MOLDOVA: U.S. AGENCIES SUPPORT RENOVATION OF MOLDOVAN BURN CLINIC

Ambassador Michael D. Kirby and Robert Moore of EUCOM receive the traditional Moldovan gift of bread and salt prior to the ceremony re-opening the Burn Treatment Center, which was renovated with U.S. funds, February 21, 2008. [Corina Chirilov, U.S. Embassy Chisinau]

Burn victims in Moldova will heal faster and more completely because of repairs and equipment provided to the Thermal Trauma Section of the Republican Trauma and Orthopedic Hospital through a joint project of the U.S. and Moldovan Governments. The center was re-opened at a ceremony attended by U.S. Ambassador to Moldova Michael Kirby, the EUCOM Deputy Director of the Department of Logistics and Military Cooperation Robert Moore. As a result of the project, the renovated facility now has 37 beds, two operating rooms, a six-bed intensive care unit, and one treatment/rehabilitation unit. The Moldovan and U.S. Governments co-financed approximately $767,000 in repairs, which was approved for funding in 2004, with $431,000 paid by the U.S. and $336,000 by Moldova. The U.S. Embassy in Chisinau's Office of Defense Cooperation requested U.S. European Command and the Department of State to identify the appropriate equipment and supplies. Operation Provide Hope and the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center Europe provided the needed funds to finish the project. The total U.S. Government contribution was $830,118.

SLOVAKIA: AMBASSADOR PRESENTS MILITARY AWARDS TO SIX SLOVAK SOLDIERS

U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia Vincent Obsitnik honored six Slovak soldiers for their contribution to "a unified democratic and federal Iraq…" At the ceremony, held at the U.S. Embassy in Bratislava, the Ambassador presented one officer with the Meritorious Service Medal for meritorious service in his capacity as Senior National Representative at U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Florida and five officers received the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom at Iraqi Ground Forces Command in Baghdad.

General Bulik, Chief of Slovak Armed Forces, and Ambassador Vincent Obsitnik speak about U.S. - Slovak military cooperation, February 14, 2008. [Igor Schneeweiss, U.S. Embassy Bratislava]

AUSTRIA: BLACK HISTORY MONTH CONCERT PACKS VIENNA JAZZ SPOT

A U.S. Embassy in Vienna's Black History Month concert packed the capital's popular "Birdland" music club entertaining a crowd of 140 for more than two hours by ten locally prominent singers, a band, and a gospel choir. The concert, which was part of a series of programs organized by the U.S. Embassy to celebrate Black History Month and raise funds for CARE Austria to aid victims in Darfur, offered a short course in African-American music history as it ranged from gospel, jazz and Motown, to funk, rock and hip hop.

Left: Gospel choir and performers wow audience at "Birdland" Black History Month concert in Vienna, February 7, 2008. [Erwin Giedenbacher, U.S. Embassy Vienna]

Malta: Reaching Out to Islamic Community in Malta

U.S. Ambassador to Malta Molly Bordonaro gave a speech, "Islam in America," to launch a series of public lectures hosted by the Malta Branch of the World Islamic Call Society. The Ambassador shared several of the ways in which Muslim-Americans have successfully integrated into and contributed to American life and how these serve as powerful reminders that when common values and purposes are shared, ethnic and racial differences need not divide a nation. The large crowd was comprised of diplomats from the Arab world, the public, government officials, and Catholic and Islamic religious leaders, including Imam El-Sadi, General Secretary of the Society Mr. Wagdi Nashnosh, and Mario Farrugia, a member of the Society.

Students simultaneously translate a poem from Arabic to English as Ambassador Bordonaro and Imam El Sadi listen attentively, January 23, 2008. [Cynthia Ehrlich, U.S. Embassy Valletta]

Denmark: Ambassador Raises $800,000 for Sports Leadership Camps

Ambassador Cain with NFL player Morten Andersen and the successful $12,000 bidder, February 2, 2008. [Bjarke Frederiksen, U.S. Embassy Copenhagen]

U.S. Ambassador to Denmark James P. Cain hosted a gala fundraising dinner which raised $800,000 for a series of sports leadership camps for young people from immigrant neighborhoods that will kick off in August. 650 executives from Danish and American companies, community leaders, and Danish sports and cultural celebrities attended the event. An NFL football signed and auctioned off by Danish NFL place-kicker Morten Andersen, who is the NFL's all-time leading scorer, sold for $12,000. The first sports leadership camp will be in August for 80 young people from predominantly Muslim immigrant neighborhoods. Two additional camps will take place in 2009 and 2010.

Russia: Visit of NBA Star Wows Sports Fans of All Ages

Tom Newell, former NBA basketball coach and consultant with over 25 years of experience, visited Primorskiy Krai as the star of a Sports Diplomacy project organized by the U.S. Consulate General in Vladivostok, the Administration of Primorskiy Krai, and the Spartak-Primorye basketball team. In Vladivostok, Tom Newell held a three-day seminar for 23 coaches of junior teams from various districts of Primorskiy Krai and gave a master class at a local high school. He then traveled to Ussuriisk, the second largest city in the Primorye region, to give a presentation entitled "New Sports Horizons: Portals to the World" to 150 professors and students, addressing the role of sports in creating international communities and promoting wellness. The coach then led a master class for an enthusiastic crowd of 50 high school youth and teachers.

Tom Newell, U.S. Consul General Armbruster and future basketball stars, February 4-12, 2008. [Dmitriy Motovilov, U.S. Consulate Vladivostok]

France: Celebrating Black History Month With Opera Singer Kevin Maynor

Opera singer Kevin Maynor and pianist Eric Olsen, invited as part of events organized by the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in France during Black History Month, delighted audiences in Paris, Alsace and Reims. Each concert focused on an aspect of the Civil Rights Movement, activists Paul Robeson or Martin Luther King Jr., and featured songs interspersed with video projections and slides. Mr. Maynor's performance in Reims was co-sponsored with the Reims-Arlington Sister City Committee. In Alsace the consulate of Strasbourg co-sponsored the concert with the city of Pfaffenhoffen. U.S. Embassy staff worked with several minority associations to host Maynor's concert in Paris.

Patrick Lozes, President of CapDiv and Le Cran; Kevin Maynor; Edouard Guershon-Nduwa, P resident of the association "Amitié Judéo-Noire," February 2008. [D. Colombo, U.S. Embassy Paris]

Albania: Remembering the Holocaust and Honoring the Heroes

Chairman Miller and Ambassador Withers greet a rescuer family member, February 2008. [Robert Manga, U.S. Embassy Tirana]

Warren Miller, Chairman of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of American Heritage Abroad, was the featured speaker at Albania's first ever official ceremonies marking Holocaust Remembrance Day. U.S. Ambassador to Albania John L. Withers II spoke at the ceremony, which took place in the Albanian Prime Minister's office, and included family members of those who hid and sheltered Jews. The U.S. Embassy in Tirana helped coordinate Miller's visit to a plenary session of Parliament and with the Speaker of Parliament where he was awarded a medal by the Albanian President for his and the Commission's work in publicizing the unique events in Albania during WWII.

Greece: Greek Premiere of "There Will be Blood" Benefits Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy Greece benefited from a sold-out premiere of the critically acclaimed and award-winning American film "There Will Be Blood," which was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Athens. The film's director, Paul Thomas Anderson and Oscar-winner Daniel Day Lewis were present at the premiere and answered audience questions following the screening. Cerebral Palsy Greece chairwoman, Vicky Antonopoulos, noted the U.S. Embassy's involvement in the event and the attendance of U.S. Ambassador to Greece Daniel Speckhard.

Director of "There Will Be Blood," Paul Thomas Anderson (right), Oscar-winner Daniel Day Lewis, with the Director of Cerebral Palsy Greece, February 14, 2008. [Eleni Alexaki, U.S. Embassy Athens]

Azerbaijan: U.S. Military Honors Awarded to Peacekeepers

The Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense hosted a ceremony for a contingent of Azerbaijani peacekeepers who had returned from Iraq a few days earlier.

U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Anne Derse gave public remarks commending the Azerbaijani troops for their service and efforts to promote stability in Iraq. In addition, the Ambassador presented the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal to three Azerbaijani officers in recognition of their outstanding performance in helping to secure the Haditha Dam in Iraq's Anbar province.

Left: Ambassador Derse awards U.S. military honors to an Azerbaijani peacekeeper, January 24, 2008. [Mehdi Huseynguliyev, U.S. Embassy Baku]

Hague: Popular Super Tuesday Event

An enthusiastic crowd of more than 550 arrived early to celebrate a Super Tuesday breakfast hosted by former U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands Roland Arnall. More than one third of the Dutch parliament showed up, as did members of the Dutch Cabinet, ambassadors and other senior officials, alongside academics, scores of media, and other Dutch and American citizens who have been energized by the spectacle of Super Tuesday. The audience heard remarks from former Ambassador Arnall and from Dutch and American commentators, watched a recorded message from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and enjoyed a live videoconference from Los Angeles with pollster Frank Luntz.

Ambassador Arnall with "Uncle Sam," aka U.S. Navy Commander Tim Bitzer, February 6, 2008. [Krister Evenhuis, U.S. Embassy Hague]

Ireland: Ambassador Builds Philanthropic Base

As Ireland has grown in wealth, interest in the development of institutionalized philanthropy has also grown. U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Thomas C. Foley took the lead in the public discussion by hosting a one day seminar on building the foundations for philanthropy. Inviting some of the leading philanthropists and advisors from both the U.S. and Ireland, the thrust of the multiple discussions was to figure out approaches to policy and developing public support to create a culture of philanthropy.

Above: Ambassador Foley discusses philanthropic institutions with some of Ireland's wealth advisors, February 21, 2008. [© Maxwell Pictures]

Luxembourg: Launch of Embassy Sponsored WWII Picture Book

The latest edition of the picture book and DVD entitled "Luxembourg during World War II; with a special focus on the Battle of Bulge and the liberation of Luxembourg by American troops" made its debut. A group of 150 children, their teachers, the authors of the book and DVD, the mayors of the three sponsoring communities, representatives of the Ministry of Education and members of the largest WWII commemorative societies and museums attended the event. A few days later, noted World War II historian Roland Gaul made two TV appearances to discuss the book. Thanks to additional U.S. Embassy in Luxembourg funding, 3,000 copies of the enhanced 2008 edition are now available for distribution.

U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg Ann Wagner engages young students from northern Luxembourg, February 7, 2008. [Patricia Reckel, U.S. Embassy Luxembourg]

Macedonia: American Corner Skopje Bops to Scott Joplin

American Corner Skopje celebrated its third anniversary in a festive evening event. In its three-year history, the Corner has had more than 30,000 visitors and held more than 350 programs. During the event U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia Gillian Milovanovic announced a new U.S. Embassy in Skopje initiative to expand the Educational Advising Center at the Corner. She also awarded certificates of appreciation to five Peace Corps volunteers who had participated actively in the Corner during this last year. The evening ended with a performance of Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer" by students from Skopje's music and ballet high school. The standing-room only crowd of about 70 clearly enjoyed the evening; one young participant pronounced it "perfect."

Ambassador Milovanovic with young musicians from Skopje's Music and Ballet Center, February 2008. [Bojana Nizamovska]

Cyprus: Yale Specialist Helps to Develop Program for Special Needs Children

Dr. Rhea Paul of Yale and Southern Connecticut University conducted a week-long seminar for more than 120 special education teachers, supervisors and parents on approaches to teaching autistic children. Dr. Paul was invited by the U.S. Embassy in Cyprus as part of a U.S. State Department speakers program. With the use of audio visual material, Dr. Paul described causes of autism, outlined pedagogical interventions, and advised Cypriot Ministry officials on developing an overall strategy for children with special abilities. The presentation was so well received that the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture will be putting it on their website so that everyone can benefit.

Dr. Rhea Paul advises more than 120 special education teachers, supervisors and parents on approaches to teaching autistic children, February 13, 2008. [Christina Hadjiparaskeva, U.S. Embassy Nicosia]

DENMARK: SEATTLE'S 'MASSIVE MONKEES' PROVIDE SOME B-BOY STYLE!

Four Seattle-based breakdancers from the crew Massive Monkees conducted workshops in schools in Denmark and Sweden. In addition to dance workshops and master classes, Massive Monkees competed in Floor Wars, the biggest hip-hop/dance event in Denmark. This program -- supported under the U.S. State Department's Performing Arts Initiative -- is part of a larger Muslim-minority outreach effort that includes a summer high-school exchange program for minorities, a street basketball program involving NBA and WNBA players, and the summer sports and leadership camp at Gerlev.

Seattle dancers teach breakdance moves to Danish youth, February 18-24, 2008. [Julie Groenlund, U.S. Embassy Copenhagen]

SWITZERLAND: EMBASSY HELPS RECOVER STOLEN PAINTINGS

Two paintings, "Boy" and "Woman Seated" by artist Jean Jansen, are the last of seven paintings to be returned to the United States that were stolen in a major May 1978 art theft from the residence of a private owner in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The U.S. Embassy in Bern worked together with the Swiss federal authorities to obtain and repatriate the last two paintings back to the United States. With the assistance of Swiss law enforcement, the U.S. Embassy was instrumental in recovering and returning valuable works of art.

John Walker and Danny Boyd of LEGATT hold the returned paintings with U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland Peter Coneway, February 2008. [Marco Crugnola, U.S. Embassy Bern]

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