



NEWSLETTER

U.S. MISSION IN TURKMENISTAN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

SEPTEMBER 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

Alumni Reunion 2009 ②

International Education Fair 2009 ②

Remarks to State TV by Under Secretary William Burns ③

United States Donates Vehicles and Counter Narcotics Equipment ③

Interview with New PAO William Stevens ④

Cooperation - Improvement of Vocational Training ④

CONTACT US

Ak Altyn Hotel, 4th Floor,
Magtymguly 141/1,
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
744000

Phone: 36 33 31
36 13 65
Fax: 36 46 93

Email:
irc-ashgabat@state.gov

Excerpts From President Obama's Ramadan Message

On behalf of the American people – including Muslim communities in all fifty states – I want to extend best wishes to Muslims in America and around the world. Ramadan Kareem.

Ramadan is the month in which Muslims believe the Koran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, beginning with a simple word – iqra. It is therefore a time when Muslims reflect upon the wisdom and guidance that comes with faith, and the responsibility that human beings have to one another, and to God.

Like many people of different faiths who have known Ramadan through our communities and families, I know this to be a festive time – a time when families gather, friends host iftars, and meals are shared. But I also know that Ramadan is a time of intense devotion and reflection – a time when Muslims fast during the day and perform tarawih prayers at night, reciting and listening to the entire Koran over the course of the month.

Continued on page 4



President Barack Obama

International Education Fair 2009



Fulbright Specialist Melda Yildyz shares her excitement of being at the exhibition with state TV reporters

At the 2009 Turkmenistan International Education Fair, the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy joined with USAID, American Councils and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) to manage a large exhibit on US exchanges and educational programs.

The exhibit presented information for a variety of students, including high-school students (FLEX), undergraduate students (UGrad, TASP), graduate students (Fulbright Master's Degree Program, Edmund Muskie Scholarship) and researchers (Ful-

Continued on page 2

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS IN SHORT

IRC - The Internet service is back at the Public Affairs Information Resource Center (IRC), work hours: Monday-Friday - from 9:00-20:00; Saturdays: 13:00-17:00;

Alumni Networking - New Facebook Page. Search "Turkmen Alumni Community" and become a fan at www.facebook.com

Alumni Reunion 2009



Deputy Chief of Mission Sylvia Curran emphasizes importance of alumni in their communities

U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan held its annual Exchange Alumni Reunion in Ashgabat on August 8-9. Over 60 alumni of various U.S. Government exchange programs gathered to discuss education development in

rural parts of Turkmenistan. The reunion, entitled “Remember Who You Are – Make a Change in Your Community”, explored ways to use alumni knowledge, skills, and attributes to improve education in rural communities.

In her opening remarks, Deputy Chief of Mission Sylvia Curran emphasized how the unique skills and cross-cultural experiences gained during their exchange programs should help alumni become community leaders. She also emphasized that leaders should use their knowledge to work to strengthen their communities and the rural communities of Turkmenistan.

The reunion included a series of presentations and workshops on several topics including community service, grant writing skills, and internet use in rural areas. Alumni from programs as diverse as FLEX, JFPD, UGRAD, and Fulbright shared their successes and challenges as they’ve worked to implement an assortment of grant projects.



Learn more about alumni:

<https://alumni.state.gov>

International Education Fair 2009

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Students of different ages mob the US exhibit

bright Scholar program, Humphrey Scholarship), as well as short-term programs for teachers and other professionals (Teaching Excellence and Achievement, International Visitors Leadership Program). The fair was open to the public, allowing visitors rare direct public access to information about US programs. Students of all ages mobbed the US exhibit, with over 400 visitors and hour! CD-ROMs on how to apply to colleges in the US, life in the United States and our FLEX program were particularly popular.

Learn more about exchange programs and opportunities at U.S. Embassy’s web page:

<http://turkmenistan.usembassy.gov>



Exchanges



UPCOMING EXCHANGE PROGRAMS:

FLEX

Academic Exchange Opportunity for High School Students: academic year 2010-2011

Qualified Age: January 1, 1993 - July 15, 1995

Testing: Fall 2009

Contact: American Councils - Ashgabat

Tel: (993-12) 33-10-21 or 33-10-22

UGRAD

Academic Exchange Opportunity for College and University Students: academic year 2010-2011

Application: deadline November 2, 2009

Contact: IREX - Ashgabat

Tel: (993-12) 33-10-34 or 33-10-38

Edmund Muskie Fellowship

Exchange Opportunity for graduate students and professionals.

Application: deadline November 2, 2009

Contact: IREX - Ashgabat

Tel: (993-12) 33-10-34 or 33-10-38

OTHER EXCHANGES

JFDP

Exchange Opportunity for Teachers of Higher Education Institutions

For more information contact American Councils in Ashgabat.

Tel: (993-12) 33-10-21 or 33-10-22

Hubert Humphrey Fellowship

Non-degree Academic Exchange

Opportunity for Mid-level Professionals

For more information contact Public Affairs Section in Ashgabat.

Tel: (993-12) 36-13-65 or 36-33-31



The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William J. Burns

Remarks to State “Turkmenistan” TV by Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William J. Burns

QUESTION: What are the main directions of future cooperation between the new administration of President Obama and Turkmenistan?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: It’s a pleasure to be in Turkmenistan with our delegation from Washington. We had very productive talks. We’ve agreed with our partners in

Turkmenistan to set up a new bilateral forum or commission, a mechanism through which we can seek to make further progress in relations across a wide range of issues, including cooperation in economic development, in the energy sector, and in ways in which we can work together on Afghanistan and on our common interest in stability there. We can work together to combat the problems of narcotics and terrorism. And we can develop ties between our civil societies and build stronger cooperation in education, culture, as well as establish a dialogue on human rights issues. So again, I am very appreciative of the hospitality of the President and Foreign Minister and I leave convinced that there is considerable potential for the further strengthening of relations between our two countries.

QUESTION: Recently there was a visit of Turkmen Foreign Minister to the United States. Can we consider your visit as a reply visit? And could you tell us about issues you considered at your meeting with Foreign Minister today?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Foreign Minister Meredov paid a very successful visit to Washington and certainly our visit to Ashgabat is an opportunity to build on that success. And today we had an opportunity for very thorough discussion of the range of issues in our relationship, ways in which we can establish this forum or commission that I’ve described before and ways in which we can work together and take practical steps forward in the interest of both the United States and Turkmenistan. Thank you.

U.S. Government Donates Vehicles and Counter Narcotics Equipment to Turkmenistan

The U.S. Embassy held a ceremony on August 6, to formally deliver two TOYOTA-Corolla vehicles and 20 narcotics identification kits (NIK) to the State CounterNarcotics Service of Turkmenistan. The donation is part of the Embassy’s

“The United States Department of State will continue International Narcotics and Law Enforcement counter-narcotics programs and also the export control and related border security programs to strengthen Turkmenistan’s borders and train its law enforcement officials.”

Chargé d’Affaires a.i.,
Richard M. Miles

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Program.

The U.S. Embassy’s, stated at the ceremony: The system of narcotics identification was developed as a means to rapidly screen and presumptively identify illicit drugs in the field. In 2007, the Embassy also donated two VAZ 21102 vehicles, a Gas Chromatograph with Flame Ionization Detector and a Fourier Transform Infrared Spectrophotometer to the National Criminal Research Center of Turkmenistan’s Ministry of the Interior.

In March 2006, the Embassy signed the first Amendment



Officials sign the End User Certificate for the donations

to the Letter of Agreement between the Government of the United States and the Government of Turkmenistan on Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Assistance. That amendment provided for additional USG assistance projects designed to improve the ability of Turkmenistan’s counternarcotics forces to interdict narcotics in transit across Turkmenistan. The Embassy’s International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Program has been conducting training, providing special laboratory equipment, and sending Turkmenistan’s forensic scientists to international meetings.



For recent embassy news visit:

<http://turkmenistan.usembassy.gov/news.html>

facebook

For photogalleries and fan stories:

Visit our facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com>
Search for U.S.Embassy - Ashgabat, Turkmensitan

Interview with William Stevens New Public Affairs Officer

QUESTION: When did you arrive to Turkmenistan?

WILLIAM STEVENS: I arrived in Ashgabat in early August 2009 and plan on being here for the next three years.

QUESTION: What were your expectations about the country and people prior to your arrival? Have those expectations changed?

WILLIAM STEVENS: I have to admit I didn't have very many expectations about Turkmenistan before I arrived. I am an avid student of history and spent a lot of time study-

ing the history of this region and knew of the proud reputation of the Turkmen before and during the Russian conquest in the late 19th century. However, during my years in Russia and other former soviet countries, I hadn't met many Turkmen. When I told my Russian friends about my trip, most of them talked about the great Turkmen dinya and arbuz.

I knew that Turkmenistan was a country rich in natural resources, culture, and history. I've already started studying Turkmen and I hope that during my time here I'll be able to learn the language and more of your history and the rich culture that permeates this society.

I should add that since my arrival I've been overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of the Turkmen people.



Cooperation – Tool for Improvement of Vocational Training



The meeting participants are discussing the results of youth vocational training program

On August 26, the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Turkmenistan Community Empowerment Program (TCEP) organized a meeting on youth vocational training issues in partnership with the Union of Entrepreneurs and Industrialists. Participants, including government officials, teachers, vocational school graduates from four provinces, and representatives of the European Union's TEMPUS Program and Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), discussed the project's achievements related to youth vocational training and the promotion of youth economic activities in rural areas.

The meeting also focused on the importance of cooperation between vocational establishments and employers in order to upgrade the level of training and update their curricula to meet current labor market demands. Participants emphasized that youth vocational training plays an important role in supporting the stated national priority of training highly professional specialists that can contribute to a dynamically developing national economy. Youth that have gained solid vocational skills will be a valuable workforce for rural development. The young people noted that high-quality training in demand-driven specialties was a guarantee of social and economic stability and confidence in the future.

The Turkmenistan Community Empowerment Program, implemented by Counterpart International, is one of the many activities made possible by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Since 1993, the American people through USAID have provided more than \$80 million in programs that support Turkmenistan's economic growth, social sector, and community initiatives.

President Obama's Ramadan Message

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

These rituals remind us of the principles that we hold in common, and Islam's role in advancing justice, progress, tolerance, and the dignity of all human beings.

This summer, people across America have served in their communities – educating children, caring for the sick, and extending a hand to those who have fallen on hard times. Faith-based organizations, including many Islamic organizations, have been at the forefront in participating in this summer of service. And in these challenging times, this is a spirit of responsibility that we must sustain in the months and years to come.

Beyond America's borders, we are also committed to keeping our responsibility to build a world that is more peaceful and secure. That is why we are responsibly ending the war in Iraq. That is why we are isolating violent extremists while empowering the people in places like Afghanistan and Pakistan. That is why we are unyielding in our support for a two-state solution that recognizes the rights of Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security.

All of these efforts are a part of America's commitment to engage Muslims and Muslim-majority nations on the basis of mutual interest and mutual respect. And at this time of renewal, I want to reiterate my commitment to a new beginning between America and Muslims around the world.

As I said in Cairo, this new beginning must be borne out in a sustained effort to listen to each other, to learn from each other, to respect one another, and to seek common ground. I believe an important part of this is listening, and in the last two months, American embassies around the world have reached out not just to governments, but directly to people in Muslim-majority countries. From around the world, we have received an outpouring of feedback about how America can be a partner on behalf of peoples' aspirations.

We cannot change things over night, but we can honestly resolve to do what must be done, while setting off in a new direction – toward the destination that we seek for ourselves, and for our children. That is the journey that we must travel together.

I look forward to continuing this critically important dialogue and turning it into action. And today, I want to join with the 1.5 billion Muslims around the world – and your families and friends – in welcoming the beginning of Ramadan, and wishing you a blessed month. May God's peace be upon you.

*Learn more about the muslim life in America:
<http://www.america.gov>*

