



United States Mission in Turkmenistan

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U.S. Embassy Marks Its Tenth Year in Turkmenistan

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The U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat celebrated its tenth anniversary of operations in Turkmenistan with a reception on March 29, 2002. U.S. Ambassador Laura Kennedy hosted the event and Speaker of Parliament Tagandurdy Hallyev was the guest of honor representing the Government of Turkmenistan. Foreign Minister Meredov also attended as did a number of other government officials and private citizens. The Embassy first opened on March 17, 1992, in the Jubileynaya Hotel on Tehran Street. The U.S. flag was raised at its current location on July 4, 1995.

"Allow me to congratulate the Ambassador of the United States, President Bush, and the American people on 10 years of diplomatic relations between Turkmenistan and the U.S. We have about 60 agreements with American companies. We strongly value our relationship, and President Niyazov constantly remarks that we should strengthen our relationship" said Speaker of Parliament Hallyev in his speech.

"I am proud that the U.S. Government was one of the first to recognize the independence of Turkmenistan. I hope that the next ten years will bring even closer cooperation on a range of issues, from education and civil society to economic ties to law enforcement and military training to narcotics control and regional security issues" noted Ambassador Kennedy.

Cultural ties include joint projects such as the restoration of the mosaic tile of the Seit-Djemalladdin Mosque in Annau. The Embassy is pleased to sponsor a bagshi group which will represent Turkmenistan at the prestigious Silk Road festival in the U.S.

The American Mission has also worked with the Government of Turkmenistan to promote political and economic reforms, including projects to strengthen the rule of law, build a stronger civil society, and improve the health and education sectors.

Since September 11, the U.S. Government and the Government of Turkmenistan have worked closely together in the war on terrorism. The Government of Turkmenistan was one of the first to join the U.S.-led international coalition against terrorism. The two governments have worked with UN agencies to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. Since October, over 165,000 metric tons of food and other goods have been shipped by the World Food Program into Afghanistan from Turkmenabat, 80% of which has been funded by the U.S. Government.

The U.S. Government values its cooperation with the Turkmenistan Government and is committed to looking for new avenues of such bilateral relations.



Ambassador Kennedy with Speaker of Parliament Tagandurdy Hallyev at the reception

From the beginning of its operations, the American Embassy has focused on expanding and strengthening Turkmen-American cooperation and investing in the future of Turkmenistan. Over 600 citizens of Turkmenistan, the majority of whom are young people, have traveled to the United States on official exchange programs to study or meet with their professional counterparts.



Driver Alexander Danilov on the first working day of the Embassy, March 17, 1992.

Dr. Betty Leaver, Translation and Interpretation Specialist, Shares Her Knowledge in Ashgabat

Dr. Betty Leaver, a professor of linguistics from Monterey Institute in California, spent two weeks, March 1-15, 2002, in Ashgabat working with the faculties of Turkmen State University and Azadi World Languages Institute. She conducted a number of workshops on interpretation and translation. During her workshops, she emphasized that a near-native proficiency in English was a prerequisite to becoming an effective translator or interpreter. Dr. Leaver urged students and faculty to improve their basic English skills and explained how it was important to emphasize social and cultural factors while learning the language. During her sessions with university teachers, Dr. Leaver discussed how to design a curriculum in the field of interpretation/translation and modern methods of teaching English as a Second Language.

On March 12, 2002, Dr. Leaver gave presentations for English teachers during the first National English Language Conference, held at Azadi World Languages Institute. Close to 100 teachers from the country, representing public schools, universities, and non-governmental centers, gathered for a day of workshops on teaching methodology and sharing of best practices.

Dr. Leaver led training workshops for freelance interpreters, alumni of USG-sponsored programs, and local Embassy staff. More than 60 participants attended these workshops. In addition to improving their skills, Dr. Leaver discussed the business of translation, including finding resources and creating network contacts.

Dr. Leaver stressed the importance of educational exchanges between U.S. and Turkmenistan. In an interview with "Neutralniy Turkmenistan" , she stated, "Professional and educational exchanges are very important, because it is impossible to reach a professional language level without being able to visit the country and understand its culture."



Dr. Betty Leaver during one session at the University

Peace Corps Volunteers to Return in April

Eight Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Turkmenistan before September 11, will be returning on April 16, 2002, to continue their service. They will work on English, Business Education and Health programs and will be placed in Akhal, Mary and Lebap Velayats. A swearing-in ceremony is planned for April 17, 2002, at the Peace Corps office.

Their return is the result of the recommendations made by an Assessment Team from Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington D.C., which traveled to Ashgabat for two weeks in February. They met with representatives of the Government of Turkmenistan, the U.S. Embassy, international organizations, and local partners.

The new group of Peace Corps Volunteers, about 45 people, are expected to arrive this coming September. "I have talked to their counterparts and they are very excited to host the new group," said Myahkri Karakulova, Peace Corps Training Manager. The new group of volunteers will be placed in all velayats of the country.

To prepare for the new volunteers, the Peace Corps office organized a National Conference on March 25 -27, 2002, with its local counterparts. The conference gathered representatives from the Ministry of Education, Regional Education Offices, and District Education Offices. The participants met at the newly opened Peace Corps Conference Hall and discussed better ways to strengthen their cooperation.



All participants after the National Conference in the yard of Peace Corps office

Dr. Linda Reed and Women in the American Civil Rights Movement

Dr. Linda Reed, a professor of history at the University of Houston, spoke on African-American history and women's issues during four days of lectures and roundtables in Ashgabat, February 25-28, 2002. Dr. Reed gave lectures on the role of women in the American civil rights movement for university students. She also led workshops on jazz, poetry, and women in civil society. Her visit coincided with African-American History Month (February) and introduced Women's Month (March).

Dr. Reed spoke to 250 students from the English, International Relations, Business, and History faculties at Turkmen State University and the Azadi World Languages Institute. During her lectures, she highlighted the contributions of individual women, such as Rosa Parks, and women's groups, in achieving equality for African-Americans.

Dr. Reed led a discussion about the role of women in civil society development for 25 female journalists and NGO leaders. Dr. Reed gave a few examples of enterprising minority women in American history who had succeeded in business and given back to their communities. Dr. Reed also led a discussion at the National Library after the showing of the film "The Color Purple".

For the Professional Organization of English Teachers (POET), Dr. Reed led a poetry reading featuring African-American poets. Afterwards, she discussed the debate within the black community over whether it is best to be seen as an individual or as a member of a larger ethnic community. She also led a discussion on the roots of American rock and roll in African-American spirituals, blues and jazz. Drawing on anecdotes from her own life, she touched on range of topics, including respect, prejudice, and current events.



Dr. Reed with students at an exhibition on African-American filmmakers at the National Library

Dr. Elinor Burkett, Fulbright Fellow, visits at Turkmen State University

Professor Elinor Burkett was in Ashgabat March 16-21, 2002, and met with students of the History and International Relations/Business Departments at Turkmen State University. Dr. Burkett is a professor of history and an American Fulbright Fellow currently teaching at Kyrgyz Russo-Slovanic University in Bishkek. She was invited to lecture on Contemporary American Politics.

During her lectures at the University, the students and faculty had an opportunity to debate American foreign policy and discuss the role of the international community in rebuilding Afghanistan. Dr. Burkett has first-hand experience in this area, having traveled to Afghanistan with her husband in January.



Dr. Burkett speaks at the English teaching organization ARCA

Dr. Burkett also met with the researchers from the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education to discuss the American Education system. In addition, she spoke at English teaching organizations such as Alliance for Responsible Community Action (ARCA) and the Professional Organization for English Teachers (POET).

Dr. Burkett is the author of several books and a regular contributor to women's magazines. Her latest book is on the U.S. education system, its trends and problems.

**ACCELS will be organizing a Job Fair
on April 27-28, 2002
at the Nissa Hotel for employers and for
those seeking employment
For more information, please contact
Konstantin Augemberg at 395328 or
eacashgabat@online.tm**

U.S. Ambassador Hosts a Reception for Finalists of U.S. Government-Sponsored Exchange Programs

U.S. Ambassador Laura Kennedy visited Mary and Bairam-Ali on March 25-26, 2002. Ambassador Kennedy met with the Hakim of Mary Velayat. During the meeting Ambassador Kennedy discussed the benefits that a Counterpart Consortium Resource Center would bring for the Community in Mary. Ambassador Kennedy and Deputy City Hakims, Khodja Byashimov and Kakageldi Kurbanov, also held a community meeting at the City Hakimlik office with representatives of the Youth Union of Mary, alumni of USG exchange programs, and community groups.



Ambassador Kennedy with (from left) Anjela Begjanova, Cultural Public Affairs Assistant; Khodja Byashimov, Deputy City Hakim; Rakhman Atadjanov, Consul of Mary Velayat; Kakageldi Kurbanov, Deputy City Hakim and Dovlet Mamedov, Youth Union Project Manager.

Following the meeting, Ambassador Kennedy visited the future site of the Youth Union's Internet resource Center, supported by the Embassy's Grant commission. The center is due to open in the former Oktober Theater next month.

In Bairam-ali, Ambassador Kennedy visited a Youth House where schoolchildren are participating in the pilot project "Future Farmers of Turkmenistan", organized by Winrock International, a USAID

contractor. The aim of the project is to teach the schoolchildren the importance of agriculture, as well as literacy and leadership skills.



Ambassador Kennedy also visited Ilkijiler Limited Liability Partnership, a group of honey producers in Bairam-Ali to observe equipment made and installed by Winrock experts. She and her colleagues were hosted by to a delicious lunch at which the participants discussed a range of local projects.



Ambassador Kennedy with the members of the honey production group