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U.S. EMBASSY SOFIA



Letter from Ambassador John Beyrle



Dear Friends,

If you're like me, you probably have enough to read. So I thought long and hard before deciding to add one more item to your list.

In the end, it seemed to me that producing a monthly newsletter like this would be an effective way to convey a review of what we

(meaning the Embassy staff, our many visitors, and I personally) have been doing to promote our mutual interest in a stronger relationship between Bulgaria and the United States.

September and October are traditionally busy months for American Embassies, and this year was no exception for us. Below you'll find summaries of some of the major events we helped organize or took part in. The October 10 ceremony marking the formal close-out of USAID assistance programs was an emotional highlight for us in the Embassy, as well as for the many Bulgarian organizations and individuals we have worked with so closely over the past seventeen years. USAID Acting Administrator Henrietta Fore traveled to Sofia to take part in the ceremonies that were a true celebration of all we succeeded in building and sustaining together during this period.

Our partnership with the Bulgarian military continues to grow. U.S. pilots from Aviano Air Force Base in Italy trained in October at Graf Ignatievo Air Force Base, following up on a successful joint training for the U.S. Army in Europe at Novo Selo Training Area the previous month. In October, I also traveled to Shumen, where Defense Minister Bliznakov and I opened a language training center for Bulgarian soldiers and officers, to help them communicate better with their NATO partners.

Nine leading environmental companies traveled to Bulgaria on October 4-5 to participate in a highly successful Environmental Trade Mission.

Highlights of this intensive program included over 100 one-on-one meetings with Bulgarian companies and environmentally-related government officials. This trade mission will lead to many commercial successes and a deepening of our bilateral relationship.

We haven't forgotten culture. We opened the fourth American shelf of new reference books about the United States in October at the regional library in Silistra. This was my first visit to Silistra and I managed to pack a lot into a short time, visiting the Turkish Fort, the Srebarna Nature Reserve, and the incomparable Roman Burial chamber. It's another example of the historical and cultural treasures that are too little-known outside Bulgaria and even inside the country. I hope to have such reference collections in all Bulgarian regional libraries by next year.

Finally, our Consulate has had a very busy season – nearly twelve thousand young Bulgarians went to the United States this summer for the Work-Travel Program. They not only learned about the U.S. and earned some money, but they were also excellent informal diplomats for Bulgaria.

In the months ahead, I will be working hard to increase U.S. investment, to help the Bulgarian military in its efforts to modernize and be a better NATO partner, to find other ways to strengthen our common fight against international organized crime, and to build more partnerships between Bulgarian and American universities and libraries. You'll find out more on our website. And I'll continue to report to you on how I've been doing.

John Beyrle

Upcoming Events

November 22: Embassy Closed for Thanksgiving Day

November 30 – December 15: Larry Schiller Photo Exhibition (Opening reception by invitation only), National Gallery of Foreign Art.

December 2: Last day for 2009 Diversity Visa Lottery registration

December 7: Pilobolus Dance Company Performance, www.pilobolus.com. Friday, December 7, at NDK's Hall 1

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USAID Acting Administrator Henrietta Fore Celebrates the U.S. - Bulgaria Partnership



USAID Acting Administrator
Henrietta Fore

USAID Acting Administrator Henrietta Fore traveled to Sofia on October 10 to celebrate the seventeen successful years of USAID programs in Bulgaria. Since 1990, the U.S. government has supported Bulgaria's transition to a democracy and free market economy with more than \$600 million in assistance. Starting as a modest program of emergency food and medical aid and support for democratic political processes, including

free and fair elections, it quickly grew into a broad spectrum of activities.

This investment has created some important institutions – including the American University in Bulgaria, the National Institute of Justice, and one-stop municipal services centers in many Bulgarian cities – that will be a lasting legacy of USAID. Close to five hundred people attended the official closeout ceremony.

Bulgaria and U.S. Join Forces Against Trafficking in Persons



Ambassador Beyrle and Deputy Prime Minister Daniel Valchev cut the ribbon to open the new office of the Bulgarian Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons

On October 23, U.S. Ambassador John Beyrle and Deputy Prime Minister Daniel Valchev opened the offices of the new Bulgarian Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which will be leading the fight against trafficking in persons in Bulgaria. Valchev is the Chairman of the Commission. Ambassador Beyrle praised the Bulgarian Government for its efforts to defeat trafficking, which threatens the dignity of individuals, and feeds the forces of corruption and organized crime.

Executive Secretary of the Bulgarian Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons Antoaneta Vassileva, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Chief of Mission Ilyana Derilova also attended the ceremony.

The Commission was created with the help of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and IOM, to enable Bulgaria to more effectively fight what some have referred to as “The Human Slavery of the twenty-first century.”

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy Colleen Graffy in Bulgaria



Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy Colleen Graffy spoke with students at the American University in Bulgaria

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy Colleen Graffy visited Bulgaria to talk about U.S. efforts in communication with Bulgarians. She met with community leaders to discuss outreach programs and the image of the United States, including Former Fulbright grant recipients, the American Chamber of Commerce, and the High Islamic Institute – where the rector spoke about his vision for Muslim engagement. She spoke strongly in opposition to the legalization of prostitution at a press conference marking the EU's

Day Against Trafficking in Persons, sponsored by the new National Commission Against Trafficking in Persons. And she paid special attention to youth – visiting the American University in Bulgaria to hear the student perspective on the Bulgarian dream as well as lunching with three young women who had previously participated in State Department-sponsored programs to visit the United States.

2009 Diversity Visa Lottery Registration

On October 3, registration for the 2009 Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery began. Persons who wish to participate in the lottery program must register online through the designated Internet website during the registration period. The website for registering for the 2009 DV Lottery www.dvlottery.state.gov is available through 7pm Bulgarian time December 2, 2007.

The Department of State continues to encourage persons who wish to enter the 2009 Diversity Visa Lottery to submit their information early in the two-month registration period.

There is no fee for entering the Diversity Visa Lottery. The Department of State does not endorse, recommend or sponsor any information or material from outside entities. Registration for the Diversity Visa Lottery through the official, U.S. government website, www.dvlottery.state.gov, is free of charge and notification of winning entries will be sent by mail only.

For more information, please visit the U.S. Embassy homepage at

<http://bulgaria.usembassy.gov>.



F-16 Joint Training at Graf Ignatievo

On October 26, members of the 31st Fighter Wing wrapped up Rodopi Javelin 2007, a three-week exercise, marking the second time the 510th Fighter Squadron participated in a joint exercise with the Bulgarian Air Force at Graf Ignatievo Air Force Base, Bulgaria. The exercise, which began Oct. 5, allowed members of both the U.S. Air Force and the Bulgarian Air Force to perform low-level flying air-to-ground gunnery, basic fighting maneuvers, and backseat orientation and intercept training. Lt. Col. Adrian Pone, 510th FS commander, said many benefits came from this exercise. "We were able to further strengthen our relationships with the Bulgarians while gaining realistic training

and exchanging ideas across the career field spectrum," he said. "Our members who were part of this exercise, whether they were pilots, maintainers or air traffic controllers, received invaluable lessons during the past three weeks." The Bulgarian Air Force participants, led by Graf Ignatievo AFB commander, Brig. Gen. Rumen Radev, were able to further develop regulations, tactics, techniques and procedures, formulate requirements of their pilots' knowledge and skills development, learn NATO standardization and interoperability and establish realistic training processes.



Bulgarian Air Force pilot Capt. Victor Stoyanov Hristov "Vick" and 510th Fighter Squadron Pilot 1st Lt. Jacob Conger walk back to the operations building after completing a combat familiarization training mission Oct. 18, 2007. Over 250 airmen joined with the Bulgarian Air Force to train together during Exercise RODOPI JAVELIN 2007 at Graf Ignatievo Air Force Base Bulgaria. 5-26 Oct, 2007 (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Michael R. Holzworth)

Defense Language School Opens in Shumen



Ambassador Beyrle and Defense Minister Bliznakov preparing to open the new Language School in Shumen

On October 16, Ambassador Beyrle and Defense Minister Bliznakov jointly opened a Defense Language School at the Military School in Shumen.

The School, funded by the U.S. Defense Department, will allow officers and soldiers in the Bulgarian Army to improve their English

language skills, so they can communicate and operate more effectively with their NATO partners.

In addition to training members of the Bulgarian military the school also has the potential to attract students from other countries that are members of the Partnership for Peace.



Students of Shumen Military School

U.S. Donates American Shelf in Silistra



Ambassador Beyrle in front of the Silistra Regional Library with Library staff and teenage volunteers

On October 15, Ambassador John Beyrle presented an American Shelf of one hundred new reference books to the Regional Library in Silistra. Through the shelf, readers at the Silistra Library will have access to the most current information

about American history, society, politics, culture, and places to visit. The shelf comes with a computer, so library users can get more information from the Internet.



Ambassador Beyrle with children at the Regional Library in Silistra

Ambassador Beyrle Visits Labor Camp Memorial Site



Ambassador Beyrle and Plamen Myashkov, Head of Bulgaria's Modern History Department, the Lovech Historical Museum

On October 12, during a visit to central Bulgaria, Ambassador Beyrle visited a memorial site commemorating the victims of a communist-era labor camp near the city of Lovech. The camp housed political dissidents and was notorious for its brutal regime: some 150 prisoners are thought to have died during the camp's four

years of existence. Mr. Plamen Myashkov, Head of Bulgaria's Modern History Department at the Lovech Historical Museum, accompanied the Ambassador to the site and described conditions there and at other larger camps such as Belene. Following the visit, Ambassador Beyrle said "the history of many nations includes some dark

pages: the fate of American Indians during the 19th century is a sad example. What is important in a democratic society is for these episodes to be subject to continuing study and open discussion, including in school textbooks, so that succeeding generations are made aware of them and understand their significance."

U.S. Embassy Supports Bulgarian Translation of The Oxford Dictionary of Islam

Hot off the presses! The Oxford Dictionary of Islam, edited by John Esposito, has just been published in Bulgarian with the financial assistance of the U.S. Embassy.

Esposito is a professor of International Affairs and Islamic Studies and the director of Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at

Georgetown University. The Oxford Dictionary of Islam answers the demand for unbiased and informative texts on Islam for better understanding and study.



American Hip-Hop and Breakdancing Stars Visit "Jam On It" Festival of Youth Arts

American hip-hop and breakdancing group HaviKoro performed free concerts before hundreds of people at the Amphitheater in Plovdiv on October 1 at 7pm and in front of the National Theater in Sofia on October 2, also at 7pm.

The group brought a positive message to young people through Breakdance, Rap and other forms of Hip Hop style.



HaviKoro and others jammed in front of the National Theater in downtown Sofia