



GEORGIA: AMBASSADOR TEFFT VISITS NATIONAL FOREST FIREBOMBED IN WAR



Ambassador Tefft speaks to television crews with the burned National Forest at his back, September 23, 2008. [Stephen Guice, U.S. Embassy Tbilisi]

U.S. Ambassador to Georgia John Tefft toured areas of the Georgian National Forest near the resort city of Borjomi to see the damage caused by Russian incendiary bombs. The ambassador was the first foreign official to view the destruction and was moved by the level of damage. "These forests are a world ecological treasure, and the whole world is harmed when this kind of damage is done, not just Georgia," he said to crews from Georgia's three largest television stations. Giorgi Khachidze, the governor of the region, joined Ambassador Tefft along with officials from the Georgian Forestry Service and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

TURKEY: OLYMPIC CHAMP THAWS TURKISH ICE



Buzz Schneider showing new shooting techniques, August 2008. [Eric Kasper]

Two-time Olympian William "Buzz" Schneider—best remembered for his role on the 1980 Gold Medal U.S. Olympic Hockey team that beat the Soviet team at the Lake Placid Winter Games—recently completed a two-month camp for young Turkish players as part of the U.S. Department of State's Youth Enrichment Program. Schneider's hockey camp drew 300 young people. They came to the ice with widely varying abilities, but they all worked together to build individual skills, team play and self-esteem while learning English.

CYPRUS: AMBASSADOR URBANCIC LEADS IFTAR DINNER FOR MUSLIM ORPHANS

U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus Frank Urbancic hosted an Iftar dinner for orphans from SOS Children's Village at the Californian Restaurant in Nicosia. SOS Children's Village is an NGO that provides family-based care to orphans worldwide. All of the children from the Village attended the dinner, including their house "mothers," SOS board members, print and broadcast journalists and officials from the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia. The dinner celebrated the longstanding friendship between SOS Children's Village and the U.S. Embassy. In a televised speech at the dinner, Ambassador Urbancic stressed the significance of the holy month of Ramadan worldwide and emphasized how American Muslims have contributed to the diverse and multicultural fabric of American society. Iftar refers to the evening meal that breaks the fast during Ramadan.



The dinner, held on September 16, 2008, celebrated the longstanding friendship between SOS Children's Village and the U.S. Embassy. [Juliette Dickstein, U.S. Embassy Nicosia]

DENMARK: TOP GUN AMBASSADOR ASKS DANISH DEFENSE TO REACH FOR THE SKY

Popular center-right daily *Jyllands-Posten* (circ. 155,212) carried an op-ed by U.S. Ambassador to Denmark James Cain in which he urged Denmark to increase its defense budget and improve its air fleet by purchasing an American-built next generation fighter. The ambassador mentioned his recent F-16 flight that marked the plane's 250,000th service air hour and stated, "Denmark, together with the U.S. and other NATO allies, needs to upgrade its fleet of fighter aircraft to sustain its air defenses and ensure that it is prepared to meet the security and peacekeeping challenges in the 21st century." Calling for Denmark to increase its defense contribution from its gross domestic product, the ambassador said, "Security cannot be achieved without sustained investment in defense. NATO, the people of Denmark and the brave Danish forces serving at home and abroad deserve nothing less."

Ambassador Cain gives the thumbs up to a stronger Danish fleet in this photo that appeared along with his August 27, 2008 op-ed. [Danish Ministry of Defense]



GERMANY: RACISM DROWNED OUT BY CHEERS IN FRANKFURT



Consul General Jo Ellen Powell (center), school director Lothar Blase (L) and state official Una Patzke (R) display the Pestalozzi School's "School without Racism, School with Courage" plaque on September 24, 2008. The photo appeared in the regional daily newspaper Rheinpfalz.

U.S. Consul General in Frankfurt Jo Ellen Powell spoke to over 200 students, teachers and a number of dignitaries at Pestalozzi Hauptschule secondary school in the city of Ludwigshafen. Pestalozzi Hauptschule, eighty-five percent of whose students come from immigrant backgrounds, was named a "School without Racism, School with Courage" by the Aktion Courage, an association fighting against racism. During a ceremony that featured an anti-racism rap, a song in remembrance of Sept. 11, and a multi-cultural sketch, Consul General Powell announced that the school had been chosen to participate in the Windows on America Program in 2009. Windows on America brings minority students in Germany on a ten-day tour of the U.S. Powell's announcement was greeted by wild cheers, and she was happily embraced by many students at the conclusion of the program.

SERBIA/KOSOVO/ALBANIA/MACEDONIA/SLOVENIA: EMBASSIES DEVELOP YOUTH CITIZENSHIP

U.S. Embassies in Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia and Slovenia launched a year-long collaborative program to promote and develop civic involvement among youth and improve prospects for future stability in the Balkans. The program incorporates local NGOs, mentors and youth from each country and will organize community and school-based volunteer work to address the needs of the region. A primary goal of the program is to educate youth to become active participants in the community in order to develop social capital and contribute to overall regional stability. First Lady of Slovenia Barbara Miklič Tuerk and Susan Shultz of the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana opened the first training program with NGO representatives and mentors from each country, emphasizing the U.N. and U.S. models in their remarks. The embassy also hosted a reception for the participants with the local NGO and diplomatic community, bringing Serbian and Albanian diplomats together for a common cause.



The First Lady of Slovenia and embassy official Susan Shultz taking notes at one of the training sessions, August 22, 2008.

BELGIUM: AMBASSADOR FOX AND SINGER HELMUT LOTTI CELEBRATE THE US-BELGIAN RELATIONSHIP

U.S. Ambassador to Belgium Sam Fox hosted a special event at his residence to showcase the U.S.-Belgian relationship. He welcomed a stellar entertainment and media audience and showed the embassy-produced film, "From Explorer Ships to Partnerships," which celebrates not only 175 years of U.S.-Belgian diplomatic relations, but 400 years of shared history. The film was followed by a performance by international Belgian star, Helmut Lotti, who sang two songs from his new collection of American music, "Time to Swing." In an interview with Flemish TV station VRT's prime-time celebrities and entertainment show "De Rode Loper" ("The Red Carpet") Lotti said of the event, "This was not only a cultural exchange but an opportunity to show what the U.S. and Belgium had accomplished together." Ambassador Fox added, "Lotti really represents a link between Belgium and America. He is taking the best of American swing, and he is making an album out of it. And that just exemplifies the relationship between Belgium and America." Ambassador Fox toured Belgium with the film to deliver the positive message of the shared history between our two countries.



Mrs. Fox, Ambassador Fox, Helmut Lotti and guests in the ambassador's residence, September 10, 2008. [Didier Vandebosch]

CZECH REPUBLIC: AMERICAN CENTER HOSTS PANEL ON AFGHANISTAN



The U.S. Embassy in Prague's American Center, in cooperation with the Center for Security Policy, Charles University and the U.N. Information Center, hosted a discussion entitled "Afghanistan, Seven Years After." Amy Carnie of the political-economic section of U.S. Embassy joined a panel of Czech academics, journalists, and government, military and NGO officials in discussing the political, economical and security developments in Afghanistan since 2001. The panel touched on the Central Asian regional situation, the present status and future outlook for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, and the nature and efficacy of the Czech Republic's involvement in Afghanistan. This panel was the first of its kind during the American Center's fall season.

Amy Carnie speaks at the American Center, September 9, 2008. [Miroslav Konvalina, U.S. Embassy Prague]

MACEDONIA: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTO PROJECT BREAKS RECORDS

The U.S. Embassy in Skopje hosted Sarah Leen, Senior Photo Editor for National Geographic, to train photojournalists and lead a weekend photo safari for a multi-ethnic group of young amateur photographers. On her first evening, she presented her own work to standing-room only crowds at the National Gallery, Mala Stanica, and later drew the largest crowd the embassy's American Corner in Skopje's city library had seen since its opening. Leen wrote a story on Macedonia for National Geographic in 1995, and audience members reveled in the photos of Macedonia thirteen years ago, as well as those of people from Siberia, Mali and Mexico. Leen selected photographs from the photo safari for the capstone event, an opening at the National Gallery attended by more than 300 people. "I am so proud of these photographers who produced such extraordinary work in such a short amount of time," she said.



Photo safari participants jump for joy in the village of Vevcani, September 21, 2008. [Miso Ristov]

CROATIA: EMBASSY ZAGREB SPONSORS NATIVE AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL



Native American Flautist and Grammy nominee Joseph FireCrow performs in Opatija during the festival, September 8-14, 2008. [Tihomir Lerner, Croatian-American Society]

In cooperation with the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb helped sponsor the Croatian American Society's third annual Red Rocks Arts and Crafts Festival. Headlined by celebrated Native American musicians Joseph FireCrow and Keith Secola, the festival featured concerts and workshops in the cities of Osijek, Opatija and Zagreb. Joseph FireCrow is a flautist who was nominated for a Grammy award in 2001. FireCrow's music is featured on the soundtrack of the Ken Burns' documentary "Lewis and Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery." Native folk and blues rocker Keith Secola is an award-winning musician, master guitarist, and native flute player. His song "NDN Kars" is considered the contemporary Native American anthem and is the most requested song on Native radio in the U.S. and Canada. The festival also included a digital video conference at the embassy's American Corner in the Zagreb public library with prominent Native American flautist R. Carlos Nakai.

POLAND: EMBASSY WARSAW AND US ARMY HONOR POLISH VETERANS OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

U.S. Ambassador to Poland Victor Ashe awarded prestigious medals to two Polish officers at a reception in honor of all Polish soldiers who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq. The event at the ambassador's residence was attended by many current and former senior military and government officials and highlighted the service and sacrifice of Polish soldiers in the Global War on Terrorism. After an invocation by Bishop Tadeusz Ploski, Ambassador Ashe and Defense Attaché Colonel Richard Runner presented Brigadier General Wojciech Grabowski and retired Colonel Pawel Hejna with the United States Army's Meritorious Service Medal.



Ambassador Ashe appearing on TV presenting a medal to Colonel Hejne while General Grabowski observes, September 23, 2008. [Wojciech Mandal, U.S. Embassy Warsaw]

MOLDOVA: CHILDREN'S HEALTH GETS A BOOST THANKS TO THE US EMBASSY



Americans and Moldovans work together to provide preventive dental care to children in a local boarding school, September 11, 2008. [Sharon Ketchum, U.S. Embassy Chisinau]

Five teams led by North Carolina National Guard soldiers together with Moldovan doctors and dental residents from the Medical University N. Testimitanu administered free Hepatitis A vaccines and dental treatments to children in 34 locations throughout Moldova. A total of 5,500 children at orphanages and boarding schools as well as flood victims received fluoride treatments, and 5,000 doses of Hepatitis A vaccines were provided. This program is the latest in an ongoing effort by the U.S. Embassy in Chisinau to provide inoculations for the residents of orphanages and boarding schools in Moldova. Past events included immunizations against chickenpox, Hepatitis A and B, meningitis, and measles, mumps and rubella. Since 2003, a total of 13,835 doses of Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and chickenpox vaccine and

12,091 dental treatments have been provided. This humanitarian project is financed through the U.S. European Command's Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Program and is overseen by the U.S. Embassy.

GEORGIA: AMERICAN CORNER OPENS IN MIXED ARMENIAN MINORITY REGION



U.S. Ambassador to Georgia John Tefft opened Georgia's eighth American Corner in the southern city of Akhaltsikhe in the heart of the Armenian minority region. The Corner—in one of Georgia's oldest public libraries in operation since 1895—is a key cultural resource for the community, and residents of this multi-cultural city are already actively using it. A men's choir greeted the ambassador, the regional governor, other regional officials, children, and patrons of the library with traditional Georgian polyphonic songs.

Ambassador Tefft at the opening of the American Corner in Akhaltsikhe, Georgia, September 24, 2008. [Stephen Guice, U.S. Embassy Tbilisi]

RUSSIA: RETURN OF CULTURAL TREASURE TO RUSSIA MAKES HEADLINES

U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Beyrle participated in the historic return of the Danilov Monastery bells to Russia. Originally slated for destruction after the Russian Revolution, the bells were rescued by an American businessman and given to Harvard University. With the collapse of communism, the Russian Orthodox Church actively campaigned for the return of these sacred bells. In cooperation with a Russian NGO and the Patriarch, the ambassador was able to help return this important part of Russia's cultural patrimony back to its true home. The ambassador gave a toast at a reception hosted by the Patriarch of Russia after the religious ceremony. The significance of the event was underscored by the attendance of the president of Russia, Dimitry Medvedev, and its coverage by all of Russia's television networks, many of which featured it as their lead national news item. Some stations interviewed the Harvard University representatives who arranged the transfer of the bells, including a Harvard student who had learned the Russian style of bell-ringing.



Ambassador Beyrle and Patriarch Alexiy II celebrate the return of the Danilov monastery bells to Russia, September 12, 2008. [Valery Yevseyev, U.S. Embassy Moscow]

FINLAND: THANKING FINNISH PARTNERS FROM THE COCKPIT



(L to R) Lt. Colonel Pauli Rantamäki, Deputy Commander, Satakunta Air Command; U.S. Col. Joy Shasteen; the Ambassador's pilot Colonel Kari Janhunen; Ambassador Barrett; Major General Lindberg; and Major General Lindberg's pilot after an hour of aerial combat training missions, September 12, 2008. [Captain Markus Kallio, U.S. Army]

U.S. Ambassador to Finland Barbara Barrett traveled to Pirkkala Air Force Base outside the city of Tampere to meet the commander of the Finnish Air Force. Finland's defense forces, who are significant partners in Kosovo and Afghanistan, got a top-tier reminder that the U.S. appreciates their contributions. After receiving a briefing on the Finnish Air Force and pre-flight briefings, the ambassador got into the back seat of a two-seat Finnish F-18 and participated in a combat flying demonstration. This is the first time a U.S. Ambassador to Finland has flown with the 21st Squadron, and Ambassador Barrett didn't just fly a "demo flight" to show the aircraft's capabilities. She flew training sorties, practiced combat missions, and pulled seven g's - almost the maximum possible - in the turns.

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