International Conference on the Durability of Authoritarian Regimes and the Challenges of Islamist Movements in the Middle East
By Dr. Noureddine Jebnoun, Visiting Professor for Arab and Middle Eastern Affairs at the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center

On September 1, 2009, Libyan strongman Colonel Muammar Qaddafi celebrated with great splendor his seizing power 40 years ago, an event of which, Rami Khouri, one of the most well-informed observers of the Middle Eastern political scene has written: “Nothing to celebrate in Libya today.”1 Almost three months earlier, Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected for a second term; an election largely disputed which triggered a wave of challenges both at home and abroad. On April 9, 2009, Algeria’s President Abdelaziz Bouteflika was acclaimed for a third term as a result of a constitutional revision, which seems a crowning process for “introducing Algeria’s President for Life.”2 President Husni Mubarak, in power since 1981, ruling the country under a state of “emergency,” is the longest serving Egyptian president. Like Mubarak, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, president since 1987, has implemented a series of constitutional “reforms” that removed presidential term limits and aimed at prolonging his rule. In Yemen, President Ali Abdullah Saleh still holds office since assuming it in 1978, despite the political instability of the country; seemingly he has no intention of stepping down.

In sum, most of the Middle Eastern states have eschewed successive waves of democratization over the past three decades. While many scholars have debated the region’s dearth of democratic reforms, an agreed understanding of the processes impeding such reforms has yet to emerge.

The international conference “Durability of Authoritarian Regimes and the Challenges of Islamist Movements in the Middle East” continued on page 2

Major in Central and Southwest Asian Studies
By Otto Koester, Director of Grantwriting

Building on the success of its undergraduate minor, the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program at The University of Montana is preparing to add a new program to its academic offerings. Pending approval by the Board of Regents, beginning in January 2010, students will have the opportunity to declare a major in Central and Southwest Asian Studies in pursuing a Bachelors degree. This will be the first such major offered by any college or university in the United States.

Like the Central and Southwest Asian Studies minor, the new major will be interdisciplinary and available to all students. It will consist of coursework in the history, culture, languages and geopolitics of the region. A unique feature of the program is that, unlike many other area studies majors, it will also focus on the geology, animal and plant life, risk for earthquakes, ecology and other topics relating to the region. Faculty teaching in the program will come from many UM academic units and departments. In addition to Arabic, students will be able to take courses in Chinese, Persian, and Russian. Study abroad in Central and Southwest will be strongly encouraged.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Central and Southwest Asia has become of great strategic importance to the United States, and Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program has received widespread recognition for translating an awareness of the region into a nationally recognized academic program. In the coming years the program plans to enhance its library holdings and outreach activities, and to become a major national resource center for Montana and neighboring states of Great Plains and Northern Rocky Mountains.
The whole rhetoric of democratization and constitutionalism becomes meaningless when only the domestic governance mechanisms are used to explain the survival of authoritarian regimes. It has been verified by empirical statistical research that oil rent revenue had little impact on the durability of authoritarian regimes. The decline of oil revenues during the 1980s, for example, did not affect the robustness of state control. This fact raises many questions: What are the other sources of revenue that have strengthened the durability of authoritarian regimes? More importantly, when trying to explain regime survival using material legitimacy (patronage and material co-optation), why do we not focus on state expenditures rather than on state revenues? Why are other variables, such as bureaucratic administration, the state security apparatus and military establishment, territorial integrity, ideological legitimacy, amongst others, not highlighted?

The conference will not limit its focus to either the lack of democracy or the lack of a democratic tradition within the locales under investigation. Authoritarianism in the Islamic world is undoubtedly specific to its political locale, but is not unique to the Middle East. Neither is the phenomenon of authoritarianism culturally specific to a certain geographic or civilization zone encompassing Islam, as articulated by Bernard Lewis; nor does there exist a predilection towards authoritarianism/theolitarianism within the long durée across the region. For instance, Chinese authoritarianism, with its economic liberalization, suggests that culture is significant but not a determinant factor to explain such phenomena. We will attempt to understand and enlighten “what is” (i.e., authoritarian rule) by emphasizing what allows such regimes to survive and even proliferate.

Factors such as weak civil society and the failure of peaceful opposition forces to challenge existing regimes will thus be underscored as impediments to democratic change. Political culture (national historical experience, political behavior...) is another factor that impacts the failure to transition to democracy in the region.

The trouble is that in many Middle Eastern countries the opposition is deeply divided. Probably the strongest opposition groups that have the largest following are those describe themselves as broadly Islamist in their outlook, such as the Muslim Brotherhoods in Egypt. Clearly, the secular opposition parties in the Middle East are much more afraid of the Islamist opposition than they are of the governments themselves. The secular parties call themselves an opposition, but if they had to ally themselves either with the present regime or the Islamists, they would prefer the current regime because the membership of the secular parties is drawn from a social class that might be at risk if the Islamists came to power. Furthermore, the division between the secular and religious opposition parties in the Middle East means that the opposition has sort of checkmated itself, which makes it easy for the regime to stay in power, however, unpopular that might be. However, focusing on ‘democracy’ has been misplaced without the bedrock of ‘peaceable political regime change’ in the first place — otherwise democratic institutions (as opposed to democratic culture) become highly destabilizing and fractious in any society.

It seems that incumbent regimes in the Middle East — as presently constituted — will be unable to meet the upcoming challenges of stability, social cohesion, cultural integrity and economic viability when confronting a wide range of challenges facing the peoples of the region moving forward.

In spite of the current wave of Islamic militancy across the Middle East and the world—which has featured the criminal mutation of some Islamist elements into al-Qaeda —nonviolent Islamists could represent a credible alternative to the paradigm of the autocratic state in the Middle East. If the latter seemed be the most plausible hypothesis, the following questions should be addressed:

What role are Islamist parties and movements likely to play in democratization of the region? What challenges do Islamist movements pose to the authoritarian regime(s)? as well as ‘what challenge does Islamist commitments / thinking have to oppose authoritarianism itself?’ This could be a critical divide between various Islamist (or opposition groupings), as if they simply are a Islam-inspired lacquer over similarly authoritarian political culture/institutions then why should they be supported (e.g. the regime in Iran)? What is the potential impact of participation by Islamist parties? How willing is a given Islamist group to yield power if it loses at the ballot box? How willing are Islamists to respect and support the democratic process and human rights seen as truly universal (rights of women and minorities)? How willing are Islamist leaders to build political coalitions with non-Islamist movements on behalf of common goals? How willing are Islamist movements to continue to be involved in a system that does not commonly reward them with political power?

Islamist movements are challenged to demonstrate their commitment to effectively and openly adhere to the principles of democracy (e.g., rule of law, accountability, transparency, participation and good governance) which are the main demands of the Middle Eastern societies—and reflect American principles. Of course, at the end of the day, it is the incumbent authoritarian rulers themselves who must support change toward a more open system by contrast to stable governance, which is a synonym for stagnation.

Durability of Authoritarian Regimes and the Challenges of Islamist Movements in THE MIDDLE EAST

Sponsors
International Programs, the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center, Office of the President, Office of the Provost, World Affairs Council of Montana, and the Central and Southwest Asia Program at The University of Montana.
All sessions will be open to the public and free of charge.

Location (For All Panels)
University Center (UC), UC Theatre
The University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812

Panels (Day 1: Wednesday September 30th, 2009)
- OPENING REMARKS, 09:30-10:00 a.m. President George M. Dennison (The University of Montana) and Dr. Mehrdad Kia (The University of Montana).

- DILEMMAS OF REFORM IN AUTHORITARIAN MILIEU, 10:00-12:00 p.m. Chair-Moderator: Dr. Noureddine Jebnoun (The University of Montana). Speakers: Dr. Clement M. Henry (University of Texas at Austin), Dr. Lindsay Benstead (Portland State University), and Dr. Elizabeth Bouri (UNDP).

- CONTESTING AND QUESTIONING AUTHORITARIANISM FROM WITHIN: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AT THE CROSSROADS, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Chair-Moderator: Dr. Mehrdad Kia (The University of Montana). Speakers: Dr. Shireen Hunter (Georgetown University), Mr. Alireza Nader (RAND), and Dr. Ali Ansari (University of St. Andrews).

Panels (Day 2: Thursday October 1st, 2009)
- EGYPTIAN MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD: AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE IN A SHADOW OF A ROBUST AUTHORITARIAN RULE, 10:00-12:00 p.m. Chair-Moderator: Dr. Ardeshrir Kia (The University of Montana). Speakers: Dr. Nathan J. Brown (George Washington University), Dr. Joshua Stacher (Kent State University), and Dr. Tarek Masoud (Harvard John F. Kennedy School of Government).

- THE ARAB WORLD BETWEEN A SEARCH FOR DEMOCRACY AND AN OLD AUTHORITARIANISM PLAYED ANEW, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Chair-Moderator: Dr. Steven Levine (The University of Montana). Speakers: Dr. Michael C. Hudson (Georgetown University), Dr. Eric Davis (Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey), Mr. John Measor (The University of Montana), Mr. Cory S Julie (Georgetown University), and Dr. As‘ad AbuKhalil (California State University, Stanislaus).

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In fall 2009, the faculty of the Central and Southwest Asia Program will once again teach a number of popular classes. One of these courses is Silk Road (ANTH/AS 106, HIST 146), which focuses on the study of the cultures and civilizations of central and southwest Asia. For nearly 3,000 years, the vast region extending from China in the east to Greece and Rome in the west, served as the nexus for a collection of east-west trade routes known today as the Silk Road. In this course, students will learn about the history, cultures, and artistic traditions of the nomadic, rural, and urban communities, which lived and worked along the 4,000 mile long trade route. They will also study the historical, cultural, social, economic and political processes that have affected and transformed the diverse communities of western China, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

In fall semester, I am also teaching Elementary Persian (MCLG 195). Persian is one of the world’s oldest languages. To the native speakers, Persian is known as Farsi or Tajik. Persian is the language of over one hundred million people in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, western China, Afghanistan, Iran, northern Iraq, southeastern Turkey, and parts of the southern Caucasus. Persian language has a rich history and literature, including one of the world’s most celebrated poetical traditions as displayed by the works of such giants as Rudaki, Ferdowsi, Khayyam, Rumi and Hafiz. We look forward to seeing you in the class this fall.

“A ray of the rising sun touched the scalloped ridge of ice-fields in the Tibetan Alps and threw a veil of pink over their snowy slopes… The morning star was still visible, but it was gray dawn on the plain below, and the light was gaining rapidly…”

“At the foot of the mountain lay the old travel road, wide and deeply marked, literally cut to bits by the sharp, nail-studded wheels of countless caravan carts. The ruts parted and merged, then spread again, as the eddies of a current mark the face of a river. On this road myriads of travelers had journeyed for thousands of years, making of it a ceaselessly flowing stream of life for it was the great highway of Asia, which connected the Far East with distant European lands.”

From their 1942 book, The Gobi Desert, missionaries Mildred Cable and Francesca French, describe a dawn departure from a point on the Silk Road in today’s Xinjiang Province of China.

These intrepid women converted into words the aura of the ancient tracks that crossed all matters of difficult terrain and served as civilization’s first great link of commerce and information. It was the Asian heartland that carried the most important routes of what in 1877, would become known as the Silk Road.

The University of Montana, through its International and Central/Southwest Asia programs has taken on the task of developing academic relationships and publishing projects in Central Asia, a region that is unlike any other on earth. Rising in a place that not long ago was only a blank spot on the world map to all but adventurers and followers of “roads less traveled,” it is the focus of one of the International Program’s most important projects--to profile the caravan trails of the silk trade, while continuing to uncover the physical grandeur and very deep antiquity of this heretofore-hidden place.

The mission is a continuing work in progress. Our most recent trip follows a 2008 journey into western China’s Xinjiang Province where we followed the northern Silk Road route around the Taklamakan Desert from Turfan to Kashgar. This 2009 episode not only took us back to “China’s wild west,” but also to the important Silk Road posts of Xi’an in Shaanxi Province and Dunhuang in Gansu Province.

Eleven successive dynasties, dating from the 11th century BC forward, made Xi’an the capital of China. The city served in this capacity for a total of 1,600 years, and has been crucial in the “Middle Kingdom’s” history for more than 3,500 years. The land around Xi’an, especially in the fertile valley of the Yellow and Wei rivers, is known as the “cradle of Chinese civilization.” During the 7th and 8th centuries AD, Xi’an was the largest city in the world, boasting of nearly two million people within its confines. Visitors from faraway nations traveled to the capital for trade, religious practices and culture. It is only proper, then, that the Silk Road would begin from this great city.

Dunhuang was the last western outpost of the Han dynasty and served with distinction as a great oasis city funnelling routes to the north and south of the Taklamakan Desert. Today it is quiet and small Gobi Desert settlement that has preserved reminders of one of history’s finest eras well.

The importance of seeing and photographing these regions that carried the first commerce westward cannot be underestimated. The places on the way had to be seen to fully understand the harshness of the terrain and the elements the traders encountered.

All funding for our travels has been provided through International Programs and the Office of the President that are making it possible to develop further the University’s development of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program.
The word India is a diminutive of Hind or "(H)industan" — a word coined by the ancient Persians (Iranis), for the people that populate the banks of the river Indus. Ironically, the British Raj instigated partition of the sub-continent, which was a Holocaust that the world does not care to remember, leaves two splintered parts that NEED to be reconciled. The word Hindu originally did not connote a religion as the last 60 years of media has portrayed it, it means residents on a riverbank that lies in today’s Pakistan. Many years ago at a wedding in Lahore, a friend or mine remarked “Arre yaar( hey man)- I wish we were over in Chandigarh or Pathankot- we could really have celebrated with music, drink and dance”. And contrast this sentiment with the remarks I’ve heard from people that claim to know the sub-continent: X: “How come the Indians were unable to spot those Pakistani’s in Mumbai? To which I answer…

Y: “Have you ever been to Punjab, Sindh, Rajasthan or Kashmir?”

Many intellectuals like Ahmed Rashid have expressed sentiments such as- when will our people realize that vested interests and ex-colonialists were poisoning thousands of years of relationships in Central and South Asia? When will we open all our borders, support the local economies and build infrastructure, schools and libraries there, instead of allowing vested interests to manipulate and fracture the region and planting mines that maim our people.

Is Islam a divisive force in the Indian Subcontinent?

Many historians, particularly those schooled in Orientalism take a simplistic and dichotomous view of problems in post colonial Asia (including the Middle East). The oversimplification often done on religious, nationalistic and ethnic terms, such as Hindu versus Muslim, Sunni versus Shia, Kurd versus Turk, Irani versus Iraqi perpetuates the patronizing and overtly patriarchal view of colonized peoples and cultures to justify external meddling in their political affairs. As a contemporary philosopher of religion and my research colleague from the University of Cyprus, Marianna Papastephanou puts it:

“Contrary to some contemporary, mass media assertions that Islam is a totalitarian worldview, ‘primitive Islam, perhaps even more so than primitive Christianity, is impregnated with a certain egalitarian and community climate’ (Chesneaux 1968, 93). Sufist egalitarian scorn of wealth, figures such as the Ottoman Badr-ed-Dîn, who renounced his career so as to preach the community of property and support a peasant rising, as well as Hamdam Qarmat in Arabia preaching egalitarian insurrection in the ninth century were cases in point (1968, 94). In an interesting parallel, “in one of his discourses the Buddha is said to have explained that it is not by taxation or recourse to force that one can remedy brigandage and social troubles, “it is poverty and lack of work that are at the root of social unhappiness” (1968, 90). [from Papastephanou, 2008]

The case of Kashmir

Many view the tragedy that occurred in Bombay (Mumbai) through the lens of Kashmir, a Shangri-la splintered by the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 based on religion and the diabolical planning of George Curzon (1859-1925) several decades before the partition even occurred. Curzon is also infamous for his anti-suffrage actions which included the establishment of an anti-suffrage league in England, as well as the “Curzon line”, a sinister carving of the borders of Poland in post WWI, which left a Polish minority in the Soviet Union. The history of Kashmir also includes the Jinnah and Nehru egos, both an integral part of the Indian National Congress who later went on to become to the first prime ministers of Pakistan and India respectively. The irony, it is alleged, is that both led irreligious lives. The independence from British raj was an opportune moment to start a process of healing the animosity amongst the religions in India. That was destroyed by the partition. It cannot be denied that the Kashmir headache for both India and Pakistan is a significant part of the pain that was unleashed on Mumbai and also the earlier terror attacks. A more complex and nuanced history of Kashmir including photos of the Northern territories (Gilgit region) and the vale of Kashmir (Srinagar region and surroundings) was shown in my Brown Bag Lecture (The Kashmir Paradox) on April 9, 2009. A photo-journalistic tour of Karachi, Islamabad and Mumbai was included at the end of the lecture.

Professors Ardi and Mehrdad Kia and I are currently planning a course in Fall 2010 specifically focused on post-colonial identities in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

Present day Hindustan

The ‘Hindu’ culture is supposedly thousands of years old. It is claimed that there are 36 million gods in this religion plus or minus 3. Now, those marginalized 3 are supposed to be the real avatars of nature - Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Preserver) and Shiva (Destroyer of the evil) all rolled into one god called the Trimurthy. Lo and behold, they are now relegated to “plus or minus 3” and the other 36 million gods rule the roost in Hindu religion. It is just not these inventions but the superstitions that come along with them, along with the ever present curse of caste and creed that is making the religion weaker and more complex by the day. The congress party’s national slogan “Unity in diversity” notwithstanding, this diversity is the greatest weakness within the culture, however “wonderful” it may appear to the rest of the world. The Hindustani’s have survived invasions not
because of any great solidarity or valor... It is just that the numbers were simply unmanageable for any ruler. So, there you have the Hindus, inventing gods and sects by
the week, making the integration of the innumerable fractured sub-sects of Hindu religion in itself an impossible task. How then can one expect a social discourse between
Hindu and Muslim religions? The fractured religion also explains the mistrust among individuals leading to corruption and Swiss bank accounts, with vast portions of the
country’s wealth stashed away instead of being re-invested in its people. The unchecked flow of money from the Arabian peninsula into India and Pakistan under the guise
of social donations to alleviate poverty [caveat emptor- partaking of this wealth requires indoctrination into Wahhabism] is not exactly contributing to the peace and good
order of Indian and Pakistani society either. Young minds begin to accept radical views more easily, especially when they begin to feel marginalized and disenfranchised.

Since nearly every Muslim in India and Pakistan is actually a ‘convert’ and many over-zealous about the religion, there is even more susceptibility to accept radical views.

With this sort of rigid and over-zealous notions of religion, one wonders if one can perceive ‘moderates’ at all? The voice of Muslim intellectuals is rarely paid attention
to. What is only apparent is ‘radicals’ and ‘less radicals’. Are Muslims marginalized in India? Yes, by the democracy or vote bank politics. In some ways it also suits many
of this ‘minority’ because they can then have their own rigid ways, interests of peace be damned. Are intellectual Muslims marginalized in Pakistan? Yes, by the repeated
need to make truce with fanatical elements that have arisen due to repeated circumstantial events that have plagued Pakistan since their independence including power
hoarding by the military. It is a sad state of affairs indeed to think of the current state of Kashmir and the North West Frontier Province, in the light of Khan Abdul Gaffar
Khan’s [the pre-independence Pashtun “Gandhi”] success at the promotion of secularism in that region, until partition destroyed his life’s work as well, and left him bitter
to his life’s end about the plight that befell India. The past colonial legacy of splintered Hindustan is replete with wounds that may never ever heal. I end with the
rhetorical question “O’ (H)Industan, Where art thou?”

References

Montana Arabic Summer Institute (MASI) Graduates 25 in 2009
By Samir Bitar and Khaled Huthaily

The Central and Southwest Asia Program (CASWAP) with support from the Department of Anthropology conducted another Montana Arabic Summer Institute (MASI) to teach intensive Arabic to high school students. The summer institute featured classroom instruction and activities for four hours a day, five days a week, from June 22 to July 17, 2009. Students received five college credits upon successfully completing the institute.

The curriculum was designed to help the students reach the novice-mid to novice-high language level based on standardized proficiency guidelines. In-class activities consisted of instruction that combined listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students were acquainted with the culture, history, geography, and religions of the Arab world. They were also involved in extracurricular cultural activities to gain an understanding of the Arab cultures in an authentic manner. Extracurricular activities included an Arabic cuisine and music event, and two field trips. Students went shopping and cooked with native speakers of Arabic to learn the Arabic names of ingredients and kitchen tools. During this event, students gathered with native speakers of Arabic and learned to appreciate Arabic music and singing. Movies and photos were taken to be available online in the Fall semester on the MASI website: www.umt.edu/cap/arabic.

Dr. Mehrdad Kia, Associate Provost for International Programs and Director of CASWAP, served as the institute’s Director. Mr. Brian Lofink, Liaison of International Programs, served as the institute’s manager. Dr. Khaled Huthaily, Assistant Professor of Arabic and Applied Linguistics, served as the curriculum developer, and Samir Bitar, Lecturer of Arabic Language and Cultures, served as the outreach coordinator. Students interacted with the two instructors as well as two excellent teaching assistants (Ms. Laura Buchholtz and Ms. Liz Higgins), who went through the process of learning Arabic at the UM and reached the advanced level of proficiency.

One student wrote: “I wanted to thank you again for spending your time teaching us all Arabic I had an amazing time.” Another student wrote: “Thanks again for a wonderful four weeks of Arabic! I really enjoyed the class and hope that I can continue studying Arabic.” One parent wrote: “I can’t believe how much [Name] is learning in your class. It’s so fun to watch the improvement day by day. This has been a great experience for her. You guys are doing a wonderful job.”

MASI 2009 was described by STARTALK evaluators as “an exemplary program that is designed to address the very real need for and build the demand for Arabic language programs in the state of Montana.” They commented that “The University of Montana is leading efforts to internationalize education in the state, in part by providing outstanding support for the implementation of critical language programs K-16. In this four-week project STARTALK resources are providing critical leverage for state resources toward the goal of opening the world to the youth of Montana.” It is noteworthy to mention that STARTALK Central selected Dr. Khaled Huthaily to be a STARTALK evaluator for other teacher and student summer programs.
The University of Montana (UM) has begun offering Elementary Modern Turkish in collaboration with exchange scholars through the Fulbright Foreign Languages Teaching Program since Fall 2008. The Central and Southwest Asia Program welcomes İşıl Dönümçü as an instructor of Turkish Language and Culture at The University of Montana.

İşıl Dönümçü was born in Istanbul, Turkey. She studied English language at the Foreign Languages Education Department of Gazi University in Ankara. During her undergraduate studies, she studied as an Erasmus Exchange student at the University of West Bohemia in Czech Republic and participated in an exchange with the Korea University in South Korea.

During her studies, she had the opportunity to work at various language institutes and observe middle and high schools as an intern teacher of English in different countries. She volunteered in an international student organization and she went to a number of countries as a cultural representative of Turkey. After completing her undergraduate degree with High Honors, she received a scholarship from the Fulbright Commission for being a Foreign Language Teaching Assistant to teach Turkish and Turkish Culture in the United States. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she will study Educational Leadership and International Relations during 2009-2010 academic year at The University of Montana.

İşıl defines Turkish as a language of love, peace, and tolerance. She encourages everyone to learn Turkish and the culture of the cradle of the civilizations. She says that you will be welcomed to the Turkish hospitality even by saying “Merhaba” and see a smile you would never forget!

Modern Turkish is an essential key for understanding Ottoman Turkish and communicating with Turkish communities in Asia and Europe. The University of Montana will continue to provide its students with the opportunity to be a part of this rich and varied culture by offering Modern Turkish in the future.

A Lady Griz Interns in Kyrgyzstan

By Jessa Linford

An internship, for many, is an opportunity to add another line to the resume.

For me it was a journey across the world thousands of miles and stumbling through 3 different languages to help me get one step closer to what any person wants, self-satisfaction in the direction their life is going.

Kyrgyzstan, a post-communist state in Central Asia, but the high mountain peaks, and the culture closely tied to the horse and a nomadic lifestyle slightly resembles Montana in a way. I was amazed at the connections I made between the terrains and the native people of Kyrgyzstan and the ones from my own Big Sky state. On a closer look the uniqueness of this country is astounding.

My internship was just as rewarding at the Institute for War and Peace Reporting. I edited articles that were translated to English from Russian, which gave me a unique insight into the social and political aspects of the country. I have many people to thank as well for this opportunity, namely Professor Mehrdad Kia that helped finance the trip and instill my fascination of Central Asia. Also I would like to thank President Dennison and Provost Engstrom of The University of Montana, and also my editor, Aida Kasymalieva.
Central & Southwest Asia Brown Bag Lecture Series

All presentations are held from 12:00 noon to 1PM in the Central and Southwest Asia Program seminar room (Old Journalism 303) and are free and open to the public.

Wednesday, September 23: Opening A Window On Iran: An Adventure in Cultural Diplomacy
Presenter: Nancy Mathews, Former Vice President for the Arts at Meridian International Center, Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, October 14: The Landscape of the Silk Road through China’s “Wild West” - Xinjiang Province
Presenters: Rick & Susie Graetz, Department of Geography and International Programs

Tuesday, November 10: Seven Regions of Turkey
Presenter: İşıl Dönümü, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, Central and Southwest Asia Program

Wednesday, December 2: A Lady Griz in Kyrgyzstan
Presenter: Jessa Linford, Student, The University of Montana

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