a part of history. Diplomats, with their experience and insights, must personally advise a nation's leaders on what course to pursue in relations with other countries.

In our system, diplomats are recruited through a written and an oral exam. They do not have to speak a foreign language when they are hired, because so many Americans, unfortunately, do not grow up speaking a language other than English. But they are required to learn a foreign language within a year or two in order to remain in the Foreign Service. In recent years, about half the people brought into the U.S. Foreign Service are women. Our diplomats have a voice in choosing their assignments, but not the final voice. Assignments usually last two or three years, which is shorter than some countries post their diplomats for.

Being a diplomat is one of the last of the "generalist" professions. American diplomats need to be able to engage successfully with counterparts from the political and economic world, but also the military, scientists, technicians, even religious figures and athletes. Their focus is as much on how to make our country's foreign policy reflect our people as it is on persuading colleagues to carry out U.S. foreign policy. And their focus is also on trying to understand what drives the people of other countries, particularly, these days, in the Muslim world.

I have spoken very generally about American foreign policy and diplomacy. I would be happy now to answer your questions as they relate to Uzbekistan specifically or to other aspects of American policy around the world.

U.S. Scholar Speaks About U.S. Policy in Central Asia

A top U.S. scholar on Central Asia recently spent 10 days in Uzbekistan leading seminars with university professors, government workers, and students about the current state of Uzbek-U.S. relations and the outlook for the future.

Dr. Roger Kangas is a professor at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies.

He has written books and dozens of articles on topics related to Central Asian policies and culture, ranging from national security strategies to the role of political parties in Uzbekistan and reports on Central Asian oil and gas production.

During his visit from March 4 to March 13, he gave presentations at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, the Academy of Statebuilding, the Institute of History, and the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies, as well as meeting with journalists, past participants in U.S. government-sponsored programs, and English-language groups such as the Chai Chat Club.

Throughout his visit, Kangas said one of his core messages was that the goal of the administration of President Barack Obama in Central Asia is similar to that of every other administration back to the early 1990s:

“Our goal is – still – to help Central Asian states become prosperous economies with stable governments. We want this to be a stable part of the world,” Kangas said.

The focus now is on pursuing specific, well defined projects that the U.S. and Uzbekistan can work on and accomplish as partners, he said. One example among many is the strengthening of the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), which supplies non-lethal goods for the security and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

The NDN is seen as a way of helping the U.S.-led efforts in Afghanistan while providing economic opportunities in Uzbekistan and throughout the region, he said.

“We see this as the beginning of a long process that will continue well after we're out of Afghanistan,” Kangas said.

“This is something that will really help integrate the economies in the region.”

Kangas said he believed the U.S. welcomed economic activity in Central Asia from countries such as Russia and China, as economic ties with various countries can spur growth and increase stability.

“This notion of us-versus-them – whether it's China or Russia or anyone else – I don't see it that way,” he said.

“If the Central Asian states can have diverse outlets for their products, that's perfect.”

Kangas' visit was sponsored by the U.S. State Department's U.S. Speaker and Specialist Program, which facilitates the travel of U.S. experts around the world to give lectures, lead workshops, and speak with the media on topics of U.S. foreign policy. The goal is to promote understanding of U.S. policies and the political, economic, and social contexts out of which they arise.

Kangas emphasized that he spoke as an independent observer, and that his views were not necessarily those of the U.S. government. He noted that the U.S. Speaker and



Dr. Roger Kangas, a professor at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., speaks about U.S. foreign policy in Central Asia during a Chai Chat presentation on March 12. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Specialist Program was meant to offer differing views on policy issues, and that this was consistent with the reality of American politics, which is a blend of many competing viewpoints and interests.

“A lot of voices in America speak to U.S. foreign policy,” he told his audiences.

“The goal is to make it one coherent engagement policy.”

Other visitors to Uzbekistan in recent years under the Speaker and Specialist Program include Dr. Philippa Strum of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Douglas Tookey, the deputy legislative counsel for the Legislature of the State of Oregon.

Foreign Policy Expert Speaks on Events in Central Asia



Dr. Thomas Graham speaks about U.S. foreign policy and Central Asia during a presentation April 16 at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent. (U.S. Embassy photo)

One of the United States' foremost experts on U.S. foreign policy regarding Russia and the nations of the former Soviet Union visited Uzbekistan in April to lead discussions with government officials, scholars, students and journalists.

Dr. Thomas Graham, the former U.S. National Security Council's Special Assistant to the President for Russia, visited Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan on his recent tour. In Uzbekistan, he met with groups at the Regional Policy Fund at the Academy of Statebuilding, the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies, the Center for Political Studies, the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, and at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.

Throughout the discussions, Graham emphasized that the system of international relations is in a period of transition. The United States is still a leading power, but its success is contingent more today than in the past upon cooperation with other countries and coalitions of nations, he said.

At the same time, what he called "global dynamism" is shifting from Europe to Asia, Graham said, which is raising the prominence of Central Asia as a region.

Graham said he believes the U.S. needs to articulate a comprehensive strategy for Central Asia that addresses a full range of issues including political and economic development and regional stability. "I think we have elements of a strategy now, but not a comprehensive strategy," Graham said. "And that's something that could be said of most anywhere in the world."

Graham's visit was sponsored by the U.S. State Department under its Speaker and Specialist program, which brings U.S. experts on foreign policy to exchange ideas with their counterparts in host countries. The goal is to build understanding of U.S. foreign policies and the po-

litical, economic, and social context out of which they arise. The speakers come from outside government and offer their own views on policy issues.

During the discussions, participants asked a range of questions about the U.S. perspectives on recent events in Kyrgyzstan, the climate for foreign investment in Uzbekistan, the relationship between the U.S. and Russia in Central Asia, and issues related to Afghanistan, among other topics.

Graham is currently a senior director with the Kissinger Associates consulting firm. He spent five years on the staff of the National Security Council, four years at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and almost 15 years as a Foreign Service Officer for the U.S. State Department.

THOMAS E. GRAHAM

Thomas Graham joined Kissinger Associates, Inc., and Kissinger McLarty Associates as a Senior Director in 2007. He was Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russia on the National Security Council Staff from March 2004-February 2007 and Director for Russian Affairs on the National Security Council Staff from June 2002-February 2004. During his five years on the National Security Council staff, he was a key White House interlocutor with the Putin government – making some seven trips to Russia in 2006 alone. From August 2001-May 2002, he served as the Associate Director of the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State.

From 1998-2001, Mr. Graham was a senior associate in the Russia/Eurasia program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. During this period, he was a frequent commentator on Russian affairs and U.S.-Russian relations. His articles have appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post, and Wall Street Journal, and in European and Russian publications.

From 1984-1998, he was a Foreign Service Officer. His assignments included two tours of duty at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, where he served as head of the political/internal unit and acting political counselor. Between tours in Moscow, he worked on Russian and Soviet affairs on the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State and as a policy assistant in the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy.

He is the author of *Russia's Decline and Uncertain Recovery* (2001) and co-author of *U.S.-Russian Relations at the Turn of the Century* (2000). Mr. Graham received a PH.D. in political science from Harvard University and a B.A. in Russian studies from Yale University.

U.S. Delegation Participates in ADB Conference



Ambassador Richard Norland and his wife Mary Hartnett host U.S. Assistant Secretary of Treasury Marisa Lago, Uzbekistan Senator Sadyq Safaev, Uzbekistan Deputy Minister of Finance Jamshid Kurchkarov, and U.S. Executive Director to the ADB Curtis Chin. (U.S. Embassy photo)

A delegation of more than a dozen U.S. Government officials came to Tashkent to participate in the 43rd annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which funds billions of dollars each year in economic development projects in Asia such as building schools, roads, railways, and providing loans to small business people.

The ADB's Annual Board of Governors' meeting was held May 3-4 in Tashkent, the first time it has been held in Central Asia. Participants including finance ministers, leaders of central banks, senior government officials, business people, academics and representatives of civil society organizations came to Tashkent for the meetings. Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov gave opening remarks May 3.

The U.S. delegation was led by Marisa Lago, the Treasury Department's Assistant Secretary for International Markets and Development. Curtis Chin, the U.S. Executive Director at the ADB, was also part of the delegation.

Along with participating in the meetings, members of the U.S. delegation visited schools and other projects supported by ADB loans and learned about various economic and trade initiatives in Uzbekistan, such as the expansion of the Navoi International Airport into a cargo hub. They also met with diplomats and finance officials from across the region to discuss issues ranging from upcoming Trade and Investment Framework negotiations to expanding infrastructure to better integrate Afghanistan with the nations of Central Asia.

The United States, after Japan, is the second largest stakeholder in the ADB. The U.S. holds a 15.57 percent stake of shares and 12.75 percent of its voting rights. The ADB, with the support of its 67 member nations, provided about \$16 billion in financing of economic development projects in 2009.

Uzbekistan recently secured about \$1.2 billion in financing from the ADB for projects to strengthen energy-sector infrastructure, road construction, improvements in water-resource

management, micro-financing and construction of a railway into northern Afghanistan.

The Asian Development Bank, based in Manila, Philippines, was founded in 1966 to provide financing for mostly public-sector development projects aimed at reducing poverty and improving the livelihood of the people of Asia. Most of its loans, many of which are offered at low interest rates to developing nations, go to infrastructure improvements, regional integration, finance sector and education projects.

ABOUT ADB

ADB is an international development finance institution whose mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people.



Headquartered in Manila, and established in 1966, ADB is owned and financed by its 67 members, of which 48 are from the region and 19 are from other parts of the globe.

ADB's main partners are governments, the private sector, non-government organizations, development agencies, community-based organizations, and foundations.

Under Strategy 2020, a long-term strategic framework adopted in 2008, ADB will follow three complementary strategic agendas: inclusive growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

In pursuing its vision, ADB's main instruments comprise loans, technical assistance, grants, advice, and knowledge.

Although most lending is in the public sector - and to governments - ADB also provides direct assistance to private enterprises of developing countries through equity investments, guarantees, and loans. In addition, its triple-A credit rating helps mobilize funds for development.

ADB Fast Facts

President: Haruhiko Kuroda
 Headquarters: Manila, Philippines
 Founded: 1966
 Members: 67
 Regional members: 48
 Nonregional members: 19
 Field offices: 27
 Total employees: 2,600+
 Nationalities employed: 55+
 Total loans in 2009: \$13.2 billion
 Total grants in 2009: \$1.1 billion
 Technical assistance in 2009: \$267.2 million

Global Economy Remains Fragile

President Obama and four other world leaders wrote an open letter to the members of the Group of 20 industrialized and developing economies warning that it is essential to follow through on reforms they promised at two recent summits, because the “recovery in the world economy remains fragile.”

“Current strains illustrate the continuing risks to global economic and financial stability,” the letter from the five members of the G20 steering group said.

“Without cooperative action to make the necessary adjustments to achieve [strong and sustainable growth], the risk of future crises and low growth will remain,” the leaders said in the March 29 letter. Copies were released in Washington and other world capitals.

The letter was signed by Obama, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, who form the steering group of future and past hosts of G20 summits.

The group of advanced and emerging economies met in London in April 2009 and then in Pittsburgh in September 2009 to plan financial reforms. The reforms are intended to steer the global economy away from the effects of cyclical swings from expansive growth to recession. The meetings came as the world was still reeling from the fallout of the worst recession since the 1930s.

Canada is hosting a G20 Summit in Toronto June 26–27, and South Korea will host a summit in Seoul November 11–12. A country that hosts a summit sets the agenda after consultations with other members.

Because of the recession that began in December 2007, G20 leaders opted to hold meetings twice a year to set goals and policies, and also to review efforts and share information on effective measures to resolve the global economic crisis.

G20 leaders have called for increased regulation of the financial, banking and investment sectors in an effort to rein in excessive risk taking and destabilizing market speculation.

G20 leaders have created a framework designed to shrink trade surpluses in export-rich countries such as China and boost savings in debt-laden nations including the United States. In an effort to balance the global economic system, the G20 agreed that member nations with sustained, significant deficits should undertake policies to support private savings and undertake fiscal consolidation while keeping markets open and strengthening export sectors.

G20 nations with sustained surpluses pledged to strengthen domestic sources of growth by increasing investment, reducing market distortions, boosting productivity, improving the social safety net for their citizens, and lifting constraints imposed on growth.



A Wall Street sign hangs in front of the American flag on the facade of the New York Stock Exchange in New York. President Obama called on the nation's financial industry to work with the government in crafting a new regulatory system to prevent serious economic crises in the future. (© AP Images)

In a speech last year on Wall Street, the president called on the nation's financial industry to work with him and Congress in crafting a new regulatory system to prevent a future economic catastrophe. Obama said the U.S. economy is beginning to return to normal as a result of interventions in the marketplace by the federal government. But he warned the financial sector that “normalcy cannot lead to complacency.”

“We need strong rules of the road to guard against the kind of systemic risks that we've seen,” Obama said.

“We will not go back to the days of reckless behavior and unchecked excess that was at the heart of this crisis, where too many were motivated only by the appetite for quick kills and bloated bonuses,” Obama said. “Those on Wall Street cannot resume taking risks without regard for consequences, and expect that next time, American taxpayers will be there to break their fall.”

The March 29 letter also addressed the long-stalled Doha trade-liberalization talks and the need to continue to resist protectionist pressures during times of economic stress.

“The G20 must go beyond merely advocating for trade and against protectionism. With regard to Doha, we need to determine whether we can achieve the greater level of ambition necessary to make an agreement feasible,” the letter said. The five G20 leaders said nations must reduce domestic trade barriers through bilateral and regional negotiations.

The G20 includes Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union, represented by its rotating presidency, is the 20th member of the group. The group's meetings also include representatives from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions and nongovernmental organizations.

Global U.S. Assistance Is Strategically Focused

The role of U.S. foreign assistance in improving global health, feeding the hungry, responding to climate change and providing humanitarian aid is to save lives and enhance livelihoods, but also to make people less vulnerable to poverty and the chaos that extreme poverty breeds, says Rajiv Shah, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

“Investment in development has never been more strategically important than it is today,” Shah said in prepared testimony at a congressional hearing March 3. “Helping nations to grow and prosper is not only the moral obligation of a great nation; it is also in our national interest.”



USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah. (© AP Images)

“The investments we make today are a bulwark against current and future threats — both seen and unseen — and a down payment for future peace and prosperity around the world,” he added.

Shah testified before the House of Representatives’ Foreign Affairs Committee on the proposed fiscal year 2011 State Department and USAID combined budget, focusing on the role of development assistance. The House committee and its counterpart in the Senate hold hearings on the proposed budget to determine if the agency’s request is in line with U.S. foreign policy objectives, and if the appropriation of federal funds serves the country’s best interests.

In accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2009, President Obama set the standard for U.S. foreign assistance when he said that “security does not exist when people do not have access to enough food, or clean water, or the medicine and shelter they need to survive,” Shah said in prepared testimony released by the committee. And Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said in defining U.S. objectives that development and diplomacy, along with defense, make up the foundation for the nation’s national security, he added.

Shah said that in the immediate aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Haiti, USAID provided a coordinated U.S. response along with other federal agencies and the military in support of the Haitian government’s efforts to provide as-

sistance for its people. “We worked collaboratively with the government of Haiti and a host of other governments, the United Nations, other international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and with thousands of generous and concerned individuals,” Shah said.

Shah said that building the capacity of countries to meet basic needs is what guides USAID. He cited three specific development priorities contained in its FY 2011 budget that contribute directly to U.S. national security:

- Securing critical front-line states — \$7.7 billion in State Department and USAID assistance to support U.S. development programs in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq.
- Meeting global challenges — \$14.6 billion in State and USAID assistance to support local and global efforts to resolve problems in global health, poverty reduction, natural and manmade disasters, and threats of instability from climate change and rapid population growth.
- Enhancing aid effectiveness and sustainability — \$1.7 billion to support the rebuilding of USAID personnel and agency infrastructure.

AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND IRAQ

“By far the largest component of our requested budget increase is dedicated to the critical states of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq,” Shah told the committee. The focus in Afghanistan in the past several years has been on greater stability and security, he said.

In 2002, 8 percent of the Afghan population had access to some form of health care, but by 2009 that number had risen to 84 percent, Shah said, because of USAID commitments. Under the Taliban regime about 900,000 boys and no girls were enrolled in schools, but as of 2009, more than 6 million children were enrolled in schools, and 35 percent were girls, he said, through USAID educational initiatives and support.

In Pakistan USAID and its partners helped expand educational opportunities, rebuilt schools and increased support for higher education, Shah said. USAID provided training for 10,852 health care providers, 82 percent of whom were women, and provided essential care to nearly 400,000 newborns.

Shah said USAID programs in Pakistan have helped generate 700,000 jobs in 2009, which includes training for more than 10,000 women in modern agricultural techniques.

In Iraq USAID has transitioned to a new phase in civilian assistance, shifting away from reconstruction toward bolstering local capacity that supports Iraqi priorities. “We are working in partnership with the government of Iraq, whose investment in their own development matches or exceeds at least 50 percent of U.S. foreign assistance funds,” he said.

Specific USAID work in Iraq is directed at economic development and strengthening the agricultural sector, which is the largest employer of Iraqis after the government, Shah said.

Global Leaders Endorse Securing of All Nuclear Material by 2014



President Obama says summit participants made "real progress" toward a safer world through their nuclear security commitments. (© AP Images)

Following two days of meetings in Washington, leaders from around the world agreed to take tangible and meaningful steps to secure the world's nuclear materials.

President Obama, who initiated the global effort in a speech in Prague in April 2009, called the collective agreement "a testament to what is possible" in multilateral partnership.

Speaking at the conclusion of the Nuclear Security Summit April 13, Obama said, "We have made real progress in building a safer world."

All the participating countries now have "a shared understanding of the risk" that nuclear materials could fall into the hands of terrorist organizations and be used to produce a weapon, he said.

The summit participants also endorsed the president's goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear material within four years, which Obama described as an ambitious goal, but one that can be achieved.

"The urgency of the threat and the catastrophic consequences of even a single act of nuclear terrorism demand an effort that is at once bold and pragmatic," he said.

The participating countries also unanimously reaffirmed their responsibility to safeguard and secure all nuclear materials and facilities under their control and committed themselves to "a sustained, effective program of international cooperation on national security," the president said.

"We call on other nations to join us," Obama said.

For its part, the United States will strengthen its own nuclear facilities and invite the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to review security measures. The president said the United States also has joined Canada's appeal for the international community to commit \$10 billion to strengthening nuclear security around the world.

The next Nuclear Security Summit will be held in Seoul in 2012, and the president thanked Korean President Lee Myung-bak for his country's willingness to host the gathering.

According to the text of the summit communiqué released April 13, all participating nations and international organizations agreed to a series of cooperative measures aimed at prioritizing the protection of nuclear material within their countries and in transport, and acknowledged the need to build greater capacity for nuclear security around the world.

The communiqué reaffirmed support for pre-existing international agreements dealing with the safety and handling of nuclear material. Along with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1540, which obliges countries to take effective measures against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the 1987 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) represents a legally binding instrument to protect nuclear material. It also establishes measures related to the prevention of outside seizure, the detection of material in transit and the punishment of nuclear material offenses.

The summit's April 13 work plan calls on more countries to ratify the CPPNM's 2005 amendment, which places legal requirements on signatories to protect their nuclear facilities and material and expands cooperation in recovering stolen material. The amendment, which the work plan describes as "vitally important for nuclear security," must be ratified by two-thirds of the 142 CPPNM signatories before going into force.

In addition, the participating nations cited the 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which the work plan describes as a key part of preventing terrorists from getting weapons of mass destruction as it offers definitions, identifies potential targets and specifies rules for extraditing or prosecuting violators.

The work plan encourages all participants to make use of resources provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including the agency's expertise on security capacity building, technical guidance and training programs.

In his remarks, President Obama said it had become clear during the summit discussions that "we do not need lots of new institutions and layers of bureaucracy."

Instead, the international community needs to "strengthen the institutions and partnerships that we already have and make them more effective," he said.

U.S. Grants Help Preserve Central Asian Cultures

Ambassadors Fund aids preservation of dance, architecture, music, books



Uzbekistan's Tamara Khanum House Museum was restored with help from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Each country of Central Asia possesses its own rich cultural history, from music to architecture to literature. Through partnerships with local institutions in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) supports several projects that preserve these national treasures for generations to come.

Since 2001, the fund has awarded grants to promote cultural preservation in countries around the world. Its recent contribution to preservation work in Central Asia ensures the longevity of a site sacred to multiple nationalities, and preserves oral traditions, near-extinct musical genres and a supply of rare written histories.

UZBEK DANCE AND WOMEN'S PROGRESS

“Suddenly from the wings in a velvet coat and soft high leather boots, straight across the stage there came a human vibrance like an electric magnet, instantly pulling the whole audience into the dynamic stride of her dancing feet,” was how American writer Langston Hughes described the first time he saw the Uzbek dancer Tamara Khanum on stage in Tashkent.

Khanum, a professional performer of traditional Uzbek dance, a genre that did not grace public stages until her talent and allure brought it to light, was captured in Hughes' 1934 essays “Tamara Khanum: Soviet Asia's Greatest Dancer” and “A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia.” Just as Hughes's poetry helped break down racial barriers in America, Khanum's courage to shed the traditional veil worn by women, and pioneer national dance as professional theater, forever changed Uzbekistan's artistic history and opened doors for its female citizens.

With support from an Ambassadors Fund grant, a museum in her name, the Tamara Khanum House Museum, has updated and expanded its offerings. The museum, created in 1994 in the part of the house Khanum lived in before her 1991 death,

displays a collection of Khanum's costumes, photos, memoirs and theater posters, as well as audio and visual materials documenting her life and career. The museum previously was unable to display all of its wares and protect them from deterioration because of a lack of funds.

Khanum, who was born in 1906 to an Armenian family, performed for nearly 70 years, touring and bringing Uzbek dance to new audiences in countries worldwide. She put a modern twist on the traditional dances, interpreting them in her own energetic style. According to Gulsum Khamraeva, director of the Tamara Khanum House Museum, Khanum would also learn a traditional song and dance for each country in which she performed, and she would request a costume from each host country to wear during her performance. By the end of her career, she had learned 86 dance numbers from different places.

With the AFCP grant, the museum has restored 75 of the 100 costumes in the collection; the dresses, shoes and accessories reflect the national styles of countries including Albania, Indonesia, Korea, and Bulgaria, among others.

A new exhibition presents hundreds of photographs that tell Khanum's life story and show how culture in Uzbekistan changed in her era. The display covers Khanum's days as a young dancer, to her performances with various musicians, to advertisements for her international performances. An audio tour is now available to museum visitors, with recordings in Uzbek, Russian and English.

The project included the creation of a Web site, <http://thanum.uz>, which provides background information and photos of Khanum.

MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS SITE IN TURKMENISTAN

Each August, Kazakh, Uzbek and Turkmen pilgrims journey to Ismamyt Ata, a monument in Dashoguz Velayat, Turkmenistan. The sole remains of a medieval town, the monument includes a 12th-century mausoleum adjacent to a 16th-century madrassah. The structure is unique in its design: a four-cupola gallery that connects to the eastern section of a seven-cupola gallery. Despite the traffic it still receives, the historic complex fell into disrepair. Severe winters slowly destroyed the mud brick walls and left decorative wooden carvings exposed to the elements.

In 2008, the Ambassadors Fund partnered with the Turkmenistan Institute of History to begin preservation and an archaeological survey of the site. AFCP funds have helped to bolster the local community's contributions that had spared the monument from complete destruction.

The restoration effort has included targeted excavation that has uncovered significant artifacts, as well as repair of the walls and interior of the burial vault and the main wing leading to the madrassah. The grant also supports the Institute of

History in holding educational workshops about the monument at local schools, and in designing and publishing a traveler's guide to the site in Turkmen, Russian and English.

By rehabilitating Ismamyt Ata, the Ambassadors Fund hopes to help the Turkmen people reclaim parts of their history and culture that were largely ignored during the Soviet period. According to the fund, publicity of the restoration project has the potential to draw many local and foreign visitors, thereby increasing regional awareness of Turkmenistan's architectural heritage.

MUSICAL HERITAGES OF TAJIKISTAN, KAZAKHSTAN

Nearly every steppingstone of a Tajik person's life proceeds with lyrical lilt, as the country's original music includes folk songs to narrate rituals and ceremonies, celebrate the seasons



The Ismamyt Ata monument in Turkmenistan is being restored with help from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation.

and agriculture, and mark every significant occasion on the human life cycle, including birth, circumcision, marriage and death.

From May 2009 through the end of March 2010, AFCP is collaborating with the Bactria Cultural Center in Dushanbe to document different genres of this folk music, including recording and filming performers. One result will be a CD and DVD of selected recordings.

To gather performance material, a team of experts is traveling to five regions of the country — Kulob, Khujand, Pamirs, Karatag and Rasht — to select the most authentic sources of traditional music available. This music today has a much stronger presence in rural areas than in urban centers, where modern “pop” productions of synthesizer-generated tunes pervade the airwaves and performance venues, and younger generations have less exposure to traditional genres.

By combining the music of several regions and making it widely available on CD and DVD, Bactria and AFCP hope to increase national appreciation for the various styles of traditional music available in Tajikistan. These genres are mainly played at family events, not in public spaces; therefore, before this initiative, each region's offerings tended to stay

within tight geographical boundaries since little communication exists between the musicians of different areas.

To overcome this isolation, Bactria will host the collected music and stories of the performers on its Web site. Schools and cultural centers throughout Tajikistan, as well as institutions focused on Central Asian culture throughout the world, will receive the CD and DVD. The project also provides for live concerts, master classes for musicians and music students, presentations, and school outreach programs.

Like Tajikistan, Kazakhstan enjoys a unique musical history. The nomadic Kazakh people shared music and musical poetry from generation to generation solely by word of mouth, leaving no written record. Much of the music was performed in improvised, call-and-response style competitions, called aytyses, in which two performers sound off against each other through song verses and instrumentals. With lyrics written in the Kazakh language, which fell out of favor during the Soviet period, the survival of this traditional music preserved the native language throughout the last century, according to the grant. As the master folk performers of this genre die, so too does the foundation of this musical heritage.

The AFCP grant is providing funds to support the Kazakh National Conservatory's efforts to preserve its collection of 9,000 hours of audio recordings of the traditional folk music. The collection currently consists of 3,600 magnetic cassette tapes and 5,000 vinyl records, all at risk of deterioration. The fund is helping to furnish the equipment and technicians needed to convert the music library to digital form, endowing it with longer life and the possibility of unlimited duplication. The project also provides for training of conservatory students in audio preservation and restoration, building local capacity for future preservation efforts.

After completion of the project in March 2010, the Conservatory's “Klassika” radio will broadcast the recordings via satellite to the general population.

RARE BOOKS IN KYRGYZSTAN

To ensure younger generations in Kyrgyzstan have access to the history and cultural heritage of their country, the Ambassadors Fund collaborated in 2008 and 2009 with the Library Information Consortium to preserve rare books. The materials for preservation came from several libraries throughout the country, including the National Library, the Central Library of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences, the Library of the Kyrgyz State National University, and the Issyk-Kul Regional Library. Converting the texts into digital type makes them available in the network of libraries and on the Internet so scientists, academics and students in Central Asia and abroad can explore their content.

As part of the project, the Library of the Academy of Sciences also trained employees in book restoration and created a center dedicated to the preservation of rare materials housed in libraries throughout Kyrgyzstan. The preservation effort ensures these books will not fall victim to destruction from temperature changes, humidity and sunlight.

U.S. Fulbright Scholar Teaches Engineering Classes in Uzbekistan



Dr. Thomas Bon (holding vase) has his picture taken with students and colleagues who took part in engineering seminars he led in 2008 in Tashkent. (Photo courtesy of Thomas Bon)

A U.S. professor of agricultural and biosystems engineering is teaching classes for faculty members and graduate students at two Tashkent universities that train the next generation of leaders in the agriculture industry.

Dr. Thomas Bon is a senior lecturer at North Dakota State University (NDSU). He came to Uzbekistan on the Fulbright U.S. Scholars program to teach engineering classes for five months at the Tashkent State Agrarian University (TSAU) and the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration (TIIM).

Bon will teach engineering courses on instrumentation and measurements, fluid power systems such as hydraulic and pneumatic systems, microcontroller systems, and computer-assisted design topics. The classes, geared toward instructors and graduate students as well as advanced undergraduate students, use computer software that is a common tool for businesses involved in agriculture and engineering. The coursework mirrors classes that Bon teaches at NDSU, where in 2005 he was named the College of Engineering and Architecture's "Teacher of the Year."

"I pride myself on being fairly practical," Bon said, adding that his students regularly find jobs with companies that build machinery or irrigation systems, or as managers in agricultural businesses.

The Fulbright programs are the U.S. State Department's premier higher education exchange programs. Every year, thousands of students and scholars from around the world study in the U.S. through the program, and U.S. students and professors have the chance to teach and learn in host countries.

Bon is the first U.S. Fulbright Scholar to come to Uzbekistan since the 2005-2006 academic year. The Government of Uzbekistan has expressed interest in welcoming more Fulbright Scholars in the coming years, indicating that 34 universities and institutes throughout Uzbekistan would like to host scholars in English language studies and many technical fields such as infor-

mation technology, architecture, agriculture, and engineering. Six prominent scholars from Uzbekistan are currently teaching and doing research at American universities and research centers on the Fulbright Program. They are at institutions such as the prestigious Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University in New York and the University of Nebraska.

Carrie Lee, the Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, said she was pleased that Bon had arrived to start his program, and that she hoped more U.S. Fulbright scholars would come to Uzbekistan.

"These faculty exchanges benefit students and scholars on both sides by facilitating the exchange of ideas, broadening areas of cooperation, and establishing long-standing connections in fields of mutual interest," she said. "The Fulbright Scholar program is especially significant because of the high level of academic professionals that it attracts, allowing pre-eminent Uzbek scholars to go to the United States and vice versa."

Bon said the software and educational materials he brought with him would remain at the host institutions in Uzbekistan, where it would be available for future students to use. The coursework in Tashkent is geared toward strengthening the cadre of teachers from whom students will learn about the engineering topics.

"What I really want to get out of this is to have some professors and graduate students who will learn to apply and use this technology," Bon said. "I hope they will feel comfortable with using it in their curriculum after I'm gone."

He also said he hoped to develop memoranda of understanding between North Dakota State University and TSAU and TIIM to facilitate further academic exchanges. He said he would watch for opportunities to build links between the universities and agricultural machinery manufacturers such as John Deere and Case New Holland, which builds tractors and cotton pickers at a factory in Tashkent. Such links could facilitate student internships at the companies, he said.

Bon will also try to recruit engineers from Uzbekistan to join professional organizations like the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE), which has about 9,000 members in 100 countries. Membership in ASABE provides access to professional materials, the opportunity to publish in professional journals, and a network of colleagues in engineering fields, he added.

Bon taught short seminars on engineering topics in Tashkent in 2007 and 2008, and that experience got him interested in coming back for a longer stay, he said.

"I came with an open mind, met a couple of people, and maintained the contacts," Bon said shortly after he arrived in Uzbekistan. "I'm very excited about this opportunity."

English Language Fellow Takes Writing Methods on Tour of Uzbekistan

English Language Fellow Dennis Johnson has spent the spring criss-crossing Uzbekistan – making stops from Andijan to Nukus, Tashkent to Karshi – introducing English professors to a new approach to teaching writing.

For the last two years, Johnson has been an English Language Fellow at the Institute for English Language Teacher Education (IELTE) at the Uzbek State University of World Languages, where he has taught numerous courses and helped his colleagues design and develop materials for a series of four writing courses.

Johnson emphasizes the role of process in the teaching of writing, and he says that students need to take their compositions through several drafts and receive feedback from their teachers and from other students as they work to complete their writing assignments. Thus, helping students develop a productive writing process is at the heart of the new writing curriculum.



English Language Fellow Dennis Johnson leads a seminar on teaching writing skills with English teachers in Angren. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Since February, Johnson has offered many seminars on this process-oriented approach. He has visited universities and institutes all over Uzbekistan and worked with hundreds of English teachers. These seminars have taken him to Jizzakh, Angren, Samarkand, Karshi, Namangan, Andijan, Bukhara, Urgench, and Nukus, and he hopes to finish his tour in Termez. At each stop, the teachers have received information about the new writing curriculum at IELTE and some of the materials that Johnson and his colleagues developed.

“With these 8-hour and 12-hour programs, I’m trying to introduce university teachers to the art of teaching composition. I’m giving them the basic concepts and materials they need to start teaching composition in a different way,” Johnson said.

He hopes that after participating in his workshops, teachers have a better understanding of what composition is and how

they might more effectively teach it. Most of all, he hopes that they will try to use the many concepts and materials he has shared with them.

Many students, Johnson said, have a very unproductive personal writing process: when they get a writing assignment, they wait until the last minute, and then crank something out as fast as possible. In their haste, they usually make many mistakes, and the quality of their work suffers.

The traditional product-oriented approach to teaching composition does nothing to change this type of behavior. But when teachers use a process-oriented approach, their students write several drafts of the assignment and improve their compositions step by step. Students have time to develop their ideas, and they learn to solve problems as they revise their work.

Johnson talks about the impact that the two different approaches can have on a student with weak writing skills. If her teacher is using a product-oriented approach, the student will probably receive a low grade on the assignment, learn little from it, and continue to think she’s a terrible writer. But if her teacher’s approach is process-oriented, she will have the chance to work on her assignment and to improve it with the help of her teacher and peers. In the end, she will come away with two things—a grade that reflects her true ability if she makes an effort, and the feeling that she is a successful learner and can become a skillful writer.

In the seminars, Johnson and the English teachers consider an essay’s many facets: its purpose and intended audience; its thesis and the development of supporting ideas. He and the teachers go far beyond the grammatical elements of composition and talk about ways of helping students find and develop the ideas that go into their essay. They also talk about how to change negative attitudes toward writing and create a classroom environment that is positive and encouraging.

During his travels for the seminars, Johnson has stayed with some host families and been to many places that few foreign visitors ever see. He spoke about the enthusiasm of the teachers in Angren and Namangan and Urgench, about how excited he was to get the chance to teach in Karshi, and of the heart-warming welcome he received when he visited a school in a village near Andijan.

“It has been incredible, an absolutely incredible experience for me,” he said. “It’s a genuine pleasure to share the knowledge I’ve gained over the years.”

The U.S. Embassy in Tashkent has sponsored several English Language Fellows in the years since Uzbekistan’s independence, but Johnson was the first since 2005. Two new English Language Fellows – one to be hosted by IELTE in Tashkent and the other by Urgench State University – are scheduled to arrive for the 2010-2011 academic year. Johnson said he was certain that these new EL Fellows will have an unforgettable experience.

Soccer or Football? Americans Love the Game No Matter the Name

Big football summer prompts the question, why "soccer?"



African influences highlight the closing ceremony held before the 2009 Confederations Cup final between the U.S. and Brazil. (© AP Images)

The world's biggest football tournament begins in South Africa in June. This quadrennial event often makes people wonder why many in the United States call the world's most popular sport soccer, rather than football.

In fact, soccer is the word for football in several countries around the world. Canada, Australia, World Cup host South Africa and 2002 co-host Japan all use the term to varying degrees:

- Canada has the Canadian Soccer Association.
- Australia's national team nickname is the Socceroos.
- South Africa's top league is the Premier Soccer League.
- Japan has the Japan Soccer Association, as it's known in Japanese, although it's translated as Football Association in English.



Italy's Gianluca Zambrotta challenges for the ball with USA's Landon Donovan, right, during their World Cup Group E soccer match in Kaiserslautern, Germany, June 17, 2006. (© AP Images)

nese, although it's translated as Football Association in English.

And despite common perceptions, the word soccer is not American at all. The term comes from Great Britain, where "association football" was the common label starting in 1863. England, widely credited with inventing the game, formed its Football Association (FA) to govern the game and institutionalize rules. Association football distinguished itself from rugby football, another popular sport, through its use of dribbling with the feet. At the time, a game of rugby football was called "rugger." To differentiate between the two, association football became



United States team runs down field as fans celebrate after the U.S. scored their first goal during the first half of a FIFA World Cup qualifying soccer match in Sandy, Utah, Saturday, Sept. 5, 2009. (© AP Images)

known as "soccer," an abbreviation of "association."

As large numbers of immigrants from Great Britain arrived in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they brought the soccer nickname with them. The label was useful once American gridiron football gained popularity.

Today, the U.S. Soccer Federation governs the game in the United States. This name, however, was changed from "U.S. Soccer Football Association" in 1974. That name itself was changed in 1945 from "U.S. Football Association," which the organization was named at its birth in 1913.

Confused? Who wouldn't be? But no matter the name, Americans love the game — in fact, the U.S. organization was among the earliest to affiliate with the game's international governing body, FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association, or International Federation of Association Football).

And U.S. fans are already excited that the 2010 event in South Africa will be the sixth straight World Cup appearance for the U.S. Men's National Team. The team will face England, Algeria and Slovenia in the first round, which begins June 12.

Social Media Sites Open Access to Information About U.S.

Around the world, the number of fans of U.S. Embassy Facebook pages has been growing rapidly in recent months as more and more people learn how they can use it to access information and meet others interested in the United States. This has been the case in Uzbekistan, too.

Facebook is the leading social media site in the U.S., and it hosts a vast array of online communities. Fans of Embassy Facebook pages can access news about a U.S. Embassy's activities in various countries including Uzbekistan, join online discussion forums, register for Embassy events such as Chai Chats, make appointments at the Information Resource Center (IRC), and meet others with an interest in the United States. Membership in Facebook is free of charge.

More and more people from Uzbekistan's regions have been using the Facebook page, and in the last six months the fan base has grown substantially. That rapid growth, along with the quality of users' comments, indicates that the social media page has great potential to continue growing and to become an important source of information for many people in Uzbekistan.

"We can see more comments now, and they are quality comments," U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Molly Stephenson said. "There are many questions, and it has become a real source for exchanging information."

The Facebook page is just one of several new and expanding electronic media geared toward people in Central Asia and the Russian-speaking world who are interested in American education and culture. These include the U.S. State Department's Russian Language Forum About the U.S.A. Facebook page, the State Department's Global Alumni Community website, and the updated global Educational Advising website.

The U.S. State Department launched the Russian Language Forum About the U.S.A. Facebook page in December, and it already has drawn nearly 4,500 fans. In recent weeks, the page has had interesting and open discussions on topics ranging from the Obama Administration's strategy in Afghanistan to adoption of children and education in America. The site has attracted many users from Russia, the U.S., Ukraine and other countries, and users in Central Asia are also welcome.

The State Department's Global Alumni Community is a newly launched website that allows previous participants in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs around the world to trade ideas, maintain contacts, and gain access to a range of news outlets free of charge.

"It's just a great resource and tool for our alumni to interact with their peers. This is where we like to direct people," said Carrie Lee, the Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent. She added that the new Global Alumni Community has much more information and tools than earlier alumni web sites.

<http://www.facebook.com/usdos.uzbekistan>

The Education USA website has recently been updated to provide more tools for students and scholars around the world to learn about studying in the United States. The website offers a look at what is going on in Education USA centers around the world, including the Educational Advising Center (EAC) at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.

The updated website has more information about testing centers, information about upcoming events such as education fairs and seminars, and links to news about education in the U.S. It also has information about the EAC in Uzbekistan, which offers a range of free services such as consultations and access to reference materials about studying in the United States. The sections of the website about Uzbekistan are in English and Uzbek.

"This is a really good website for international students because it gives advice on how to apply to U.S. colleges and universities," said PAO Stephenson. She added that many students have contacted the EAC after learning about it through the Education USA website.

Each of these social and electronic media sites are meant to use the latest forms of communication to improve access to the information that people want about programs in the United States.

Author Presents Book About American Experiences to Ambassador

Prominent Uzbek author Dadakhon Nuriy met with U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland recently and presented him a signed copy of his new book, *Niqobsiz Amerika* (Unmasked America), which details Nuriy's experiences during a six-month visit to the United States.

The 728-page book, published in Uzbek, is a wide-ranging account of the people Nuriy met and the places he visited as he traveled in 2009 through New York, Washington, and many other places. Through fictional stories, non-fiction pieces, and letters he sent to friends and family in Uzbekistan, Nuriy covers topics ranging from the experiences of Uzbeks living in America to the struggles of the automobile industry and the impact of the September 11, 2001, acts of terrorism. He writes about hurricanes, Native Americans, the skyscrapers in Chicago, farmers, the American education and medical systems, libraries, and policies under the administration of President Barack Obama.

"It is both fiction and non-fiction writing, but I wanted it to be artistic and literary, and based on facts," Nuriy said, adding that parts of the book had been in the works for more than 20 years. "It should be enjoyable to read."

Nuriy said he hoped the book would help to dispel misperceptions about America that he believes have circulated in Central Asia for 100 years. He said he had received feedback from many literary friends and officials of the Government of Uzbekistan, who told him they found it an interesting and insightful book about America.

He has held generally positive views toward America since he was a student of the writer and teacher Abdulla Qahhor



Author Dadakhon Nuriy (right) presents U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland with a painting and his latest book, "Unmasked America", about his impressions of the United States. (U.S. Embassy photo)

(1907-1968), who "discovered America for Uzbek writers," Nuriy said.

Nuriy is the author of about 10 books and is a past recipient of the Oybek Literary Prize. He has written other travelogues in the past, offering descriptions of some of the most interesting places in Uzbekistan, India and Sri Lanka. As a gifted painter and scholar of folklore, Nuriy brings an enthusiasm for detail and historical context to his writings.

Along with the copy of *Unmasked America*, Nuriy also presented Ambassador Norland with a painting he made of an Uzbek madrassah.



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