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Issue 28

Monthly Newsletter

January 2004

Turkmen Officials and Journalists Watch and Discuss U.S. President's State of the Union Address

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On January 22, U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat organized viewing of the U.S. President's annual State of the Union Address for prominent Turkmen government officials, foreign policy experts, journalists, and representatives of ethnic and religious communities at the Sheraton Grand Turkmen Hotel. President Bush's address, delivered to the U.S. Congress on January 20, was shown in Russian in its entirety and gave the viewers an opportunity to learn about the U.S. administration's present-day priorities in foreign and domestic policies.

In her introductory statement, Ambassador Jacobson described the background of State of the Union Addresses, and the special importance that this year's address has as the U.S. presidential election campaign is being launched.

In his annual address, President Bush spoke of America's campaign against terrorists, and the goals of the U.S. and the international community in Afghanistan and Iraq. The U.S. President reiterated that America and the international community are demanding that Iran and North Korea stop development of nuclear weapons.



Guests viewing the U.S. President's State of the Union Address.

On domestic priorities, Bush said he's optimistic about the reviving U.S. economy and discussed the importance of health care. The President also asked Congress to reform the nation's immigration laws.

After viewing the address, participants engaged in informal discussions of these and other issues raised in the President's Address.

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USAID, WHO and Turkmen Health Ministry Conduct Seminar on Malaria

A weeklong seminar on malaria prevention and treatment measures was held for Turkmen medical specialists in Ashgabat from January 20-26. Turkmenistan's Ministry of Health, USAID



Central Diagnosis Center Specialist Galina Mamedova (right) shares specifics of malaria surveillance in Turkmenistan with one of participants.

Regional Training Program and World Health Organization's (WHO) Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Program organized the event. WHO malaria specialists from Russia Alla Baranova, Andrey Zvantsov and Gassan Souleymanov trained a total of 52 Turkmen health workers on malaria diagnosis and treatment methods. They were assisted by specialists from Turkmenistan's State Sanitary Inspection Service, the National Institute of Deserts, and the Central Diagnosis Center.

The goal of the seminar is to spread expertise in this area through local trainers, who were selected based on their results on a test, which was conducted upon completion of the seminar. Held for epidemiologists and laboratory specialists in two separate parallel sessions, the seminar provided participants with a structured framework for treating malaria utilizing modern tools and equipment. Laboratory specialists received an overview of integrated laboratory technology,

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A Website on Journalism in Ashgabat

On January 15, Dina Baybarodina, an experienced journalist, posted a website on journalism to IATP's server at <http://iatp.edu.tm/samopiztsi> using the facilities of the IATP access site at the National Library in



Dina Baybarodina consults with an IATP staff member about her website.

Ashgabat. A graduate of Moscow State University with a degree in journalism, Dina has had a career spanning 28 years in local television, radio and newspapers. Dina's popular television shows in the 1980s included "Eureka," a children's program about science, and "Motherland," a show about travel. She has always dreamed of founding a school of journalism in Turkmenistan, but was unable to find financial support for her project. Dina created the website to present her dream online – teaching beginning journalists to judge the quality of sources, challenge opinions, and develop multiple sources of information. Dina was able to create the website thanks to computer skills acquired during a series of IATP trainings in computer, Internet and Web design basics back in March 2002. "I always thought that people who could work on computers were magicians, and I could never learn to work on a computer at my age. IATP's trainers changed my mind completely, and now in one and a half years I have become addicted to computers and even created my own website," remarked Dina.

Contributed by Aysenem Tuylieva, IREX

Young Intellectuals from Ashgabat and Dashoguz

On January 10, twelve students united online to participate in an intellectual contest at the Alumni Resource Center (ARC) in Ashgabat and the IATP access site in Dashoguz. Participants prepared for the event in seminars taught by volunteer trainers Hemra Atabayev, who works at the Center for Social Partnership, an NGO in Ashgabat, and Nargiz Abdullayeva, president of the Red Crescent Youth Club, an international Red Cross organization, which among other things assists the disabled. Using the popular Russian television game "What? Where? When?" as a model, they created their own online version to test each other's knowledge. To play, each side received a random question, sent in through e-mail to IATP staff, which they discussed around a table for one minute. The game requires sharp critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as debating ability, as one must argue one's reasoning for coming up with a particular answer. The question themes ranged from Chinese culture to Russian proverbs to music videos. Ahmet Hojaye, a FLEX alumnus, moderated the event through an online chat server. Meanwhile, Arslan Penjiyev (FLEX 03) updated the teams' scores at the game website www.iatp.edu.tm/ebridge. Over 20 alumni



The Ashgabat team of Young Intellectuals discussing possible answers to one of the contest questions.

and other users came to watch the event, which the Ashgabat team won with the final score of 6 (correct answers) to 3.

Contributed by Aysenem Tuylieva, IREX

Peace Corps Volunteers Gather in Ashgabat for a Week of Seminars and a Resource Fair

More than 50 Peace Corps Volunteers from across the country gathered in Ashgabat from January 6 – 11, 2004, to attend a resource fair and early service training aimed at



U.S. Embassy's IRC Assistant Azat Myradov (left) offering free U.S. Government publications to volunteers at the Resource Fair.

increasing the efficiency of the volunteers' service in their communities. Volunteers gathered to share the experiences and needs, they encountered during their first two months at site since swearing in on November 6, 2002. During the weeklong training, Peace Corps Volunteers attended seminars on teaching HIV/AIDS awareness and reproductive health, as well as technical training in education and health. Experienced volunteers, who have been working in Turkmenistan for a longer period, conducted a seminar on "How to Do a Camp".

More than a dozen American and international organizations and the Embassies of the U.S. and Great Britain displayed their information at a Resource Fair, specially organized for Peace Corps volunteers on January 10, 2004. Volunteers met with representatives of various organizations operating in Turkmenistan and explored opportunities for using their resources to support their local projects.

Having returned to their regional sites, newly furnished with useful information and resources, volunteers began implementing their projects together with their local counterparts.

Exchanges

FSAU Participants Gather for Mid-Program Workshop in Washington, D.C.

Participants of the FSA Undergraduate exchange program attended their Mid-Program Workshop in Washington, D.C., January 8-11, 2004. The theme of the workshop was "The Power of Community Service." Participants learned ways to continue doing community service in their home countries and how to encourage others to join them. They reflected upon their own community service during the first semester, with two teams winning prizes for their posters created on this theme. All the posters may be viewed at www.irex.org.

Students also participated in community service activities in the Washington, D.C. area such as park clean-up, singing with occupants of group homes, giving presentations about their home countries at retirement centers and making gifts for children in health care.

The FSAU students also had time to see a Washington Capitals hockey game, visit monuments and museums in the capital city, and see a special production of the Washington Improv Theatre Company. FSAU Program Manager from Turkmenistan Kaia Benson was at the workshop, where she met with the students from



FSAU 03 Participants show their Turkmen spirit at the Mid-Program Workshop.

Turkmenistan, who all had great things to say about their classes, professors, friends and host families.

Contributed by Kaia Benson, IREX

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday

Alumni Hold Roundtable on Civil Rights in Ashgabat

On January 19, the Alumni Resource Center in Ashgabat was the venue for a roundtable on civil rights issues with 13 alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs and Marie-Jose Van Rie, Human Dimension Officer from the Ashgabat office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). IATP Alumni Coordinator Bahar Agayeva and IREX Country Director Bahar Atayeva organized the discussion to celebrate the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. and improve dialogue in Turkmenistan on the important issues Dr. King raised during his lifetime. Ms. Van Rie described OSCE's mission, which includes maintaining dialogue with host governments, promoting constructive criticism and bringing violations of human rights to light. In a question and answer session, alumni inquired about human rights cases in which OSCE had served as an observer or advocate. Ms. Van Rie followed up by providing useful links for future reference on press freedom, international law and legislation, and human rights issues, including human trafficking, at <http://www.osce.org/fom> and www.legislationline.org. She also gave the alumni printed



Marie-Jose Van Rie discusses civil rights with alumni.

literature and a CD on human rights, gender issues in post-conflict situations, freedom and responsibility, and other issues.

Contributed by Aysenem Tuylieva, IREX

Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" Speech Featured at the American Center

On January 21, a Literary Club session, led by a Peace Corps volunteer Ray Nayler twice a week at the American Center, featured Dr. Martin Luther King's famous speech known as the "I Have a Dream" speech. Ray Nayler and club members discussed the style and dynamism of the speech and its significance for the Civil Rights movement in the U.S.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered the speech on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. on August 28, 1963, during the March on Washington, joined by over 200,000 people. It was a speech of hope and

determination, epitomizing the day's message of racial harmony, love, and a belief that blacks and whites could live together in peace. The speech is currently considered one of the greatest and most influential speeches ever made.

Every year on the third Monday in January, America celebrates the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who was the most famous American civil right leader in the 1960s. Dr. King attained national prominence by advocating a policy of passive resistance to segregation.

Healthcare

USAID, WHO and Turkmen Health Ministry Conduct Seminar on Malaria

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including modern malaria tests. The seminar also aimed to strengthen local capacities in basic and applied research to permit and promote the regular reassessment of Turkmenistan's malaria situation.

A special training manual on different types of malaria mosquitoes was printed out for distribution among participants. This book was developed by specialists of the Department of Flora and Fauna of the National Institute of Deserts.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC), WHO/RBM

program, USAID Regional Training Program, and Turkmen Ministry of Health shared the costs of conducting the training. The USAID Regional Training Program sponsored the participation of Turkmen health specialists in the seminar and provided laboratory equipment, including 12 microscopes and supplies, which were used during practical sessions of the workshop.

The Central Asia Regional Training Program is part of USAID's Strategic Technical Assistance for Results with Training (START) project and is administered by the Academy for Educational Development (AED).

AED contributed to this article

Turkmen Officials and Journalists Watch and Discuss U.S. President's State of the Union Address

(continued from page 1)

The State of the Union Address, a tradition going back to 1790, gives the President an opportunity to reflect on the past while presenting his hopes for the future to Congress, the American people and the world. The formal basis for the annual message by the President is provided for in the U.S. Constitution. The State of the Union is one of only a few presidential speeches that are televised live in prime time on all major U.S. networks.

The full text of President Bush's 2004 State of the Union Address in English and a translation of the address summary and foreign policy content into Russian and Turkmen are available on the U.S. Embassy's website (www.usemb-ashgabat.rpo.at) or at the Embassy's Information Resource Center (tel.: 35-00-45). The Information Resource Center also has the recorded video of the State of the Union Address in English and Russian available for loan.

New!

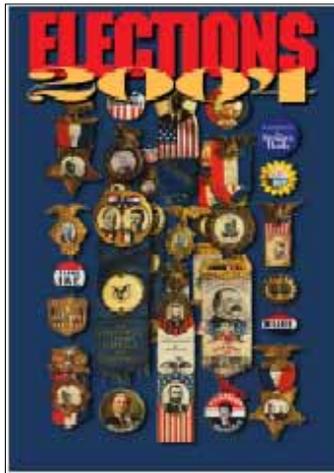
IRC Corner

Introducing new electronic journals

United States Elections: 2004

This unique publication offers an introductory overview of the American electoral process. Seven experts, mostly political scientists, explain significant aspects of the upcoming elections to international audiences who may have different ways of electing their governments.

The journal offers a discussion of the role of political parties in the American system and the nomination process including party nominating conventions and primary elections. One of the articles describes in detail how electoral institutions ensure fairness, discussing the procedures for registering voters, counting votes, and structuring a ballot. An interview with prominent political analyst Thomas Mann,



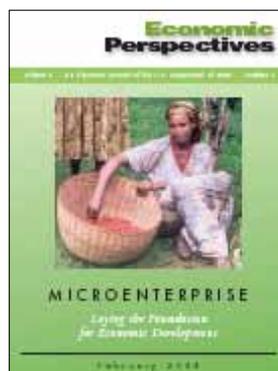
of the Brookings Institution, deals most explicitly with the upcoming election. You can also learn about two aspects of the process that have become crucial in modern elections: public-opinion polling and campaign-finance laws. In addition, you will find information on key Internet links and additional resources.

This journal is available in print in English. Please call 35-00-45 or send e-mail to: irc-ashgabat@iatp.edu.tm. In Russian, this publication is available in electronic format. The print version will arrive soon. Several articles from the journal have been translated into Turkmen, and are available through: <http://www.usemb-ashgabat.rpo.at/tm>.

Microenterprise: Laying the Foundation for Economic Development

This journal offers insights from key government officials and prominent scholars in the field of microenterprise on access to finance and enterprise development and its societal implications. An article by Emmy Simmons of the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade, USAID, gives an overview of U.S. government support of microenterprises as the predominant source of income and employment for hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

In his article Peace Corps Director Gaddi Vasquez discusses the help Peace Corps volunteers could offer in community-based small businesses and microenterprises, particularly those that focus on youth and



women. Other articles discuss microenterprise programs, access to financial services and best practices in microenterprise development from the USAID perspective.

The journal also offers several commentaries on the topic, two analytical articles by leading experts in microenterprise lending, facts and figures, and key Internet links.

This journal is available in electronic format in English through the IRC at the U.S. Embassy. Please call 35-00-45 or send e-mail to: irc-ashgabat@iatp.edu.tm.