



DO'STLIK



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In this issue:

Brazzaville Visits Central Asia... 1

Assistant Secretary Blake Travels to Uzbekistan.....1

Yulduz Usmonova Sings for Peace and Unity3

Joint Special Operations University Conducts Seminar for Uzbek Officials.....4

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service Conducts Training in Uzbekistan.....5

American Military Commander Visits Tashkent Museums.....5

Obama Reaches Out to Muslim World.....6

Snapshots of the Muslim World...7

The State of Indiana.....8

Assistant Secretary Blake on Central Asia Consultations..... 10

American Expert Speaks to Uzbek Journalists, Students and Officials.....12

State Department's Program Welcomes Foreign Journalists... 13

Dazzling Designs Woven into Central Asia's Past..... 14

U.S. Forest Service Working to Support Central Asian Biodiversity.....15

Virtual School Helps Students Worldwide.....16

Entrepreneurs Launch Novel Online Ventures..... 17

JFDP Alumni Reflect on Their Experiences at U.S. Universities.....18

PEPFAR Showing Greater Effectiveness, Efficiency Against HIV/AIDS20

Global Polio Eradication Is Within Reach, Special Envoy Says.....21

No Major Foreign Policy Shift After U.S. Midterm Election.....22

American Film Festival Attracts Large Audiences.....24

Alternative Rock Band Brazzaville Visits Central Asia



Brazzaville displays its musical talent in front of Kalta Minor minaret in Khiva. (U.S. Embassy photo)

On September 6, 2010, the American band “Brazzaville” arrived in Uzbekistan as part of a tour of Central Asia and the Caucasus organized through the Performing Arts Initiative Program.

Founder, lead vocalist, and songwriter David Brown performed with his crew in Khiva, Charvak, Samarkand, and Tashkent, finish-

ing the Uzbek leg of the tour with an interview at a local radio station and reception at the Ambassador’s residence.

Brazzaville was formed in 1997 by American David Brown, and mixes independent rock with bossa nova and other multicultural

Continued on page 2

Assistant Secretary Robert Travels to Uzbekistan

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake visited Uzbekistan November 9-10, 2010.

Assistant Secretary Blake’s visit to Uzbekistan is his third since taking up his current position. In Tashkent, Assistant Secretary Blake met with government officials to discuss a range of issues of mutual interests, including in the security,

political, economic and human dimensions of the U.S.-Uzbekistan relationship.

He also met with Voice of America reporter Abdumalik Boboyev to discuss his ongoing case.



Robert Blake, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs. (State Dept photo)

Alternative Rock Band Brazzaville Visits Central Asia



Brazzaville rocks Tashkent's Turkestan Hall in front of thousands. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Continued from front page.

overtones to create a unique sound that hasn't been heard in Central Asia. Currently based in Barcelona, Spain, Brown tours worldwide and collaborates with a large number of talented musicians in the U.S., Europe, and Russia.

The band has previously performed concerts in Russia and Kazakhstan, but this year visited Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmeni-



David Brown from Brazzaville plays for the audience at Charvak Resort in Tashkent Region. (U.S. Embassy photo)

stan, and Uzbekistan for the first time in addition to returning to Kazakhstan. According to Brown, they were the first Western band to perform in Turkmenistan since the fall of the Soviet Union, putting on concerts in Ashgabat and Mary.

In Khiva, the band performed at sunset against the backdrop of the unfinished Kalta Minor minaret. In Samarkand, they displayed their talent before a massive crowd of elated youths, while in Charvak they were able to relax in the mountains and perform on a beautiful evening by the reservoir. The performances were unforgettable, and the Turkestan Hall concert in Tashkent on September 9 was, according to singer David Brown, "pure magic." Along with an enjoyable outdoor evening reception in their honor, including Uzbek music and dancing, the concert

was a fitting end to their tour through Uzbekistan.

Not only did Brazzaville have the opportunity to learn about Central Asian music and traditions, as well as seeing some of its most spectacular sites, they were able to share something unique with the people of Uzbekistan.

Brazzaville currently has seven albums released on different labels spanning from 1998 through 2008. Anyone interested in more information about the band, its mission, and its music, can visit the website at <http://www.brazzaville-band.com/>.



The band improvises with Uzbek musicians during a concert. (U.S. Embassy photo)

The Performing Arts Initiative is a program run by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs that seeks to foster mutual understanding and respect through the arts and music. The program provides funding for U.S. Embassies abroad to organize and sponsor visiting artists and musicians. Anyone interested in more information about the initiative can visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/cultural/performing-arts-initiative.html>.



David Brown and his band perform for a huge crowd of enthusiastic youth in Samarkand. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Uzbek Star Yulduz Usmonova Sings for Peace and Unity



Yulduz Usmonova performs at the U.S. Embassy in observance of the Daniel Pearl World Music Days. (U.S. Embassy photo)

In observance of the Daniel Pearl World Music Days, Uzbek star Yulduz Usmonova performed for a crowd of around 600 people at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent on October 1, 2010.

The concert opened with Public Affairs Officer (PAO) Molly Stephenson's remarks, which highlighted how the audience was "joining thousands of people around the world united in the hope that -- through the power



Public Affairs Officer Molly Stephenson opens the Daniel Pearl World Music Days concert. (U.S. Embassy photo)

of music -- they can respect differences, reach out in friendship, and diminish hatred."

The concert lasted for over two hours and included dazzling performances by a leading Uzbek Dance group "Ofarin." The crowd didn't want the energizing concert to end.

The Daniel Pearl World Music Days is a global network of musical events held throughout the month of Octo-

ber -- the month of Daniel's birth -- to promote tolerance and understanding through the universal language of music.

The concert attracted a diverse crowd, many of whom visited the U.S. Embassy for the first time, from very young children to grandmothers and grandfathers. Some people travelled from remote regions of Uzbekistan just to attend the concert.

Many people present knew very little about Daniel Pearl's tragedy and how the month of October unites people of different cultures with the power of music. The PAO's welcoming remarks included an excerpt from President Barack Obama's Daniel Pearl World



Yulduz Usmonova sings and dances along with the dance group "Ofarin" at the Daniel Pearl World Music Days concert. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Music Day greeting that "throughout history, music has shown a limitless capacity to open our hearts and spur our imaginations. It enriches moments in time, shapes our understanding of one another, and unites cultures and nations without regard to language or borders."

The performer was the ideal choice for this event due to her popularity and cross-cutting appeal. As noted on worldmusic.org: "Yulduz Usmanova is a unique phenomenon in the global pop culture of the 90s. Hailing from a recently established country that for generations was part of the former Soviet Union, she represents a new spirit: of freedom, of independence and innovation, while also celebrating age-old traditions. To her fans in her homeland of Uzbekistan, Yulduz is the voice of the future."

Yulduz Usmonova shared between songs that "music overcomes any hatred and violence; music can enchant and inspire any heart." She concluded the concert with her very popular song "World" which she performed in three languages: English, Uzbek and Turkish.

Joint Special Operations University Conducts Interagency Security Sector Seminar for Uzbek Officials



Course Director Carl McPherson watches as Chargé Duane Butcher presents graduation certificates. (U.S. Embassy photo)

On Friday, August 6, Chargé d'Affaires Duane Butcher presented graduation certificates to participants of the U.S. Embassy-sponsored Interagency Security Sector Seminar in Tashkent. Fifteen mid and high-level officials from the Ministry of Defense, Internal Affairs, and Prosecutor's Office completed the week-long training conducted by instructors from the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU), Strategic Studies Directorate, as part of the Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP).

The University was established in 2000 under the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to provide education for special operations and national security personnel. It has developed training programs on combating terrorism (CbT) for interagency security officials of foreign partners in the global fight against terrorism, and will conduct an estimated 10 seminars overseas this year on different themes relating to joint special operations forces.

Uzbekistan is the first country in Central Asia to welcome the instructors, who delivered interactive lectures and workshops in preparation for the interagency presentations that completed the training. "We wanted to offer variety in our course of instruction beyond lectures and power point presentations," said course director Colonel Carl McPherson (USAF, Retired), whose team of instructors managed to elicit fruitful discussion and collaborative engagement on the part of all of the participants.

The ultimate goal of the seminar was to improve Uzbekistan's CbT capabilities, build interagency relationships in the security sector, and advance the U.S.-Uzbekistan partnership in the field of combating terrorism. The immediate goal, though, was to get the heads of disparate agencies to work together to solve common problems, establish lasting interagency contacts, and begin to break through the barriers preventing joint action against terrorism.

Based upon the results of the projects presented by the

three interagency groups, the immediate goal was achieved with resounding success. Each interagency group was responsible for crafting a policy and strategy for achieving a given goal, and the participants worked together all week to develop their proposals. As for the ultimate goal, McPherson says that their work "is about planting seeds. You never know what's going to grow from these educational forums, but when some of the seeds take root, some very productive developments can occur to promote national, regional, and global stability."

Colonel Jeff Nelson (USA, Retired) noted that after JSOU's seminar in Mauritius this year, participants commented that they knew each other, but had never really interacted or worked together to combat security threats as an interagency team. That sparked discussions with



Colonel William Mendel (USA ret) gives a lecture to the participants. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Madagascar and Seychelles on conducting their own joint training seminar for regional cooperation on common security threats and terrorism.

While it is impossible to determine exactly what will be the results of the training, it left a positive impression on the officials who took part. All of the participants were highly engaged in the process, and interacted with the instructors during lectures and the lively question and answer sessions. One of the participants said that the instructors were intelligent, experienced, and very interesting, and expressed his appreciation for the "fantastic" training.

Colonel McPherson's first seminar as course director seems to have made an impact, providing an excellent forum for building interagency collaboration and increasing regional and international cooperation on a fundamental issue of vital interest to both the United States and Uzbekistan.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service (CBP) Conducts International Air Cargo Interdiction Training (IACIT) for Uzbek Officials

In August, CBP, under the auspices of the Export Control and Related Border Security Program (EXBS), conducted training on air cargo inspection techniques and methodologies at JFK International Airport in New York City.

Trainers from the U.S. CBP conducted the IACIT for officers of the State Customs and Border Protection Committees and Aviation Security Services of Uzbekistan in order to share the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out effective inspection and detection, as well as cargo and passenger processing, at international airports.

Specific emphasis was placed on the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and WMD components and delivery systems. Participants from the following agencies were involved: State Committee for Border Protection, State Customs Committee, Aviation Security Service of Navoi International Airport, and Specified Customs Point "Tashkent-AERO."

The training was comprised of classroom and practical training covering a wide range of enforcement topics in the air cargo environment. Topics included: export and import operations, outbound inspections, targeting strategy, document analysis, contraband discovery, anti-terrorism and weapons of mass effect, canine enforcement, air cargo concealment, and aircraft search procedures.



US CBP officer explains use of air cargo search tools and equipment. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Classroom presentations were supplemented by practical exercises, during which the participants were able to apply learned methods in a genuine operating environment. The trainees took part in an aircraft search conducted by CBP officers, discussed similarities in K9 (canine) inspection and training techniques, and assisted in document analysis of military cargo freight.

American Military Commander Visits Tashkent Museums



General Hostage listens attentively at the Museum of Applied Arts of Uzbekistan. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Lieutenant General Gilmary Michael Hostage III arrived in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on September 13, 2010, in order to participate in discussions with Uzbek counterparts. During his two-day visit, he had the opportunity to peruse the collections of the State Museum of History and the Museum of Applied Arts of Uzbekistan as well as to meet with military and

civilian representatives of the Government of Uzbekistan.

Lt. Gen Hostage is Commander of U.S. Air Forces Central Command, Southwest Asia, where he oversees air operations and develops contingency plans for an area covering 20 countries in South and Central Asia. General Hostage, a command pilot, has served with distinction as a pilot in combat operations, received extensive military education, and has been given numerous high honors for his service. He was previously Vice Commander of Pacific Air Forces in Hawaii.

During his visit to Uzbekistan, which is a key nation in his area of responsibility, General Hostage was able to meet with Uzbek and other international officials, and paid a visit to the Marine Detachment at the U.S. Embassy. The cooperation between the United States and Uzbekistan is vital for the mission of both countries in combating terrorism and creating stability in the region.

He was also able to learn a fair amount about the history and art of Uzbekistan by visiting two prominent museums in the capital. After spending time in both museums, the general expressed his admiration for the collections and the rich traditions and history of Uzbekistan.

Obama Reaches Out to Muslim World



U.S. President Barack Obama, left, and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono wave to journalists after a joint press conference at the Presidential Palace in Jakarta on Nov. 9, 2010. (© AP Images)

President Obama, acknowledging that relations between the United States and Muslim communities around the world have been frayed over many years by mistrust and suspicion, says that since becoming president, he has worked to repair those relations and create a path to move beyond differences.

“We can choose to be defined by our differences, and give in to a future of suspicion and mistrust,” Obama said. “Or we can choose to do the hard work of forging common ground, and commit ourselves to the steady pursuit of progress.”

And no matter what setbacks may come, the United States is committed to human progress, Obama added.

Obama addressed Muslim communities across the globe during a speech November 10 at the University of Indonesia in Depok before heading to South Korea, the third stop of his four-nation visit to Asia, to attend the Group of 20 (G20) summit of advanced economies in Seoul. Indonesia will also attend the G20 summit.

The president visited India before arriving November 9 in Jakarta. He is also visiting Japan on his last stop before returning to Washington. He was forced to leave Indonesia a little earlier than planned because of the volcanic ash spewing from Mount Merapi. Two previous trips to Indonesia were postponed because of events in Washington and an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

In his speech, Obama cited Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation, as a fast-developing democracy and a tolerant nation. Before his speech, he met privately with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono at the Merdeka Palace in Jakarta.

The president’s speech was intended to echo his address to Muslim audiences in June 2009 in Cairo, in which he said that no single speech can eradicate years of mistrust. He acknowledged in Depok that while progress is being made in improving relations, many of the issues that have caused tensions for many years remain to be addressed.

Innocent deaths in the United States, Indonesia and across the

world caused by violent extremism are still an ever-present problem, he said. But he repeated his Cairo pledge that the United States “is not, and never will be, at war with Islam,” though extremists have often tried to drive that wedge between the United States and Muslims everywhere.

The violent extremism represented by al-Qaida and its affiliates must be defeated, Obama said. Those who want to build peaceful societies that are prosperous and free must not cede ground to the extremists who seek to destroy progress, he added.

The task of defeating extremism in all its forms is not a task for the United States alone, he said. He cited the progress made in Indonesia in rooting out extremists and combating their violence while building a modern nation.

The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have cost the United States support and trust by many in the global Muslim community, but Obama said there is progress and reason to renew that trust. The work continues, Obama said, in building the capacity of the Afghan government to secure its future. And significant progress has been made in ending the war in Iraq as the Iraqis now have taken full responsibility for their security, he said.

And while there have been many false starts and setbacks to the Middle East peace process, the United States has been persistent in the pursuit of peace and for a solution that has two nations living in peace, side by side, Obama said.



President Barack Obama is greeted by an adoring crowd as he speaks at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Nov. 10, 2010. (© AP Images)

Snapshots of the Muslim World



Brown took this photo of three girls in Fatehpur Sikri, India. "I got pretty good at determining when someone shy and coy would look back," he said. (Photo courtesy of Derek Brown)

The average American doesn't typically vacation in places like Tajikistan — but photographer Derek Brown thinks they should. He hopes his photographs will inspire Americans to travel to Muslim countries around the world.

"I want people to go see it for themselves," says Brown, 40, whose work has appeared in publications ranging from *The Economist* to the cover of American Airlines' in-flight magazine. He and a companion started out in India in 2008, wanting to demonstrate the diversity of the Muslim world "because it's a huge part of the world and it's very poorly understood. ... We were part of those who poorly understand, so we wanted to change that in ourselves first."

He spent 14 months photographing people in 28 different countries, including Pakistan, Senegal, Jordan and Turkey, which gave him "a snapshot that covered a lot of countries — all from the same time frame." His exhibition of photographs from the trip, *Imagining the Muslim World*, is on display through mid-November at a popular downtown Washington bookstore and restaurant, *Busboys and Poets*.

Brown photographed everything from girls turning cartwheels outside a mosque in Damascus, Syria, to boys playing soccer outside a mosque in Dakar, Senegal. His goal is to illustrate the different shades and faces of Muslim people.

"There are times in my past that I would have thought Muslim equals Arab, which equals Middle East," he says. This is one of the reasons he approached Andy Shallal, owner of *Busboys and Poets*, about doing the exhibition. At the café, the bright colors in Brown's photographs jump off the walls — and have sparked many conversations about Muslim life.

"When we talk about Islam, we tend to think in a very monolithic way. This cracks that myth and makes people see that Islam goes far beyond Arabs or Palestinians or anything we've been accustomed to hearing," says Shallal, an Iraqi American.

Brown especially likes showing images of ordinary Muslim women and girls. "Because they're one of the larger catalysts and focuses of misunderstanding," he says. "The idea is a Muslim girl could never run and have fun in public. She could never have her headscarf off. Or have a headscarf on and do flips. I want to show all these things."

No matter where he went, he felt welcomed — and safe — he says. His favorite spot on the trip was Fatehpur Sikri, India, where he said he loved the way the mosque looked at sunrise and sunset. He was equally enthusiastic about Turkey: "People are incredibly friendly," he said.

Brown included a small picture of the Taj Mahal itself in the exhibition as a reference to the Muslim ruler who had it built in the 17th century, noting that many people overlook that part of the structure's history. "It seems so obvious," he says. "But it's not to many."



Islamic Center of Washington, Washington, D.C. (Photo courtesy of AgnosticPreachersKid, Wikimedia)

Brown also included in the exhibition a photograph of a mosque that surprised him: The Islamic Center in Washington. He was stunned to find such an intricate, beautiful mosque in Washington, and impressed to see how intimate the large mosque felt.

Brown hopes that his exhibition will help change the way people think Muslims are, and the way they actually live their lives. "I want to try to close this gap," he says. "People think, 'Muslim equals terrorist.' That isn't true."

Shallal, the *Busboys and Poets* owner, said he's heard many positive responses from customers and visitors who've come to see Brown's work.

"It's been very thought-provoking for a lot of people," he says. "I've been really heartened by the response that we've received. People have really enjoyed looking at it and talking about it."



The State of Indiana - The Hoosier State



Indiana is in the eastern north-central United States, in the region known as the Midwest. The state is bordered by Ohio, Illinois and Michigan.

Popularly, Indiana is known as the “Hoosier State” and its people are known as “Hoosiers.” The origin of the name has been lost in time, but perhaps no other state nickname is more widely recognized. With good reason Indiana has been characterized as a land of corn, limestone, and literature. Corn is its leading crop, its quarries yield much of the nation’s fine limestone for building, and the roster of famous Hoosiers includes a large number of writers. Yet this characterization does not reflect the diversity to be found within the borders of the state.

During the 20th century, Indiana has changed from an agricultural economy to an economy dominated by manufacturing. Despite increasing industrialization and urbanization, it has retained many of the characteristics of a rural, Midwestern conservative society. It is a land of corn and hogs and large manufacturing plants, of city slums and model urban developments, of huge university centers and remote hamlets. The landscape varies from the wooded hills of scenic southern Indiana to the flat, rich farmlands of the central section and to the swamps and marshes of the north. Points of interest range from such natural features as sand dunes, caves, and lakes, to the man-made Indianapolis Motor Speedway, scene of the internationally known 500-mile (805 km) automobile race held on the Memorial Day weekend.

PEOPLE AND HISTORY



Mike Makley of Fowler, Indiana, watches as corn is loaded into a truck on Crossroads Farms in Williamsport, Indiana. (© AP Images)

More than six million people live in Indiana, two-thirds of them in urban areas. Most of the people who settled Indiana in the 1800s came from other states. With them came European immigrants, mainly from Germany and Great Britain. More recent newcomers are from Mexico, Canada, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Korea.

The first known Europeans in the area were French explorers and settlers traveling south from Canada from 1679 onward. They traded cloth, beads, and other goods for animal furs from the local Miami, Piankashaw, and Wea peoples. The French founded Vincennes, Indiana’s first permanent settlement. The British took control of Indiana in 1763.

The region fell into American hands at the start of the American Revolution (1775-83). The territory of Indiana (formed in 1800) became a state in 1816. More settlers flooded in from other states and from Europe. As these new arrivals developed the state, industry replaced farming as the traditional livelihood. The years following World War I (1914-18) brought more industrialization. People moved to find jobs in the cities, only for many to lose them in the Depression.

World War II (1939-45) ended the Depression across the nation as factories started producing war materials and jobs were



Alcoa Warrick Operations employee inspects the finished rolls of aluminum as they come off the last stage of the production line at the Alcoa Warrick Operations in Newburgh, Indiana. (© AP Images)

plentiful. Currently, Indiana’s industry is not so strong as it once was, partly because the steel business slumped during the 1980s.

ECONOMY

In the past the Indiana economy was dominated by agriculture and then by manufacturing. Today it is based on a mixture of manufacturing, farming, and service industries.

Indiana’s leading industry groups are those that manufacture primary metal products (chiefly rolled and finished steel), electrical machinery, transportation equipment (especially motor vehicles, aircraft, and parts) and nonelectrical machinery (such as metal working and general industrial machinery). Other major kinds of manufactured goods are processed foods, chemicals, fabricated metal products, rubber and plastic products, and stone, clay, and various glass products.

Recessions during the last quarter of the 20th century caused Hoosiers to re-think their heavy dependence on durable manu-



The Porsche 935 K3 in which Reginald "Don" Whittington, his brother and Klaus Ludwig won the 1979 24 Hours of Le Mans is displayed in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum in Indianapolis. (© AP Images)

factured goods. As a result there was an increased emphasis on diversification and the growth of service and high-technology industries.

Corn and hogs have long been the basis of the state's agricultural economy. Since pioneer days, corn has been the leading crop. Other major crops are soybeans and wheat; minor crops include hay, oats, rye, tobacco barley and tobacco. Although hogs are the major agricultural commodity, cattles and calves have moved up steadily in importance, as have other livestock and livestock products.

TOP TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Columbus - Unexpected, Unforgettable Architecture and Art

Columbus, Indiana (population 39,000) is ranked 6th in the nation for architectural innovation and design by the American Institute of Architects on a list that includes the much larger cities of Chicago, New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. *Smithsonian Magazine* called Columbus a "veritable museum of modern architecture." Visitors to Columbus can see more than 70 buildings and pieces of public art by internationally noted architects and artists, including I.M. Pei, Eliel Saarinen, Eero Saarinen, Richard Meier, Harry Weese, Dale Chihuly and Henry Moore.

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum, located five miles northwest of downtown Indianapolis on the grounds of the famous Indianapolis Motor Speedway, is recognized as one of the most highly visible museums in the world devoted to automobiles and auto racing. In 1987, the

museum and Speedway grounds were honored with the designation of National Historic Landmark.

Approximately 75 vehicles are on display at all times. The Hall of Fame Museum also displays the equipment and methods used for timing and scoring the Indianapolis 500 from the first race to the 21st century, including a viewer-activated computer presentation that explains the progress through the years. An extensive trophy collection, including the famed Borg-Warner Trophy, which honors the winner of each Indianapolis 500, is also on display along with auto racing trophies, honors and awards from around the world.

Sources: <http://www.in.gov>
<http://www.50states.com>
 Grolier Student Encyclopedia, V.8
 Encyclopedia Americana, V.15



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

QUICK FACTS

Abbreviation: IN

Capital City: Indianapolis

Governor: Mitch Daniels

Date of Statehood: December 11, 1816 (19th)

Population: 6,159,068, 14th largest

Area: 94,327 sq. km, 38th largest

Origin of State's Name: "The land of the Indians"

Largest Cities: Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Evansville, Gary, South Bend.

Economy: *Agriculture:* Corn, soybeans, hogs, cattle, dairy products, eggs.

Industry: Steel, electric equipment, transportation equipment, chemical products, petroleum and coal products, machinery.

Assistant Secretary Blake Talks about Central Asia Consultations

Dushanbe, Tajikistan
September 1, 2010

QUESTION: [Through Interpreter] How do you evaluate the general political situation in Central Asia? What future do you see for the situation in Tajikistan? And especially in light of the latest 25 prisoners escaped from the [inaudible]?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE: Thank you for that important question.

As I said in my opening remarks, I think it's incumbent upon all governments to protect their societies and their people from the threats posed by violent extremism. The United States works with the government of Tajikistan and with many other governments here in the Central Asian region to help them to meet and combat those threats.

At the same time we believe it is very important for all governments to allow democratic institutions to function and to provide political space for legitimate opposition that does not espouse any kind of violence or terrorism. That's why we are very strong supporters of democratic institutions such as non-governmental organizations, free media, and that's why we also take a very strong stand on such matters as religious freedom. We believe that by protecting such values one strengthens one's society and one's nation. Thank you.

QUESTION: [Through Interpreter] She has two questions. The first one concerns Kyrgyzstan. She says there are rumors that soon there might be new troubles in Kyrgyzstan. What can you say about this?

The second question is about the ongoing dispute between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on the blockade of rail cars. Does the United States play any role in facilitating the solution of this ongoing dispute?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE: First of all with respect to the situation in Kyrgyzstan, I don't want to speculate about any possible future events that might happen. From our perspective the most important upcoming event are the parliamentary elections that are scheduled to take place on October 10th.

With regard to the situation between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, both of these countries are friends and partners of the United States, so we would like to see them resolve their differences as soon as possible. We believe that many of the issues that divide them are interrelated. Uzbekistan has some concerns about the construction of the dam at Roghun and how it might affect water supplies in Uzbekistan. Tajikistan has its own concerns about the blockade. And the United States supports efforts, first of all by the two countries to resolve these issues bilaterally, but we also support efforts by the UN, the United Nations, to help bridge the differences. We have also talked bilaterally with each of these countries to urge them to listen to each other's concerns and to try to resolve these important matters because, again, I think these are legitimate concerns on both sides and it's important that these be resolved for the benefit of the people of the two countries.

QUESTION: [Through Interpreter] The issue concerns the CASA-1000 Project. We know that the World Bank is working closely on this project but they say that the project is not well substantiated unless the Roghun hydropower station is constructed. Unless it is constructed it has no future. This is their main idea.

But we know that CASA-1000 is beneficial for the United States of America. How would you evaluate that struggle between two super powers like Russia and the United States of America in this energy dispute? This is the first question.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE: First of all, I deny that there's any kind of fight between the United States and Russia on this issue. There is a feasibility study that is now underway to look at the feasibility of the CASA-1000 project and the United States will then take a position once we've seen the results of that feasibility study. So I don't want to comment on the CASA-1000 project before we see the results of that study.

With respect to Roghun, the World Bank is also undertaking feasibility studies on that project to look at such matters as seismic conditions and matters such as the environmental impact. Again, I think it is very important that those feasibility studies be undertaken as well and we'll look forward to hearing the results of that independent assessment.

QUESTION: There are more than 2215 NGOs in Tajikistan who specialize in democracy, human rights, et cetera, and seven parties. Why did you meet just with [inaudible] of the Islamic party?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE: As you say, there are a large number of NGOs here and I appreciated the chance to meet with an important cross-section of the non-governmental organizations that are active here in Tajikistan, and I appreciated learning about the conditions under which they operate.

I decided to meet with Mr. Kabiri because his party received, after the government party, one of the highest levels of votes in the recent elections. Again, I think there needs to be political space for parties that willingly renounce violence and willingly renounce ties to religious and other extremists. I made that point to Mr. Kabiri himself, that it's very important that his party be very clear that they do not espouse violence and that they do not have any ties whatsoever with extremist groups.

QUESTION: [Through Interpreter] The Taraf newspaper journalist is interested whether there is real independence of the CASA-1000 project on the construction of the Roghun hydropower station. If yes, what is the attitude of the United States of America towards the construction of this hydropower station?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE: Again, I don't want to comment on these individual projects until we've seen the results of these feasibility studies. I think that would be, the issue that you mention I'm sure will be one of the questions that I'm sure will be looked at in the feasibility study so I don't want to try to prejudge what they might say on that subject.

QUESTION: [Through Interpreter] You assure that the United

States of America stands for the freedom of media, but recently about five Tajik newspapers have been taken to court, there are lawsuits against these newspapers. So if you are for the freedom of media, what actions are you going to take in this case? What's our attitude in this issue?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE:

Thank you for that question. As you say, we do support freedom of the media, both here in Tajikistan and around the world. And the matter that you have raised regarding the five newspapers here has been a matter of discussion between the United States and the government of Tajikistan. So I think I'll just leave it there. But to say that as a whole we want to see, as a rule, as much freedom of the media, all kinds of media, as possible. Not only here in Tajikistan, but in other parts of Central Asia and around the world.

QUESTION: I am Professor [inaudible]. Last year I got Fulbright Fellowship and spent a year in research [inaudible]. I appreciate your presentation here.

My question is about energy project of Tajikistan. You very well know that Russia has [inaudible] participate and actually realize this intention, and also Iran has the same intention to take part in Tajikistan's energy project. Does the U.S. administration have any intention, any plan to take part of any construction [inaudible]? Thank you.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE: Thank you. I would answer that question just by saying that we haven't made any decisions on that important matter, but we are very well aware of the great importance of hydroelectricity exports for the economy of Tajikistan and we will evaluate what we might be able to do once the feasibility studies, particularly on the CASA-1000 project are completed. We want to help diversify Tajikistan's economy and provide new sources of income so that it does not rely so much on remittances as it does now. And to provide a more solid base for sustainable growth in the future.

I would also point out that the most likely financing for many of these projects comes from the multilateral development banks, the Asian Development Bank and others, and of course the United States is the largest shareholder and largest donor of those banks. So in any case, we'll be providing a very substantial portion of the financing, but whether we also provide bilateral financing will I think be evaluated once we see the results of these feasibility studies.

I'm sorry, I have to run off to another event so I'm going to have to stop here, but I want to take the opportunity to thank all of you for coming and tell you how much I value the opportunity to interact with all of you. I hope I can come back to Dushanbe in the very near future. Thank you.

QUESTION: [Through Interpreter] A very short question. A question from a [inaudible] correspondent.



U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake visited Uzbekistan on November 9-10, 2010. (U.S. Embassy photo)

She asks that some time ago the U.S. Ambassador announced the beginning of the construction of the National Training Center in the west of the country. Are there any plans about the date of the construction, beginning of the construction? Any specific information about it?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE: I don't really have much more to add to what our Ambassador's already said, but the United States remains committed to that project which we see as a very important way to increase counter-narcotics training for the services here in Tajikistan. And let me just say we value very much the cooperation that we have with the government of Tajikistan on this important matter.

Thank you all very much.

ROBERT O. BLAKE

Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs
Term of Appointment: 05/26/2009 to present

Robert Blake is a career Foreign Service Officer.

Ambassador Blake entered the Foreign Service in 1985. He has served at the American Embassies in Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria and Egypt. He held a number of positions at the State Department in Washington, including senior desk officer for Turkey, Deputy Executive Secretary, and Executive Assistant to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Ambassador Blake served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission in New Delhi, India from 2003 – 2006, as Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives from 2006 to mid-2009, and as Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs from May 2009 to the present.

Mr. Blake earned a B.A. from Harvard College in 1980 and an M.A. in international relations from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in 1984.

American Communications and Media Expert Speaks to Uzbek Journalists, Students, and Officials



The audience at Bukhara State University listens attentively to Dr. Goss. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Dr. Mimi Goss, a lecturer at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and president of her own communications consulting firm, spent one week in Uzbekistan speaking to students, journalists, and government officials on the "Benefits of a Free Flow of Information in a Society."

After conducting workshops in Kazakhstan, Dr. Goss arrived in Uzbekistan for a week of consultations and presentations throughout Uzbekistan. It was her first visit to either country, and she was impressed with the culture and hospitality of both Central Asian countries.

As a former journalist and current consultant to U.S. Government officials, Dr. Goss shared personal experiences that illustrated the importance of cooperation and mutual respect between the government and a free press. During all of her presentations, she reiterated the value of a free and independent media in the development of an open and flourishing society, citing World Bank and other studies drawing a clear correlation between economic achievement and the number of media outlets in a country.

Dr. Goss began her visit on September 18 in Bukhara, meeting with students and faculty at Bukhara State University. She also spoke with local journalists in Bukhara before traveling to Tashkent to begin her series of lectures and events in the capital.

At the University of World Economy and Diplomacy and the University of World Languages, and again at the Embassy, Dr. Goss talked to students about freedom of information issues in the United States and about leadership skills. In addition to her student audiences, she met with area journalists and government officials, speaking at the International Journalists Retraining Center, the Academy of State and Social Construction, the Uzbek Agency for Communication, and the Regional Policy Fund.

In many of her events, Dr. Goss offered advice on how to

use media to promote Uzbekistan around the world, noting that many Americans unfortunately know very little of the country, and that it is difficult to find good information on Uzbekistan in Western countries. She also talked about U.S. laws governing press freedom and about the impact of the internet on journalism worldwide.

Students and professionals were encouraged to interact with Dr. Goss during her presentations, and the result was a series of lively discussions and active question and answer sessions. Her visit was a great opportunity for dialogue and exchange. Dr. Goss' first visit to Uzbekistan was a successful one, and hopefully will not be her last.



Dr. Goss speaks to students in Tashkent. (U.S. Embassy photo)

DR. MIMI GOSS

Mimi Tennyson Goss, Ph.D. is a communications consultant, media trainer and former reporter who teaches at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. With 20 years of experience, she trains leaders in government, business, labor, non-profits and the media nationally and internationally. Her clients and students include heads of state, diplomats, politicians, military officials, corporate executives, union leaders, non-profit heads and journalists.

Dr. Goss has written for Boston Magazine, Management Review, The Boston Globe and Le Nouvel Afrique Asie. She has been a commentator on The O'Reilly Factor and Greater Boston with Emily Rooney, and a guest speaker at Harvard's Memorial Church.

She received her Ph.D. in film, psychology and culture, and M.S. in journalism from Boston University, and her B.A. from Concordia University in Montréal, Québec, Canada. She also studied at the Friedrich Schiller Universität in Germany. She speaks French and German.

State Department's Program Welcomes Foreign Journalists



Russian-speaking participants of the Edward R. Murrow program visit the mayor of Knox County, Tennessee, Tim Burchett. (Photo courtesy of Office of Mayor of Knox County)

The State Department welcomed more than 150 young international media professionals representing 125 countries to the nation's capital as part of the fifth annual Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists that lasts from October 25 to November 12, 2010.

The program, named for one of American journalism's greatest figures, provides foreign journalists the opportunity to experience the United States firsthand while exchanging ideas with their American colleagues. The journalists participate in nine separate projects during the three-week program. They explore the role of a free press in a democracy, learn about the media and the social, economic and political structures of the United States and engage in professional development seminars and an international symposium with their peers.

"We believe that a free press and the practice of journalism are critical elements for any successful society," Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith A. McHale told the group. "These elements cannot exist without you, the individual journalists who have the skills, resources and most of all the commitment to provide your audience with the news they deserve and require."

More than 600 journalists have participated in the program since it began in 2006. For most of them, it was their first visit to the United States.

The program gives foreign journalists the opportunity to compare their preconceived ideas of America with the reality they discover. It also allows Americans to better understand the culture of the visitors and their perspective toward the United States.

This year, for the first time, the Murrow journalists have the unique opportunity to see American democracy in action during the November 2 midterm elections. They will interact with working American journalists and witness election

coverage in the U.S. media. As Aida Kasmalieva, a television producer from the Kyrgyz Republic, told *America.gov*, "It will be interesting to talk to the average American voter. What is his reasoning? How does he vote? It will be interesting to see how American TV will cover the elections."

The Murrow Program, a public-private partnership, was developed by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as part of its International Visitor Leadership Program, together with the Aspen Institute and leading American schools of journalism.

Murrow, a pioneer in broadcast journalism, is renowned for his radio reports from London rooftops during the Blitz bombings of World War II, including his famous sign-off to courageous Londoners, "Good night and good luck."

His career became synonymous with investigative television journalism through his innovative "See It Now" television program and coverage of some of America's most difficult social issues — hunger, poverty and McCarthyism — of the 1950s. Following his successful journalism career, he became the director of the U.S. Information Agency under President John F. Kennedy. He was a firm believer in the importance of international engagement and understanding.

Continuing in the Murrow tradition, the journalists visited the U.S. State Department for the Aspen Institute Symposium on Current Issues in Journalism, featuring an address by Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William J. Burns; a conversation with Bob Woodward of the *Washington Post*; and a panel discussion with leading journalists and representatives of new media, including Arianna Huffington, editor of the online political journal *Huffington Post*. Participants also attended lectures on the midterm elections, briefings on Capitol Hill and meetings with foreign policy analysts at local universities and policy research organizations.

The participants will divide into smaller groups to visit 10 journalism schools, located throughout the United States, for intensive seminars on journalistic practices in a democratic society. They will also experience life on American college campuses and interact with journalism students.

During their last week in America, the participants will visit cities including Austin, Texas; Pensacola, Florida; Charleston, South Carolina; and Portland, Oregon, to get acquainted with grass-roots civic and political life in the United States. Before their return home they will reunite in New York City to meet with representatives of major media outlets and visit the U.S. mission to the United Nations.

For more information visit the State Department's Edward R. Murrow Program website at <http://exchanges.state.gov/ivlp/murrow.html>.

Dazzling Designs Woven into Central Asia's Past



Textile Museum curator Sumru Belger Krody says that as symbols of social standing and wealth, ikat fabrics were important gifts in 19th-century Central Asia. (Photo courtesy of Department of State)

The spectacular patterns and vivid colors of the *ikat* fabrics on display at a Washington museum might be mimicked on the runways of Milan, Italy, next year. But these are the originals: the status symbols of 19th-century Central Asia.

The Textile Museum's newly opened exhibition, *Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats*, shows off one of the world's leading collections of a fabric that has gained favor in the international fashion world in recent years. In pre-Soviet Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, though, it was more than a colorful accent: The *ikat* (pronounced EE-kaht) was the supreme expression of the designer's art and the dyer's skill, a practical part of households that could afford it, an important product of a growing urban economy and a gift of significance and prestige whether to a loved one or to a czar.

"It was a glue in many spheres of life, from political to economic to social," said Sumru Belger Krody, the curator of the exhibition and of the museum's Eastern Hemisphere collections.

One reason for the prestige of *ikat* fabrics is the difficulty of making them. "The tricky part of *ikat* is that you introduce your colors and patterns to the yarns before you weave them, and then you weave the material, and then when you've finished the fabric, the design clearly comes in front of you," Krody said.

Each strand of yarn might be dyed and dried three times — in the primary dye colors of yellow, red and blue — and before each stage in the dying process, the designer must tie up each yarn to protect sections that are not supposed to absorb that color dye. So a section that will be blue must be knotted for the yellow and red dye baths; a section that will be green must absorb the yellow dye, then be knotted for the red dye, then be untied for the blue so that the yellow and blue combine for green.

Ikats have been produced in many parts of the world, with some variations; the word "*ikat*" derives from a Malay term

meaning "to tie." Central Asian *ikat* fabrics use fine silk yarns that are dyed and placed on the loom — the weft of the fabric. The warp, the yarn woven across the weft, would typically be a plain cotton that is not noticed, Krody said.

The *ikat* technique is known elsewhere, "but in Central Asia, it's a very, very different story," Krody said. "Theirs is the most colorful: jewel-like colors with very bold designs. Nowhere else in the world will you see that used this way."

The ancient cities of Central Asia, along the northern Silk Road, had been known for centuries for producing luxury fabrics, Krody said. In the case of *ikat* fabrics, "the major production started in Bukhara and spread to Samarkand and then the Fergana Valley," she said. "It just blossomed on the scene in the beginning of the 19th century and basically died in the 1920s and '30s when the Soviets took control of this region."

The variety of *ikat* designs presents a special challenge for Krody. She said the man who assembled this collection and donated it to the museum, Turkish-born international banker Murad Megalli, made an effort to find unusual and unique designs. "And it's good to receive wonderful, new things; it's hard for scholars like me because it's hard to date and provenance them," she said. The exhibition includes more than 60 of Megalli's collection of more than 150 *ikats*.

Although the designs are elaborate and the production process laborious, the *ikat* fabrics were used in very simple garments: dresses and pants for women, and T-shaped robes for men and women.

"*Ikat* was a luxury fabric, so it was very special," Krody said. "It wasn't for everyone, although everyone wanted to acquire it, but you had to have a certain wealth to be able to. Depending on your wealth, you may have one in your wardrobe or you may have dozens of it."

Although the *ikat* fabrics and garments were made in the urban centers of Central Asia — the oases of the Silk Road — they were worn by the nomads of the countryside as well as middle-class townspeople, Krody said.

In the 20th century, the prestige of Central Asian *ikats* led to the demise of the industry that produced them. For one thing, the private workshops — the designers, the dyers, the weavers and the tailors, sometimes represented by different ethnic and religious groups — could not fit in with the communal ideal of the Soviet Union. "They tried several ways to kind of hold onto the tradition, but unfortunately when the Soviet regime came in, *ikat* was considered to be a very middle-class fabric, for a wealthy clientele, so they were basically suppressed to produce and use this material," Krody said.

Colors of the Oasis will remain on view at the Textile Museum through March 13, 2011. Krody said that only the Kunstkamera Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, has a more extensive collection, including spectacular *ikats* given to the czars by Central Asian rulers in the 19th century.

U.S. Forest Service Working to Support Central Asian Biodiversity

Activities aim to improve natural resource management

The five nations of Central Asia —Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — encompass an array of ecosystems rich in biodiversity amidst landscapes ranging from arid desert to mountainous forests.

Such natural resources now are in danger, however, from a variety of human and natural threats, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) officials say. Arable agricultural and grazing land has suffered degradation that may undermine the economic viability of rural areas. Already insufficient water supplies become even scarcer as a result of climate change. Illegal and unsustainable logging for timber and firewood has caused significant deforestation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with man-made fires adding to the loss of valuable forest resources. Central Asian forests are also under pressure from invasive species.

In response, the USFS, in collaboration with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), earlier this year conducted a biodiversity assessment of Central Asia to identify major threats to the region's ecosystems, study the impact of global climate change on its biodiversity and suggest areas where natural resource management can be incorporated into U.S. foreign assistance activities for the region.

In an interview with America.gov, Kinder explained some of the pressing environmental challenges currently facing the nations of Central Asia. One such historical problem in the region, he said, has been land degradation, an issue going back as far as the Soviet Union's "virgin lands" project of the 1950s, which attempted to transform vast expanses of Kazakhstan's steppes for grain production. He also cited the Soviet-era diversion of water from the Aral Sea for agricultural irrigation. More recently, increased livestock production, combined with the failure to rotate herds among pastures, has led to overgrazing that has diminished soil fertility. Forest management likewise is an issue, as substantial deforestation already has occurred in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

"All of Central Asia has low forest coverage, but these forests are unique because of their biodiversity," Kinder said. "Many domesticated species of fruits and nuts are thought to have originated there." The wild ancestor of the apple, for example, is native to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and walnut forests are found throughout the region, to name but two of the more than 300 species of fruits and nuts found in the region.

Although the region has many committed individuals skilled in natural resource management, Kinder said, the Central Asian nations often lack the technical capacity and financial resources to effectively carry out programs in this field. Issues such as job creation and economic development that have a direct effect on human populations are seen as more pressing needs that take precedence.

Kinder and one other USFS staff member conducted the regionwide biodiversity assessment in March 2010, working



Zaamin National Park, the oldest nature preserve in Uzbekistan. (Photo courtesy of <http://zapovedniki-cccpr.ru>)

out of Almaty, Kazakhstan, but also traveling to Kyrgyzstan. Over the course of four weeks, they reviewed existing research, visited several field sites and protected areas and met officials from government agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in both nations. The finished assessment is now under review by USAID, and will serve as a means to identify possible areas of engagement by that agency on natural resource management and conservation in Central Asia.

The biodiversity assessment is but one aspect of USFS involvement with the region. An official from the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia, a local NGO based in Kazakhstan but active in all five nations, attended a USFS seminar on watershed management held this April in Arizona. The following month, an official from this and one other regionwide NGO, the Kyrgyzstan-based Central Asian Mountain Partnership, went to a similar seminar on climate change and natural resource management held in California.

In October, Kinder and two other USFS officials participated in a workshop in Almaty that focused on watershed management and establishment of market-based systems to better manage natural resources and biodiversity.

Such international cooperation brings benefits beyond the practical and technical, important as those are. Kinder, who served in Kazakhstan with the Peace Corps from 1999 to 2001 as an environmental educator and whose wife is from that country, pointed to the value of the cross-cultural communication that arises from such partnerships.

"I love bringing individuals from the domestic side of the U.S. Forest Service to a foreign country for them to observe their culture and experience their hospitality," he said. "Creating such connections is extremely fulfilling."

More information on the U.S. Forest Service's programs in Central Asia is available on the USFS website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/globe/europe/centralasia.htm>.

Virtual School Helps Students in U.S., South Asia, Worldwide



Salman Khan aims to make his Khan Academy "the world's first free, world-class virtual school where anyone can learn anything." (Photo courtesy of Khan Academy)

Many students have a subject in school that excites them while another subject leaves them bewildered. Whether they're seeking deeper understanding or a new way of comprehending difficult material, the Khan Academy can shed new light on nearly any topic.

Salman Khan, based in California, created Khan Academy as an online classroom with a free database of video lessons on subjects ranging from basic arithmetic to algebra, calculus, finance, history, and many of the sciences, including organic chemistry. Khan plans to make videos that teach "everything," making Khan Academy "the world's first free, world-class virtual school where anyone can learn anything," he writes on the academy's website.

And soon, "everything" will become accessible to nearly everyone. In September, the Khan Academy received a \$2 million grant from Google to build the software needed to translate the site's content into the world's most-spoken languages.

"We have some leeway, but we are planning now to do Mandarin, Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Russian, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Japanese and German," Khan said in an interview.

"We're going to do the first wave of translation over the next two years, and what we're hoping is to really establish a process that makes it possible to go beyond those original languages," he added.

Khan, who grew up in New Orleans with an Indian mother and Bengali father, looks forward to extending Khan Academy's global reach with the translation project. He noted that the Hindi translations alone could reach as many as 400 million students, building on the site's already prominent South Asian presence.

"By nature of where my family is from, Khan Academy has gotten quite popular in South Asia, especially Bangladesh," Khan said. "The country is proud, but it's very humbling for

me. They're proud that one of their own is out doing something helping other people."

More than 10 percent of Khan Academy's viewers come from India, Khan told the *Hindustan Times*.

"I happen to have the same name as an Indian movie star, so whether it's deserved or not that gives me some flair," he joked.

Celebrity status aside, Khan is also making a name for his school in remote villages that do not have a regular electricity supply. Through a partnership with World Possible, a California-based nongovernmental organization (NGO) that works in part to bring computers and Internet access to poverty-stricken schools, Khan Academy supplies the educational content to some classrooms in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Ecuador. "We hope over the next five to 10 years that ... other NGOs will keep working on the technology issues and we just need to hand the content to them and they figure out the best way to get it to students," Khan said.

BUILDING A VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Khan has personally created the more than 1,800 videos available to students. Each module runs for 10 to 20 minutes, with Khan explaining in a conversational style the concept at hand while incorporating underlying principles and real-world connections that he thinks can help with students' understanding.

"I teach the way I wish I was taught," he writes on the website. "These videos are my expression of how the concepts should have been expressed in the first place, all while not compromising rigor or comprehensiveness."

Khan began recording the video lessons after he saw how his teaching style helped his cousin. In 2004, when she was struggling with her middle school math class, Khan began tutoring her remotely, eventually videotaping himself and posting the sessions on YouTube so she could access the help at her convenience. Her subsequent success in math, and her brothers' use of his other video tutorials, led Khan to post more and more videos to the Web. In September 2009, he quit his job as a hedge fund manager to run Khan Academy full time.

With plans to "keep making videos until the day I die," as he writes on his site, Khan wants to create simulation games to add to students' depth of understanding of the topics they watch and build a community of learners who use the site to interact and discuss the subject matter. He would like to see physical schools use Khan Academy as the basis for their curriculums.

"In the long term, we hope that we can be teaching people as [well] as anyone," Khan said. "We are redefining a good part of the educational experience."

Learn more at the websites of Khan Academy [<http://www.khanacademy.org/>] and World Possible [<http://worldpossible.org/>].

South Asian–Heritage Entrepreneurs Launch Novel Online Ventures

Here's an exciting concept: use e-mail to share information with others! Sounds about two decades too late? Not to Sachin Agarwal, co-founder of Posterous, a company with a very simple idea: post any kind of information online by attaching it to an e-mail. That's it. Posterous does the rest, creating your own website or personal blog.

Agarwal and Posterous were one of “30 Under 30” top young entrepreneurs named by the U.S.-based business magazine *Inc.* in July — four of whom are of South Asian background. The others are Ooshma Garg, founder of the diversity recruitment firm Anapata; Naveen Selvadurai, co-founder of Foursquare, a geolocation and social networking application; and Vikas Reddy, a co-founder of Occipital, which developed RedLaser, a bar-code reader for mobile phones that has become one of the smart phone's hottest apps.

Aside from the high-tech element, the most striking characteristic of these four individuals — and all of *Inc.*'s choices for that matter — is the importance of social networking. To learn



The Foursquare application is shown on an iPhone in front of a Starbucks in San Francisco. Foursquare lets you share your whereabouts with friends, no matter if you're at a hot new bar or a neighborhood pet store. (© AP Images)

about Reddy, Garg, Selvadurai, or Agarwal, you must enter the world of online blogs, Facebook, Twitter, mobile phone apps, even YouTube videos. As with many of their generation, the boundaries between their work and social lives blur in their dynamic and constantly evolving online communities.

SELVADURAI AND FOURSQUARE

Perhaps the hottest high-tech market out there now is “geolocation” or location-based social networking — and Foursquare, based in New York, is right in the middle of it. Foursquare exploits the Global Positioning System found in the current generation of mobile devices, allowing users to share their location with friends and comment on shops, restaurants and other attractions.

Since Foursquare's founding in 2009, its growth has been explosive, leading many analysts to call it the new Twitter. In July, the number of Foursquare subscribers reached 2 million

— double what it had been in April — and the company has continued growing at 100,000 new members a week, according to *Inc.* magazine. Foursquare has attracted \$20 million in venture capital as well.

Selvadurai was born into a family of engineers in Chennai, India; at age 8, he sailed for eight months with his mother and father, a marine engineer, aboard a large cargo ship as part of his father's last voyage before retiring. Selvadurai came to the United States in 1991, earned degrees in computer science, and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 2006. After graduate school, he joined friends in New York City to work on mobile applications for Sony Music before co-founding Foursquare.

“None of us expected to be where we are now,” Selvadurai says. He acknowledges that rapid success has brought big challenges, from expanding customer service to simply setting priorities. “We have notebooks full of great ideas, but we have to decide which ones to put our engineers to work on.”

AGARWAL AND POSTEROUS

E-mail can seem downright dull next to the excitement surrounding mobile phone technology, but as Agarwal has blogged, “E-mail is the most powerful, flexible, open and free messaging platform out there.”

Agarwal was born in Britain but grew up in Southern California, where, he admits, “I started feeling the typical Indian pressure to become a doctor.” He actually applied to Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, as a pre-med student, but realized that computers and software programming were his true passion.

After graduating in 2002, he worked at Apple Inc. for six years before joining software engineer Gary Tan to found Posterous in 2008.

The attraction of Posterous is its simplicity. You can post texts, photos and videos without any formatting necessary. Posterous will also send your information, automatically, to other social networking services such as Facebook.

Posterous, located in San Francisco, has drawn plenty of attention. It has attracted more than \$5 million in venture capital and is growing at an estimated 20 to 25 percent a month, according to an industry observer, TechCrunch.

Looking five years ahead, Agarwal speculates that he may still be with Posterous, or into another Web publishing venture.

“I love building software to solve problems that I have myself,” he says. “No matter what, I'll be building something that I personally use every day. That's how you can be really passionate about your work.”

More information on Posterous [<https://posterous.com/>] and Foursquare [<http://foursquare.com/>] is available on their websites.

Junior Faculty Development Program Alumni Reflect on Their Experiences at U.S. Universities



JFDP alumnus Rustam Sulaymanov in downtown Chicago in April 2010. (Photo courtesy of Rustam Sulaymanov)

When the political philosophy curriculum he'd studied so thoroughly became obsolete after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Dr. Alisher Abidjanov decided to introduce himself to the classics of the field. Then he realized that many of the texts did not have Russian or Uzbek translations. If he wanted to read more of Plato or Montesquieu, he would have to study other languages.

In addition to his duties as an associate professor focusing on political theory and civil society at the National University of Uzbekistan, Abidjanov devoted himself to a year's study of English, and successfully applied for the Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP) to spend time researching at a U.S. university.

The JFDP was established in 1994 by the United States Information Agency (now the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs – ECA) of the U.S. Department of State. It was designed specifically to give opportunities to Eurasian and Southeastern European institutions of higher education to expand, get access to new resources and perspectives, and create academic networks with the West. Since 1998 it has been managed by American Councils for International Education, which administers more than thirty educational exchange and training programs.

In the JFDP, facilitated by U.S. Embassies throughout the re-

gion, qualified professors at local institutions are able to audit classes, work with a mentor-professor on research and teaching, and observe the details that make American universities work. When they return to their home institutions, they can begin to implement new methods or materials they have acquired during their time with the program, which is currently one semester.

Every participant's experience in the program is different. Unlike Dr. Abidjanov, who worked at the George Washington University (GWU) in 2002 and 2003 for two semesters followed by two simultaneous internships in the capital, Dr. Dilmurod Rasulev spent just five months at the same university's Research Program in Social and Organizational Learning.

"Five months was far too short," said the expert in equilibrium modeling and commerce, but attending six classes and helping to teach three classes, along with attending conferences, kept him busy and fulfilled. Finding housing, paying for necessities, and improving his English in a house full of Russian speakers were the most difficult aspects of the program for him. "In Europe it is easier to get along, but there are more educational and scientific opportunities in the United States," he said, and he used the experience to maximum advantage.

After only four years back in Uzbekistan at the State Economic



Jamshid Normatov (left) meets with his program coordinator, Dr. Saul Hoffman, at the University of Delaware. (Photo courtesy of Jamshid Normatov)

University (SEU), Dr. Rasulev has already designed a new master's course in microeconomics and modeling. Perhaps more impressive, he took ideas from what he called the "perfect facilities for teaching" at GWU, and created his own architectural and instructional design at SEU in Tashkent. The university now has 300 workstations and 24 new classrooms with modern equipment and layouts based on what Rasulev saw in the U.S.

Another professor of economics who wishes he could have stayed longer at the University of Delaware is Dr. Jamshid Normatov from the University of World Economy and Di-

plomacy. While Abidjanov lived with his family and Rasulev with colleagues from Serbia and then Uzbekistan, Normatov had the opportunity to stay with a young American couple that volunteered to host him. Professor Saul Hoffman, Chair of the Department of Economics, worked as his program coordinator and helped find housing as well as arranging his participation in a New York conference. He was even picked up at the Philadelphia Airport by someone from the university and driven all the way to Newark, Delaware.

"I was very surprised with how friendly everyone was," said Dr. Normatov. He noticed that most people didn't lock their doors, neighbors and random passersby offered him free rides to the university on rainy and snowy days, and even the customs official in Chicago sported a large grin and said, "Welcome to America."

Despite the fact that he had less than five months, took three courses in different economic fields, met with professors, co-taught, and gave a lecture on the Uzbek economy, Normatov had time to attend the conference in New York, visit Washington, DC, and even see Pennsylvania Amish country, which he says was the most memorable experience during his stay.

"I heard of the program through a colleague and former participant," Normatov said, and he has already highly recommended the program to his fellow professors in Tashkent. He is also applying new methods of teaching to involve the students more in the course, and encouraging both group work and individual excellence. He says the program boosted his self-confidence. "I believe I can excel, and am more committed to my work now."

Dr. Rustam Sulaymanov, an economics professor at Westminster International University in Tashkent, also had the unique opportunity to stay with Americans and to experience more of the country than just the typical big coastal cities. He participated in two conferences, joined an international public affairs association, and attended six courses in 2010 at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. "It was my first real rural experience in America," he said, contrasting it with his earlier visit to New York City and adding, "It was really great."

Another surprising aspect of his time in JFDP was Indiana University's Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center (IAUNRC), where Sulaymanov found large numbers of Central Asian scholars studying at one of the premier centers for Eurasian studies. "I learned a lot about America, and a lot more about Central Asia," he said regarding his new friends from the region and the conferences in which he participated. He said he was also surprised at the number of American students in the program who were so knowledgeable about and interested in Central Asia.

One thing that unites all of the participants in the program, despite their vastly different experiences, is their contribution to education in Uzbekistan after returning, and their continuing ties to their host university. After being back in Tashkent only a few months, Dr. Sulaymanov has already received a JFDP alumni grant to organize a teaching symposium for professors in the region, and is continuing to work with his academic advisor, Professor Michael Alexeev, on further research.



Jamshid Normatov actively participates in courses during his fellowship at the University of Delaware. (Photo courtesy of Jamshid Normatov)

Dr. Rasulev has managed to redesign all of the classrooms in his university, has used curriculum from the United States, and has recently been invited to participate in a conference in Macedonia after submitting a paper on the financial crisis. Dr. Normatov has dramatically altered his teaching methods, and is continuing to look for new opportunities to expand his horizons.

Meanwhile, Dr. Abidjanov developed a new course on theories of civil society and traveled to GWU again in 2004 and 2005 to work with his mentor, Dr. Stuart Umpleby, who has also come to Uzbekistan twice to deliver lectures and help students. Abidjanov also developed contacts at Harvard, the University of Washington (Seattle), and Johns Hopkins University, and took full advantage of the scholarship and research opportunities of the U.S. capital while there. In 2009 and 2010, he was a Fulbright Scholar at SAIS Johns Hopkins' Central Asia Caucasus Institute, researching civil society issues in the region. He has acquired many new ideas, and said that the JFDP was "an eye-opening experience."

Anyone interested in more information about the Junior Faculty Development Program or other educational exchange opportunities through the U.S. Embassy can visit the JFDP website at www.jfdp.org or the Embassy website at <http://uzbekistan.usembassy.gov/exchanges/> for details, eligibility requirements, and deadlines.

PEPFAR Showing Greater Effectiveness, Efficiency Against HIV/AIDS



Blood is tested in a South African lab that is partly funded by PEPFAR. Between 2004 and 2009, 2.5 million people benefited from PEPFAR's HIV/AIDS treatments. (© AP Images)

Nearly seven years after the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was announced, the program is having an "extraordinary impact" on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, with data showing that more than 2.5 million people have been directly supported by its treatments through 2009, according to U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and PEPFAR Administrator Dr. Eric Goosby.

Through PEPFAR and contributions to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the United States has committed approximately \$32 billion to fight HIV/AIDS.

Goosby spoke with reporters in Washington November 10, saying "PEPFAR has shown that indeed one disease responded to with significant resource infusion can have outcomes that have changed the way we think about global health."

The program, now operating in more than 30 countries, is showing increased efficiency and effectiveness, with more than 60,000 patients receiving anti-retroviral medication every month, and expansions in prevention and care programs.

Each partner country is looking more closely at who is being affected by HIV and how the disease is moving through its populations, and that information is helping PEPFAR decide where to position its prevention programs as well as any special care and treatment services that might be needed.

The United States accounts for almost 60 percent of international funding commitments to prevent and fight HIV/AIDS, and Goosby said more nations need to step up their support.

"We alone are not going to be successful ... without really soliciting the help of all countries on the planet, including the countries we are working in," he said. Other nations need to join the United States by contributing to the effort, and to do so explicitly and continuously. "We are ready to be the voice to put that challenge out," he said.

Reducing HIV/AIDS contributes to a country's overall security and stability. Individuals aged 15 to 50 are disproportionately targeted by the disease, and they also represent the prime years of a country's working force. It also "hits individuals who have money, who are mobile and often educated," including doctors, lawyers and teachers, he said.

"The lack of that layer in society is ... a huge destabilizing force and kind of lends fertile fodder to the development of armed and terrorist activity," Goosby said.

In its fight against HIV/AIDS, PEPFAR is now looking to transition toward "a more stable, sustained response," from its initial emergency focus. "We're lean and clean in our ability to deliver more with fewer people and for less money," he said.

For example, Goosby said, new research has demonstrated the effectiveness of male circumcision, which has been shown to reduce the rate of HIV infection by 64 percent. The operation removes a layer of cells that are highly susceptible to infection, he explained, and PEPFAR's data has projected that 4.2 million HIV infections can be averted through 2025 with an increase in the number of circumcised men between ages 15 and 50, as well as having programs in place to circumcise newborn males.

Circumcised males are still at risk of infection, he said, but the reduced rate "will look like a vaccine has entered" the population because of the drop in the number of infections.

PEPFAR is also planning to accelerate its prevention of mother-to-child transmission by providing 80 percent coverage of disease testing at the national level and 85 percent coverage of prophylaxis and treatment for infected pregnant women by the year 2014, he said.

The increased availability of generic drugs has also helped to lower the average treatment cost per patient to about \$435, and Goosby said he expects the figure to drop even further, thanks to increased procurement pooling with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, reduced transportation costs, new drugs that require fewer doses, and other innovations.

PEPFAR will also be expanding its services through the U.S. Global Health Initiative to provide treatment and prevention against other infectious diseases, as well as supporting maternal and child health and clean water. He said this will help increase the effectiveness and efficiency of overall U.S. health assistance.

PEPFAR is "often the strongest delivery system that's up and running," he said. For example, when Haiti was devastated by a January 12 earthquake, "our clinic system and our providers in these clinics were the first responders and the primary responders for the first 10 days or so. Our resources also fed into a lot of that first response effort."

Global Polio Eradication Is Within Reach, Special Envoy Says

Global polio eradication is within reach, but this last push will require a renewed international commitment, cooperation and community involvement, says U.S. Special Envoy Rashad Hussain.

“We must encourage persistence, reinvigorate political and technical attention in the face of a disappearing disease and competing priorities, and urgently expand the number of financial and engaged donors beyond those who have historically found the resources, some of which may be struggling to sustain their prior levels of support,” Hussain said September 27 at a special conference on polio eradication in New York.

The United States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) co-hosted a panel discussion entitled “From



A boy in Afghanistan receives the polio vaccine in the latest drive to eradicate polio in southern provinces. (© AP Images)

Dushanbe to Dakar: Innovative Partnerships for Polio Eradication in OIC Countries.” The panel discussion was held at UNICEF headquarters in New York.

Hussain, the U.S. special envoy to the OIC, said the U.S. partnership with the OIC provides renewed impetus to the global effort to eradicate polio, and has the added benefit of strengthening the United States’ cooperation with Muslim communities on issues of common concern.

When President Obama gave his global speech to Muslim communities in Cairo on June 4, 2009, he announced that the United States would work together with them to advance shared goals in the fight to end polio.

“We have started down that path by bringing together a focused and determined community in December 2009 to launch the OIC-U.S. joint initiative on polio,” Hussain said. “In addition, the U.S. and the OIC have raised polio eradication in both bilateral and multilateral fora to continue to highlight the importance of polio eradication.”

He added that, as the president indicated in his September 22 speech on achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, the effort to eradicate polio has become a significant

U.S. foreign policy objective involving global partnerships.

According to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, there have been 663 cases of polio reported worldwide this year, compared with 1,020 cases at this point in 2009. The initiative reports that poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus that invades the nervous system and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours. While the disease can strike at any age, it mainly affects children under the age of 3, who account for more than 50 percent of all cases.

Hussain said that for thousands of years, polio has been endemic. It was not until 1955, when Dr. Jonas Salk developed the first vaccine against polio, that the world was able to begin to cope with the disease. Five years later Dr. Albert Sabin perfected the oral polio vaccine, giving the world a second weapon against the disease, and opened a door to eradication.

“In the United States, the last case of polio caused by a wild poliovirus was reported in the late 1970s,” Hussain said.

The United States has provided more than \$1.8 billion to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative since 1988, as well as extensive technical support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The president announced his Global Health Initiative proposal of a \$63 billion effort to improve and expand access to health services for the world’s poor, which underscores the



Dr. Jonas E. Salk (center), father of the polio vaccine and professor of research bacteriology at the University of Pittsburgh, PA., is shown in a laboratory on March 27, 1954. (© AP Images)

U.S. commitment to a comprehensive global health strategy, including polio eradication, Hussain said.

“Yet vaccination campaigns and emergency operations in outbreak areas continue to face funding gaps,” he said. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative currently faces an \$810 million funding gap for implementation of its 2010–2012 work plan.

No Major Foreign Policy Shift After U.S. Midterm Election



President Obama calls Republican Representative John Boehner, expected to be the next speaker of the House, on Election Day. (© AP Images)

Following major Republican gains in the November 2 midterm elections, President Obama is expected to face challenges implementing his agenda, but the foreign policy objectives are not expected to change, political experts say.

Republicans gained more than 60 seats, giving them majority control of the House of Representatives in the Congress that will convene in January 2011. They also earned more seats in the Senate, although Democrats retained a slight majority.

At a November 3 press conference, Obama said the election indicated “that no one party will be able to dictate where we go from here; that we must find common ground . . . in order to make progress on some uncommonly difficult challenges.”

Divided government, which happens when one party controls the executive branch and another has a majority in at least one house of Congress, is more common than not in U.S. government.

Political experts say that over the next two years, Americans will see a good deal of gridlock, in which political maneuvering and stalling result in inaction.

“But at times you’ll also maybe see the parties strategically working together because ultimately the American people want to see their federal government getting the people’s business done,” American University professor David Lublin told journalists at the Washington Foreign Press Center November 4. “Parties that look simply obstructionist, be they the Democrats or the Republicans, can eventually pay at the polls.”

“Over the next two years, the country will likely be confronted with major challenges that require a governmental response, and the government will need to respond,” he added.

Regardless of which party controls Congress, though, the president sets the foreign policy agenda. “America has continuing interests regardless of which party is in power,” Lublin said.

And Lublin pointed out that when it comes to foreign policy, the president remains dominant because he remains commander in chief of the armed forces.

Republicans largely support the administration’s efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Relations between the United States and other nations should not be affected by the election. Nor should major international humanitarian aid efforts, such as initiatives to combat malaria and HIV/AIDS. Trade could be an opportunity for politicians from both parties to work together, Lublin said.

OBAMA’S DOMESTIC AGENDA

Obama told reporters that American voters had sent a message that they are frustrated with the state of the U.S. economy.

“I think it’s clear that this agenda will be reshaped to refocus on issues that the center of America cares about: jobs, economy, spending,” said Mike Allen, White House correspondent for the political newspaper Politico, at the Foreign Press Center November 4.

Many newly elected Republicans ran on a campaign pledge to repeal Obama’s health care reform. But doing so is nearly impossible because any attempt to repeal health care legislation would be vetoed by the president.

Spending issues likely will spark the most debate. One of the first big debates in the new Congress will probably be over tax cuts, John Fortier, research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, told journalists at the Foreign Press Center November 2.

Republicans may also take a closer look at infrastructure investment projects, many of which are funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Allen said. This doesn’t mean there will be no spending; rather Republicans will likely focus funding on specific projects.

The two biggest challenges for Obama’s agenda will be immigration and climate change, where legislative action is “going to be nearly impossible,” Fortier said.

Legislation designed to curb greenhouse gas emissions was previously passed by the House of Representatives, but failed in the Senate. The administration has indicated it will work toward meeting its reduction goals by implementing executive regulations.

A 2007 Supreme Court ruling said that the Environmental Protection Agency has the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, yet “we’ll see some big fights again with Congress” about the agency’s role, Fortier said.

Differing political views are not always a negative, experts say. “Divisiveness is often sort of seen as a bad thing in politics, but it also is necessary for healthy debate,” Lublin said.

U.S. Embassy Tashkent on Facebook

The U.S. Embassy has its own page on the popular social networking website Facebook. Currently, the page has over 1,300 members, a number that is growing day by day.

The page contains useful information about the Embassy, its programs and activities in Uzbekistan, the Information Resource Center (IRC) and its services and resources. It also publishes information about Embassy events, important announcements, the updated schedule for the weekly Chai Chat Club and so on.

Additionally, the page provides information and the link to the *IRC Visitor Registration System* - a Facebook application that helps visitors who want to go to the IRC to request appointments online. To check out the system, go to <http://apps.facebook.com/ircvisitor/>.

Registered members, also known as *fans*, can post questions or comments on the notice board (the *Wall*) of the page. They can also leave their feedback on IRC services and discuss Embassy programs.

Anyone who wants to become a member (*fan*) of the *U.S. Embassy Tashkent* page first needs to get a free Facebook account (if you don't have one yet) and then go to <http://www.facebook.com/usdos.uzbekistan> and click on the "Like" button at the very top. Easy!

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

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

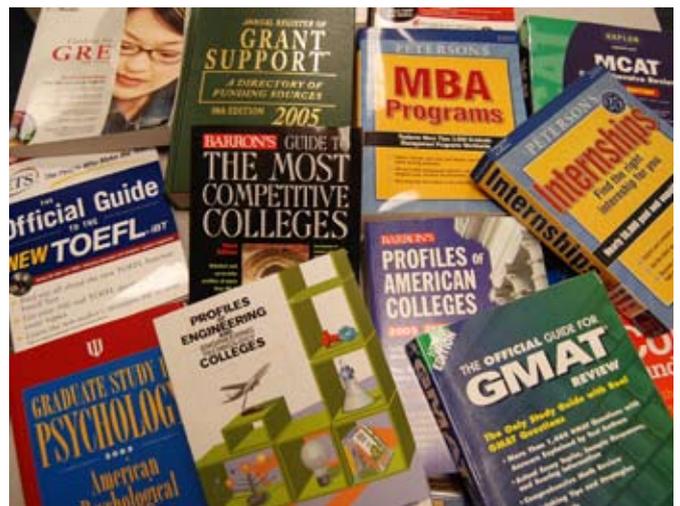


The Educational Advising Center offers the following services free of charge:

- General information about educational opportunities in the U.S.
- Individual advising in areas of study and course descriptions
- Test preparation materials for SAT, TOEFL, GRE and GMAT that can be used during consultation hours
- U.S. college selection database
- Supporting reference materials
- Financial aid resources
- Application guides
- Guides to Distance Learning

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

Advising hours are by appointment from 13:00-17:00, Monday to Thursday. To schedule an appointment, please call



A sample of the materials offered by the Educational Advising Center at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent. (U.S. Embassy photo)

120-5450 between 9:30 to 12:00 Monday through Friday or e-mail Tashkent-Advising@state.gov.

Third Annual American Film Festival Attracts Large Audiences

Approximately 1,000 people came out to watch popular American movies from different genres and eras during the Third Annual American Film Festival in Tashkent from October 24-26, 2010. The film screenings, which were offered free of charge, were held at the Council of Friendship Societies of Uzbekistan's Tashkent movie theater and were organized by the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section.

Films chosen for the Festival included the classic 1961 comedy "Breakfast at Tiffany's," the adventure film "The Goonies," the hit 1978 musical "Grease," western classic "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," the recent animated film "Up," the first color film "The Wizard of Oz," and finally the recent drama "October Sky." All of the movies were shown in English with English subtitles except for two that featured Russian subtitles ("Breakfast at Tiffany's" and "Up").

When sharing their experiences of the Festival, several guests mentioned their desire to see similar events in the future. "I am happy that [this festival] is turning into a great tradition," said one viewer. Another participant urged, "Please organize it more often."

The audience enjoyed the traditional quiz prior to each viewing, which contained questions related to the movie or covering a specific aspect of American history or culture. For the correct answer, the winners received a non-fiction book in English or a DVD of an American film.



Approximately 1,000 people came out to watch popular American movies from different genres and eras during the Third Annual American Film Festival in Tashkent from October 24-26, 2010. (U.S. Embassy photo)

The American Film Festival became an annual event in 2008. Molly Stephenson, the Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, highlighted the importance of events which "help Uzbek audiences learn more about American culture and traditions, and foster mutual understanding between our nations."



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