



THIS IS Central and Southwest Asia

The Newsletter of the Central and Southwest Asia Program
at The University of Montana

Fall 2007

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The Central & Southwest Asia Program Continues Its Growth

By Otto Koester, Director of Grantwriting and Project Development

With its formal establishment in 2003, the Central and Southwest Asia Program developed a multifaceted plan for a new interdisciplinary regional studies program at UM. Building on the popularity of several undergraduate Silk Road and Central Asia courses introduced in 1997, the plan called for the expansion of its existing undergraduate academic program, partnerships and exchange opportunities with universities and research institutions in the region, policy dialogues and conferences about contemporary political, economic, social and cultural problems, outreach and training activities, and a research and publication program aimed at translating the significance of Central and Southwest Asia into a major academic program. But from where would come the financial resources to launch such an ambitious initiative? Was the plan merely a dream? In retrospect, the rapid growth of the Central and Southwest Asia Program has in large part been driven by its ability to attract external grants and contracts from a variety of sources, especially United States government agencies. Within a short period of time, this support has been instrumental in helping the Central and Southwest Asia Program to become a nationally recognized center for the study of the peoples, cultures and history of the Central and Southwest Asia region.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND NEW UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

One of the most important governmental agencies to support the Program has been the U.S. Department of Education, which has supported the expansion of its undergraduate curriculum with three Title VI grants in the past ten years. The second grant, awarded in 2003, allowed UM to introduce new courses in Persian and Arabic, as well as four new introductory regional studies courses and three advanced offerings. The third Title VI grant, awarded in 2005, enabled the Central and Southwest Asia Program to collaborate with the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center to integrate the study of China with Central and Southwest Asia. Funds from this grant were used to offer additional intermediate courses in Arabic and Chinese language and culture, and to introduce or revise twenty other courses. In addition, four UM faculty members traveled to Xinjiang Province in western China to gain a deeper understanding of the longstanding connections between China and Central Asia. Through these three grants, UM was able to create an undergraduate minor in Central and South-

west Asian Studies, with hopes of offering a full undergraduate major in the near future.

OUTREACH, TEACHER TRAINING, AND CONSULTANT ACTIVITIES

In addition to the Title VI grants, the United States Department of Education awarded the Central and Southwest Asia Program two Fulbright-Hays Group Study Abroad grants. Under the first of these two grants, a group of twelve Montana K-12 teachers traveled to the Kyrgyz Republic for a one-month lecture and site visit program in Summer 2004. The purpose of the trip was to gather and prepare new instructional materials about the peoples, history and geography of the Kyrgyz Republic for use in K-12 Montana classrooms. One year later, in April 2005, a second Fulbright-Hays grant was awarded for a group of 13 other Montana teachers and educators to visit China and Kazakhstan. This allowed two UM faculty members and eleven high school social studies teachers from Missoula, Frenchtown, Bozeman, and Billings, to travel to Beijing, Xinjiang Province, and Almaty to attend scholarly lectures and visit historical museums in July 2005. Upon return to the United States, the study tour participants gave presentations about the political, cultural, trade, and geographical ties between China and Central Asia at the annual meeting of the Montana Education Association for K-12 social studies teachers across the state.

In addition to the Fulbright-Hays Study Tours, the Central and Southwest Asia Program has conducted numerous teacher trainings and consultancies in collaboration with UM's School of Education under partnership agreements with the Academy of Educational Development, American Council for Education and Learning, World Learning, the United States Department of State, USAID, the World Bank, and other major donor agencies. These activities have included a three-year professional development project for four groups of teachers and education administrators from Pakistan, a four month training program for Ministry of Education officials from Azerbaijan, and professional development training for teachers and education officials from Egypt. Additional trainings for Russian and Kyrgyz teachers are scheduled for October and November 2007, and a pioneering consultancy assignment for the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic was concluded in September 2007. The consultancy resulted in *Continued Growth on p. 2*

the development and introduction of a new system of student performance assessment system to be used as part of Kyrgyzstan's nation-wide effort to modernize its K-12 educational system. The teacher trainings and consultancies have totaled approximately 2 million dollars in grants and contracts.

PARTNERSHIPS AND EXCHANGES WITH UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Another externally-funded facet of the Central and Southwest Asia Program has been the establishment of two working partnerships and exchanges between UM and other institutions of higher learning in the region. In 2004, Mehrdad Kia, Director of the Central and Southwest Asia Program, was awarded a three-year grant under the FREEDOM Support University Partnership Program of the Bureau of the Educational and Cultural Affairs, the educational arm of the United States Department of State. Under this grant, UM collaborated with two universities in the Republic of Georgia to exchange faculty and strengthen the capacities of both Georgian universities in the field of American Studies. Over the next three years, three Georgian university teachers spent one semester taking American studies courses at UM, and three UM professors traveled to Georgia to conduct classes in American literature, law, and economics. The UM-Georgia exchange also included a two-day conference about U.S.-Georgian relations held in Tbilisi, Georgia in May 2005. The conference received national attention in Georgia and was broadcast on television.

In 2005, Jeffrey Renz, Director of the Criminal Defense Clinic in UM's Law School and a member of the Central and Southwest Asia Program, received word that UM had also succeeded in obtaining a three-year FREEDOM Support University Partnership Program grant. Of more than 80 proposals submitted, Renz' project was one of only three to be funded. Between 2005 and 2007 UM's School of Law partnered with Osh State University in the Kyrgyz Republic for three Kyrgyz law professors to come to UM for intensive legal education and practical clinical training, and for two UM law professors to visit Kyrgyzstan and help the Osh State Faculty of Law revise its mission and teach new courses. At the end of the third year, Renz and Greg Munro, his UM School of Law colleague, collaborated with the Kyrgyz National Academy of Law to organize a nation-wide conference for professors, judges and lawyers interested in modernizing the Kyrgyz system of legal education. The total amount of money awarded under the FREEDOM Support University Partnerships was \$453,957.

At the level of student exchanges, the Central and Southwest Asia Program recently welcomed nine international students for the Fall 2007 semester under the Near East and South Asia (NESA) Undergraduate Exchange Program. Funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the NESA program is providing full scholarships for a group of outstanding undergraduate students from Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates to spend up to two semesters studying at UM.

POLICY DIALOGUES AND CONFERENCES

External financial sources have also supported a variety of dialogues, conferences, and meetings that the Central and Southwest Asia Program now organizes on a regular basis. The topics for these projects have ranged from the policies of the United States government toward different countries in the region, to different aspects of Central Asian cultures and traditions and the prospects for regional cooperation. Thanks to three grants from the Montana Committee for the Humanities, distinguished scholars, diplomats, journalists, and other experts from the region have come to Missoula to participate in the annual Central and Southwest Asian Studies Conference held on the UM campus in April of each year. Among the invited presenters at these conferences have been such eminent persons as Ahmad Rashid, the best-selling author and journalist from Pakistan; Elizabeth Jones and Richard Boucher, the past and current Assistant Secretaries of State for Central Asia under the Bush Administration; John Fox, Director of the Office for Afghanistan at the United States Department of State; the Ambassadors to the United States from Georgia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan; and scholars from Austria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and other universities in the United States, among others.

Smaller conferences have also been held with two groups of scholars, educators, and prominent cultural figures, one from Tajikistan and the other from Kyrgyzstan, with assistance from World Learning and the United States Department of State. The focus of these smaller-scale events has been to engage in frank exchange of ideas about the cultural legacy of Islam in Central Asia and the revival of tolerant traditions of the Silk Road. Begun in late 2006 and early 2007, these meetings have resulted in specific project plans to be carried out in the region.

PUBLICATIONS

Several UM members of the Central and Southwest Asia Program faculty are also engaged in writing books with the help of external support. Three of these books will be published with financial assistance from World Learning and the United States Department of State. The fourth will be produced under a grant recently awarded by the United States Department of Education.

The first book is titled *Tajikistan: Pearl of Central Asia*, the authors of which are Mehrdad Kia, Ardeshir Kia, and Rick and Susie Graetz. It is being published by The University of Montana Press and is scheduled to appear in October 2007. The second publication is tentatively titled *Kyrgyzstan: Crown of Central Asia*, a companion volume to the Tajikistan book and authored by the same team. It will also be published by The University of Montana Press and is due to appear in January 2008.

The third publication is a book tentatively titled *The Greats of Tajik Culture: A Popular Encyclopedia*. This volume will be the result of a collaborative effort by an international team of scholars from Tajikistan, Georgia, Europe, and the United States. It will be co-edited by Ardeshir Kia, Associate Director of UM's Central and Southwest Asia Program, and Grigol Beradze, Professor of Persian Language and Culture, Tbilisi Institute of Asia and Africa. The publication date is May 2008.

Future priorities for the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program's external funding plan are the following: strengthening of the undergraduate program by adding courses on Persian and Turkish language and culture; revitalization, translation, and publication of classical Islamic and Central Asian documents and texts; and increase in the number of Central Asian students attending UM. Identification of potential funds sources and preparations for submission of grant proposals are underway.

Grants Awarded (2004 to present)

1. U.S. Department of State, FREEDOM Support University Partnership grant, UM-Tbilisi Institute of Asia and Africa and Kutaisi State University, Republic of Georgia, ca. \$230,000 (awarded 2004 for three years)
(Central & Southwest Asia Program and International Programs)
2. U.S. Department of State FREEDOM Support University Partnership grant between UM School of Law and Osh State University (3 years), \$244,000 (awarded 2005 for three years)
(School of Law, International Programs, and Central & Southwest Asia Program)
3. U.S. Department of State Fulbright Hays Group Study grant to Central Asia, \$74,000 (awarded 2005)
(Central & Southwest Asia Program and Mansfield Center)
4. Academy for Educational Development and USAID contract. Training and professional development for Pakistani educational administrators and teachers (\$649,000 over 3 years)
(International Programs, English Language Institute, Central & Southwest Asia Program)
5. U.S. Department of Education Title VI grant to integrate study of China and Central Asia, \$179,000 (awarded 2005 for two years)
(Central & Southwest Asia Program and Mansfield Center)
6. U.S. Department of State Fulbright Hays Group Study grant for Western China, \$78,000 (awarded 2006)
(Central & Southwest Asia Program and Mansfield Center)
7. Montana Committee for the Humanities, Annual Central Asia Conference, \$3,000 (awarded 2006)
(Central & Southwest Asia Program)
8. U.S. Department of Education International Research and Studies grant, ca. \$360,000 (awarded 2006 for three years)
(Central & Southwest Asia Program)
9. World Learning Support for Central Asia Cultural Heritage Project, Dialogues and Publications, \$130,000 (awarded 2006)
(Central & Southwest Asia Program)
10. American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) and Azerbaijan's Ministry of Education (World Bank-funded), Training for educators and officials from Azerbaijan, ca. \$210,000 (awarded 2006)
(School of Education, International Programs, Central & Southwest Asia Program)
11. Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and World Bank, Consultant and technical assistance services in student assessment, ca. \$269,000 (awarded 2006)
(School of Education, International Programs, Central & Southwest Asia Program)
12. Montana Humanities Committee, Annual Central Asia Conference, \$5,000 (awarded 2007)
(Central & Southwest Asia Program)
13. Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Asian Development Bank, Kyrgyz Educator Study Program in Curriculum and Learning Materials Development, \$280,277 (estimate) (recommended for funding subject to final negotiations, August 2007)
(School of Education, International Programs, Central & Southwest Asia Program)

Estimated Total Amount of Grants Awarded: \$2,550,177

Arabic Language Grant Awarded

By Khaled Huthaily

The University of Montana has been awarded a \$386,000 grant from the United States Department of Education's International Research Studies Program to support a three-year project to prepare a new textbook for teaching the Arabic language. Titled "Enhancing Proficiency and Accuracy: Instructional Materials in the Phonology of Arabic", the grant will allow The University of Montana to produce an integrated set of instructional materials for teaching the sound system of Modern Standard Arabic.

The proposed materials will consist of three components: 1) a 250-300 page textbook that will provide a comprehensive introduction to the sound systems of Arabic and English; 2) a 50-75 page teacher's manual to accompany the textbook; and 3) a web-based CD with detailed illustrations and animated drawings that demonstrate the positions and movements of speech organs for how Arabic and English sounds are made.

The textbook and teacher's manual will be structured around topics devoted to the history, culture, and dialects of the Arab World; the production of Arabic and English consonants and vowels; contrasting word-stress, intonation and rhythms; and rapid Arabic and English speech, among others. In addition to illustrations and animated drawings, the CD will have interactive exercises that detail the physical production of Arabic and English sounds.

The director and the Principal Investigator of the project is Dr. Mehrdad Kia, Associate Provost for International Programs and the Director of the Central and Southwest Asia Program. The leader of materials development team and head researcher will be Khaled Huthaily, a UM doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction and adjunct instructor of Arabic language and culture. Other materials development team members will include Dr. Kristen Brustad from the University of Texas at Austin and Dr. Mahdi Alish from West Point Military Academy, both nationally known Arabic language teachers and curriculum specialists.

5th Annual Central and Southwest Asia Conference

By Brian Lofink



Richard Boucher, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, United States Department of State, speaking at the 5th Annual Central and Southwest Asia Conference

From April 19 to 21, 2007, the Central and Southwest Asia Program, with generous support from the Montana Committee for the Humanities, organized the fifth annual Central Asia conference. The conference's title was "Central Asia and its Geopolitical Impact on South Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East."

A significant number of diplomats, public officials, scholars and artists from Central Asia, the Caucasus region, Europe, and the United States participated in this conference, joining our UM faculty for a two-day program of presentations, dialogue, music and culture. Ambassador Richard Boucher, Assistant Secretary of State, United States Department of State delivered the keynote address, entitled Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East: Policy Challenges for the United States.

In addition to providing hundreds of students and faculty, as well as the greater Missoula community, a unique insight to the region's political, social, economic, and environmental challenges and their impact on the rest of the world, the conference offered two highly acclaimed musical performances. Both performances offered Missoula and western Montana with a rare opportunity to experience the Mugham musicals traditions from the region of south Caucasus and in particular, the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Travels in Kyrgyzstan

By Rick & Susie Graetz

In spring 2006, on behalf of The University of Montana's International Programs and the Central and Southwest Asia Program, we traversed the diverse landscape of Tajikistan and the Pamir Mountains. This past spring, we explored the Tajik people's northern neighbor, the Kyrgyz Republic or Kyrgyzstan. Although they now enjoy sovereignty, both Central Asian nations were at one time part of the Soviet Union until it dissolved in the early 1991.

Tajikistan is a magnificent country, its Pamir Range ranks as the second highest on earth and the friendliness of its populous is legendary. We didn't see any lessening of majestic scenery in Kyrgyzstan and found the Kyrgyz people to be just as welcoming.

Kyrgyzstan's Tien Shan Range and its collection of mountains, dominates this piece of high Asia and are, to put it simply... awesome. Six-thousand-meter peaks are numerous and Khan Tengri and Pobdea soar beyond 7,000 meters, ranking them with some of the planet's loftiest summits.

We found Kyrgyzstan relatively easy to negotiate in terms of quality of access to the higher elevations. Lower elevation roads were in excellent shape. Accommodations and food, in a region known for remoteness and spare population, was good and at a level that allowed us to experience indigenous living rather than resort life. It was the real thing and we dined with locals in many places that rarely, if ever, see westerners.

The ancient city of Osh, about 3,000 years old, and a passage way for the fabled Silk Road, was our favorite city. The busy, sprawling Bishkek, the capital, was also enjoyable. Beyond these two cities, much of Kyrgyzstan is a gathering of well-spaced small towns amidst a mountainous and pastoral landscape.

Much like the Tajikistan journey, we returned from the Kyrgyz Republic with hundreds of photographs and enough exposure to the people and their habitat, to write a book that will portray Kyrgyzstan, the Crown of Central Asia, accurately.

Raising The Flag

A summary of summer travel to Turkey and Azerbaijan, 2007

By Thomas Goltz

Planting two symbolic gardens to address the sod-buster in me (one in Livingston and the other in Missoula), I hit the road (or perhaps better, the air) on June 15th for an intense two month trip to Turkey and the Caucasus to conduct research, cultivate relations with universities and potential UM program sponsors, and generally get my ever-needed 'fix' of international affairs.

As always, the first stop was Istanbul, the city astride the Bosphorus Straits, where I almost immediately plunged into the political crisis of the day: along with the rest of Turkey, the city was gearing up for snap elections in mid-July called by 'Islamist' Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in response to a not so-subtle hint by the secular military establishment that his candidate for president, fellow 'Islamist' and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul was unacceptable to the 'Deep State.' In the event, Erdogan and his AK Party would massively increase their parliamentary majority and then push Gul into the presidency in August, but throughout June and early July the Big Question was whether the military would intervene to 'protect' the secular legacy of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, as they have four times since 1960. The general analysis of the election event might be summed up by the apparent paradox that the more democratic Turkey becomes, the more Islamic it becomes, and vice-versa. The other surprise of the election was the re-emergence of an explicit Kurdish presence in parliament: in order to effect an 'end-run' around the 10% barrier hurdle designed to keep 'marginal' parties out of parliament, Kurds (and others) ran as independents, won some 30 seats (out of 550), and then constituted a parliamentary 'group' under the name of the party that has not run in the election at all. I wrote a story about all this for *The National Interest*, which also addressed the growing disenchantment across the Turkish political spectrum with American/Bush Administration policies in the region, and particularly Iraq.

Lastly, I of course looked up old friends, such as Dr. Prof. Mete Tuncay and his colleagues of Bilgi University in Istanbul, who remain eager to set up a partnership with UM. I caught them all together at Mete's 70th birthday party and presentation of a *Festschrift* put together by his many friends and former students.

I flew to Baku on July 4th and remained there for a month, catching up with diverse issues in Azerbaijan ranging from the not-so-pretty transformation of the city's skyline thanks to an oil related construction boom (friends made a new movie on this theme, entitled simply 'The House,' the story of a young man tricked into selling his ancestral home to nefarious developers; I am placing a review of the film and its context in *Azerbaijan International*) to the controversy surrounding the Gabala Radar Station, thanks to Vladimir Putin's "offer" to George W. Bush that the United States use that Russian-run (and thoroughly decrepit) installation instead of building new missile shields in Poland the Czech Republic to fend off nuclear attacks by 'rogue' states (such as Iran . . .) *The International Herald Tribune* picked up an OpEd I wrote on the subject. The bulk of my time, however, was spent 'raising the UM flag' through

a series of lectures and high-level meetings. Presentations included the Azerbaijan-American Alumni Association, the newly-created Azerbaijan Tourism Institute (associated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism), Qavqaz (Caucasus) University, as well as a key-note lecture on regional security for a group of international summer-school students at the newly-created Diplomatic Academy associated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the request of the Chancellor (an old friend of the



*Visiting Scholar Goltz in action in Caucasus
(‘We are precisely here’)*

Central & Southwest Asia Program at UM) His Excellency Ambassador Hafiz Pashayev. The crowning achievement in this context was my "Mugham Comes To Montana" project for Azerbaijani Public Television, a half hour program featuring four traditional musicians performing their magic across Montana, and culminating with concerts at UM's annual Central Asia conference in April, 2007). The bait for all this was a discussion panel (in Azerbaijani) consisting of myself, a UM graduate from Billings now serving as a Peace Corps volunteer and two Azerbaijani women who have spent time at UM. Broadcast at 'Prime Time' on Saturday, August 4th 2007, the program made instant waves across the country.

I had the pleasure of viewing it in the company the father of H.E. Mehriban Aliyeva, wife of the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev. Suffice it to say, The University of Montana and the Central & Southwest Asia Program is now thoroughly embedded in the national consciousness of Azerbaijan at the highest levels.

In addition to these activities in Azerbaijan, I also took a filthy train up to Tbilisi to give a presentation of my *Georgia Diary* (M.E. Sharpe, 2006), which was attended by leading journalists, academics, diplomats, government figures and many old friends from the bad old days of the early and mid-1990s, who figure in the book.

(I will make a similar presentation on October 10th at noon in the newly opened Central Asia board room, (Old) Journalism 303 as part of the 'brown bag' series)

I departed Azerbaijan for Turkey on August 5th, enjoyed about a week of relaxation in my house on the Northern Aegean, and then returned to Montana via a forced two day stay in Paris (life is tough) to gear up for two UM classes: Introduction to the Middle East, and the third semester of my Introduction to the Post-Soviet Caucasus (affectionately known by former students as "Goltz's Gulag . . .")

As for the future, upon my return to the Big Sky country, I was delighted to find an invitation to fly to Budapest in early October for the launch of the Hungarian translation of my book *Assassinating Shakespeare* (which had to wait almost twenty years before finally getting published to rave reviews in 2006). Hope springs eternal. Word also has it that certain Hollywood types are sniffing around the book with the idea of making it into a film.

Yikes!

Oh, and both my symbolic gardens are growing.

THIS IS Central and Southwest Asia

The Newsletter of the Central and Southwest Asia Program at The University of Montana



The University of
Montana

Central & Southwest Asia Brown Bag

All presentations start at 12:00 noon and are free and open to the public.

Legal Training in Kyrgyzstan

Presenters: Jeff Renz & Greg Munro
Wednesday, September 19, Central & Southwest Asia Seminar Room, Old Journalism 303

Georgia Diary

Presenter: Thomas Goltz
Wednesday, October 10, Central & Southwest Asia Seminar Room, Old Journalism 303

Reforming the Kyrgyz Educational System

Presenter: Ken Stuker
Thursday, November 8, Central & Southwest Asia Seminar Room, Old Journalism 303

Journey through the Silk Road

Presenters: Rick & Susie Graetz
Wednesday, November 14, Central & Southwest Asia Seminar Room, Old Journalism 303

Armenians in Georgia

Presenter: Milena Oganessian
Thursday, December 6, Central & Southwest Asia Seminar Room, Old Journalism 303

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