



United States Mission in Turkmenistan

9 Pushkin Street, Ashgabat, 744000
Turkmenistan

Phone: 35 00 45; Fax: 39 26 14
Website: <http://turkmenistan.usembassy.gov>

Issue 1

Quarterly Newsletter

Winter issue

Introducing New Electronic Journal

"The United States in 2005 -- Who We Are Today"

Inside This
Issue:

- 2 **USAID donation**
- 2 **DAS Kennedy visit**
- 3 **Alumni events**
- 4 **Highlights of outreach activities**

This new electronic journal takes on a nearly impossible task: to describe in less than 50 pages who we Americans are today. In the first article, scholar Marc Pachter describes some of the attributes and values that define the American character. Next, demographer Audrey Singer provides a demographic snapshot of the United States in 2005. Short profiles of thirteen Americans, some of whom are well known but most of whom are not, provide a glimpse of how some Americans live their everyday lives and what is important to them. Scholar Alan Wolfe argues that although the American people

are divided on a number of political and social issues, there are many more things, which tie us together than tear us apart. Then, two experts with widely different viewpoints debate the contentious issue of immigration. Finally, two well-known authors journey to their childhood homes after many years away, one to find it completely transformed, and the other to find it almost unchanged. The journal also carries useful bibliography and list of recommended Internet sites for further reading. To view this issue, please visit: <http://usinfo.state.gov> and go to the E-Journal USA Section.

Enterprise Development Project in Ashgabat certifies another 16 CAPs in Turkmenistan



On December 17, 2004 Enterprise Development Project, EDP/Ashgabat held its second award ceremony for local professional accountants participating in the CIPA program as is being implemented across Central Asia. Sixteen individuals were certified as newly qualified Certified Accounting Practitioners (CAPs) at this ceremony. To date, 39 local accountants in Turkmenistan have achieved such status.

Participating at the event were Deputy Head of Mission for the United States Embassy Jennifer Brush, USAID Country

Director Bradford Camp, USAID Project Management Specialist Patty McCabe, EDP Country Director Kyle Gunther and Deputy Chairman of the Union of Accountants of Turkmenistan Elena Senyukova. Ms. Senyukova opened the ceremony, highlighting the importance of the CIPA program and congratulating the newly certified CAPs on their hard work and determination in passing through the program. Following her comments, Deputy Head of Mission Jennifer Brush praised the accountants and stressed the importance of transparent accounting in the development of a free market economy. She as well encouraged them to continue their studies with the CIPA program and international accounting standards.

Project EDP, along with USAID and the US Embassy are impressed by the initiative shown by these CAPs in Turkmenistan, and wish them continued success as they move ahead with the CIPA program as well as in the accounting industry.

Photo: Accountants and DCM Jennifer Brush after award ceremony

Past issues of the "U.S. Mission in Turkmenistan" Newsletter is available online at:
<http://turkmenistan.usembassy.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT DONATES U.S. \$120,000 OF LABORATORY EQUIPMENT TO TURKMENISTAN

On February 8, 2005, a handover ceremony marked the donation of six sets of serological laboratory equipment from the U.S. Government to the Turkmenistan Ministry of Health. U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan Tracey Ann Jacobson and the Turkmenistan First Deputy Minister of Health Biashim Sopiev participated in the ceremony.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Central Asia Regional Program (CDC/CAR), with the financial support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided six laboratories, each with a complete set of laboratory equipment for effective blood testing. Each set includes an automated ELISA reader and washer, incubator, centrifuge, water purification system, refrigerator, computer, pipettes, and additional laboratory supplies used for a wide variety of tests. The value of the laboratory equipment totals approximately \$120,000.

The six sets of laboratory equipment will be distributed to all blood banks, including Ashgabat, Dashoguz, Turkmenabat, Mary, Balkanabat and Abadan. The donation of these six laboratories is part of a comprehensive laboratory improvement and training program to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases in Turkmenistan and Central Asia.

This laboratory equipment will increase the accuracy of HIV and other test results, which can improve the country's response to infections. The information will shape educational campaigns, patient care, and community mobilization to reduce the risk of infections transmission through donor's blood.

CDC/CAR's activities in Turkmenistan focus on reducing the burden of infectious diseases, primarily HIV and tuberculosis (TB). CDC's strategy is twofold: to improve local capacity in surveillance and prevention, by strengthening laboratory and epidemiological systems, and to build on these capacities by building programs that positively impact the health of the people of Turkmenistan. CDC is recognized as a leading governmental agency for protecting the health and safety of people both within the U.S. and internationally.

USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries to provide a better future for all.

For more information, please contact the CDC/CAR office in Almaty, msinclair@usaid.gov, or see the USAID/CAR website at www.usaid.gov keyword: CAR.

U.S. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE LAURA E. KENNEDY VISITS TURKMENISTAN

Ashgabat, February 9, 2005. -- Ambassador Laura E. Kennedy, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, is in Turkmenistan February 9-10, 2005 at the invitation of President Saparmurat Niyazov. At their meeting Wednesday, President Niyazov and U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kennedy discussed human rights, education, child labor, regional cooperation, security issues, and other topics of mutual concern. Ambassador Kennedy's schedule in Ashgabat also includes meetings with Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Gurbanmuradov, Minister of Foreign Affairs Meredov, and Minister of Education Saparlyev. She is also expected to meet with alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs and representatives of civil society groups.

Following her talks with President Niyazov, Ambassador Kennedy noted that it was a constructive meeting, useful for both sides. "I thanked the Government of Turkmenistan for some positive steps during the last year and continuing support for international anti-terrorism efforts. I also appreciated the opportunity to discuss some areas of particular concern to the U.S. Government, including religious freedom, the development of civil society, access to prisoners, resumption of Radio Mayak

broadcasts and some other issues," said the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. "The United States is interested in cooperating in a wide range of issues to advance democratic reform, economic prosperity and security in Turkmenistan."

Deputy Assistant Secretary Kennedy's areas of responsibility include countries in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. She assumed her duties as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of State in June 2004. From 2001 to 2003, she served as U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan where she focused on promoting civil society and enlisting the government in the war against terrorism in neighboring Afghanistan. Deputy Assistant Secretary Kennedy has previously served in Austria, Armenia, Turkey, and Moscow, and in a variety of Washington assignments. While Director for Central Eurasia and Caspian energy issues, Deputy Assistant Secretary Kennedy visited Turkmenistan from 1995 to 1997. She also traveled through parts of Central Asia with cultural exhibition programs while assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. Deputy Assistant Secretary Kennedy is married to retired Foreign Service Officer John Feeney and has two children, Martin and Patrick Feeney.

Embassy Congratulates Contemporary Issues Program Finalists

On December 10, 2004 DCM Jennifer Brush, PAO Ilya Levin and CAO Natalie Ashton attended the reception in honor of four finalists of the Contemporary Issues Program (CI), administered by IREX. The finalists, scheduled to visit the U.S. to conduct a four-month research in such areas as cotton marketing systems in Turkmenistan, reaching a consensus in community decisions, professional development for young specialists, and legal issues of market entry for SME. In her remarks, DCM stressed the importance of the program and thanked the Contemporary Issues alumni for their impact on the development of mutual understanding between the U.S. and Turkmenistan. About fifty alumni of exchange programs had an opportunity to meet and network with their peers and Post officers.

Contemporary Issues alumni play an active role in sustaining the transition to democracy, free markets, and civil society in Turkmenistan. The event was of great interest to alumni of other USG programs and encouraged them to apply for CI program in future.



Photo: CI finalists introducing themselves to alumni

New PAO Gets Introduced To Alumni Community

On December 16, 2004 new Public Affairs Officer Ilya Levin visited American Center in Ashgabat to introduce himself to alumni of USG-funded programs. Alumni introduced PAO to alumni community and talked about the for alumni and offered assistance for alumni endeavors aimed at promoting democracy and civil society in Turkmenistan.

The event demonstrated once again how much the U.S. Mission's appreciation of the work that



activities they've been implementing and their future project ideas. PAO Levin assured of his, and U.S. Embassy's, support in creating a favorable environment for education and professional development Turkmenistan's alumni of USG exchange programs do for their communities. The Post will continue the active support of alumni initiatives through grant programs and numerous alumni events.

Photo: PAO Ilya Levin with alumni

Alumni Celebrate Accomplishments At The New Year Reunion

On December 27, 2004 about 70 alumni of USG-funded exchange programs gathered to celebrate the successes of alumni community in Turkmenistan for the past year. The event was jointly organized by PAS, IREX and ACCELS and brought alumni from almost every exchange program. PAO, CAO, Alumni Coordinator, ACCELS and IREX representatives congratulated alumni on their accomplishments and lauded the positive

changes alumni had brought to local communities in the past. They encouraged alumni to continue their projects aimed at making an impact on the development of their country and its civil society. The last alumni event in 2004. gave its participants an opportunity to share their ideas about future projects with fellow alumni and find partners for joint projects.

Alumni In Dashoguz, Turkmenistan Develop Newsletter

Exchange program alumni, in cooperation with the American Corner in Dashoguz, Turkmenistan, released their first American Corner Newsletter on February 14. Alumni developed the newsletter, called "Eagle's Eye View," to fill an information gap in their community.

Newsletter editor, Myahrijemal Altybayeva (FLEX '04) described how she developed the idea as follows: "I noticed that we don't really have papers or interesting stuff to read for teens of our community, so I decided to make [a newsletter] together with alumni and visitors."

DAS Kennedy Meets With Exchange Alumni In Turkmenistan

DAS Laura Kennedy's February 10 meeting with alumni of USG-sponsored exchange programs gave alumni the opportunity to show the DAS their seriousness, dedication, and determination to advance issues such as NGO registration for a National Alumni Association; maintaining Department funding for exchange programs in Turkmenistan; and the challenges of re-entering Turkmen universities after returning from exchange

programs. Alumni were receptive to the DAS's words of encouragement and requests for success stories to defend USG exchange program and alumni funding for Turkmenistan. Embassy will follow up on National Alumni Association registration and will pursue solutions to alumni challenges with a soon-to-be-formed "Bilateral Education Working Group" with the Turkmen Government.

Turkmenistan Alumni Grant Supports English Classes For Children From Low Income Families

On February 14, 30 students from Ashgabat and outlying areas attended their first English language class at the "Bilimli Nesil" educational center, run by IV Program alum, Alexander Fataliev. Fataliev's project, which will provide free English language courses to economically disadvantaged children, is financed by a PAS Ashgabat alumni small grant. The program is modeled on the

Department's ACCESS Microscholarship Program. Students will learn English through an American Studies curriculum, using books published in the United States that describe American values, traditions, and culture. At the end of the program children will attend a ten-day camp to practice their English, learn more about the USA, and participate in confidence-building exercises.

Outreach activities - Highlights

PAS Participates In Children's Festival

On December 5, 2004 Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy took part in the annual Children's Festival organized by the International Women's Club. This year PAS has sponsored card-making activity coordinated by one of the most active IV alumni Valentina Hairova. The activity was aimed at revealing the talent and creativity of children; it also proved that kids could work together as one team preparing cards with Christmas and New Year themes. The event met the packed house of children where card making was of great success among kids of

various ages. Visitors' donations, fees for the card making and other activities like lotteries, book selling and entertainment will go to disabled children as well as to orphans and elderly people.

Post's active participation at the charitable events promotes Turkmen citizens' understanding of civil society and democratic values like help and compassion to socially disadvantaged people and orphans.

Opening Of Internet Center In The Turkmen Public School

On December 22, PAS staff participated in the opening of a Democracy Commission- sponsored Internet Center in a public secondary school in eastern Turkmenistan. The Democracy Commission awarded the grant to a group of

teachers, who wanted to establish the Internet Center in Turkmenabat to be used by local teachers and students. The grant provided the center with three computers and a dial-up Internet connection. The grant is to cover all

Internet connection fees for the first six months, after which some of the access costs should be covered by user fees. The teachers plan to operate the last six months of the project entirely on user fees, to create

Turkmenabat's first truly self-sustaining Internet Center. The project plans to provide Internet access to 1,600 students in Turkmenabat City and will create Turkmenabat's first self-sustaining Internet center.

PAS Visits Police Shelter

On December 28, PAO and PAS staff delivered New Year gifts to the Ashgabat City Police Shelter for children.



Photo: Children at police shelter celebrate New Year and enjoy presents from PAS

The shelter provides temporary home, and educational services to runaway, homeless, and delinquent youth.

The Democracy Commission supported a local group's initiative to offer English, Russian and Turkmen classes, psychological counseling, and cultural education to the shelter's young inhabitants.

Fourteen children prepared holiday performances and played games in English, Russian, and Turkmen languages for Embassy guests. The visit brought some holiday cheer to the disadvantaged children and furthered a primary PAS outreach goal to recognize and support disadvantaged groups across the country

Turkmen Media Applauds ACCESS Microscholarship Program

The official Turkmen Government website, "www.Turkmenistan.gov.tm" highlighted PAS Ashgabat's ACCESS Microscholarship Program on January 3, 2005. The program offers two-year microscholarships for economically disadvantaged students ages 12-16 years old to study English in four regions of the country. PAS administers the program in conjunction with private English language centers in the cities of Ashgabat, Turkmenbashi, Turkmenabat, and Dashoguz. The

students have made significant progress in learning English and have already completed their first semester of the course.

The Government of Turkmenistan gave international recognition, on an official government website, to a USG program that aims to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged youth.

Turkmenistan Exchange Participant Wins Parliament Seat

During recent December 2004 parliamentary elections, Mr. Kasym Babaev, Dean of the International Relations and Law Department at Turkmen State University (TSU), alumnus of the FY-99/00 University Partnership with Texas A&M, was elected as a deputy of Azatlyk region of Ashgabat city. Texas A&M helped to strengthen the curricula of the International Relations and Law Department.

As a result of his two-month stay in the United States in 2000, Mr. Babayev changed his attitude toward the United States policies and its people. He now strongly supports Public Diplomacy projects for his students, including U.S. Speaker programs, ABA/CEELI projects and free access of students to information via the department's Legal Library that receives assistance from USAID and PAS.

Turkmenistan Medical Students Combat Tuberculosis

On January 10, PAS met with a student initiative group that is fighting the spread of tuberculosis (TB) in Turkmenistan through public awareness. A former Democracy Commission grantee, the group now works closely with USAID's Project Hope and WHO's DOTS Program to host public workshops and health campaigns aimed to educate the population about TB and to combat

the spread of the disease. The group, founded by students at Turkmen State Medical Institute, is the first local organization to collect statistics about TB and to offer free TB treatment to impoverished families. The group also provides free Internet access to facilitate medical research on TB and other diseases.

PAS Turkmenistan Visits Youth Training At Local Police Department

On January 13, PAS Grants Coordinator Nafisa Yuldasheva and CAO Natalie Ashton attended a Democracy Commission grantee workshop aimed at educating youth-at-risk about the dangers of drug use and HIV/AIDS. The NGO "National Center for Combating

AIDS," hosted the workshop in cooperation with UNICEF and the Ministry of Internal Affairs for 35 young men and women. The NGO plans to conduct similar workshops at local police stations throughout the country to support awareness about the dangers of drug use and HIV/AIDS.

Visitors Learn More About Black Movement And Freedom In The U.S.

On January 18, 2005 PAS hosted an event celebrating the heritage of American revolutionist Martin Luther King. About 15 visitors gathered at ACCELS to watch a documentary depicting the challenges of black movement and the role the famous civil rights leader played in the U.S. history. PAS distributed booklets about the civil rights movement and the legacy of Martin Luther King.

Dedicated to Martin Luther King's birthday, the event brought new information to visitors about the civil rights movement in America after the World War II. The documentary show also made visitors aware of the numerous challenges the American society faced in order to eliminate racial discrimination..

PAS Participates At Mary American Corner Grand Opening

On January 19, 2005 PAO Ilya Levin and Alumni Coordinator Gulyalek Soltanova traveled to Mary, the regional center of Mary province, to participate at the grand opening of the American Corner in that region. More than sixty people including alumni, English teachers, students, their parents, Peace Corps volunteers and others attended the event. PAO, a representative of Mary city administration, ACCELS Country Director greeted the American Corner visitors and highlighted the importance of such resource centers in the regions. After the opening ceremony people had a chance to talk to PAO and Alumni Coordinator about the education and information resources PAS provides for public. Alumni Coordinator concluded the event by meeting with alumni where she shared information about



grant opportunities; alumni events organized by PAS as well as strongly encouraged them to be actively involved in Mary American Corner activities. She also strongly encouraged them to register for the State Alumni website and write articles for a quarterly published newsletter for alumni.

Following its official opening, the American Corner is able to expand its outreach activities beyond the city to the smaller districts of the region.

Photo: PAO Ilya Levin and inspector of the Mary Department of Education Begmurat Annanurov at the opening ceremony

PAS Turkmenistan Hosts State Of The Union Program

On February 15, PAS Ashgabat hosted Turkmenistan government officials, educators, students, media, and community leaders for a taped broadcast of President Bush's 2005 State of the Union Program, in Russian and English languages. Over 100 guests listened to the President's call for democracy and freedom throughout the world and engaged with Embassy officers and local staff about local implications of the U.S. foreign policy agenda. PAS distributed over 300 brochures, booklets, and CD-ROMs about American government, society, and culture, including the Russian translation of President Bush's State of the Union Address.

CAO Natalie Ashton briefly introduced the background of the "State of the Union" to the audience where she mentioned, "the U.S. Constitution requires that the president report to Congress "from time to time" on the "State of the Union." This constitutional requirement has

evolved into the president's annual State of the Union address, which now serves several purposes. The speech reports on the condition of the United States both domestically and internationally, recommends a legislative agenda for the coming year, and gives the president the opportunity to convey personally his vision for the nation."

Bush's 2004 speech addressed a variety of domestic and international issues including the war on terrorism, U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, homeland security, health care and education. The speech emphasized U.S. support for democracy and freedom worldwide. "America is a nation with a mission, and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs," said Bush in his address. "Our aim is a democratic peace -- a peace founded upon the dignity and rights of every man and woman," he added.

DCM Hosts Luncheon For Turkmenistan Legislators

On February 15, Embassy Ashgabat's DCM Jennifer Brush hosted a luncheon for four Turkmen Mejlis (Parliament) Members, three of whom were exchange program alumni. The Pol/Econ Officer, CAO, and Alumni Coordinator also attended the lunch. The officers congratulated the officials with their new appointments after the December 19 parliamentary elections, and discussed Turkmenistan's new law banning child labor,

educational development, and rule of law issues. Two officials are IV alumni and one participated in a university exchange with Texas A&M University. The officials noted that the lunch was the first working level event between the U.S. Embassy and the Turkmen Parliament that had taken place in over four years and expressed an interest in future events, as well.

Turkmenistan NGO Celebrates Valentine's Day In English

Ashgabat CAO spent an evening listening to melodious sonnets and serenades, performed by Ashgabat's Polish Cultural Organization "Polonia," on February 12. The youth group, with members ranging from 5 to 16 years old, invited PAS Ashgabat and their own parents to celebrate Valentine's Day traditions through songs,

poetry, and plays, spoken in English, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, and Turkmen languages. "Polonia" is a former Democracy Commission grantee and still works closely with PAS Ashgabat to promote positive local understanding of American culture and values, as well as USG policy in Turkmenistan.

Minnesota Donates Books To Turkmenistan Teacher's Institute

On February 17, PAS Ashgabat donated thirty books by American authors to the Pedagogical Institute in Mary, Turkmenistan, thanks to the generous gifts of Mr. Paul Ryberg and his local libraries in St. Elmo, Minnesota. Since late 2003, Mr. Ryberg has sent to PAS Ashgabat over 1000 books and journals which have been donated to local libraries and educational resource centers across the country. Embassy Ashgabat's CAO presented the

books to the Institute, which offers two-year higher level education and teaching certificates to secondary school graduates in Turkmenistan's Mary Region (or Mary "Welayat" in Turkmen). The CAO spoke to a group of 120 English teachers about PAS educational resources and encouraged the teachers to study American culture in order to further enrich their knowledge of the English language.

Turkmenistan High School Teachers Create New Websites

On February 15, four high school teachers posted three new websites to IATP's server after completing IATP Assistant Administrator Jennet Orayeva's Web design course at the IATP access site in Dashoguz, Turkmenistan. Having learned HTML, photo editing, and basic design, the trainees created websites dedicated to literature, nature, and art. English language teachers

Malika Berdiyeva and Aynur Toyliyeva developed a website (www.iatp.edu.tm/zapovednik) on the Kaplangir National Nature Park Reserve, which is located west of Dashoguz. Nurdjemat Yazgulyeva created a website about the Turkmen classical poet Magtymkuli at www.iatp.edu.tm/magtymguly, which contains his biography and poetry.

Distance Learning Consultant Introduces Math Course Online In Ashgabat

On February 16, twelve residents at three IATP access sites across Turkmenistan tuned in to Valentina Burmistrova's (Fulbright '04) 90-minute online presentation of her new distance-learning (DL) course entitled "Math for the College Applicant" that is now hosted on IATP's DL portal at www.iatp.edu.tm/moodle. For the past three months, Valentina and six other IATP consultants learned to create DL courses, incorporating

lectures, forums, chats, tests, and glossaries into an online course. As a result, Valentina created a six-week preparatory course for students taking the state's college entrance exams to major in Mathematics. Unlike the United States, Turkmenistan does not have a single, standard admissions test. Students must pass a combination of subject-based tests related specifically to the discipline they wish to study.

Entry Level Officers Teach Turkmenistan About African American History And Culture

From February 13-21, Embassy Ashgabat's Entry Level Officers (ELOs) traveled throughout Turkmenistan to talk about African American History and Culture as part of PAS's celebration of Black History Month 2005 and Post's Entry Level Development Program. Each officer visited with local education and culture officials, professors, teachers, students, and civil society leaders in one of

Turkmenistan's five geographical regions to express the important contributions that Black Americans have made to the nation's history and development. Post's Political/Economic, Cultural Affairs, General Services, and Consular Officers are each in charge of one of Turkmenistan's five regional areas.