



DO'STLIK



Issue 21

January 2012

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U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton Visits Uzbekistan



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton receives flowers from an Uzbek woman upon her arrival to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on October 22, 2011. (U.S. Embassy photo)

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Uzbekistan October 22-23. This was her second visit in 10 months and came following a meeting with Foreign Minister Ganiev in Washington on September 29.

Upon her arrival in Uzbekistan on Saturday afternoon, Secretary Clinton had a private

meeting with President Islam Karimov at the Oqsaroy Presidential Residence. President Karimov greeted Secretary Clinton outside the palace and expressed his personal respect for her, President Obama and the United States.

They spoke for just over two hours and addressed matters of mutual concern, including the Northern Distribution Network and other issues involving both the U.S.-Uzbek relationship and the Central Asian region. Secretary Clinton's visit demonstrates the continued efforts the U.S. is making to deepen its relationship with Uzbekistan.

On Sunday morning, Secretary Clinton met with four civil society representatives at the U.S. Embassy to hear their thoughts on a number of topics. After the discussion, she personally greeted and thanked U.S. Embassy staff and their families.

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U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Returns to Women's Wellness Center in Tashkent

During a trip to Uzbekistan, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited the Women's Wellness Center in Tashkent on October 23. She initially opened the country's first public center in 1997 as the First Lady of the United States. At the time, the center was just opening and was located on the campus of the Tashkent Medical Institute.

In 2000, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright participated in the official opening of the country's first private Women's Wellness Center – modeled after the center the then First Lady Clinton had opened in 1997. The center was established through a 1998-2006 USAID-funded grant program that included partnerships among the American International Health Alliance, the University of Illinois in Chicago and the State Medical Institute in Tashkent.



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton receives flowers from Dr. Dilmurod Yusupov, Director of the Wellness Center, on behalf of the Women's Wellness Center in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on October 23, 2011. (U.S. Embassy photo)

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U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton Visits Uzbekistan (Continued from page 1)

In speaking to the American and Uzbek crowd gathered in the U.S. Embassy, Secretary Clinton reiterated how much she has enjoyed her travels to Uzbekistan over the years, “from Tashkent to Samarkand to Bukhara and many places in between.” She also acknowledged how much she appreciates the hard work of those who helped make her visit possible.

In particular, she noted that the U.S. Embassy has “a great interagency team,” as it is home to cooperation between not only American and local staff but also the State Department, Department of Defense and USAID. Additionally, she took time to specifically thank the local Uzbek staff, “who is absolutely instrumental in everything that we do.”

After the meet and greet, Secretary Clinton visited the Women’s Wellness Center, the current form of the one she had officially opened when she made her first trip to in Uzbekistan in 1997 as the First Lady of the United States. The center has since moved from the Tashkent Medical Institute campus to its own location, and provides a broad range of clinical care and outpatient services to 80-90 women daily.

Before returning to the United States, Secretary Clinton also took a trip to the new General Motors powertrain engine plant. The plant is a joint venture between GM and the Uzbek automotive company UzAvtosanoat and is scheduled to officially open next month. While at the facility, Secretary Clinton, accompanied by Foreign Minister Ganiev, received



U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan George Krol introduces U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to the U.S. Embassy Tashkent staff and families in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on October 23, 2011. (U.S. Embassy photo)

a tour by General Director of GM Powertrain Uzbekistan Juergen Spendel. She also announced a new initiative that will help entrepreneurs interested in technology, the Central Asian Technology Entrepreneurship Program. The program is made possible by the State Department and the nonprofit organization CRDF Global.

Uzbekistan was the final stop on a week-long trip that also included visits to Malta, Libya, Oman, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Returns to Women’s Wellness Center in Tashkent (Continued from page 1)



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signs the Women’s Wellness Center’s guestbook. (U.S. Embassy photo)

In fact, the Women’s Wellness Center was the country’s first private clinic dedicated to women’s health issues, as well as the first center to screen for cervical cancer, which is the second most common cancer among women in

the country. It is a significant success story, as it is currently financially independent, a national center providing the full range of services to address women’s health and operates as a partner for other international and bilateral organizations.

The center is staffed by Uzbekistan’s leading cervical cancer specialists, who provide training to practitioners throughout the country. In addition to performing clinical care and outpatient services, the center has also conducted two national conferences, numerous workshops and seminars, which resulted in the training of more than 1,000 health specialists in Uzbekistan and neighboring countries.

The Government of Uzbekistan has made great strides in improving maternal and child health since gaining its independence 20 years ago. It is due to the Government of Uzbekistan’s commitment to maternal and child health issues, USAID’s modest investment and the leadership of the center’s director, Dr. Dilmurad Yusupov, that the center has become so successful. There have been many positive, visible changes since Secretary Clinton’s last visit to the center. The achievements of the center are a demonstration of what is possible when governments and individuals work together.



Secretary Clinton meets with Women’s Wellness Center staff in Tashkent. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Meeting with Staff and Families of the U.S. Embassy Tashkent

Remarks by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

The U.S. Embassy in Tashkent

October 23, 2011

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, I am delighted to be here, and I want to thank all of you for coming out on a Sunday morning and apologize that, as is often the case, we got a little delayed, did some interviews and had some typical challenges. But all is well, and I'm especially pleased to join you here in this beautiful atrium.

As some of you might remember, when I came last December, you did not have an Ambassador, so I would like to welcome and thank your new Ambassador for his service, and to thank all of you for the great cooperation and partnership that you have together. George understands, as he just said, the importance of Uzbekistan to the region and to our national interest – not just because of its central role in the Northern Distribution Network and our efforts in Afghanistan, but for growing trade and economic opportunities and a great opportunity that we have to try to help develop democracy here in Uzbekistan.

I'm delighted to be back for a third visit. When I was first lady, I helped open the nation's first public health clinic for women. I'll go back there today to see how they're doing. And I've enjoyed the opportunity to travel in the country, from Tashkent to Samarkand to Bukhara and many places in between. I just finished an interesting, productive meeting with four representative civil society activists. I assured them that their messages and their concerns were being heard here, and basically assigned the Ambassador and all of you to follow up to make sure they know that.

New GM Plant Visited by U.S. Secretary of State

On October 23, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited the new General Motors Powertrain Plant in Tashkent with Foreign Minister Ganiev, before its official opening in November. They received a tour of the 40-hectare facility from General Director of GM Powertrain Uzbekistan Juergen Spendel.

The plant is the result of collaboration between American and Uzbek companies – GM and UzAvtoanoat, respectively – that has provided job opportunities in both countries. It is expected to produce more than 225,000 engines each year. The plant itself was designed by Uzbek and American engineers and architects working together, and was built to be environmentally-friendly to the local community. Secretary Clinton noted that the plant “will serve as a symbol of our friendship and cooperation.”

In remarks following the tour, she highlighted the importance of this cooperation, as well as the importance of increasing economic opportunity around the globe, noting that economics is a central focus of the United States' foreign policy.

Additionally, Secretary Clinton announced that the U.S. State Department and the nonprofit organization CRDF Global are

I really want to also thank your DCM. Thank you so much for your assistance in putting together our visit, also Chip Laitinen and the human resources team and whole Management section. I know that when somebody like me shows up, there's even more work than what you usually are faced with, but as is the case, you have performed amazingly well.

I know too that this Embassy demonstrates what we call for in the QDDR. It is a great interagency team. Our State and DOD officers have shown real interagency teamwork as you strengthen the Northern Distribution Network. I know our State and USAID officers, working with local staff, have really taken on helping the Uzbek Government to tackle trafficking-in-persons, and we are making real progress, and I thank you for that. Others of you are helping to grow more food here, helping young people get jobs and economic experience. And we, of course, are very grateful to our Marine Guard detail.

So I thank all of you, and particularly the children who got up early and got dressed up and brought in for this occasion. And I am especially grateful to our local staff, our American and Uzbek alike. You are part of this team. And the Uzbek staff is absolutely instrumental in everything that we do. I know that this is not sometimes an easy post, and all of you, American and Uzbek alike, work under some difficult stresses, but you consistently operate at the highest levels.

So I wanted to come by personally, see this beautiful atrium, and to thank you and let you know how much what you do is valued back in Washington. And now, I'd like to say hello to as many people as I can, and enjoy the rest of your Sunday. Thank you. (Applause.)

launching the CRDF Central Asian Technology Entrepreneurship Program. This program will award a \$20,000 techno prize to eight individual entrepreneurs. One of the eight will be selected to travel to Silicon Valley, in California, and have the

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Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks at the new GM Powertrain plant. (U.S. Embassy photo)

New GM Plant Visited by U.S. Secretary of State

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U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton sits behind the wheel of a new Chevrolet Spark at the General Motors Powertrain-Uzbekistan factory in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on October 23, 2011. (U.S. Embassy photo)

opportunity to meet with potential investors and learn more about marketing his or her technology.

The program aims to help train the next generation of entrepreneurs and foster a culture of technology-centered development in Uzbekistan and throughout the Central Asian region. Secretary Clinton noted that the U.S. prizes entrepreneurship and wants to “encourage it here in Uzbekistan,” which would provide Uzbekistan with more tools to help the country take an even greater advantage of the global marketplace.

Before heading back to Washington, Secretary Clinton congratulated GM Uzbekistan on being named a finalist for the State Department’s 2011 Award for Corporate Excellence and thanked GM Uzbekistan for making such a “wonderful partnership.” To commemorate the partnership, she signed an engine block that will be permanently displayed at the factory.

Remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at GM Plant

GM Plant, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. October 23, 2011

Well, please, everyone be seated and good day to you. Thank you for being here and for touring this magnificent, impressive new factory facility. I’m pleased to be here with Foreign Minister Ganiyev and also want to acknowledge Mr. Rosu Pulof, chairman of GM’s Uzbek partner company, and to thank Juergen Spendel, general director of GM, and all of the distinguished guests. I also would like to thank the American Chamber of Commerce in Tashkent and the American-Uzbekistan Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC for all of your efforts to promote trade and economic ties between our two countries.

This plant is a joint venture from top to bottom with all of the newest, most advanced technology. It is a collaboration between Uzbek and American companies, and it will serve as a symbol of our friendship and cooperation. We place a priority on shared ventures like this plant. It was designed by Uzbek and American engineers and architects working together. It was built to be environmentally responsible for the local community. In fact, GM’s water purification technology will ensure the water is cleaner when it leaves the factory than when it entered.

GM’s global manufacturing processes will be carried out by skilled Uzbek workers using locally sourced components, ultimately adding over 1,000 new jobs for Uzbeks. And the use of American machinery and technology as well as the revenues created from the annual production of more than 225,000 new power-trained engines will also support jobs in the United States for Americans. GM’s presence here in Uzbekistan adds to our efforts to build closer economic connections between ourselves and the countries of South and Central Asia. And today, I am proud to announce that the State Department and the non-profit organization CRDF Global are launching the Central Asian Technology Entrepreneurship Program. This program will help train the next generation of entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan and foster a culture of technology-centered development here and

throughout the region. Eight entrepreneurs will each be awarded a \$20,000 techno prize, and one of the eight will be selected to travel to Silicon Valley, meet with potential investors, and prepare their technology for the marketplace.

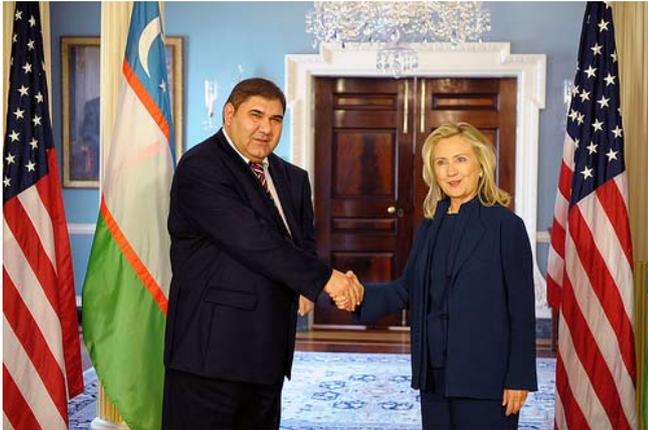
This is a fitting place to launch this prize because Uzbekistan has a proud history of science and innovation. Many noble scientists and scholars were born and worked in this region, even the father of algebra, and your young people are full of talent and energy. Entrepreneurship is a core value for my country, and we want to encourage it here in Uzbekistan. We believe in order to take even a greater advantage of the global marketplace, Uzbekistan needs to continue its reforms in rule of law, democracy, and human rights. And I’d like to congratulate GM Uzbekistan on being named a finalist for the State Department’s 2011 Award for Corporate Excellence. So thank you very much for this wonderful partnership, and I look forward to hearing about the great results.

Thank you all. (Applause.)



Secretary Clinton signs an engine block accompanied by General Director of GM Powertrain Uzbekistan Juergen Spendel. (U.S. Embassy photo)

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Meets with Uzbek Foreign Minister Elyor Ganiev



Secretary of State Clinton Greeted Uzbek Foreign Minister Ganiev at the State Department. (U.S. Embassy photo)

On September 29, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with Uzbek Foreign Minister Elyor Ganiev in Washington, DC to discuss bilateral relations. Secretary Clinton reiterated the importance of the talks: “We value our relationship with Uzbekistan... [and] we believe that our continuing dialogue with officials of the government is essential.”

Before the meeting began, Clinton welcomed Ganiev and emphasized the importance of the talks: “I’m delighted to

welcome Foreign Minister Ganiev here to Washington. We are working well and closely together with Uzbekistan on a number of issues, and this gives us an opportunity to discuss matters of importance between our two nations, as well as regional issues.” Foreign Minister Ganiev responded by thanking Secretary Clinton for the opportunity to discuss a number of issues affecting both countries.

During a press briefing at the Department of State, Clinton noted that Uzbekistan has played a key role in providing supply routes to Afghanistan and in helping the efforts to reconstruct Afghanistan: “[Uzbekistan and its government] have been very helpful to us with respect to the Northern Distribution Network.

They have also been helpful with Afghanistan in terms of reconstruction. They are deeply involved in assisting Afghans and the Afghan government to try to rebuild and make Afghanistan a prosperous, peaceful country.”

While human rights issues and political freedoms issues in Uzbekistan remain of concern to the U.S., Clinton noted: “we are working with the Uzbeks to make progress, and we are seeing signs of that.” Overall, she emphasized the United States’ desire to deepen its relationship with Uzbekistan “on all issues.”

Ambassador Krol Speaks at American Chamber of Commerce Meeting

On October 27, U.S. Ambassador George Krol spoke at the monthly meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in Uzbekistan.

He presented a comprehensive overview of current U.S.-Uzbek relations to AmCham members and representatives of the international diplomatic community in Tashkent.

In his presentation, the U.S. Ambassador stressed Uzbekistan’s central role in the region and explained that the U.S. is pursuing a multifaceted approach to its relationship with Uzbekistan.

The U.S. wants this approach to be as transparent as possible to the local businesses and international communities.

As U.S. political and business leaders become more familiar with Uzbekistan, they will be better able to identify more possibilities for mutually beneficial cooperation.

For instance, while security cooperation is vitally important to the future of the Central Asian region as a whole – and of Afghanistan in particular – Ambassador Krol noted that there are also opportunities for cooperation in eco-

nomics, science and technology, and the social spheres.

The U.S. Ambassador highlighted the usefulness of personal interaction across all issues, such as parliamentary exchanges and visits by business delegations.

He specifically cited the visits made by Secretary Clinton and staffers from the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations as recent examples.

In following with this line of thinking, Ambassador Krol emphasized the importance of getting out of the capital and seeing all Uzbekistan’s regions, which he hopes to do himself.



George A. Krol, U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Uzbek Jazz Guitarist Goes to U.S. to Study at Prestigious Music School



Jazz guitarist Michael Danilov and his Silk Road roots. (Photo courtesy of Shukhrat Kamalov)

After receiving some help from the U.S. Embassy's Educational Advising Center (EAC), Uzbek jazz guitarist Michael Danilov traveled to Boston, Massachusetts to begin his studies at the Berklee College of Music. Berklee is world-renowned for the study of contemporary music, making it the ideal place for an aspiring jazz musician.

Seven years ago, Danilov's brother Alex, a pianist who currently plays with the People's Artist in Moscow, introduced him to jazz. Although Danilov had begun his guitar career playing rock music, he quickly decided to concentrate on jazz, which is known for its use of improvisation.

Danilov studied at the Tashkent State Conservatory of Music but felt he needed to continue his education. Even though he was accepted into Berklee's Professional Diploma Program after his March 2011 audition, Berklee was not always a tangible concept to the Uzbek musician.

Berklee started as a fantasy: "It was my dream to be there, but at first it was an unrealistic dream," says Danilov. "I just thought about it like every child wants to be an astronaut. It was an unreal dream, but who can stop you from dreaming?"

One of the first steps toward realizing his dream was to learn English. At an international jazz festival in Astana, Kazakhstan, in 2006, Danilov felt his inability to speak English acutely.

While at the festival, he met trumpeter and Grammy winner Randy Brecker; because Danilov did not know English, he was unable to talk with the musician. Realizing he could never attend school in the United States without knowing the language, Danilov began taking lessons.

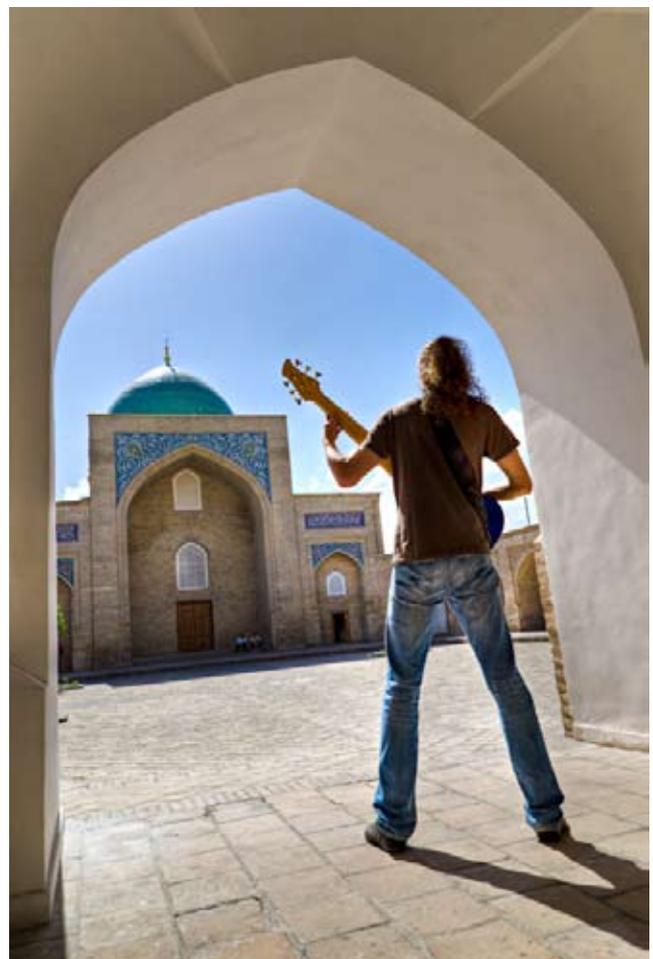
Even after deciding to enroll at Berklee, Danilov faced difficulties in making Berklee a reality. Berklee had offered him a partial scholarship but he had to find funding for the remainder of the tuition. Danilov sought out the

EAC for help and advice. Sharifa Djurabaeva, the Educational Advisor at the EAC, assisted Danilov in obtaining information about additional scholarship opportunities. She worked with him, sending him helpful websites and relevant scholarship material. She even contacted Berklee directly to learn more about the partial scholarship he was receiving.

Danilov notes that he was very late in preparing all of his documents and contacting the EAC. However, he felt that even the help he received from Djurabaeva and the EAC in such a short time was invaluable:

"Of course I thought it would be really good if we had started working with the education center much earlier. I saw how she worked with me so I could just imagine how much she worked with other students who had just started preparing."

Although the EAC helped Danilov toward the end of his preparations, the center is available to students during the entire process. It provides up-to-date information about higher education in the United States through advisors, college databases, test preparation materials, financial aid resources, guides and supporting reference materials.



(Photo by Shukhrat Kamalov © 2011)

Paul Poletes Leads a Chai Chat on the New Silk Road Initiative

On October 28, Paul Poletes, the Deputy Director of the Office of Central Asian Affairs, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, led a Chai Chat on the New Silk Road initiative. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton first mentioned the initiative while in Chennai, India earlier last year.

Poletes gave a general introduction to the New Silk Road initiative and then allowed the audience to ask specific questions, which allowed Poletes to elaborate on aspects of the initiative that were of interest to those present.

The aim of the New Silk Road is to better link Central Asia to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, with the goal that this would help stability, economic development and energy security in both Afghanistan and the wider region. Although the initiative was announced by the U.S., the idea originates with the Government of Afghanistan's own development plan, which includes Afghan efforts to reintegrate with its neighbors and become a kind of transit and trade hub between Central and South Asia.

At the moment, Afghanistan is isolated and cut off from its neighbors and better integration would help the entire region. Specifically, the New Silk Road includes a number of infrastructure projects inside Afghanistan. The estimated cost of these projects is \$30 billion, and while the U.S. will provide some support, it is hoped that international financial institutions and other donors will provide the bulk of the funds.

It is important to note that, according to Poletes, the New Silk Road is "not just a list of projects but a new way of thinking about Afghanistan and the wider region." While projects like building better roads are necessary, it is the overarching idea of bolstering reintegration through trade and conversation along the New Silk Road that is essential.

For instance, in 2014, a big change will occur when U.S. troops pull out of Afghanistan. The more Afghanistan is able to trade with its neighbors, the better position it will be in to become self-sustainable. Poletes mentioned that many are skeptical about the success of a regional approach. Acknowledging this, he emphasized that many countries in the region are already pursuing bilateral projects with Afghanistan - projects that support the

New Silk Road vision and increase regional integration.

One example of an existing bilateral tie is that of Uzbekistan providing electricity to Kabul. The initiative seeks to promote mutually beneficial connections like this one, connections that will allow Afghanistan to be an active player in the region. Afghanistan can become better integrated through increased trade with its neighbors – including Uzbekistan.

It is important that Afghanistan becomes stable and self-sufficient: instability can easily spill over the borders into neighboring countries, no country wants to continually support another and no country wants to depend on foreign aid.

Thirty countries have been invited to a conference about the New Silk Road in Istanbul. The point of this conference is to talk about the concept rather than to agree on a hard plan for the initiative. The latter will receive more attention at a follow-up conference set to take place in Bonn.

While the New Silk Road initiative comes from the Government of Afghanistan's five-year plan, it is important for the entire Central Asian region, as it can improve the economic integration and prosperity of all involved countries.

Prior to becoming the Deputy Director of the Office of Central Asian Affairs, Poletes was head of the Political-Economic section at the U.S. Embassy in Tirana, Albania. He worked in the Political section in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from 2003-2006. Additionally, he has worked in Greece and Bangladesh and as the Montenegro Desk Officer at the Department of State in Washington, DC.



Paul Poletes gives a general introduction to the New Silk Road initiative to the Chai Chat audience at the U.S. Embassy. (U.S. Embassy photo)

U.S. NGO Fundraising Expert Michael Wells Works with Civil Society Representatives in Uzbekistan



Michael Wells conducts a workshop in Tashkent. (U.S. Embassy photo)

The U.S. Embassy welcomed Michael Wells, principal consultant at Grants Northwest, on September 18. His ten-day visit to Uzbekistan was made possible through the U.S. State Department's U.S. Speaker and Specialist program, which enables U.S. specialists to share expertise with overseas audiences by acting as consultants, presenting lectures and conducting workshops and seminars.

During his time in Uzbekistan, Wells led workshops in Tashkent and travelled to Urgench and Nukus to provide field consultations to NGO activists in the regions. He began his trip by leading a full-day fundraising workshop for representatives of more than 30 NGOs from all regions of Uzbekistan.

The workshop was organized to increase the knowledge and capabilities of the selected NGO representatives on various aspects of resource mobilization. Additionally, Wells gave a half-day workshop on project design for U.S. Government Exchange Program alumni.

Workshop sessions included discussions and exercises on needs assessment, project impact, positioning, project development, logical models and budget drafting. The workshop also aimed to establish a group of trainers throughout the country who will be able to help other NGO activists in the regions to increase their grant writing skills.

While speaking to NGO representatives, Wells engaged participants in analytical work and project development activities. Over the course of the seminar, participants discussed various topics of project design, from the problem statement to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

In Urgench and Nukus, Wells had the opportunity to provide consultations and feedback to NGO representatives on ways to empower their project ideas, generate income to sustain NGO activities and gather data.

While visiting the Society of Disabled Children in Urgench, Wells generated ideas on how the organization can establish a business unit to provide computer services for the local community and to assist in creating jobs for young people living with disabilities.

Hosting visitors who can provide technical assistance by sharing their expertise is one of the many ways in which the U.S. Embassy supports the development of civil society in Uzbekistan.

Wells also teaches grant writing at Portland State University and has extensive expertise in resource mobilization for non-profit organizations in the U.S. On a national level, he is a former board member of the American Association of Grant Professionals where he was treasurer for four years and chaired the 2002 national conference in Portland. He is a past board member and president of the Grant Professionals Certification Institute where he was heavily involved in developing the GPC certification process.



Attendees listen to a presentation during a workshop. (U.S. Embassy photo)

U.S. Librarian Claudia Weston Lectures on Digital Libraries and E-catalogs



Claudia Weston lectures to a group of librarians. (U.S. Embassy photo)

Claudia Weston, the Government Information Librarian at the Portland State University Library, gave lectures about strengthening libraries in Uzbekistan October 7-13. She conducted seminars in Tashkent, Samarkand, Urgench and Ferghana, focusing on digital libraries and electronic catalogs.

Her visit was part of the U.S. Department of State's American Speaker Program, which arranges for U.S. experts to travel to other countries to share their knowledge.

While in Tashkent, Weston met with the leaders of the National Library of Uzbekistan and the Republican Information and Library Center. She also led a full-day seminar for directors and senior staff of libraries and information resource centers.

At the seminars in Tashkent and the regions of Samarkand, Khorezm and Ferghana, Weston also took time after her formal presentations to discuss general library management practices.

In all, more than 170 Uzbek library directors and staff attended seminars across the country. In Ferghana alone, there were 62 participants at the six-and-a-half hour program. The majority of the audience was comprised of library directors, deputy directors and technical staff.

Weston's visit came just after Uzbek librarians had begun work on local electronic catalogs and a national union catalog. Thus, while many attending the seminars were aware of digital libraries and e-catalogs, through Weston's presentations, they were able to learn more about American and international models and best practices.

During all of her lectures, Weston made note of the emphasis libraries in the United States place on cooperating and sharing their resources. She cited many examples and suggested that libraries in Uzbekistan could benefit from doing the same.

Collaboration is facilitated by the use of digital libraries – managed collections of digital files – and e-catalogs. These resources have many benefits over traditional libraries and catalogs. For example, e-catalogs are easier to maintain and are more user-friendly for both library staff and patrons.

In addition to holding extensive question and answer sessions, Weston provided all attendees with her contact information so they could continue to ask her questions even after her departure from Uzbekistan.

The Government of Uzbekistan has recently taken initiative to increase development of the country's library system, of which the new National Library of Uzbekistan building in Tashkent is a physical manifestation. Weston is the second American speaker to address the topic of libraries in Uzbekistan, as Hanna Szczepanowska from the Smithsonian Institution visited and spoke about museums and libraries in August of last year.

Weston has been in the library profession for 30 years. She began her career at the National Agricultural Library and has been at the Portland State University Library for ten years.

Currently, her specialty is in curating and providing access to state and federal information resources. She also plays an active role in the Government Information Online program, which is an e-mail and chat service available to anyone worldwide.



Dr. Weston receives flowers and Uzbek figurines as tokens of thanks. (U.S. Embassy photo)

U.S. Embassy Hosts Yalla Concert for 10th Daniel Pearl World Music Days



Yalla performs at the 10th annual Daniel Pearl World Music Days concert on October 7. (U.S. Embassy photo)

The U.S. Embassy observed the 10th annual Daniel Pearl World Music Days with a concert featuring the legendary Uzbek group Yalla on October 7. U.S. Ambassador George Krol opened the concert with remarks in both English and Uzbek, welcoming the crowd and thanking and introducing Yalla.

Keeping the intent of the Daniel Pearl World Music Days concept in mind, Ambassador Krol told the crowd: “Your presence here this afternoon is witness to the fact that music has the power to create channels of communication and connections between people of different cultures.”



Jasur Mirsagatov sings at the Daniel Pearl World Music Days concert, accompanied by dancers from the Sanam Ensemble. (U.S. Embassy photo)

As a journalist, Pearl committed his life to investigating and uncovering the unbiased facts behind stories. As a musician, he sought to use music unite humanity against violence. Thousands of concerts have been held around the world each October since the founding of the Daniel Pearl World Music Days 10 years ago, all advocating tolerance and celebrating a shared human existence. This was U.S. Embassy Tashkent’s second year participating in World Music Days. In 2010, a crowd of 600 enjoyed an energetic performance by pop singer Yulduz Usmonova. 2011’s concert proved to be even more popular with more than 900 people in attendance at the

U.S. Embassy. The audience was comprised of people of all ages, from grandparents to babies and everyone in between. As was evident by the singing and dancing crowd present, Yalla appeals to multiple generations of Uzbeks. In fact, 2011 marks the band’s 40th anniversary, which made their performance even more memorable.

Yalla was a very appropriate choice for last year’s concert due to their great popularity throughout Uzbekistan and the rest of Central Asia and their role as cultural icons. Over the past four decades, the members of Yalla have served as cultural ambassadors to meetings and festivals across the globe, thus demonstrating the unique property of music that brings people together despite differences.



Honored Artist of Uzbekistan Sevara Nazarkhan sings at the Daniel Pearl World Music Days concert. (U.S. Embassy photo)

A number of other artists performed at last year’s show, as well, to honor Yalla for their years of hard work and their subsequent success and inspiration. Other entertainers at the concert included the People’s Artists of Uzbekistan Mansur Toshmatov and Roshana Sultonova, the Honored Artists of Uzbekistan Shuhrat Vohidov and Sevara Nazarkhan, Jasur Mirsagatov and the Sanam Dance Ensemble.



The Sanam Ensemble dances to Yalla’s music at the concert. (U.S. Embassy photo)

NASA Readies Vehicle for Mars Mission



An artist created this view of the Curiosity rover surveying the surface of Mars. The spacecraft is set to launch in late November, arriving at Mars in August. (Photo courtesy of NASA)

The United States is preparing to send another exploratory vehicle to the planet Mars, the “largest and most complex piece of equipment to ever be placed on the surface of another planet,” said the director of the Mars exploration program, Doug McCuistion. The Mars Science Laboratory (MSL), to be launched in coming weeks, is “truly a wonder in engineering,” McCuistion said at a press briefing.

MSL marks a new generation of vehicles with much greater capabilities in a 20-year plan to study Mars. The rover weighs about 900 kilograms and is 2 meters tall. McCuistion said, “We have ever increasing payloads, we’ve got more accurate landing capabilities, we’ve got longer-lived systems on the planet with nuclear power, and we’ve got state-of-the art instruments aboard.”

MSL is the successor to Opportunity and Spirit, twin rovers that NASA landed on Mars in 2004. They completed a three-month primary mission that year, but continued to slowly explore the planet, returning images of the Martian surface to NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California. Spirit ceased returning data in 2010, but Opportunity still serves as an eye on Mars for the scientists who built the craft.

The MSL mission will arrive at Mars in eight months and will deploy the rover Curiosity to explore Gale Crater, which, according to orbital observations of the planet, may have had an environment capable of supporting life in the past. That is the rover’s main mission, McCuistion said, “to try and understand if it was ever habitable.”

Spirit and Opportunity paved the way for Curiosity’s mission with their discoveries that wet environments did exist on ancient Mars, but which of those formerly wet spots may have indeed supported life? The new rover will gather data to answer that question, said Mars scientist Ashwin Vasavada. “This mission is setting us up for the time when we actually go to do the search for life,” he said. “You have to understand pretty much about Mars to understand where to go to do those experiments.”

While the planetary mission of MSL is the primary goal, the job of getting the rig to the fourth planet from our sun will be no

small achievement either. In fact, the mission depends on three vehicles, said MSL Project Manager Pete Theisinger. “There is the vehicle that gets you to Mars. There is the vehicle that actually penetrates the atmosphere and goes through the entry, descent and landing portion of the mission; and then there is the rover that eventually gets deposited on the surface.”

McCuistion said the mission relies on the best in U.S. imagination and innovation with support from partners in France, Canada, Germany, Russia and Spain. Vasavada said the rover Curiosity will provide a “virtual presence” on Mars for more than 200 scientists around the world, using 10 different scientific instruments to survey the landscape, collect samples from the surface, analyze the chemical composition of the Martian soil, and provide weather data.

“The crowning achievement,” Vasavada said, is the capability “to drill into rocks and capture material from the inside of rocks, which we’ve never done before on Mars.” After a rock sample is drilled, Curiosity’s robotic arm will deliver the sample to sophisticated instruments in the roving laboratory that will analyze the elements in the sample and test for any organic matter.

The MSL mission is designed to help scientists understand how Mars might have supported life, but it will also help international science teams understand the capabilities they must reach to support a human presence on the planet. McCuistion said the MSL effort has already led to greater precision in targeting landing sites and greater capabilities to land larger payloads and handle samples robotically. Improving technology in all these areas will lead to another generation of equipment to support a human mission to Mars.

The three vehicles are stacked and positioned on a launch pad at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The window to launch begins November 25 and extends to December 18. After the craft arrives at the Red Planet in August, it will have a primary mission lasting one Martian year, which is almost two Earth years.



An artist depicts the descent of the spacecraft carrying the Curiosity rover to the Martian surface. (Photo courtesy of NASA)



The State of Montana – the Treasure State



Montana is the northernmost state in the Great Plains – Rocky Mountain region of the United States and the nation's fourth largest state. It is 861 km from east to west and 443 km from north to south. On the north at the 49th parallel, Montana borders Canada. The name, of Latin origin, means "mountainous region." The nicknames "Treasure State" and "Big Sky Country" suggest Montana's resources, clear atmosphere, and vast distances.



With the peaks of the Rocky Mountain Front range in the background, a herd of antelope walk on a ridge between near Great Falls, Montana. (AP Photo/Great Falls Tribune, Robin Loznak)

The major rivers east of the Rocky Mountains are the Missouri River and the Yellowstone River. The major river in northwest Montana is the Clark Fork, a tributary of the Columbia River. Flathead Lake is Montana's largest natural lake.

West of the Rocky Mountains winters are a little milder and summers are cooler. The mountains of western Montana lie in the path of warm Pacific winds and also protect western Montana against cold air masses from the Canadian Arctic.

PEOPLE

Montana is the nation's fourth largest state, yet it has no major cities. The state's small population is unevenly distributed. People cluster in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains in the west and along the rivers and railroads in the east.

Many of today's Montanans are descended from early miners and ranchers. More recently small communities of African and Hispanic Americans, as well as Laotian and Vietnamese, have developed in the largest cities. About 6 percent of the population are Native Americans, who have inhabited Montana for about 12,000 years.

HISTORY

The members of the Lewis and Clark expedition were the first Europeans to cross into Montana on April 28, 1805. In the following decades fur traders thoroughly explored the region. In 1862 gold was discovered at Grasshopper Creek. Other metals, especially silver and copper, were discovered and mined.

On May 26, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill creating the new territory of Montana out of the larger Idaho Territory. After 25 years as a territory Montana became the 41st state on November 8, 1889.

The opening of the West to white settlement caused great conflict with Native Americans. Many Native Americans died from foreign diseases. The new settlers killed vast numbers of bison, which threatened to destroy the food supply on the plains. Tensions increased when the army attempted to restrict the Native Americans to reservations. In June 1876 Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer and five companies of the U.S. Seventh Cavalry were killed by Sioux and Northern Cheyenne warriors on the banks of the Little Bighorn River (a tributary of the Bighorn River). The following year, while attempting to escape a reservation, a band of Nez Percé led by the great Chief Joseph was captured in the mountains of northern Montana. By the 1880s most of Montana's Native Americans were confined to reservations.

After World War II (1939-45) Montana lost thousands of jobs in mining, logging, agriculture, and energy. An energy crisis in the 1970s produced a boom by increasing the value of the state's oil and coal resources. In the 1980s falling copper prices led to the closing of most of the state's mines.

Montana today is rapidly changing. Mining, timber, agriculture, and energy are still important, but they employ fewer workers. More people are moving to the mountains, seeking natural beauty, privacy, and recreational opportunities.



Julie Harpole combines wheat on her father Rick Golie's farm north of Great Falls, Montana. (AP Photo/Great Falls Tribune, Robin Loznak)

ECONOMY

Traditionally, cattle ranching, wheat farming, and mining for copper, lead, and zinc were Montana's chief sources of income. They continue to be important, but in the last half of the 20th century services began to produce more income. The production of lumber and wood products, such as paper, is Montana's leading manufacturing industry.



This is a Sept. 1995 file photo of idle oil drill jacks lined up in a field north of Kevin, Montana. New discoveries in neighboring North Dakota, tax breaks by the state legislature, along with updated technology are the main reason oilmen are looking to Montana for sources of black gold.(AP Photo/The Great Falls Tribune,Stuart S.White)

RECREATION

Montana has an exceptional diversity of recreational and spectator activities, available under federal, state, or local auspices.

Glacier National Park contains some of the nation’s most spectacular mountain scenery, set among more than 50 glaciers and 200 lakes. In few other places are glaciers so accessible to visitors. The Going-to-the-Sun Road, affording incomparable vistas, crosses the Continental Divide. Hundreds of miles of horseback or foot trails lead into an interior filled with a variety of flora and fauna. Glacier National Park, on the Canadian border, adjoins Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta.

Two sites marking tragic encounters between Indians and whites have been preserved. Big Hole Battlefield National Monument preserves the scene of the clash in 1877 between the U.S. Army and fleeing Nez Percé Indians led by Chief Joseph. The Nez Percé Indians won a costly victory that slowed their ultimately unsuccessful attempt to escape to Canada. Custer Battlefield National Monument preserves the area where Lieutenant Colonel George Custer and more than 200

of his men were killed in 1876 in a battle with Sioux and Cheyenne Indians. A separate unit nearby marks the battleground where two of Custer’s subordinates and their troops averted annihilation. The extensive terrain of the Custer battlefield provides an exceptional opportunity for a visitor to study frontier military tactics and relive an epic event.

The ten national forests within Montana provide abundant opportunities for hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, hiking, snow-shoeing, swimming, boating, photography, and nature study. A number of roadless areas have been added to the nation’s roster of wilderness and primitive areas.

Sources:

- <http://mt.gov>
- <http://factfinder.census.gov>
- <http://www.50states.com>
- Grolier Student Encyclopedia, V.11
- Encyclopedia Americana, V.19



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

QUICK FACTS

Abbreviation: MT

Capital City: Helena

Governor: Brian Schweitzer

Date of Statehood: November 8, 1889 (41st state)

Population: 974,989; 44th largest

Area: 380,849 sq. km; 4th largest

Origin of State’s Name: Based on Spanish word for “mountainous”

Largest Cities: Billings, Missoula, Great Falls, Butte, Bozeman, Helena, Kalispell, Havre, Anaconda, Miles City

Economy:

Agriculture: Cattle, wheat, barley, sugar beets, hay, hogs

Industry: Mining, lumber and wood products, food processing, tourism



The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Montana. (AP Photo/Beth A. Keiser)

U.S. Embassy Hosts First Sports Envoy Program with Marty Conlon



Sports Envoy Marty Conlon shows participants what to do during a dribbling exercise. (U.S. Embassy photo)

The U.S. Embassy hosted Sports Envoy Martin Conlon, a former professional basketball player and National Basketball Association (NBA) employee, from September 20-29. During his time in Uzbekistan, Conlon conducted basketball clinics for coaches, professionals, children and aspiring male and female athletes across the country.

Marty's trip included stops in Samarkand, Bukhara, Navoi and Tashkent. In each city he conducted clinics and workshops. The events were sponsored by the U.S. Embassy, as well as the Basketball Federation, the Development Fund of Children's Sport, the Olympic Committee and the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Uzbekistan.

Marty kicked off his first clinic in Samarkand, where he worked with more than 100 children – training them in basic basketball techniques. He later worked with coaches and had the opportunity to explore the historical sites in Samarkand.

He then headed to Navoi and had the opportunity to work with children, coaches and professional male and female athletes. Marty particularly enjoyed working with the Navoi women's professional team. According to Marty,



Marty poses outside with a banner about his visit. (U.S. Embassy photo)

the women were both talented and hard-working with a great enthusiasm for basketball.

After working with children in Bukhara, Marty returned to Tashkent for the 20th Independence Basketball Cup. He also met with Uzbekistani journalists for a press conference, had a special presentation for students at the U.S. Embassy and worked with a high school team on basketball basics.

On Monday, September 26, the U.S. Embassy held a special reception in honor of the former NBA player's visit. In his opening remarks, Ambassador George Krol thanked Conlon for his hard work and stated that although this was the first U.S. Sports Envoy in Uzbekistan, he hoped it would be the first of many.

Marty currently travels the globe for the NBA as the Manager of International Operations. Before joining the



Marty yells out a call during a clinic in Navoi. (U.S. Embassy photo)

NBA as a staff member, he played collegiate basketball for Providence College, where he went to the NCAA Final Four in 1987. Upon graduation he played as a professional player for a number of teams in the NBA, including the Miami Heat and the Milwaukee Bucks. Following his last season in the NBA, Conlon played professional basketball in Italy, Greece, Spain and Ireland, where he captained the Irish National Team.

Sports have a unique ability to break down barriers and promote cooperation and understanding between different people and cultures.

The Sports Envoy Program allowed the U.S. Embassy to reach out to Uzbek communities in Tashkent and around the country, and aimed to increase positive relations, teach basketball skills and promote the importance of sports.

Due to the success and popularity of Conlon's visit as Sports Envoy, the U.S. Embassy is looking forward to continuing the program and hosting more athletes in the future.

U.S. Embassy Holds Successful Fourth Annual American Film Festival



Moviegoers look at the film festival banner. (U.S. Embassy photo)

On October 8 and 9, the U.S. Embassy held its fourth annual American film festival at the Council of Friendship Societies of Uzbekistan in Tashkent. Last year's film festival was organized in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence, and more than 1,000 people viewed six movies over the course of the weekend.

Public Affairs Officer Brian Penn gave opening remarks in Russian on Saturday evening, where he welcomed the crowd and thanked the Council of Friendship Societies of Uzbekistan and Uzbekkino for their help.

Mr. Saidahrar Gulyamov, the head of the Council of Friendship Societies of Uzbekistan, also spoke, highlighting the cooperation between the U.S. Embassy and the Council of Friendship Societies of Uzbekistan that has made the film festival possible each year.

Films chosen for last year's festival included the musical "My Fair Lady" (1964), the cartoon "Fantastic Mr. Fox" (2009), the classic "Citizen Kane" (1941), the western "Once Upon a Time in the West" (1968), the comedy "As Good as it Gets" (1997) and the drama "The Mighty" (1998). All movies were shown in English with Russian subtitles, except for "Once Upon a Time in the West" and "The Mighty," which were shown with English subtitles.

"The Mighty" was the closing film of the festival and was chosen in part because it deals with mental and physical disabilities and October is

National Disabilities Awareness Month.

Before the screening of each movie, Public Affairs staff conducted a quiz in either English or Russian — depending on the makeup of the audience — on themes of that particular movie. The person with the first correct answer to each question was rewarded with a book of American fiction.

Additionally, three people received DVDs and U.S. Embassy hats for their correct responses to the film festival quiz conducted by the U.S. Embassy on its Facebook page the week leading up to the festival.

At the final movie showing on Sunday, Cultural Affairs Officer Greta Gromovich made closing remarks, thanking everyone for attending and making the American film festival successful once again. In fact, the festival was so successful that one moviegoer asked, "Can't the U.S. Embassy organize this kind of film festival twice a year?"

Another commented: "That was so exciting! Thank you all for organizing such an amazing festival. Beautiful films and great opportunities that you gave us not only to improve our knowledge and English but also to help us make friends! We want to participate further in such events."

Not only does the festival allow people to view American films in a fun, friendly atmosphere, but it also gives Uzbek audiences the opportunity to view American culture and tradition onscreen, which promotes mutual understanding and respect between the U.S. and Uzbekistan.



PAO Brian Penn delivers opening remarks to a crowded theater. (U.S. Embassy photo)

USAID Celebrates 50th Anniversary



A visit to the intensive peach orchard plot in Kuvasay District, Ferghana Province, October 15, 2011. (Photo courtesy of USAID)

U.S. Ambassador George A. Krol, along with USAID Country Representative John A. Pennell, USAID staff and other members of the U.S. Embassy Team, celebrated USAID's 50th Anniversary on November 3rd. The celebration came following U.S. Secretary of State Clinton's visit to Tashkent – which included a stop at the Women's Wellness Center, a former USAID beneficiary that is now a fully self-sustaining national center of excellence for women's health – and the visit of Denise Rollins, USAID's Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia, and Erin E. McKee, USAID's Regional Mission Director for Central Asia.

During their visit, Ms. Rollins and Mrs. McKee held a press conference at the U.S. Embassy on USAID's history and current projects in Uzbekistan, and visited partners in Tashkent and the Ferghana Valley to see firsthand the impact of U.S. Government assistance in improving livelihoods.

At the press conference, Ms. Rollins spoke about successes USAID has had over the past half-century and the growing importance of its work. She noted that USAID is becoming a modern development enterprise, and is no longer a traditional aid agency, with its spirit of entrepreneurship and results-based approach to development. In 1961, USAID was created when U.S. President John F. Kennedy recognized the need to unite development into a single agency to increase impact and expertise. Over the past 50 years, USAID has been unobtrusively cultivating a more peaceful and secure world.

USAID in Uzbekistan

Since 1993, the American people have provided over \$330 million in development assistance through USAID in cooperation with the Government of Uzbekistan, the private sector and civil society. In Uzbekistan, USAID support has focused primarily on activities in economic growth, investing in people, and governing justly and democratically. USAID has helped Uzbekistan strengthen its central bank, establish the legal environment for private sector growth and adopt international accounting standards for greater transparency of business transactions. Additionally, farmers have improved their irrigation networks and on-farm water efficiency by up to 60%. In 2010 alone, USAID introduced over 1,200 farmers to new production techniques, which nearly tripled crop productivity and stimulated a five- to ten-fold in-

crease in sales. Through programs focused on investing in people, USAID provided technical assistance for the nationwide implementation of activities related to high-quality primary health care, evidence-based medicine, and per-capita financing, where health facilities received funding based on the number of patients they serve. The per-capita system now finances 3,200 rural primary health care facilities – almost the entire rural primary health care sector. Eighteen hospitals across the country have been certified as baby friendly, and nearly 400,000 women have improved their child care and health practices.

USAID also helped to expand access to education for children with disabilities, who are frequently disenfranchised from society, through support for community-based and institutional care. USAID's programs related to governing justly and democratically have enhanced the ability of civil society leaders to engage with the government on critical civic issues, helped political groups to improve communication with constituents, and strengthen the capacity of organizations addressing women's issues, rights of the disabled and the environment.

In addition, USAID programs enabled Uzbek Members of Parliament to visit members of the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C. to learn more about American governance, and improved the health awareness and conflict-resolution capacity of over 1,000 at-risk youth. USAID also assisted Uzbekistan's response to trafficking in persons by increasing public awareness of the issue and building the capacity of local organizations to provide protection and reintegration services for over 3,000 victims of trafficking. Lastly, during the June 2010 crisis, USAID-provided emergency health kits supported 100,000 Uzbek refugees from the Kyrgyz conflict.

At present, USAID manages a number of projects in Uzbekistan that focus on enhancing capacity for transparent and inclusive governance, increasing sustainable economic prosperity through agriculture, reducing health pandemics and human trafficking and improving management of water and energy resources.



Small-scale processing training for women-householders in Tarakurgan District, Namangan Province, October 12, 2011. (Photo courtesy of USAID)

In recognition of USAID's 50th anniversary, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden delivered keynote remarks along with USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah and special guest Caroline Kennedy at USAID headquarters in Washington, DC. Read more about that event at <http://50.usaid.gov/events/november3rd> and about USAID's 50 years at <http://50.usaid.gov>.

For further information on USAID and its projects in Uzbekistan, please visit USAID's Central Asian site (<http://centralasia.usaid.gov/uzbekistan>).

USAID Expands Assistance to Agriculture



The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has launched the next phase of its support to Uzbekistan's agriculture sector: the four-year, \$12 million "Agricultural Linkages Plus" (AgLinks Plus) project. This project follows on and expands the activities of its predecessor—the "AgLinks" Project. USAID's AgLinks Plus will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR) under the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

In recent years, the world market for food products has witnessed steady growth in demand for many types of fruits and vegetables (F&V). Uzbekistan has significant production and export potential in F&V production and processing. The Government of Uzbekistan has adopted a number of reforms targeting increased development of the F&V sector through enhanced competitiveness.

USAID's AgLinks Plus will undertake a holistic "value-chain" approach in promoting F&V and will expand coverage to 26 districts in 6 provinces (including to Andijan, Bukhara, and Tashkent). Previous activities based in Samarkand, Namangan and Ferghana provinces supported production, processing and marketing of stone fruits, pome fruits and grapes and will continue under the extended project.

Under USAID's AgLinks Plus, subtropical and nut tree crops will be added. Target crops will include: almond, apricot, cherry, peach, apple, pear, persimmon, plum,

pomegranate, quince, table grapes and walnut. Planned activities include establishing a "Farmer Forum" to exchange fruit production, handling and processing techniques between Uzbek and U.S. farmers, and an Online Agricultural Information System to disseminate best practices.

New and improved plant material and agronomic practices will be promoted through on-farm demonstration plots. Additional efforts will improve farm level pest and disease control and the management of small and medium sized cold stores. Other efforts will support the strengthening of agricultural education, research and extension systems.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is proud to celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2011. USAID was created in 1961 by American President John F. Kennedy and is funded by the American people. Since 1993, USAID has supported local efforts to improve economic growth, governance and health in Uzbekistan.

For more information about USAID programs, please visit our website at <http://centralasia.usaid.gov/> or <http://uzbekistan.usembassy.gov/usaidd.html>.

For additional information on USAID's Aglinks Plus project, please contact:

USAID AgLinks Plus Project
12B, Afrosiyob Street, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 100015
Tel.: + (998 71) 252 5414, Fax: + (998 71) 252 6756

Uzbek Master Ceramists Visit the U.S.

On September 14, four multi-generational ceramic master artisans from Uzbekistan visited Alfred University's School of Art and Design in Rochester, NY. The visit was part of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), which arranges short-term visits to the U.S. with the hope that such visits will build mutual understanding between the U.S. and other nations.

Through the IVLP, the Uzbek artists—Inom Ablakulov, Odilbek Matchanov, Alisher Rakhimov and Firdavs Yusupov—will have the opportunity to learn about the history, presentation, conservation and education of traditional arts in the U.S. and the role they play in American cultural heritage. Additionally, the ceramists will be able to observe the impact of traditional arts on community-building and civic development throughout the country.

In addition to viewing the ceramic facilities at the School of Art and Design, the Uzbeks toured the Inamori Museum of Fine Ceramics and the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art, both of which are located at Alfred University.

Alfred's MFA program is consistently ranked number one in the nation by U.S. News and World Report and the School of Art and Design's ceramic art facilities are considered to be among the best in the country. These facilities include 13 gas fired kilns and 14 electric fired kilns in the main kiln room; three gas fired salt/soda kilns, three raku kilns, 1 two-chamber wood/soda kiln and 1 one-chamber wood kiln in an outdoor kiln area; glaze studios; a clay mixing area; and a main studio area.

Besides Rochester, the artists' September 6- September 23 visit was comprised of stops at schools, museums and artistic communities in a number of cities around the U.S.: Washington, DC; Baltimore, MD; New York, NY; Los Angeles, CA; and Santa Fe, NM.

The IVLP has existed since 1940 and is run by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Annually, it sponsors more than 4,000 International Visitors, who are nominated for the program and are current or emerging leaders in government, politics, the media, education, the arts, business and other important fields.

Press Conference of U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Marc Grossman and German Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Michael Steiner



U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Marc Grossman and German Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Michael Steiner speak with journalists in Tashkent on October 11, 2011. (U.S. Embassy photo)

October 11, 2011. Intercontinental Hotel, Tashkent

SRAP Grossman: First of all, thank you all for coming this morning. I'm delighted to be here with my colleague Ambassador Steiner of Germany. We had the good fortune this morning to call on the President. We appreciated his time, his good counsel and his advice. We took the opportunity to thank him for all Uzbekistan does to support peace and stability in Afghanistan. And we took the opportunity to brief him on the diplomatic efforts to create two successful conferences this year on Afghanistan—one in Istanbul in November and the other in Bonn on the 5th of December. And with that I ask my colleague if he wishes to say a few words.

SRAP Steiner: Maybe just two points in addition to that. I think it was a new approach that both representatives of the United States and of Germany had a common presentation to the leader of Uzbekistan. And I think I can say we are happy that we share the view that a solution in Afghanistan must be found within Afghanistan, and that the region and the neighbors have to respect the independence of the solution to be found in Afghanistan. And the second point I'd like to underline is that we are happy that the President has expressed readiness to take part in the conferences mentioned, and this is a good sign that we are happy the President has said that Uzbekistan will take part in the two conferences, both in Istanbul on the 2nd of November, and the one on the 5th of December in Bonn.

SRAP Grossman: With this we'd be glad to take couple of questions, if anyone has a question.

Navruz Rizaev (Ahborot News Program) via interpreter: Our President has been underlining the need for peaceful solutions in Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan has so far taken part only in development projects in Afghanistan. How does the U.S. rate these efforts by Uzbekistan and on what common

projects can both Uzbekistan and the United States work together [with regard to] the future in Afghanistan?

SRAP Grossman: Thank you for your question. We did raise this with the President and he gave us his advice on all of these questions. First, the peace process in Afghanistan is extremely important as Ambassador Steiner said. That peace process is Afghan led and Afghan owned. So, we agreed that it's the job of Uzbekistan, of the United States and Germany to support that Afghan led process.

On the economic question, we all agreed that economic integration and economic development in the region is extremely important. And that's why we raised with the President the vision of the new Silk Road. But when I think of what Uzbekistan has already done, for example, in terms of provision of electricity to Afghanistan, railways to Mazar-i-Sharif, these are all examples of why economic integration and economic development are so important. So, from our perspective, and I believe from Ambassador Steiner's as well, Uzbekistan's support for Afghanistan is important in all aspects.

We can take one more, if anyone's got more.

Nargiza Komilova (Davr News Program) via interpreter: This is Nargiza Komilova from Davr TV program, and the question is, what additional steps are necessary to undertake in order to improve the current situation in Afghanistan?

SRAP Steiner: I think the important thing is that the international community has a strategy, a realistic strategy. We have agreed on a transition of the security responsibility till the end of 2014. There it's important that we help the Afghan security forces to be able to take over the responsibility, but also the governmental structures need to be supported, so that the Afghan government, by the end of 2014, can exercise the full sovereignty. And then it's important what happens after, after 2014. And there, I think, the most important signal, and that is something that the international community has to do, is that we don't repeat the mistake of '89, but stay engaged both in Afghanistan, as well as in the region, so that we show we continue to care, actively helping economically so that the country becomes what we want it to become—a stable prosperous country, within its region and working together with its region.

Let me just say one sentence, if I may. I think what we want to achieve is a win-win situation in the interest of Uzbekistan, of our countries and of Afghanistan and of the whole region, and I think it is possible if we all work together, and if we have also Uzbekistan, who is a major player in this region, on board. And we have to hope - after this talk with the President - that we will achieve exactly that.

SRAP Grossman: Thank you all very much!

U.S. Embassy Supports Financial Education in the Andijan Region



Women participate in financial education training sessions at the Business Women's Association of Andijan. (Photo courtesy of the Business Women's Association of Andijan)

The U.S. Government is committed to providing assistance to aid in improving the living conditions of people worldwide. As a part of this, the U.S. Government seeks to ensure that programs providing financial education, which enable participants to better make informed financial decisions, are fully integrated into the formulation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

Recently, the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent provided a small grant to the Business Women's Association of Andijan, allowing the association to carry out a project on financial education for representatives of vulnerable populations such as unemployed women, young people and populations living in rural areas.

In collaboration with partners and stakeholders, the Business Women's Association of Andijan implemented series of "Plan Your Future" trainings for representatives of 10 Andijan districts.

The training program addressed issues such as family budgeting, saving and de-

creasing expenditures, micro-financing and obtaining loans to start a businesses.

After attending the association's program, the 150 workshop participants became trainers on a number of finance-related topics. The participants then conducted follow up activities in their respective communities, reaching out to 4,500 people in the Andijan region.

It is expected that such activities will enhance family budget managing skills and improve the financial status and living conditions of vulnerable populations.

The six-month project, completed in October, attracted the local media's attention and was well received by the local population. Currently, the association is planning to expand this activity to other districts and regions beyond Andijan.

This particular project was funded through the U.S. Embassy's Democracy Commission Small Grants Program.

This program seeks to support the development of Uzbekistan's democratic institutions and civil society by awarding small project grants on a competitive basis to Uzbekistan's nongovernmental organizations, nonprofit community-based organizations and other nonprofit associations and community groups, as well as independent local media organizations.



Session participants display completion certificates. (Photo courtesy of the Business Women's Association of Andijan)

Ambassador Krol Opens Kino Klub Featuring Uzbek Filmmaker Zulfikar Musakov



Director Zulfikar Musakov talks to the audience following the screening of his film. (U.S. Embassy photo)

On November 29, Ambassador Krol opened the U.S. Embassy's monthly Kino Klub, thanking everyone for attending and for their "willingness to brave the cold weather" in order to come to the U.S. Embassy.

In his introduction, the U.S. Ambassador noted that this particular Kino Klub meeting would be different: "Traditionally our Kino Klub screens a movie or documentary and then has a discussion via Skype with the director or producer of the film. However, tonight is a special event. We have the director of 'Lead' joining us here after the film."

Ambassador Krol also mentioned that he was looking forward to the film and a conversation with the director, particularly since "audiences in the U.S. don't have much exposure to foreign films, including films from Uzbekistan." He added that "this includes opportunities to meet with great film directors."

Zulfikar Musakov, the director of "Lead," has received many international awards and has directed more than twenty movies. Following the screening, he led a lively discussion of his 2011 film, which has already won several awards for best screenplay – including the Golden Gepar Award, which it received from the Fund Forum during Art Week this past October.

The film tells the story of two friends in the security services and the life-changing, disastrous decision one of them is forced to make. It produced many questions from the 120-member audience. People were interested in the content as well as the actual production of the film, such as its production cost.

Every month the U.S. Embassy screens a film or documentary, followed by a discussion with the film's director or producer. Those who wish to participate should be sure to register in advance by calling (+99871) 140-2441; 140-2445 or by sending their name and passport number to Tashkent-program@state.gov.

U.S., Global Partners Pledge Continued Afghanistan Support



Secretary Clinton, left, holds private talks with Afghan President Hamid Karzai on the sidelines of the Bonn conference to discuss Afghanistan's future. (© AP Images)

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has pledged continued U.S. support for Afghanistan, joining nearly 100 nations in doing so at an international conference in Bonn, Germany, as Afghanistan works toward increasing self-sustainability. "We want to send a very clear message to the people of Afghanistan that as they continue to make tough decisions, we will stand with them and do so in that spirit

of mutual accountability," Clinton said December 5 during the conference on Afghanistan's future.

She emphasized that while the United States will continue to provide support for Afghanistan, Afghans themselves must also work to meet the commitments they have made. "We look forward to working with them to embrace reform, lead their own defense and strengthen their democracy," Clinton said. She commended recent advances made by Afghans, highlighting in particular the "considerable progress" achieved by women and civil society during the past 10 years. She said the country's health care system alone has made a "huge leap for women," as shown in a new Afghan mortality survey.

"Ten years ago, the maternal mortality rate in Afghanistan was estimated to be the highest in the world. Today, women's life expectancy has increased by between 15 and 20 years because women are finally getting access to health care, including prenatal care, and far fewer are dying in childbirth," Clinton said.

While praising other notable gains by the Afghan government in recent years, the secretary acknowledged that

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“enormous obstacles” remain ahead for Afghanistan. She said the Taliban remain active, posing security challenges, and noted that the World Bank recently projected that Afghanistan will face continued budget deficits that will require new resources and revenue. Clinton also said there remains much work to be done, by both the Afghan government and civil society, “to strengthen and build democratic institutions and to assure the rule of law.” The secretary said the United States welcomes a series of economic, political and security plans announced on December 5 by Afghan President Hamid Karzai at the conference.

On the economy, she said Afghanistan committed to “set priorities, use international aid effectively and enact a series of economic reforms to crack down on corruption, spur private sector growth and attract new investment.” In response, she said the United States and other international partners will resume financial contributions to the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund. She said Karzai also committed to expand the capacity of Afghan security forces. Clinton said the United States and other partners remain committed to training, advising and assisting Afghan forces as they take full control of their country’s security by the end

of 2014. She added that participants in Bonn set out a blueprint for a post-transition Afghanistan, a road map for what the secretary called a “decade of transformation.”

On the political front, the secretary said Karzai committed to proceed with “inclusive, fair and credible presidential elections and a peaceful, democratic transfer of power in 2014.” She said the United States will continue to provide support for Afghanistan’s democracy, including the civil society. Clinton added that Afghans have also committed to building stronger regional ties, and said the United States looks to Afghanistan’s neighbors to “actively support an inclusive Afghan-led, Afghan-owned reconciliation process.”

The Bonn conference, which brought together representatives from nearly 100 of Afghanistan’s neighbors, near-neighbors and international partners, was hosted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and chaired by Karzai.

Secretary Clinton is scheduled to travel to Lithuania, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands before returning to Washington December 8.

Anniversary of the Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement Signing



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and First Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Azimov sign the Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement, December 2, 2010. (U.S. Embassy photo)

December 2 marked the first anniversary of the signing of the Science and Technology Cooperation agreement made between the United States and Uzbekistan. It was originally signed by Uzbek First Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Azimov and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, when she visited Uzbekistan in 2010, and has been valid since March 17 of last year.

The goal of the agreement is to increase the scientific and technological knowledge of and promote cooperation between the U.S. and Uzbekistan. To accomplish this, the

agreement highlights exchanges – such as those of information, technologies and specialists – joint conferences and seminars and collaborative research.

According to Rustam Saidov, the Head of the Department on Development of International Science and Technology Cooperation, Committee for Coordination of Science and Technology Development, Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan, “partners in this cooperation will have greater scientific-technical means and better financing opportunities.” Additionally, the agreement provides “an opportunity to focus the intellectual potential for solving the common tasks and achieving the goals faster.”

Although the agreement is in place to help the scientists of each country, it has other, far-reaching implications. Not only does the agreement facilitate the advancement of science and technology but it also emphasizes and strengthens the important bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Uzbekistan.

For example, Mr. Saidov notes that the agreement intensifies U.S.-Uzbekistan bilateral cooperation “towards acquiring new knowledge on topical issues of fundamental and applied sciences.” The agreement also strengthens “the position of Uzbek science in the world system of division of labor in the fields of science, participation in solving global problems and mega-science projects, and the use of the American experience for further development of Uzbek science.”

Obama: Advanced Economies Lay Plans for Economic Growth



President Obama holds a press conference at the conclusion of the G20 summit held November 3–4 in Cannes, France. (© AP Images)

President Obama says the Group of 20 nations have worked together and made progress toward strengthening the global economy, averting another recession and putting the world on the path to recovery. “As a result, advanced economies, including the United States, are growing and creating jobs, but not nearly fast enough,” the president said. At a press conference November 4, Obama said the G20 nations agreed to stay focused on jobs and economic growth through an extensive plan that calls for greater coordination on individual national actions and policies.

The G20 leaders also made progress toward rebalancing the global economy in an effort to lessen sharp swings in the economic cycle that can lead to recessions, he added. The G20 countries held their annual leaders’ summit in the French resort town of Cannes November 3–4. The next summit will be held in Mexico’s Los Cabos, Baja California, in June 2012.

Obama said Europe remains on track to implement a sustainable path for Greece, which is facing a debt crisis. He added that Italy asked the International Monetary Fund, which worked with the European Union on the crisis in Greece, to provide a quarterly monitoring program as Italy implements “fully and swiftly” a comprehensive plan of growth-enhanc-

ing reforms. “All of us have an enormous interest in Europe’s success, and all of us will be affected if Europe is not growing — and that certainly includes the United States, which counts Europe as our largest trading partner,” Obama told reporters. “And that’s why I’ve made it clear that the United States will continue to do our part to support our European partners as they work to resolve this crisis.” “But our European partners have laid a foundation on which to build, and it has all the elements needed for success: a credible firewall to prevent the crisis from spreading, strengthening European banks, charting a sustainable path for Greece, and confronting the structural issues that are at the heart of the current crisis,” Obama said.

The White House said the United States is committed to the timely implementation of a package of measures to sustain its own economic recovery through public investments, tax reforms and targeted employment measures. The G20 nations also adopted a set of high-level financial reforms to prevent a crisis in the future, Obama said. The leaders also agreed to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, in an effort to fight climate change and to create clean-energy economies.

While in Cannes, Obama met with French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel individually to discuss the European debt crisis. Obama told reporters that it was the most important aspect of the summit over the two days of meetings among the 20 world leaders. “We also discussed the situation in Greece and how we can work to help resolve that situation as well. And the United States will continue to be a partner with the Europeans to resolve these challenges,” he said.

U.S. Embassy Unveils 9/11 Memorial



U.S. Marines stand guard over the plaque at the unveiling ceremony. (U.S. Embassy photo)

On Thursday, November 17 Ambassador George Krol officially unveiled a memorial in honor of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. The memorial is on the U.S. Embassy compound.

In addition to a stone plaque, a key component of the memorial is the inclusion of two new birch trees. The trees symbolize the Twin Towers and represent rebirth and new life; their sturdy trunks embody the strength of the free people.

In his remarks, Ambassador Krol noted that people from 58 different nations were among the 2,977 victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks – including two citizens of Uzbekistan.

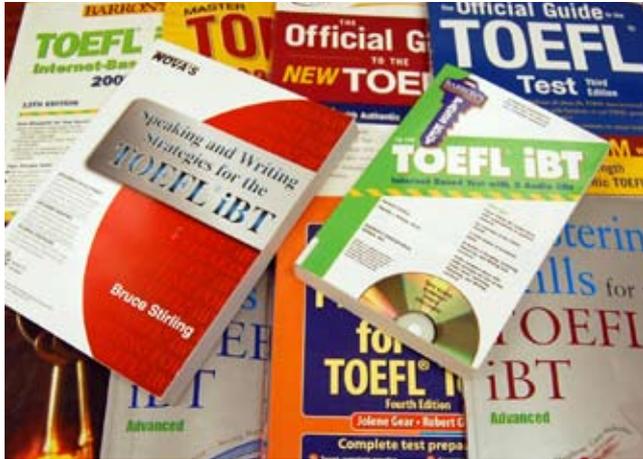
He also highlighted how, although they were “intended to demoralize and divide us,” the attacks brought people together.

At the conclusion of his address, the U.S. Ambassador read the words written on the plaque that represent the sentiments on which the memorial was founded: “Let peace vanquish violence, understanding replace intolerance and the joy of life be celebrated among all nations.”

Following the U.S. Ambassador’s words, those present observed a moment of silence for remembrance and reflection.

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Contact the EducationUSA center in Uzbekistan to learn more!

Address: 3, Moyqorghon Street, 5th Block, Yunusobod District, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan.

Phone: (+99871) 140-2447

E-mail: Tashkent-Advising@state.gov

Website: <http://uzbekistan.usembassy.gov/advising.html>



EducationUSA.state.gov



Embassy of the United States of America

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

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

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

Email: Tashkent-IRC@state.gov

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