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001. manifest	Airport Arrival (1 page)	11/07/1997	b(7)(E)
002. list	Press Traveling on the First Lady's Trip [Personally Identifiable Information] (2 pages)	00/00/0000	P4/b(4), b(6)
003. email	To Julie E. Mason from Tom [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	11/05/1997	b(6)
004. report	re: US Government Report (1 page)	07/30/1997	P1/b(1)
005. report	re: US Government Report (1 page)	10/15/1997	P1/b(1)

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RESTRICTION CODES

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- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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Vital Voices Speech
7-11-97

Divider Title: _____

**First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Vital Voices Speech
July 11, 1997**

Vienna, Austria

Mrs Clinton: I want to start by thanking Ambassador Hunt for her service to the United States, but more than for her leadership and commitment to human rights and the work she has done here in Europe on behalf of raising voices of women so that all can hear them. I would like to thank the other conference sponsors for supporting this very important meeting. And I would also like to thank the Austrian people and their government for their willingness to serve the cause of peace and democracy. Home to the United Nations and other criminal international organizations, hosts to important summits of the Cold War, haven for refugees, Austria has given the people of Europe and the world a safe place to come to so that we can hear out and understand one another so that together we may shape a common future.

This conference is held in that same spirit. We are here to advance the cause of women and to advance the cause of democracy and to make it absolutely clear that the two are inseparable. There cannot be true democracy unless women's voices are heard. There cannot be true democracy unless women are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives. There cannot be true democracy unless all citizens are able to participate fully in the lives of their country. We have seen great progress in this region of the world. Our previous speakers this morning, from Bulgaria, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic shared with us some of the progress they have seen in their own lives. How they were able to take advantage of new opportunities to seek new responsibilities on behalf of themselves and to further

the cause of democracy in their countries. We come at a point in time when the architecture of revolution is nearly complete in Europe. The old order is being replaced by democratic institutions and open markets, of free press, functioning parliaments, political parties. Basic rights of assembly and association are becoming facts of life. Last month Russia joined the community of creditor nations. This week the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were invited to join NATO, and at the time the announcement was made, it was clear that those were the first invitations, not the last invitations. Today my husband is in Poland and Romania to reiterate America's support for democracy's progress. And I think it is also significant that you are gathered here in Vienna to recognize both the crucial role that women have played and will play in continuing that democratic progress. But also in talking and working together to devise strategies and learn from one another about how we can continue to overcome the obstacles that still lie ahead. It is clear, I think, to all of us, to someone like me who comes from a democracy that has been working at perfecting its union for more than 220 years, and to those of you who come from much newer democracies, that democracy is very hard work. You cannot flip a switch and expect to have a democracy as we dream of. In my own country we struggle every year with the challenges that are posed to democracy. We have to work very hard to make sure all of our people are given the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our democracy. We meet new challenges every day. So the work of democracy is never finished and all of us who are here today are committed to continuing that work, no matter what the obstacles we face. Because even though you may have a free press or a functioning parliament, even though you may have elections that are fair and are repeated successfully, democracy depends on more than that. It depends on more than just a written constitution. It depends upon more than even economic progress. Democracy depends ultimately on whether democratic values are rooted in the hearts of men and women. Whether all citizens believe that all people are entitled to be accorded the respect to which each of us as human beings should be able to demand. As a Croatian writer once said, "for everyday, life revolution consists much more of the small things, of sounds, of looks and images." So even though we may look and see the institutions of democracy functioning, even though we may see the image reflected of our open markets and the progress we are making economically, we still and we always will have work to do, to make sure what Alexis de Tocqueville called "the habits of the heart" that really are at the center of a democratic institution or a democratic country are cultivated and passed on from generation to generation.

If we look at where we are in the world today, we see that one of the sounds that is most important to ensuring that democracies take root is the sound of women's voices, those vital voices that we celebrate here. On my visits to Central and Eastern Europe, I have heard the sounds of those voices. I have heard women from many countries articulating their dreams for the world and their lives after communism. Despite the differences between them, everyone seemed to speak the same mother tongue -- the language of freedom and hope. I heard women's voices in Estonia when I visited a clinic that is the first in that county to offer a broad range of health services for women. I heard them in Romania when I met with teachers who are developing a new pedagogy that emphasizes civic participation and democratic values. I heard them in Ukraine when I met with nurses who had just started their own professional organization. I heard them in Hungary when I visited a center that is helping the minority Roma community overcome barriers to education, employment and full participation in Hungarian society. I heard them in the Czech Republic when I met with leaders of non-governmental organizations who are involved in local projects to protect the rights of children and to safeguard the environment. I heard them in Belarus when I spoke with women health professionals struggling to bring quality health care to the critically ill children of Chernobyl. I heard them in Russia when I talked over the radio with listeners throughout the country on a women-owned radio station. I heard the voices of women asking "what do we do now? We are educated; how do we use that education to be part of democracy?" And I heard them in Poland when I sat around a table with women representing different political points of view and participated in one of the most important of democratic acts, disagreeing with one another respectfully,

as we debated the issues that were important to us. And I heard women's vital voices in Bosnia where I was told by a teacher how she kept trying to keep her students learning despite a horrific war. How I was told by health professionals the struggles that they faced treating the wounded and how they were all committed to rebuilding their lives. You bring these voices here, these voices that I have heard, and now we must determine what we do with those voices.

Do we merely use our voice for our own personal advantage? Do we take our education, do we take whatever fortunate advances we have been given at this point in history, and only work for ourselves? That is a perfectly legitimate choice. To be a successful politician, to have power for oneself, to be a lawyer or a judge, to be a business leader, to have economic gain for oneself in a democracy -- that is our choice. But I hope that the vital voices represented here will do something else as well. To use our experience, our voices, to speak on behalf of all people, to give voice to the voiceless. Because we know very well in my country and in each country represented here that there are many women who do not have the education we have. There are many women who are held down by cultural and historical traditions, prevented from exercising the choices they might want to make. We know there are poor people who can only dream of coming to Vienna or sitting in a hotel room looking down at Manhattan. And we know, or we should know, that we ignore the needs of all our people at our peril, that part of the great challenge we face in our democracies is to be sure we create conditions for all men and women to make the choices that are right for their lives. And women particularly have an opportunity at this point in history to express that commitment of conscience, to make clear that, yes, we want to be successful on our own, we want to be held accountable and responsible for the choices we make because we want to be seen as full human beings. But that is not all we want, we do want to help create societies and a world where the opportunities for all children, young boys and young girls, are available to them in ways we could not have even dreamed a few years ago.

When we met, many of us in this room, together in Beijing we came to declare in clear and unequivocal terms that women's voices must be heard, and we offered a clear proposition that a nation's progress depends on the progress of women, that the strength of political system depends on the inclusion of women. That the vibrancy of an economy depends on the full contribution of women. That the richness of civil society depends on the participation of women. That human rights are women's rights, and women's rights are human rights. And I have been asked what did I mean when I said that. And I have always been amazed that I would be asked such a question. I was on a Voice of America call-in program one day, and I received a call from Iran, and the speaker on the other end, a man, said that he had heard that I said that. What could I have meant? And I said, "Well, I meant what I said and if you will just shut your eyes and imagine the rights that men have, those are the rights women should have as well." And the reason we want those rights is not merely to make a statement, not to be part of a political movement, but because we want our dignity to be respected as human beings, and we want to be part of building a democratic world.

We have seen changes since Beijing. Here in Central and Eastern Europe, we have seen in Albania the birth of a parliamentary caucus devoted solely to issues affecting women. In Bulgaria, a non-governmental organization is teaching judges and lawyers and citizen jurors about the legal rights of women. In Ukraine, there has been a new government ministry devoted to women's affairs. In Lithuania, new services are being given to support the needs of elderly women. In Poland, we have seen created one of the largest micro-enterprise networks in the world, a new agency sponsored by the Polish and American governments and the World Bank whose sole mission is to teach women important new job skills and to help them find well-paying jobs.

And yet, despite the progress, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, since the conference in Beijing, we have a lot

of work to do. Because the transition from communism to free markets and democracy has created new obstacles to women's realization of their God-given potential. We have seen new stresses and sacrifices imposed on women. Throughout the region, cuts in pension and childcare, kindergartens and health care has meant that women are shouldering a double burden that was heavy enough to begin with. The oppressive structures of communism may have been torn down, but the new structures and standards necessary to advocate for women's rights and to protect women from exploitation are not yet fully constructed. The hard work of building these political, legal, and economic standards and structures must include women, and it is what you have been speaking about here. That is why this conference comes at such an important time, for it is enabling us to share practical ideas and methods to advance the presence of women in the political, legal and business spheres. Exchanging ideas and strategies enables us to learn from one another and take these ideas home. But that is too rare in our own world. When I am privileged to travel as I do, I always meet with groups of women for informal discussions. Whether I am in Bangladesh, Romania, Poland, Nicaragua or Chile, I find that women have much more in common than might appear on the surface. And yet I also find that even in those cities where I am meeting with women who represent the academia or the professions or business or politics, they often do not speak to one another. They sometimes do not even know one another. They are surprised to learn what the woman down the street is doing to assist them in their work. We cannot build strong civil societies without working together and creating associations that enable us to make progress on the issues we care about. That is why this conference has the potential for creating new networks and associations of support, within countries and between countries.

The United States government, largely through the Agency for International Development, will continue to support a broad range of programs that provide grants, training, and technical assistance to citizens to strengthen democracy at the grass roots. We want to be part of building democracy, and we especially want to be part of enabling women to participate in that process. Today we build on the commitment we have made, a commitment to local groups that are working to protect the environment, or improve health services, or spark economic development, teaching children basic democratic values. Working to create that area between the market and the government which is crucial to the continuation and progress of democracy. We call that "civil society." And it is only civil society that can inculcate the values of democracy, those habits of the heart. It is only through our families, our religious organizations, our associations at the civic and the neighborhood level, our trade unions, our other groups where we come together voluntarily joining in forums to create better opportunities that we will really create democracy. The market place can do better than any other institution the work of creating wealth. But the market place, which knows the price of everything, knows the value of nothing. That is not the market place's job. The government has to preserve order, has to provide the basic services, but it cannot reach the heart. It can stir the emotions. It can, as we all know, create demagoguery, but it cannot in those very small sacred places of the heart do the work that can only be done voluntarily through the civil society. And so the United States Agency for International Development knows that, and that is why so much of its work has been aimed at this middle, this important part of every democratic society. And today I have the honor of announcing that the United States will commit three million dollars next year to projects that will directly support the objectives of this conference. These funds, which are entirely new funds, will be reserved solely for efforts that help women enter and ascend the realms of politics, law and business. Moreover, we will continue to see to it that women have full and complete access to the entire range of democracy and business programs that we support. These efforts will supplement the work of this conference and the work that you do everyday. We know what the symptoms of inequality and oppression look like in real life. We see them when women are beaten or sold or denied credit or refused a job because of gender or passed over for promotions or treated with disrespect and not listened to. But we have to do what we can to alleviate those systems, those symptoms of injustice. And yet we cannot lose sight of their root cause — disrespect for women's spirit as human beings and citizens.

Here in Vienna in 1993, leaders from around the world gathered to craft the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This is what they called for, the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human persons. That word dignity is essentially the premise on which our democratic efforts in our respective countries will stand or fall. It is time for us as a global community to understand once and for all, we have run out of excuses. Here we are at the end of the twentieth century, at the heart of a continent that has been scorched by war time and time again. If the history of this century teaches us anything, it is that whenever the dignity of any group is compromised by a derogation of who they are, of some essential attribute that they possess, then we leave ourselves open to having our own dignity questioned. Where we do not respect the dignity of others, we do not make the dignity of any of us safe from attack. If this century has a lesson that is redeeming, it is that by extending the circle of citizenship and human dignity to include everyone without exception, we have the hope that can come to those of us who believe that by working together we can create a better life for ourselves and our children. If we take seriously what you are talking about here at this conference, and you go home and bring the message of excitement and solidarity that you have achieved here, you will not change anything overnight. But your voice and your work, added to the inexorable, incremental steps that are necessary for change in a democracy will create the conditions for change. And then we will have a glimpse of seeing what a newsroom and a courtroom will look like with women fully participating. What the corporate board room and the political back room will consist of when women take their rightful places. We will see more clearly what can happen in the home when women are given the respect and dignity they deserve.

I am very much in awe of the stories of many of you, I can only imagine the strength that it took to have done what you have done in this audience, to join Charter 77, to march for Solidarity, to expose human rights abuses, to make freedom's voice carry over the heads of those who would silence you. I think of all this, and I ask myself how you kept your focus through those years of totalitarian oppression on what was most important in the human heart. Perhaps the answer lies in a speech that was given in Austria seven years ago, just after the fall of communism. Part of it goes as follows:

"Many of us who in recent years strove to speak the truth in spite of everything, were able to maintain an inner perspective, a willingness to endure, a sense of proportion, an ability to understand and forgive others and a light heart, only because we were speaking the truth, otherwise we might have perished from despair."

Many of you will recognize the words of President Havel, talking about the totalitarian lies that recently prevailed in this part of the world and of the heroic individuals like so many of you who struggled against them. Those words are just as true today, even though the burdens and obstacles are nowhere near what oppressed Europe for so many years. But we know that it takes strength to keep your voice heard. We know that it takes courage to stand up for those without voices. All of you who tore down communism did so because you believed in democracy and freedom and the human heart and spirit. Now you fight for women's rights because you believe in the same values. One barrier is rubble, the other is crumbling. With the strength of our commitment and the power of our voices that barrier, too, will surely fall. If we keep faith with those values that brought you to this day, if we work with one another, if we enable all of the voices of men and women who believe in freedom and hope to be heard, then the dreams that brought us here will be realized and we will be able to look back at this conference and say to ourselves "Women's vital voices played a role in creating the kind of world I am proud to call my own." Thank you very much.

Question and Answer Session after the First Lady's Speech at the Vital Voices Conference July 11, 1997

(First portion of this section inaudible due to central audio feed problem)

MRS. CLINTON: Anything we can do to create good opportunities for girls and women, I think, will benefit many, many women. But I also believe that in many different societies for different reasons, an individual woman's chances for pursuing her own dreams will be enhanced if other women work together to change social, historical, and cultural conditions that hold women back. There are many women who have attained a good education and then are told that they cannot succeed in the area they wish to work in for artificial reasons. So the individual woman has to do what she can to prepare herself, but then as part of our vital voices we have to make it possible for every woman to be able to pursue whatever her ambitions or dreams might be. I also think there is another element, and that is the sort of psychological barriers that are the internal barriers to many women's success. Women who feel that they are not entitled to pursue their own dreams. Women who feel that, if they make a choice to pursue an education or to pursue a job, they are making a choice not to pursue family or relationships. So I think we have to enable women to feel that they can attain that balance between work and family that is so difficult in all societies, which many of us have worked on for many years, and support young women so that they feel comfortable making these choices.

QUESTION: There's a lot of violence on TV in America, which also influences our cultures. What can you do to stop it?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I agree with that. I deplore the violence that is depicted on American television and in American movies, and we -- my husband and the Vice-President and Mrs. Gore and I -- have worked very hard over the last several years within the system that we have, which is a not only a free and open-market place of ideas, but with our first amendment to the Constitution, we have very broad protections for anything that is characterized as speech, which most television programs and movies are. And you may have heard that just two weeks ago, our United States Supreme Court struck down a law that the Congress had passed and the President had signed, trying to limit pornography on the Internet in the United States. So they take a very broad view of what is protected under our Constitution. So, within a limit, we have tried to do several things. The President has advocated that a computer chip be built into new televisions so that programs can be blocked out by parents exercising authority over their television set, so that the television set can be programmed in such a way that certain stations and programs cannot be seen. So, that will work for younger children, but then we know older children will spend their time figuring out how to break the system, but at least, you know, for a few years parents will have the illusion of control over their children again, and even an illusion in these circumstances is comforting to some extent. And we've also worked with the television to create labels for television programs, so that parents can make better decisions about what they permit their children to watch. And finally, we have encouraged the entertainment industry to create different kinds of programs. Now, I think having said all that, I am not hopeful about being able to limit the violence on American television or in American movies. We have too much freedom that is given for good reason to be able to prevent that. And it sells, unfortunately. People watch it. It's like driving by an automobile accident. You know you shouldn't, but you slow down and you look and are interested and stimulated by such programs. So we are doing what we can from the governmental level. In my book "It Takes A Village," I urged parents and other citizens to boycott certain programs, not to buy the products that are advertised on programs, to use citizen action to make a statement about what programs should or should not be seen on our television. But I think that many of you in countries with different legal systems will have to be working very hard to try to create a situation in which you are not flooded by the most violent television programming from our culture, and I continue to try in the United States both to limit it and to get citizens and especially parents to exercise more authority with children and to try to limit the effect of it. I think it is one of our most serious problems because it is part of the conflict that is developing between "are we creating in our society citizens or consumers," and it is a very difficult problem.

QUESTION: Speaking of your book, I liked your book about raising children. Do you agree that women should emphasize our central role in the family even as we advocate our rights?

MRS. CLINTON: I do, because I am very committed to family and to my particular obligations as wife and mother, but I don't think every woman has to become a wife and a mother. If we are talking about democracy, it is very important to make clear that women should have a range of choices. There are women who wish to be full-time mothers and commit themselves to that task. That should be a respected choice. There are women who do not choose to marry, or if they marry, do not choose to have children. That should be a respected choice. So, the vast majority of women in our countries will try to do both, as I have and as most of you have, to have a family and to have work that is important and meaningful to me. That balancing act that we're all engaged in must also be respected and more support must be given to women who are attempting to do that. But the larger point I would make beyond individual women's choices and being respected for these choices, is that whether or not we make any of these choices, every one of us has an obligation to do what we can to make sure our children are well raised, and that our children have the health care, the education, the safety, stability, and all the conditions that will enable them to grow to their own potential. So, whether or not a person is a parent, or however many children a person has, every one of us will be affected in the quality of our life by how our children and the next generation are treated. So, I think that goes beyond the individual choice, and keeping the importance of raising children central to our political and economic and social consideration is not just a family's responsibility, it is the entire society's responsibility.

AMB. HUNT: Before I ask you the last question and ask you to close your remarks with that question, I want to thank you personally for coming, and I want to tell you that this conference, which has been hugely successful, would not have happened without some very generous help from organizations like Bank Austria, Austrian Airlines which flew about 160 people here, Nestle Corporation, the U.S. Government, the European Union, the Soros Foundation, and a host of others. And I know that you are as impressed as I am with their generosity, too. If you could just say two sentences about the key question of this conference: What can Americans learn from our experience as Eastern and Central Europeans? What can Americans learn from Central and Eastern Europeans?

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you, whoever asked that question. Because I think there is a great deal that Americans can learn from your experiences. I think, first, that it takes courage and perseverance to both win and keep a democracy, that the building of a democracy is an ongoing challenge and struggle, and that we can never take it for granted. And that many of you in this room and in the countries from which you come, have a much clearer idea of the importance of the values that underlie democracy than many people in my country do today. Because we have many people who have gotten very complacent in the United States. They don't take the trouble to vote. They don't defend the freedoms that we have fought for, and people in previous generations have died for. So, maybe it is a good thing that a society gets to the point of the United States and many of the European countries, where freedom is so ingrained in the fabric of life that we don't have to worry about it or fight over it any more. I think there's always a danger when people become complacent, because there's always the risk that demagogues and authoritarians will assert themselves and influence the minds of people and take over the political and economic structures again. So that is one important thing. The second point I would make is this struggle that I referred to earlier, in the new global economy, in the Information Age in which we are living, how do we live as human beings? How do we ensure that we are able to deal with the enormous number of choices that we have? Many of you came from countries where under communism, you had no choices. Now in many countries we have so many choices that people are often bewildered about what is the right choice that they should be making. How do we create the right conditions, the balance between government and the marketplace, a balance of power that will create jobs and good

incomes and economic opportunities, but will also provide support for people in a social safety act and will create an environment in which the marketplace does not determine everything. So, as you are struggling to make those choices, we in the United States will be watching you and supporting you, and together I hope that we will enter into the twenty-first century with a much clearer understanding of and commitment to those basic democratic values that we have worked on for so many years, but that you now hold as a trust for the rest of us. Because how you deal with democracy's new challenges will affect the United States and the entire world.

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**Beijing Remarks
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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 5, 1995

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE UNITED NATIONS
FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN
BEIJING, CHINA**

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much Gertrude Mongella, for your dedicated work that has brought us to this point.

Distinguished delegates and guests, I would like to thank the Secretary General of the United Nations for inviting me to be part of this important United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. This is truly a celebration -- a celebration of the contributions women make in every aspect of life: in the home, on the job, in the community, as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, learners, workers, citizens and leaders.

It is also a coming together, much the way women come together every day in every country.

We come together in fields and in factories. In village markets and supermarkets. In living rooms and board rooms.

Whether it is while playing with our children in the park, or washing clothes in a river, or taking a break at the office water cooler, we come together and talk about our aspirations and concerns. And time and again, our talk turns to our children and our families.

However different we may appear, there is far more that unites us than divides us. We share a common future. And we are here to find common ground so that we may help bring new dignity and respect to women and girls all over the world -- and in so doing, bring new strength and stability to families as well.

By gathering in Beijing, we are focusing world attention on issues that matter most in the lives of women and their families: access to education, health care, jobs, and credit, the chance to enjoy basic legal

and human rights and to participate fully in the political life of their countries.

There are some who question the reason for this conference.

Let them listen to the voices of women in their homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces.

There are some who wonder whether the lives of women and girls matter to economic and political progress around the globe. . . . Let them look at the women gathered here and at Hairou. . . . the homemakers, nurses, teachers, lawyers, policymakers, and women who run their own businesses.

It is conferences like this that compel governments and peoples everywhere to listen, look and face the world's most pressing problems.

Wasn't it after the women's conference in Nairobi ten years ago that the world focused for the first time on the crisis of domestic violence?

Earlier today, I participated in a World Health Organization forum. In that forum we talked about ways that where government officials, NGOs, and individual citizens are working on ways to address the health problems of women and girls.

Tomorrow, I will attend a gathering of the United Nations Development Fund for Women. There, the discussion will focus on local -- and highly successful -- programs that give hard-working women access to credit so they can improve their own lives and the lives of their families.

What we are learning around the world is that, if women are healthy and educated, their families will flourish. If women are free from violence, their families will flourish. If women have a chance to work and earn as full and equal partners in society, their families will flourish.

And when families flourish, communities and nations will flourish.

That is why every woman, every man, every child, every family, and every nation on our planet does have a stake in the discussion that takes place here.

Over the past 25 years, I have worked persistently on issues relating to women, children and families. Over the past two-and-a-half years, I have had the opportunity to learn more about the challenges facing

women in my own country and around the world.

I have met new mothers in Indonesia, who come together regularly in their village to discuss nutrition, family planning, and baby care.

I have met working parents in Denmark who talk about the comfort they feel in knowing that their children can be cared for in creative, safe, and nurturing after-school centers.

I have met women in South Africa who helped lead the struggle to end apartheid and are now helping build a new democracy.

I have met with the leading women of my own hemisphere who are working every day to promote literacy and better health care for the children in their countries.

I have met women in India and Bangladesh who are taking out small loans to buy milk cows, rickshaws, thread and other materials to create a livelihood for themselves and their families.

I have met doctors and nurses in Belarus and Ukraine who are trying to keep children alive in the aftermath of Chernobyl.

The great challenge of this conference is to give voice to women everywhere whose experiences go unnoticed, whose words go unheard.

Women comprise more than half the world's population. Women are 70% percent of the world's poor, and two-thirds of those who are not taught to read and write.

Women are the primary caretakers for most of the world's children and elderly. Yet much of the work we do is not valued -- not by economists, not by historians, not by popular culture, not by government leaders.

At this very moment, as we sit here, women around the world are giving birth, raising children, cooking meals, washing clothes, cleaning houses, planting crops, working on assembly lines, running companies, and running countries.

Women also are dying from diseases that should have been prevented or treated; they are watching their children succumb to malnutrition caused by poverty and economic deprivation; they are being denied the right

to go to school by their own fathers and brothers; they are being forced into prostitution, and they are being barred from the bank lending office and banned from the ballot box.

Those of us who have the opportunity to be here have the responsibility to speak for those who could not.'

As an American, I want to speak up for women in my own country -- women who are raising children on the minimum wage, women who can't afford health care or child care, women whose lives are threatened by violence, including violence in their own homes.

I want to speak up for mothers who are fighting for good schools, safe neighborhoods, clean air and clean airwaves. . .

. . .for older women, some of them widows, who have raised their families and now find that their skills and life experiences are not valued in the workplace. . . for women who are working all night as nurses, hotel clerks, and fast food chefs so that they can be at home during the day with their kids. . . and for women everywhere who simply don't have time to do everything they are called upon to do each day.

Speaking to you today, I speak for them, just as each of us speaks for women around the world who are denied the chance to go to school, or see a doctor, or own property, or have a say about the direction of their lives, simply because they are women.

The truth is that most women around the world work both inside and outside the home, usually by necessity.

We need to understand that there is no one formula for how women should lead their lives.

That is why we must respect the choices that each woman makes for herself and her family. Every woman deserves the chance to realize her God-given potential.

We also must recognize that women will never gain full dignity until their human rights are respected and protected.

Our goals for this conference, to strengthen families and societies by empowering women to take greater control over their own destinies, cannot be fully achieved unless all governments -- here and around the world -- accept their responsibility to

protect and promote internationally recognized human rights.

The international community has long acknowledged -- and recently affirmed at Vienna -- that both women and men are entitled to a range of protections and personal freedoms, from the right of personal security to the right to determine freely the number and spacing of the children they bear.

No one should be forced to remain silent for fear of religious or political persecution, arrest, abuse or torture.

Tragically, women are most often the ones whose human rights are violated.

Even in the late 20th century, the rape of women continues to be used as an instrument of armed conflict. Women and children make up a large majority of the world's refugees. And when women are excluded from the political process, they become even more vulnerable to abuse.

I believe that, on the eve of a new millennium, it is time to break our silence. It is time for us to say here in Beijing, and the world to hear, that it is no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights as separate from human rights.

These abuses have continued because, for too long, the history of women has been a history of silence. Even today, there are those who are trying to silence our words.

The voices of this conference and of the women at Hairou must be heard loud and clear:

It is a violation of human rights when babies are denied food, or drowned, or suffocated, or their spines broken, simply because they are born girls.

It is a violation of human rights when women and girls are sold into the slavery of prostitution.

It is a violation of human rights when women are doused with gasoline, set on fire and burned to death because their marriage dowries are deemed too small.

It is a violation of human rights when individual women are raped in their own communities and when thousands of women are subjected to rape as a tactic or prize of war.

It is a violation of human rights when a leading cause of death worldwide among women ages 14 to 44 is the violence they are subjected to in their own homes by their own relatives.

It is a violation of human rights when young girls are brutalized by the painful and degrading practice of genital mutilation.

It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families, and that includes being forced to have abortions or being sterilized against their will.

If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, let it be that human rights are women's rights. . . . And women's rights are human rights, once and for all.

Let us not forget that among those rights are the right to speak freely. And the right to be heard.

Women must enjoy the right to participate fully in the social and political lives of their countries if we want freedom and democracy to thrive and endure.

It is indefensible that many women in non-governmental organizations who wished to participate in this conference have not been able to attend -- or have been prohibited from fully taking part.

Let me be clear. Freedom means the right of people to assemble, organize, and debate openly. It means respecting the views of those who may disagree with the views of their governments. It means not taking citizens away from their loved ones and jailing them, mistreating them, or denying them their freedom or dignity because of the peaceful expression of their ideas and opinions.

In my country, we recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of women's suffrage. It took 150 years after the signing of our Declaration of Independence for women to win the right to vote.

It took 72 years of organized struggle on the part of many courageous women and men.

It was one of America's most divisive philosophical wars. But it was also a bloodless war. Suffrage was achieved without a shot fired.

We have also been reminded, in V-J Day observances last weekend, of the good that comes when men and women join together to combat the forces of tyranny and build a better world.

We have seen peace prevail in most places for a half century. We have avoided another world war.

But we have not solved older, deeply-rooted problems that continue to diminish the potential of half the world's population.

Now it is time to act on behalf of women everywhere.

If we take bold steps to better the lives of women, we will be taking bold steps to better the lives of children and families too.

Families rely on mothers and wives for emotional support and care; families rely on women for labor in the home; and increasingly, families rely on women for income needed to raise healthy children and care for other relatives.

As long as discrimination and inequities remain so commonplace around everywhere in the world -- as long as girls and women are valued less, fed less, fed last, overworked, underpaid, not schooled and subjected to violence in and out of their homes -- the potential of the human family to create a peaceful, prosperous world will not be realized.

Let this conference be our -- and the world's -- call to action.

Let us heed the call so that we can create a world in which every woman is treated with respect and dignity, every boy and girl is loved and cared for equally, and every family has the hope of a strong and stable future.

That is the work before you, that is the work before all of us, who have a vision of the world we want to see for our children and our grandchildren. The time is now. We must move beyond rhetoric, we must move beyond recognition of problems, to working together, to have the common efforts to build that common ground we hope to see.

God's blessings on you, your work and all who will benefit from it. Godspeed and thank you very much.

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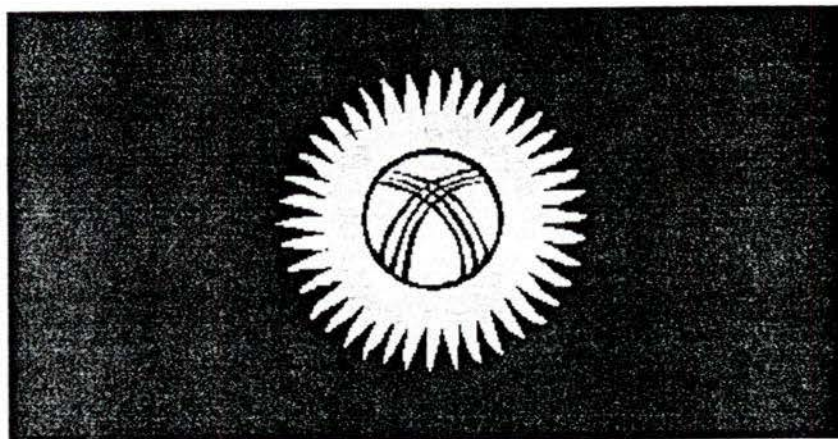
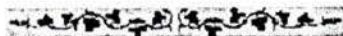
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Divider Title: _____

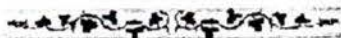


Interactive Central Asia Resource Project Description of Kyrgyzstan

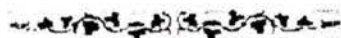


Kyrgyzstan is located in eastern Central Asia bordering China, Kazakstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Its has a total land area of 76,641 square miles with a population of about 4.4 million. Its capital city, Bishkek, has a population of 626,900. The population consists of 52 percent Kyrgyz, 21 percent Russian, 13 percent Uzbek, 2.5 percent Ukrainian, 2.4 percent German, and 1.6 percent Tatar. The country has an annual population growth rate of 2 percent. The official language is Kyrgyz, but here too there have been disputes with the "indigenous" Russian population over linguistic and citizenship claims.

Kyrgyzstan declared its sovereign independence on December 12, 1990, shortly after Askar Akayev was elected president by the Supreme Soviet. On October 13, 1991 Akayev became the country's first freely elected president. He was unopposed in the election. As president Akayev is both head of government and head of state, a feature common to all of the Central Asian republics. He presides over a constitutionally founded government that is comprised of the 313 member Zhogorku Keneshom (legislature) and the Supreme Court. The president appoints a prime minister who forms a government. The current government was formed on December 18, 1993. The current legislature, formerly the Supreme Soviet, was elected during the Soviet period and did not stand for election until March of 1995. Akayev himself faces an election in December of 1996. The major political parties include the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan and Alta-Mekel and Erkin, both of which are small Kyrgyz nationalist parties. Akayev is the only sitting president of the Central Asian region who was not a former Communist.



Visit Other ICARP Pages



Quick Facts

GEOGRAPHY

Official name:

Kyrgyz Republic; digraph: KG (KS)

Location:

Kyrgyzstan is situated in Central Asia bordered by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China

Capital:

Bishkek

Area:

Total area: 199,900 square km (76,641 square miles). It is about the size of Minnesota. 5.2% - forests, 4.4% - water, 53% - agricultural land, 36% - other

Land Boundaries:

Total 3,878 km, China 858 km, Kazakhstan 1,051 km, Tajikistan 870 km, Uzbekistan 1,099 km

Climate:

Dry continental to polar in high Tien Shan; subtropical in southwest (Fergana Valley); temperate in northern foothill zone

Terrain:

Peaks of Tien Shan rise to 7,000 meters, and associated valleys and basins encompass entire nation. Highest point - Peak Pobeda (7,439 meters)

Natural Resources:

Abundant hydroelectric potential

Significant deposits of gold and rare earth metals

Locally exploitable coal, oil and natural gas

Other deposits of nepheline, mercury, bismuth, lead, and zinc

Irrigated Land: 10,320 sq. km (1990)

GDP: 22,467,800,000 soms (1996)

Currency: Som (\$1 = KGS17.10 (as of October, 1997))

PEOPLE

Population: 4.6 million (01.01.97); unofficial sources: 4,769,877

Age Structure: 0-14 Years - 37% (female 868,108; male 888,479)

15-64 Years - 57% (female 1,377,221; male 1,345,990)

65 Years and Over - 6% (female 185,807; male 104,272)

Population Growth Rate: 1.5%

Birth Rate: 25.97-births/1,000 population

Death Rate: 7.32 deaths/1,000 population

Net Migration Rate: 3.66 migrant(s)/1,000 population

Infant Mortality Rate: 45.8 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life Expectancy at Birth: Total population: 68.13 years

Male: 63.92 years

Female: 72.56 years

Total Fertility Rate: 3.31 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality: Noun: Kyrgyz(s)

Adjective: Kyrgyz

Ethnic Divisions:

Kyrgyz 60.8 %

Russian 15.3 %

Uzbek 14.3 %

Ukrainian 1.5 %

Other 8.1% (includes Dungan, German, Kazakh, Korean, Tajik, Tatar, Uighur and others). Kyrgyzstan has more than 80 ethnic groups

Religions:

Islam, Russian Orthodox etc. The freedom of worship is guaranteed under the Constitution. Most major religions are practiced in Kyrgyzstan

Languages:

The official state language of Kyrgyzstan is Kyrgyz. Russian is also very widely used, and English is becoming popular among the younger generation

Literacy:

Age 15 and over (1989)

Total population: 97%; Male: 99%, Female: 96%

Labor Force:

1.836 million

By occupation:

Agriculture and forestry 38%, Industry and construction 21%, other 41% (1990)

Government

Type: Republic

Head of State: President

Government Power:

Legislative Branch - Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) consisting of two chambers, with the Legislative Assembly and People's Representatives Assembly

Executive Branch - Government, Local Akimiats (local state administrations), Ministries and State Establishments

Judicial Branch - Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, Highest Court of Arbitration

Adm. Divisions:

Bishkek (capital) and 6 oblasts: Chui Oblast, Jalal-Abad Oblast, Naryn Oblast, Osh Oblast, Talas Oblast, Issyk Kul Oblast

Independence: 31 August 1991

National Holidays:

New Year's Day (January 1)

Russian Orthodox Christmas (January 7)

Orozo Ait (winter) - Muslim holy day celebrated by the lunar calendar (date is not fixed)

International Women's Day (March 8)

Nooruz (March 21)

Kurman Ait (spring) - Muslim holy day celebrated by the lunar calendar (date is not fixed)

International Worker Day (May 1)

Kyrgyz Constitution Day (May 5)

WW II Victory Day (May 9)

Independence Day (August 31)

Constitution: Adopted 5 May 1993

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Member of: More than 30 international organizations, like AsDB, CIS, EBRD, ECE, ECO, ESCAP, FAO, IBRD, ICAO, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IOC, IOM (observer), ITU, NACC, OIC, OSCE, PCA, PFP, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WHO, WIPO, WTO etc.

Kyrgyzstan's flag was adopted on March 3, 1992 and shows a combination of esoteric and practical symbols. On a field of red - traditional color of the Kyrgyz - is centered a yellow sun with 40 rays, representing the 40 tribes led by the ancient national hero, *Manas*, who united them to form the Kyrgyz nation. Centered on the sun is a red circle containing two crossed sets of three curved lines, a stylized representation of the opening at the peak of a *boz uy* (yurta, yurt) - the traditional Kyrgyz house. The sun symbolizes light, nobility and eternity to the Kyrgyz.

Diplomatic Representation in U.S:

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,

His Excellency Mr. Baktybek Abdrisaev

Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic

1732 Wisconsin Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20007

Tel.: (202) 338-5141

Fax: (202) 338-5139

e-mail: Embassy@kyrgyzstan.org

Ambassador Ms. Zamira Eshmambetova,

Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic

to the United Nations

866 UN Plaza, Suite 477, New York, NY, 10017

Tel.: (212) 486-4214; Fax: (212) 486-5259

U.S. Diplomatic Representation:

Ambassador Anne Sigmund. Embassy: Erkindik Ave. #66, Bishkek 720002

Telephone: [7] (3312) 22-29-20, 22-27-77,

22-26-31, 22-24-73

FAX: [7] (3312) 22-35-51

Additional General Information about Kyrgyzstan

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
004. report	re: US Government Report (1 page)	07/30/1997	P1/b(1)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 23216

FOLDER TITLE:

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Ukraine [binder] [2]

2015-0275-S

rc2104

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
005. report	re: US Government Report (1 page)	10/15/1997	P1/b(1)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 23216

FOLDER TITLE:

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Ukraine [binder] [2]

2015-0275-S

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KYRGYZSTAN: ARRIVAL/U.S. ASSISTANCE

SCENESETTER

As you deplane, you will be greeted by First Lady Akayeva, Foreign Minister Imanaliyev, Chief of Staff Jumanliyev and U.S. Ambassador Anne Sigmund.

An IL-76 transport plane, carrying humanitarian assistance for hospitals and orphanages in Bishkek and Osh will be unloading medical supplies on the tarmac. You will observe the unloading and make a arrival statement highlighting this assistance. The event is scheduled to last 15 minutes.

BACKGROUND

The humanitarian assistance cargo is in two parts. The Bishkek donation consists of medical supplies and medicines from CitiHope International and Project Hope, and clothing donated by the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program for Allen County Indiana (RSVP). CitiHope and Project Hope's donations will be distributed to three hospitals, four health centers, a research center and an orphanage. The estimated value is more than \$2 million.

The RSVP donation consists of clothing and goodwill items valued at \$5,000. Bishkek Peace Corps volunteer Katie Joley's mother, who is the Director of RSVP, coordinated this assistance. The Peace Corps will deliver the items to those most in need.

The Osh mission consists of pharmaceuticals donated by Heart-to-Heart International, valued at over \$700,000, to be given to the Osh Free Medical Clinic. RSVP has also provided \$5,000 worth of children's clothing which Osh-based Peace Corps volunteers will distribute.

PARTICIPANTS

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

First Lady Mayran Akayeva

Foreign Minister Muratbek Imanaliyev

Chief of Staff, President's Office, Kubanychbek Jumanliyev
(TBD) Kyrgyz Ambassador to the U.S., Bakytbek Abdrisaev

American Embassy

Ambassador, Anne Sigmund

Deputy Chief of Mission, Angus Simmons

NGO Representatives

Citihope, Reverend Paul Moore and his staff

November 12 - Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Event: USG Humanitarian Flight (IL-76) to Bishkek and Osh
(AN-26)

Dicussion: A USG contracted IL-76 carrying pharmaceuticals for 10 medical institutes in Bishkek, clothing for Bishkek and Osh, and pharmaceuticals for Osh will land the evening of November 11 in Bishek. This aircraft and a second cargo aircraft (An-26) will be on the ramp in Bishkek and should be downloading cargo while the First Lady is in Bishkek on Nov 12.

Suggested talking points that might be included in the First Lady's remarks concerning the Bishkek humanitarian mission are:

- o This humanitarian mission is carrying pharmaceuticals and clothing for both Bishkek and Osh donated through three U.S. private volunteer organizations.
- o I want to personally acknowledge the hard work and dedication of CitiHOPE and the Reverand Paul Moore and his staff, who I understand are here today, Heart-to-Heart/The American Academy of Family Physicians, and Americorps/RSVP of Indiana. Their cooperative efforts go well beyond global politics and humanitarian assistance programs and are a shinning example that the people of the U.S. care for and support the people of Kyrgyzstan during a period of critical change.
- o I encourage you to continue your humanitarian efforts in Kyrgyzstan and the rest of the Newly Independent States during this critical time of transition.
- o The aircraft that you see unloading cargo here today is the 30th humaitarian airlift to Kyrgyzstan funded through a USG funded transportation program called Operation Provide Hope which has delivered over \$70 million in humanitarian assistance from the American people to the the people of Kyrgyzstan since 1992.
- o By the end of this year, it is estimated that this program will have delivered over \$2 billion in humanitarian assistance to the twelve countries of the Newly Independent State (NIS).

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KYRGYZSTAN EVENT PAPER: FINCA ROUNDTABLE AND MARKET TOUR

SCENESETTER

In Novo Povloka village you will meet a total of 24 FINCA bank members, divided into two roundtables of 12 members, each roundtable representing a village bank. The roundtable participants are microentrepreneurs, primarily women, who have businesses in the local market.

Novo Povloka is approximately 20 minutes from Bishkek. The motorcade will proceed to the single family home where the village "Bolsun" bank group meets. There will be three-four people outside the home to greet you and the press may also be present. As you enter the home, you should remove your shoes.

You will hold the roundtable sitting in traditional fashion on the carpeted floor of the meeting room. The estimated time of the roundtable is 10 minutes. You will then tour the Novo Povloka market, viewing stalls owned and operated by FINCA members.

The second roundtable will meet in a traditional Kyrgyz yurt, and you should remove your shoes before entering. You will observe a typical "Saykal" bank meeting and have a brief discussion with bank members.

BACKGROUND

FINCA is operating under a four-year, \$6.2 million USAID grant. It is a microfinance program which targets the poor, providing lending and savings services. To date, FINCA has made approximately 20,000 loans. Repayment rates are in excess of 98 percent.

In Novo Povloka, FINCA has established eight village banks with 100 active members. Over 90 percent of bank members are women. The average loan size is \$250. Members have used their loans to expand their businesses and excess profits to improve their families' standard of living. It is estimated that each FINCA client partially or fully supports eleven others from their small businesses.

PARTICIPANTS:

USAID

John Bayer

C.J. Rushin-Bell

FINCA/Kyrgyzstan Management Staff

Mark Rostal, Chief of Entourage

Kim Kuznia, Osh Regional Manager

Steve MacLeod, Osh Manager

Reuben Summerlin, Financial Services Advisor

Kirsten Weiss, Business Training Manager

Indira Ruzieva, Bishkek Finance Manager

Galena Griniova, Osh Senior Accountant

Ainura Turdalieva, Bishkek Financial Services Manager

Nurjan Miasheva, Osh Financial Services Manager

Vladimir Kovaliov, Bishkek Internal Audit Manager

Ainura Turgunbaeva, Osh Office Manager

FINCA FACTSHEET

FINCA Worldwide

Founded in 1984, The Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA) is a nonprofit, private voluntary organization. In 13 developing countries (Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Uganda, Malawi and Kyrgyzstan) as well as the U.S. (Washington, D.C. and Minnesota), FINCA Village Banking programs provide small loans, a savings program and technical support for the self-employed poor, helping them to work their own way out of poverty. Since 1989, USAID has provided \$23 million to FINCA International affiliates including El Salvador (\$10 million), Nicaragua (\$1.5 million), Malawi -- through World Learning (\$1.47 million), Kyrgyzstan (\$6.2 million), Uganda (\$1.77 million), Honduras (\$1 million), Tanzania (\$1 million) and Ecuador (\$250,000).

A Village Banking group consists of 20 to 50 neighbors-usually 80% or more are women-who come together to guarantee one another's loans, to administer group lending and saving activities and to provide mutual support. By offering credit, not charity, to these women, FINCA enables them to start or improve their own small businesses, which provide a steady source of employment and income for themselves and their families. Throughout most of the world, working capital-the money needed to start or expand a business-is simply not available to the poor. During 1996, FINCA provided \$16,911,051 in working capital for 69,888 small businesses in 14 countries.

FINCA Kyrgyzstan

In 1994 FINCA received a \$6.2 million grant from USAID to establish a microenterprise credit project in Kyrgyzstan. In two and one-half years of operations, FINCA Kyrgyzstan (F/K) has successfully refined and implemented its international proprietary business technologies to help meet the needs and improve the lives of the economically disadvantaged of Kyrgyzstan. To date, F/K has disbursed over US \$1.4 MM to approximately 15,000 individuals with a bad debt expense of less than US \$500. The project is operating in three Oblasts and has 100 national employees. During the period ending June 30, 1997, F/K reported an increase in the number of active Village Banks from 349 to 421 representing a net gain of 21%.

Over 85% of loan recipients have been women. With the collapse of the Soviet system many men lost their jobs and families lost a comfortable life style as food became expensive and scarce and schools and medicine were no longer free. Self-employment became the only hope for some. With the help of FINCA, many women were able to obtain small working capital loans to buy rice, eggs and other products which they could sell in the local bazaars. Through FINCA's Village Banking savings system these women have increased their working capital and income which allows them to purchase butter, sugar, and meat-luxuries they previously could not afford.

FINCA Briefing Paper

FINCA Worldwide

What is FINCA

Founded in 1984, The Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), is a nonprofit, private voluntary organization. In 13 developing countries (Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Uganda, Malawi and Kyrgyzstan) as well as the U.S. (Washington, D.C. and Minnesota), FINCA Village Banking programs provide small loans, a savings program and technical support for the self-employed poor, helping them to work their own way out of poverty. FINCA's first major partnership with USAID was in El Salvador in 1989 when USAID provided \$10 million to FINCA to establish and build the CAM (Centro de Apoyo a la Microempresa).

What is a Village Banking group

A Village Banking group consists of 20 to 50 neighbors-usually 80% or more are women-who come together to guarantee one another's loans, to administer group lending and saving activities and to provide mutual support. By offering credit, not charity, to these women, FINCA enables them to start or improve their own small businesses, which provide a steady source of employment and income for themselves and their families. FINCA's average loan per borrower is only \$144, yet the accumulated savings of members exceed \$3.2 million.

Why credit

Throughout most of the world, working capital-the money needed to start or expand a business-is simply not available to the poor. In its twelve years, FINCA has proven that, given access to credit, poor people can create their own business, repay their debts and set aside savings for the future. During 1996, FINCA provided \$16,911,051 in working capital for 69,888 small businesses in 14 countries. These businesses provided critical income for families, and in some cases, employment for additional family members or members of the community. While income and profits are hard to measure, FINCA-supported small business generated \$3,746,783 in family savings worldwide-an average of \$54 per family. While \$54 may not seem like a lot of money, it represents three weeks pay in Uganda and over three weeks salary in Malawi and Kyrgyzstan.

Who benefits

The typical FINCA borrower is a woman between 25 and 44 years old, supporting, or helping to support, three children. She has little hope of being hired by a business outside of the home. She wants to start her own small business that would allow her to

earn the income needed to feed, clothe and educate her children. She has a plan to improve her life and that of her family, yet she is too poor to qualify for a loan from a commercial bank. A FINCA loan is clearly the best-and perhaps the only-hope she has for improving her prospects.

FINCA in Kyrgyzstan

FINCA's performance in Kyrgyzstan

In 1994 FINCA received a \$6.2 million grant from USAID to establish a microenterprise credit project in Kyrgyzstan. In two and one-half years of operations, FINCA Kyrgyzstan (F/K) has successfully refined and implemented its international business technologies to help meet the needs and improve the lives of the economically disadvantaged of Kyrgyzstan. To date, F/K has disbursed over US \$1.4 MM to approximately 15,000 individuals with a bad debt expense of less than US \$500. During the period ending June 30, 1997, F/K reported an increase in the number of active Village Banks from 349 to 421 representing a net gain of 21%. The project is operating in three Oblasts (Chui in the north and Osh and Jalal-Abad in the southwest) and has 100 national employees. FINCA's activities in Kyrgyzstan directly address USAID's Strategic Objective 1.3 "Accelerated development and growth of private enterprises" and is highly regarded by the Ambassador and USAID Country Representative there.

F/K has established and maintained the highest level of financial performance among microfinance practitioners in Kyrgyzstan. F/K charges a positive interest rate through the effective design and implementation of an appropriate pricing structure. By charging interest rates that sufficiently cover administrative costs, expanding the scope of operations, and creating an efficient institutional structure, F/K has consistently posted gains towards self-sufficiency. In May 1997, F/K achieved its first month of financial self-sufficiency, or break-even, after two years of lending. FINCA Malawi, Honduras and Nicaragua have also achieved financial self-sufficiency. In addition, F/K has maintained repayment rates in excess of 98%, the highest return in both the informal and formal sectors.

Through August 1997, F/K has expended \$3.0 MM of USAID funds in grant management, on-site technical assistance, local operations, overhead and loan capital. F/K has utilized this funding to develop the institution as a financial intermediary, capitalize the loan portfolio, subsidize operating losses and purchase fixed assets. Therefore, USAID's funding has been used as a catalyst to build efficient operations and scale.

Who receives the loans

Over 85% of loan recipients are women. With the collapse of the Soviet system many men lost their jobs and families lost a

comfortable life style as food became expensive and scarce and schools and medicine were no longer free. Self-employment became the only hope for some. With the help of FINCA, many women were able to obtain small working capital loans to buy rice, eggs and other products which they could sell in the local bazaars. Through FINCA's Village Banking savings system these women have increased their working capital and income which allows them to purchase butter, sugar, and meat-luxuries they previously could not afford.

Future performance projections

In the coming years, FINCA will accelerate the rate of microfinance activities. To date, F/K has leveraged USAID funding by directly lending \$1.4 MM in funds originating from USAID. F/K clients have lent approximately \$2.0 MM of their personal savings, a direct result of USAID's funding. Combined lending-USAID and client savings-through August 1997 totaled \$3.4 MM, 113% of grant funds expended. This ratio will increase over the successive periods. The remaining grant funds, \$3.2 MM, will yield nearly \$13 MM in loans originating from USAID grant funds during the period from September 1998 to August 2000. Moreover, clients are projected to lend \$17 MM for the same period extrapolating from historical data. Thus the expected ratio of total combined lending-USAID and client savings-for the remaining grant funds through the year 2000 will equal nearly 800%.

USAID funding to FINCA

Since 1989, USAID has obligated \$23 million to FINCA International affiliates including El Salvador (\$10 million), Nicaragua (\$1.5 million), Malawi -- through World Learning (\$1.47 million), Kyrgyzstan (\$6.2 million), Uganda (\$1.77 million), Honduras (\$1 million), Tanzania (\$1 million) and Ecuador (\$250,000). Of the \$23 million, \$16.9 million has been spent on projects that continue to benefit tens of thousands of poor families. FINCA programs disbursed \$20 million in loans last year. The funding for the Honduras and Tanzania projects was just obligated and has not yet been disbursed. USAID recently approved a grant to Shorebank for operations in the Caucasus new projects that will include a \$6.94 million subagreement for FINCA to start three affiliates (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan) and a technical assistance Hub in Georgia.

FINCA has also received two Matching Grants from USAID. The first Matching Grant for \$1 million began in September 1992. The second Matching Grant is for \$4,997,706 for the five year period ending September 1999. In addition, FINCA has received start-up funding for its Village Bank Capital Fund and for implementation of a FINCA Affiliate Financial System through USAID's Implementation Grant Program (\$1.1 million grant and \$1 million MSEED loan).

AIHA's Medical Partnership Program between the Kyrgyzstan and the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC), funded under a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was formed in October 1992. In addition to the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Health, the Kyrgyz partners are the Institute of Oncology and Radiology, the Institute of Obstetrics and Pediatrics and, since 1996, the Institute of Cardiology and Internal Medicine. Since the inception of the partnership, over 100 Kyrgyz physicians and nurses have visited KUMC, while over 70 US physicians, nurses and health administrators have traveled to Kyrgyzstan.

The general areas of focus for the partnership have been nurse education, introduction of family medicine, management training, pediatric oncology, laparoscopic surgery, prosthetics and orthotics, neonatology, respiratory disease, emergency and burn care, and continuing education.

Program Outcomes

Health Care Reform: In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the partnership has focused on three main components of health care reform in Kyrgyzstan. These include nursing education, introduction of family practitioners/family medicine, and management training for nurses and health care administrators.

In order to reduce overhead costs and generate revenue, the Institute of Oncology and Radiology has decreased its number of beds by closing a hospital wing, renovating the facility and re-opening it as a hotel for relatives of patients. A private rehabilitation hospital in Bishkek was founded after studying the American health care system during a partnership visit.

Nursing Reform: The priority given to nurse education and the development of management skills represents a pioneering attempt by the partners and the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Health to upgrade health care delivery in the country by elevating the skills of nursing professionals. Senior nurses from throughout Kyrgyzstan have participated in intensive one- and two-month training programs at KUMC focusing on skills development and hospital administration. The partners developed the "Kyrgyzstan Nursing Administration Course," emphasizing management skills for nurse administrators. The nurses receive a general overview of the structure and function of the US health care system, especially the role of the nurse, nursing education, nurses' clinical skills, and the administrative structure of nursing in the hospital. The visiting nurses accompany nurse managers on the floors, visit nursing skills labs, and are introduced to the work of the Home Health Nurse, who provides health care in a home setting. In addition, they attend lectures on standards of patient care, infection control, and prevention.

New nurse administrator/manager positions have been created by the Ministry of Health and filled by these nurses in their respective institutions. Nurses have been hired in each oblast of the Republic to the newly-created position of senior nurse-administrator with a salary comparable to that of chief physicians. In addition, nurses have been invited to KUMC to participate in a train-the-trainers course designed to prepare them to teach other nurses at the Bishkek School of Nursing. KUMC has donated equipment for five nursing laboratories at the School for this purpose.

In May 1995, the partners hosted a conference in Bishkek for chief nurses from each of the Central Asian Republics (CAR). Over 120 nurses participated in the CAR Leadership in Nursing seminar, which specifically addressed management and administrative issues pertaining to the region. A

second nursing conference took place in Bishkek during September 1997. This conference was preceded by a "train-the-trainers" seminar for nurse educators at the Bishkek School of Nursing, using a new nursing textbook developed by the partners.

Neonatology: The partnership program has also focused on neonatal resuscitation of full-term normal weight infants. A series of seminars were conducted by KUMC specialists on thermal regulation, intubation, and general diagnostics. The program started in partnership hospitals in Bishkek; however, responding to requests from the Ministry of Health, the program has been expanded to include neonatologists from all over Bishkek. The US teams also traveled to Osh and repeated the training seminars in that city. Over 110 physicians from ten of the twelve birthing units in the Kyrgyz Republic were trained in a series of "train-the-trainers" courses to become instructors in neonatal resuscitation. Translated textbooks on neonatology were distributed to the participants to increase their knowledge base. The training in neonatal resuscitation conducted at multiple sites around Kyrgyzstan is having a significant impact on reducing morbidity and mortality. KUMC staff project infant deaths have been reduced by thirty percent as a result of the training across the republic.

Respiratory Diseases: The Partnership program has also focussed upon Respiratory Diseases. Three teams of Kyrgyz physicians traveled to KUMC to observe the American treatment of asthma and bronchial infections. Three pulmonologists traveled to Bishkek to conduct seminars and give lectures. Of interest to the American physicians were salt chambers and native herbs used in treatment of bronchial diseases in Kyrgyzstan.

Management Training: Partnership efforts, augmented by AIHA/AUPHA management training workshops, have given health care managers from Bishkek the opportunity to participate in a series of training seminars in diverse areas, such as grantsmanship, informed decision-making and financial management.

In an effort to establish model blood banks in Bishkek, partners have worked toward improving the administrative skills of blood bank directors. Their training will lead to greater efficacy and management of blood banking, including infection control. Specialists from US community blood banks traveled to Bishkek and Jalal Abad in December 1995 to assess the work of blood banks in Kyrgyzstan. The specialists made recommendations on donor recruitment, materials management, and standard operating procedures. They also donated and installed a computer with word processing, database and accounting software to Regional Blood Bank in Bishkek.

Pediatric Cancer Registry: Through several exchange visits, the KUMC and Kyrgyz partners have established an academic exchange program and a national pediatric cancer registry in Bishkek, which has allowed the partners to collect accurate cancer morbidity and mortality rates in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the partners have begun to conduct a comprehensive cancer screening and treatment project in the township of Malli-Say, which in 1993 was struck by an earthquake which reopened an abandoned mine and uncovered uranium waste. At the request of partners at the Institute of Oncology and Radiology, KUMC diagnostic teams examined residents for radiation-related illness, collected data, and treated patients. Together, the partners are analyzing the data to assist in the long-term treatment of victims of this disaster.

Laparoscopic Surgery: Surgeons from Kansas City demonstrated laparoscopic techniques at a conference of surgeons in Central Asia. They performed six operations at the Institute of Oncology and Radiology, using equipment donated by KUMC. In addition they presented two lectures: one for operating room nurses on the maintenance of laparoscopic equipment, the other for anesthesiologists on the use of resuscitation equipment.

Prosthetics/Orthotics: At the request of the Ministry of Health, the partnership took steps towards the establishment of a center for clinical training and production in prosthetics and orthopedics. One prosthetist and one orthotist traveled to Bishkek in the Fall of 1995 to review local prosthetic and orthopedic services and to study current medical practices related to prosthetic care. In addition, they visited the Bishkek prosthetic plant to evaluate the equipment and technology available. The specialists made recommendations to enhance education and improve the prosthetic rehabilitation of patients.

Catastrophic Emergency Care and Burn Care: Following a very successful two week program on emergency and burn care, the ministry asked the partners to repeat the seminar and expand the program to include the city of Osh and the firefighters and first responders in both cities. A team of physician, nurse, two therapists and an emergency technician traveled to Bishkek and Osh to teach two seminars and set up a comprehensive burn department at Hospital No. 4 in Bishkek and the Oblast Hospital in Osh. All supplies to set up these departments were donated by 20 hospitals in Kansas, cleaned and packaged by the firefighters and shipped by container from the State Department to Kyrgyzstan. The departments will be set up in such a way that they can function independently in the future.

Future Plans for the Partnership

Nursing reform through practical skills development will continue to be a major area of partnership focus. Plans are underway to upgrade the existing nursing skills laboratories, introduced to hospitals with partnership assistance. Discussions have also begun regarding the establishment of a masters degree program for nurses at the Medical Academy. They will also be conducting a seminar to train nurses to teach nurses.

The Partnership also plans to continue in it's efforts of supporting Catastrophic Emergency Care and Burn Care. They will continue to work on the two comprehensive burn care centers in Osh and Bishkek together with educating first responders. This program represents a nationwide effort in Kyrgyzstan and a statewide effort in Kansas.

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AIHA's Medical Partnership Program between Millard Fillmore Health Systems and the SUNY Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences in Buffalo, New York, and L'viv Clinical Railway Hospital and L'viv Perinatal Center in L'viv, Ukraine, funded under a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has existed since April 1993.

The partnership emphasizes obstetrics and gynecology, infection control, ophthalmology, resource center development, hospital administration, and laparoscopic surgery.

Program Outcomes

Obstetrics and Gynecology/Surgery: Implementation of prenatal screening and diagnostic ultrasound has enabled the partners to better identify high-risk pregnancies and, ultimately, improve fetal outcomes at the L'viv Perinatal Center. They have also introduced the utilization of the vaginal probe with ultrasound for prenatal diagnosis. Training in the primary care of women has also been conducted, combined with specific efforts in the reduction of low birth weight infants and their care. Between 1992 and 1995 the number of complications due to infections decreased in both the maternity and the gynecology units. In the maternity unit it has decreased by 2.8 times and in the gynecology unit it has been reduced by a factor of 3.8.

The mid-year report in 1996 revealed a number of statistics regarding strides that have been made in the Perinatal Center. The average length of stay in the maternity unit decreased from 13.6 days in 1995 to 11.2 days in 1996. The average length of stay in the gynecology unit was reduced from 5.8 days in 1995 to 5.4 days in 1996. In addition, the length of stay for a woman after a normal delivery was reduced to 3 days. Perinatal mortality rates were decreased from 27 percent in 1995 to 26 percent in 1996. Intra-natal mortality rates were reduced from 15.5 percent in 1995 to 14 percent in 1996. The mortality rate of full-term infants was also lowered in 1996 to 2 percent from a rate of 3 percent in 1995.

The L'viv Perinatal Center has begun performing the following new diagnostic procedures: hysteroscopy, amniocentesis, and ultrasound examination with the use of a transvaginal meter. The following treatments and procedures have also been introduced at the Center: laparoscopy cystectomy, laparoscopy tubectomy, LAVH, laparoscopic surgical sterilization, minilaparotomy, and prolongation of pregnancy despite premature release of amniotic fluid.

The Perinatal Center has begun providing laboratory examinations on an out-patient basis prior to surgery, and treating women with gynecological diseases. A short procedure unit was opened at the Center, in addition to a neonatal intensive care unit and a prenatal diagnostics unit.

Infection Control: Both NIS partner hospitals have implemented infection control programs including Universal Precautions, improved cleaning, disinfection and sterilization techniques, and prophylactic vaccination of health care providers against Hepatitis B and diphtheria. As a result, the incidence of nosocomial infections at L'viv Perinatal Center has been reduced by 15 percent. The position of Infection Control Officer has been added at Railway Hospital. This individual has responsibility for hospital-wide infection control and the quality improvement program. Nurses continue to be trained in Body Substance Isolation and Universal Precautions. Statistics at Railway

Hospital show that both hospital personnel contact with patients' blood and hospital infections between patients have been significantly reduced. The overall length of stay at Railway Hospital has been decreased by 2 days.

Ophthalmology: At Railway Hospital, extensive hands-on training in early detection of myopia and cataracts has led to a 40 percent increase in early detection and an estimated 20 percent decrease in vision related disabilities. Treatment was changed from intra-capsular to extra-capsular techniques, and over 125 patients received extracapsular implants with correctly fitted lenses to restore full vision. Training has continued in the areas of extra- and intra-capsular lens implementation surgery as well as phaco-emulsification. To date over fifty phaco-emulsification procedures have been performed. New diagnostic tools have helped to identify over 2600 patients with cataracts and over 800 patients with glaucoma. Surgery has been indicated and performed for ninety-two of the glaucoma patients.

Resource Center Development: Librarians from the L'viv Scientific Library have received training in Buffalo to increase their knowledge of computers and the use of bibliographic materials. They have studied the hospital library system and its support of patient care and have been trained in special search techniques on new equipment that they now have in L'viv. They plan to implement a computerized bibliographic system stored in two databases at the Resource Center. The partners have successfully translated "Prologue in Obstetrics" and disseminated educational materials to a vast audience. Reference materials and textbooks have been transferred to the L'viv partners for establishment of a medical reference library.

Hospital Administration: Billing and collection procedures and cost containment strategies have been implemented at both L'viv hospital sites. The role and responsibilities of the Infection Control Officer were developed to include the management of infection control data and statistics.

In February 1996, a cost accounting department was opened at the Railway Hospital. The hospital now provides services for which they receive payment. Revenues from these services total over \$5,000 per month. The hospital anticipates that within five years they will transition to a completely fee-for-service institution.

Laparoscopic Surgery: Laparoscopic training has been conducted in three stages: research and study of the techniques, observation of the techniques, and, lastly, using a laparoscopic trainer under the supervision of a US trainer. Physicians have observed and studied the following surgeries: laparoscopic cholecystectomy, appendectomy, herniorrhaphy, colon resection, and Nissen fundoplication. A new laparoscopic surgery department was opened at Railway Hospital in February, 1996; the department is staffed by physicians and nurses who were trained in Buffalo. A new laparoscopic technique, double combined extirpation of uterine tissue, was introduced at the Perinatal Center in 1996. Statistics that were received in June 1997 from Railway Hospital indicate that 1603 laparoscopic GI procedures have been performed using the equipment and techniques learned from US Partners. Eight GI endoscopists have also been trained and have begun performing laparoscopic gynecologic surgeries at Railway Hospital.

Future Plans for the Partnership

A comprehensive approach to women's health and breast cancer screening will be fully implemented, enabling the L'viv partners to provide screening programs for breast, cervical, and uterine carcinomas, as well as to offer appropriate treatment interventions. Mammography procedures will be standardized and an educational outreach program will be developed, including instruction in Breast Self Exam. Pap smear testing and staining will be standardized using the Bethesda Classification method. Basic birth control services will be provided in an outpatient clinic. Outpatient treatment of cervical dysplasia, including colposcopy and cryotherapy will be provided on an outpatient basis.

An NICU will be developed at the Perinatal Center and personnel will be trained in the treatment of premature newborns with respiratory illness. A birthing room and "Birthing Center" will be created at the Perinatal Center.

The partners will develop a preventative maintenance program. Equipment will be evaluated for potential maintenance. The partners will work together to assure the proper functioning of laparoscopic, ophthalmologic and laboratory equipment.

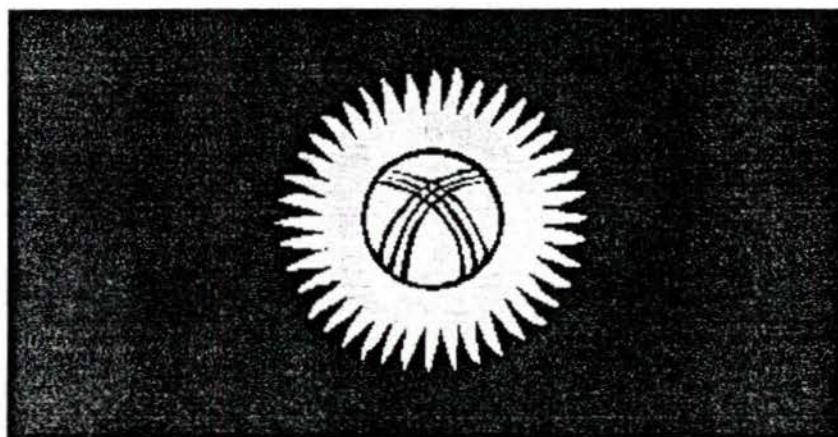
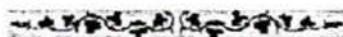
The partnership will work in the area of nursing continuing education program by enhancing collaboration on nursing school curriculum. They will also assist with the development of the Nursing Learning Resource Center.

Training will be conducted in advanced laparoscopic techniques and gynecological laparoscopy at both hospitals. Gastrointestinal and ENT laparoscopy will also be developed at Railway Hospital.

The computer network will be expanded and the potential for dial-in access from both hospitals will be evaluated. Additional training in the use of biomedical databases will be provided.

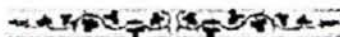


Interactive Central Asia Resource Project Description of Kyrgyzstan

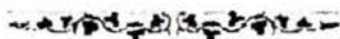


Kyrgyzstan is located in eastern Central Asia bordering China, Kazakstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Its has a total land area of 76,641 square miles with a population of about 4.4 million. Its capital city, Bishkek, has a population of 626,900. The population consists of 52 percent Kyrgyz, 21 percent Russian, 13 percent Uzbek, 2.5 percent Ukrainian, 2.4 percent German, and 1.6 percent Tatar. The country has an annual population growth rate of 2 percent. The official language is Kyrgyz, but here too there have been disputes with the "indigenous" Russian population over linguistic and citizenship claims.

Kyrgyzstan declared its sovereign independence on December 12, 1990, shortly after Askar Akayev was elected president by the Supreme Soviet. On October 13, 1991 Akayev became the country's first freely elected president. He was unopposed in the election. As president Akayev is both head of government and head of state, a feature common to all of the Central Asian republics. He presides over a constitutionally founded government that is comprised of the 313 member Zhogorku Keneshom (legislature) and the Supreme Court. The president appoints a prime minister who forms a government. The current government was formed on December 18, 1993. The current legislature, formerly the Supreme Soviet, was elected during the Soviet period and did not stand for election until March of 1995. Akayev himself faces an election in December of 1996. The major political parties include the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan and Alta-Mekel and Erkin, both of which are small Kyrgyz nationalist parties. Akayev is the only sitting president of the Central Asian region who was not a former Communist.



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Quick Facts

GEOGRAPHY

Official name:

Kyrgyz Republic; digraph: KG (KS)

Location:

Kyrgyzstan is situated in Central Asia bordered by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China

Capital:

Bishkek

Area:

Total area: 199,900 square km (76,641 square miles). It is about the size of Minnesota. 5.2% - forests, 4.4% - water, 53% - agricultural land, 36% - other

Land Boundaries:

Total 3,878 km, China 858 km, Kazakhstan 1,051 km, Tajikistan 870 km, Uzbekistan 1,099 km

Climate:

Dry continental to polar in high Tien Shan; subtropical in southwest (Fergana Valley); temperate in northern foothill zone

Terrain:

Peaks of Tien Shan rise to 7,000 meters, and associated valleys and basins encompass entire nation. Highest point - Peak Pobeda (7,439 meters)

Natural Resources:

Abundant hydroelectric potential

Significant deposits of gold and rare earth metals

Locally exploitable coal, oil and natural gas

Other deposits of nepheline, mercury, bismuth, lead, and zinc

Irrigated Land: 10,320 sq. km (1990)

GDP: 22,467,800,000 soms (1996)

Currency: Som (\$1 = KGS17.10 (as of October, 1997))

PEOPLE

Population: 4.6 million (01.01.97); unofficial sources: 4,769,877

Age Structure: 0-14 Years - 37% (female 868,108; male 888,479)

15-64 Years - 57% (female 1,377,221; male 1,345,990)

65 Years and Over - 6% (female 185,807; male 104,272)

Population Growth Rate: 1.5%

Birth Rate: 25.97-births/1,000 population

Death Rate: 7.32 deaths/1,000 population

Net Migration Rate: 3.66 migrant(s)/1,000 population

Infant Mortality Rate: 45.8 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life Expectancy at Birth: Total population: 68.13 years

Male: 63.92 years

Female: 72.56 years

Total Fertility Rate: 3.31 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality: Noun: Kyrgyz(s)

Adjective: Kyrgyz

Ethnic Divisions:

Kyrgyz 60.8 %

Russian 15.3 %

Uzbek 14.3 %

Ukrainian 1.5 %

Other 8.1% (includes Dungan, German, Kazakh, Korean, Tajik, Tatar, Uighur and others). Kyrgyzstan has more than 80 ethnic groups

Religions:

Islam, Russian Orthodox etc. The freedom of worship is guaranteed under the Constitution. Most major religions are practiced in Kyrgyzstan

Languages:

The official state language of Kyrgyzstan is Kyrgyz. Russian is also very widely used, and English is becoming popular among the younger generation

Literacy:

Age 15 and over (1989)

Total population: 97%; Male: 99%, Female: 96%

Labor Force:

1.836 million

By occupation:

Agriculture and forestry 38%, Industry and construction 21%, other 41% (1990)

Government

Type: Republic

Head of State: President

Government Power:

Legislative Branch - Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) consisting of two chambers, with the Legislative Assembly and People's Representatives Assembly

Executive Branch - Government, Local Akimiats (local state administrations), Ministries and State Establishments

Judicial Branch - Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, Highest Court of Arbitration

Adm. Divisions:

Bishkek (capital) and 6 oblasts: Chui Oblast, Jalal-Abad Oblast, Naryn Oblast, Osh Oblast, Talas Oblast, Issyk Kul Oblast

Independence: 31 August 1991

National Holidays:

New Year's Day (January 1)

Russian Orthodox Christmas (January 7)

Orozo Ait (winter) - Muslim holy day celebrated by the lunar calendar (date is not fixed)

International Women's Day (March 8)

Nooruz (March 21)

Kurman Ait (spring) - Muslim holy day celebrated by the lunar calendar (date is not fixed)

International Worker Day (May 1)

Kyrgyz Constitution Day (May 5)

WW II Victory Day (May 9)

Independence Day (August 31)

Constitution: Adopted 5 May 1993

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Member of: More than 30 international organizations, like AsDB, CIS, EBRD, ECE, ECO, ESCAP, FAO, IBRD, ICAO, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IOC, IOM (observer), ITU, NACC, OIC, OSCE, PCA, PFP, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WHO, WIPO, WTO etc.

Kyrgyzstan's flag was adopted on March 3, 1992 and shows a combination of esoteric and practical symbols. On a field of red - traditional color of the Kyrgyz - is centered a yellow sun with 40 rays, representing the 40 tribes led by the ancient national hero, *Manas*, who united them to form the Kyrgyz nation. Centered on the sun is a red circle containing two crossed sets of three curved lines, a stylized representation of the opening at the peak of a *boz uy* (yurta, yurt) - the traditional Kyrgyz house. The sun symbolizes light, nobility and eternity to the Kyrgyz.

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Additional General Information about Kyrgyzstan

UNCLASSIFIED**INR**United States Department of State
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

Viewpoint

INR analysts' working paper

International Trafficking in Women from Central Europe and the NIS

Trafficking in women from Central Europe and the New Independent States (NIS) has increased over the past few years. Well-established criminal organizations are running these trafficking and prostitution operations by capitalizing on the poverty, rising unemployment and the disintegration of social networks in the region.

* * *

Trafficking definitions and statistics elusive

The definition of trafficking in women varies widely given differing interpretations by individual countries, and because the industry may take different forms, such as sexual exploitation, indentured servitude and mail order brides¹. Moreover, definitional difficulties persist as cases may involve legal or illegal immigration, with women witting or unwitting about their employment as prostitutes. For the purposes of this paper, trafficking will focus primarily on trafficking for sexual exploitation and will cover the following practices as defined by the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights.

- keeping women in a state of illegal dependence;
- the use of force and deception;
- employment in prostitution or other unregulated and unprotected work;
- debt slavery i.e. by means of improper agents' fees and exorbitant rates of interest;

¹ Marriage or international matchmaking agencies offer foreign women for marriage abroad through "mail-order bride" catalogues. These companies may mask trafficking operations.

*Produced by the Office of
Analysis for Terrorism, Narcotics
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- (emotional) blackmail and exploitation of the illegal immigrant status;
- physical and sexual abuse;
- physical violence and the threat of violence;
- transport of one or more persons within a country or between countries for profit.

It is also difficult to estimate the true level of trafficking in women as it is an underground industry. No one agency compiles accurate statistics on how many women and children are trafficked worldwide; most estimates are anecdotal or difficult to extrapolate from limited case studies. Not enough research has been done to give precise ratios for women trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation versus other forms of exploitative labor. Nevertheless, according to some non-governmental organizations (NGOs), each year between one and two million women and girls are being trafficked around the world² with some 10,000 to 100,000 women trafficked for sexual exploitation from East to West. EU Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs Anita Gradin estimates that two-thirds of the women trafficked to Europe come from Eastern Europe and one-third of the women come from developing countries.

The lack of accurate statistics is also a problem in monitoring the trafficking of children, though reports from the 6th session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice indicate that there has been a dramatic increase in the abduction of children for commercial purposes by organized crime syndicates.³

Trafficking trends

The general magnitude of trafficking in Central European and NIS women and children to and through Europe, Asia and the Middle East appears to be increasing, though specific numbers have not been established. Recent investigations show that the majority of these women are trafficked to Western Europe, largely for sexual exploitation. Women from Central and Eastern Europe are particularly vulnerable to being exploited by the traffickers given the women's geographical proximity, cultural/racial similarities and ability to enter legally as tourists often without the need to apply for a visa.

² Beyond Europe, other anecdotal figures, collected from NGOs, human rights groups estimate that over the last ten years, 200,000 women and girls have been trafficked from Bangladesh to Pakistan. Moreover, 20,00-30,000 women have been trafficked from Burma to Thailand, and 150,000 Thai and Filipino women have been trafficked to Japan.

³ It has reached critical proportions in Asia where poverty is the main motivating factor behind children being trafficked or sold into debt bondage, brothels or sweat shops. NGOs, human rights groups and law enforcement officials, for example, estimate that 40,000 children from Nepal have been trafficked to India and Hong Kong over the last ten years, 15,000 children have been trafficked in Cambodia over the last six years, and 30,000 children to date have been prostituted in Sri Lanka.

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The main countries of origin for trafficking in women from East to West are Russia, Ukraine, Poland and The Baltic states (see map), according to an International Organization for Migration (IOM) officer. Other countries of origin include Belarus, Moldova and Central Europe. Traffickers target women in these countries because their difficult economic conditions make them more susceptible to offers of employment abroad. Some experts estimate that 80 percent of those in the region who have lost their jobs in recent years due to economic difficulties have been women. In addition to being origin countries, the Central European countries, especially Poland, Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic, are key transit countries to Western Europe. The Baltic countries are also a transit point to Western Europe as they already have the infrastructure and well established alien smuggling routes.

According to an IOM officer, most Western European countries, especially the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Greece, are major destination countries. The NGO Global Survival Network (GSN) concurs with this list and adds Japan, Israel, Turkey and UAE. Others include Thailand, Macau, South Africa and Tanzania. GSN and the NGO Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women claim that North America is also a growing destination point. Officers from IOM and INS believe the majority of NIS women trafficked to the US are going to New York, Washington, DC, Florida, California and Hawaii. Conversely, GSN found that some US women have been trafficked to Japan and Russia, though US law enforcement appears to have little information on this issue.

IOM, GSN and the Dutch Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV) claim that women from Central Europe and the NIS are trafficked to Western Europe primarily by private car and bus, although some transport of NIS women includes planes. According to the NGO End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, women are primarily trafficked to large cities, vacation and tourist areas, and military bases in Europe. Trafficking rings operate along major truck routes, for example the roads from Warsaw to Berlin and Budapest to Vienna.

Targeting, profiles and recruitment

Traffickers most frequently target young women, who are thought to be free of AIDS or other sexually transmitted disease, for sexual exploitation. Most of the trafficked women are under the age of 25, with many only 15-18 years old. This contrasts with women from developing countries, namely Asian countries, who are trafficked to Europe. These women tend to be older, more likely to be married, and to have children.

IOM, GSN and STV studies found that the recruitment of women from Central and Eastern Europe was often informal—through friends and acquaintances—but, on arrival in the destination country, many found themselves indebted to a trafficker or club owner. GSN also found that the Russian mafia recruits women at mixers or matchmaking parties organized by marriage agencies. The Russian mafia also uses these companies' databases to get additional

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names of possible recruits. Additionally, young women are often recruited at bars or dance clubs.

Similarly, GSN found that criminal organizations will commonly contract procurers⁴ to approach women or their families with offers of well-paying jobs in exotic cities, though ultimately the girls will be forced into prostitution. In societies with a tradition of fixing deals informally, this form of recruitment does not necessarily arouse suspicion. Agents will generally front the money for provision of travel documents, transportation and supposed jobs; GSN found that depending on the destination, trafficking networks may charge NIS women anywhere from \$1,500 to \$30,000 which they are expected to pay once they begin working. GSN also discovered that trafficking networks may use contracts. Many of the contracts are bogus and used to provide an image of legitimacy, lulling the girl into believing that she is dealing with a reputable business.

An additional venue for recruiting or duping women is through advertisements. Typically, ads in papers--usually placed by an agency not an individual--recruit women by offering lucrative jobs for models, dancers, waitresses, au pairs or hair stylists in Western Europe. According to an officer with the NGO Women in Development, women from Central Europe and the NIS, especially from small rural towns, are not always as accustomed to evaluating the legitimacy of the advertisements, particularly as some legitimate advertisements list young and attractive as qualifications.

Links to organized crime

Attracted by the endless market, enormous profits and minimal risks, criminal groups of all levels of sophistication are involved in the trafficking industry. There are an abundance of freelance traffickers who supplement their income by providing one aspect of the trade, such as internal or international transportation, on an ad hoc basis. There are also small but well-organized rings that specialize in trafficking nationals out of one country using similar routes repeatedly. Most notably, large, well-organized international trafficking rings have increasingly become involved in this trade over the past five years. Dr. Bruggeman, from Europol, said in 1996 that organized crime groups are using violence and intimidation to kidnap, imprison and force females into prostitution. These criminal organizations are capable of changing routing and means of transportation as necessary, and can procure fraudulent or authentic documents. Moreover, IOM, GSN and several European law enforcement agencies believe that the same criminal organizations engaged in trafficking women are involved in other illicit activities, such as drug trafficking, auto smuggling and gas scams, with the profits all interrelated.

⁴ According to a 1996 NGO study (The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Eastern Europe) presented before the Stockholm World Congress against the Sexual Exploitation against Children, it appears that procurers may be paid between \$2,000 to \$5,000 dollars to recruit a girl. GSN, however, found that in Russia recruiters might be paid as little as \$10 per woman recruited for the marriage agencies.

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Though the Russian mafia has traditionally been involved in prostitution, they are increasingly "evolving" into the trafficking of women. GSN discovered that the upper echelon of Russian organized crime was largely involved in providing the "roof" for the trafficking operation, while lower level criminals were responsible for managing the logistics, such as recruitment. Outside of Russia, IOM and GSN report that Russian organized crime groups are controlling European prostitution industries, such as those in Poland, Germany and Italy. According to Bulgarian Interior Ministry Chief Popov, Russian criminals are also trafficking Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian and Chechen women through Bulgaria to Turkey, Greece and elsewhere in Western Europe for prostitution. GSN found that Russian criminal groups are collaborating with Turkish and former Yugoslavian crime groups in trafficking women in Western Europe. GSN also found that in Russia's Far East, Russian criminals are reported to have supplied Russian women to brothels and clubs in Hong Kong and Macau. Lastly, Russian crime rings have trafficked women to the United States. For example, California authorities arrested 11 members of a Russian-Armenian mafia ring in September 1995 for importing Russian women for prostitution.

Other organized crime groups are also involved in the trafficking industry. Albanian criminal groups are involved in the Italian prostitution market, while Ukrainian groups reportedly control the markets in Hungary and Austria. In June, a Ukrainian mafia boss was arrested at the Austrian / Italian border at Tarvisio. In partnership with Albanian criminals, he had been trafficking dozens of Ukrainian girls to Italy and forcing them into prostitution. Dutch authorities have found that highly organized, extremely violent Eastern European trafficking gangs are largely controlling the trade in their country. A Belgian Interpol officer also claims that the Turkish PKK has used traditional alien smuggling routes to traffic women to Belgium for prostitution.

GSN investigations uncovered that the Japanese Yakuza are also involved in the trafficking industry, often in cooperation with the Russian mafia. The Yakuza not only force Russian women, who thought they were going to Japan to work as hostesses, into prostitution but also traffic Thai and Mexican women to Japanese brothels. The Thai women are frequently bought from Thai traffickers, while the Mexican women are duped into thinking they would be singers or actresses in Japan.

Widespread abuse of travel documents

The use of travel documents varies according to the immigration regulations in the destination countries. Traffickers usually bring Central and Eastern European women to Western Europe legally on work permits or tourist visas but then force them to work as prostitutes. In many instances, the travel agencies--often run by or associated with traffickers--have established relationships with various embassies which may "rubber stamp" the visas. Commonly, when a visa expires, women are given aliases and a visa for a different country. They then may be rotated on an international circuit of strip clubs and brothels in order to evade authorities and keep them from becoming discovered. One IOM study reflected that most Central European

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women entered the Netherlands as tourists, enabling them to remain legally (though not work) in the country for up to three months. By contrast, Russian women and most East European women entered the Netherlands illegally.

GSN found that in the few reported instances nationwide where Russian women were trafficked to the US, the traffickers used tourist visas. In general, it appears that prostitution is a low priority for US law enforcement agencies. Though local police may have anecdotal evidence of foreign women engaged in prostitution, in general, US law enforcement agencies do not keep accurate statistics and do not know the extent of the problem in the US. Additionally, women from the NIS are increasingly entering the US through mail-order bride companies. There are an estimated 200 mail-order bride companies which arrange some 2,000 to 5,000 marriages in the US each year; Russian and Filipino women are the two largest sources of foreign brides of US men.

Additionally, IOM has found that those countries with liberal visa policies for dancers or those involved in the arts or entertainment business tend to have a larger problem with trafficking, as traffickers often exploit this loophole. Traffickers, for example, have used Canada's entertainment visa to trick NIS women into believing they will be folk dancers, and then trap them into the sex industry. Facing growing domestic pressure over the traffickers use of the entertainment visa, Switzerland recently revoked this type of visa.

When tourist or work permits are not available, traffickers may purchase false or altered passports from local authorities. GSN found that in Russia, traffickers claim they can generate, often with official connivance, documentation to traffic women overseas. The GSN study showed the traffickers were confident that they could obtain false documentation for minors to work abroad, or new identities for women by acquiring false passports with genuine information, sometimes by using contacts from Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Lax law enforcement

There are a multitude of factors--including limited funding, resources and attention--which hinder law enforcement in combating the trafficking in women. Undercover operations, for example, are difficult because an insufficient number of European policemen speak Russian or other NIS languages. Lack of coordination and information-sharing among local police, border police and immigration authorities further impedes law enforcement efforts.

Beyond inadequate cooperation, there are unspoken biases, confusion, and disbelief over the issue in many governments. There is often a lack of political will to seriously address the issue, which is still largely seen as secondary to trafficking in drugs and arms. The trafficking industry is often associated with prostitution, a low priority for many law enforcement agencies, or associated with illegal migration and alien smuggling. Many governments are under tremendous pressure to limit migration, so they detain and deport the trafficked women without further investigation. Frequently the focus becomes whether or not the woman knew she would

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be a prostitute, or whether or not prostitution is illegal in a certain country, rather than the violation of the woman's civil and human rights.

Corruption may also prevent governments from arresting and prosecuting traffickers. In several instances, shady or corrupt government or law enforcement officials benefit or profit from the trade. Facing domestic pressure, governments are occasionally compelled to pursue the traffickers. For example, Greek authorities arrested at least 10 policemen, including two police chiefs, in August 1995 for masterminding several Russian and Eastern European call-girl trafficking rings in Greece. The rings had enticed thousands of girls and women with promises of a better life; yet when they arrived, corrupt policemen confiscated their passports and sold them to nightclub owners. In Germany, the Chief of the Special Commission on Organized Crime in Frankfurt, was arrested in 1996 for working with a trafficker of Eastern European women.

A GSN study also found that some Russian police and Federal Security Bureau (FSB) officials are involved in the sex trade. Private security firms—which provide the protection for the trafficking organizations, brothels and prostitution rackets—often include current or former members of the FSB and police. Widespread indifference to women's issues, a lack of resources, and a heavy workload have also prevented honest Russian security personnel from tackling the problem of trafficking in women. These obstacles and instances of corruption add to the victim's fear of punishment and arrest by local law enforcement and prevent trafficked women from coming forward and testifying. The women fear not only deportation but also reprisals by traffickers to themselves and/or their families. Language barriers and a lack of knowledge of their legal rights further compound their fears. Traffickers, however, know how to exploit the loopholes in the various countries' penal codes, according to a Belgian Interpol officer.

For further information, contact: INR/TNC Amy O'Neill, (202) 647-78272, or INR/TNC Office Director Mark Steinitz, (202) 647-6812.

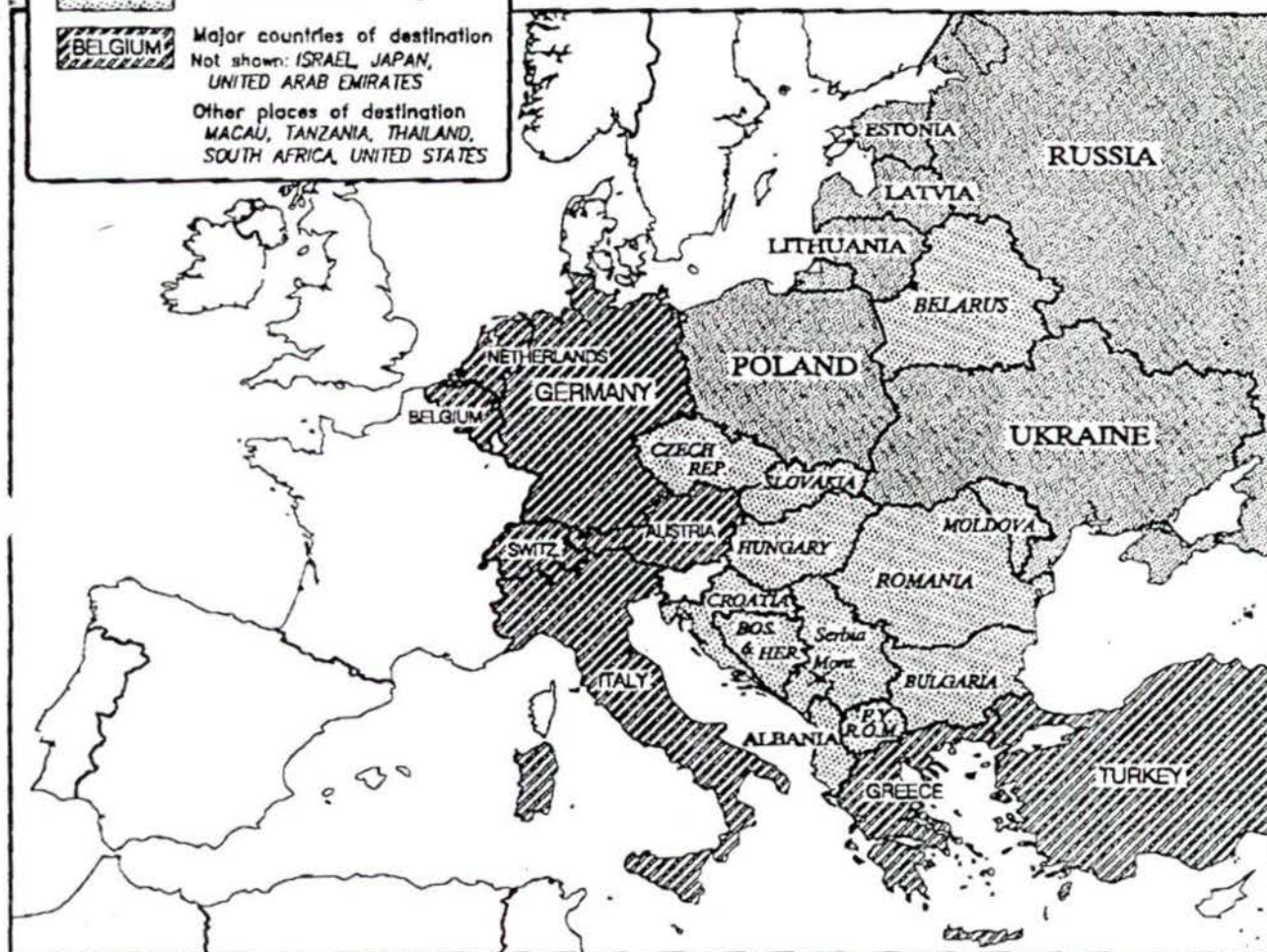
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Unclassified

Trafficking in European Women IOM and GSN estimates

- RUSSIA** Primary countries of origin
- BELARUS** Other countries of origin
- BELGIUM** Major countries of destination
- Not shown: ISRAEL, JAPAN,
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
- Other places of destination
MACAU, TANZANIA, THAILAND,
SOUTH AFRICA, UNITED STATES

Europe: International Trafficking in Women



Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative

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This Viewpoint reflects the opinions of the drafter. The information was based on open source literature and interviews with non-governmental organizations, human rights organizations, inter governmental organizations and government officers. The following sources were used:

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Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Some Eastern European Countries, a study carried out by Helena Karlen and Christina Hagner and commissioned by End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, March 1996

Trafficking in Women for Purposes of Sexual Exploitation, Risto Veijalaen Rapporteur to the Conference on Trafficking in Women, Vienna, June 1996

UN Crime Commission: Report on the 6th Session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, April 1997

European Parliament Report on Trafficking in Human Beings, Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs, December 1995

Trafficking in Women for Purposes of Sexual Exploitation, Report by Europol Drugs Unit, May 1996

Trafficking in Women, report by the Spanish National Police, 1996

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"Women's Vital Voices, The Costs of Exclusion in Eastern Europe," Swanee Hunt, Foreign Affairs, July/August 1997

Interviews:

The drafter spoke on the phone or in person with individuals from the State Department, DOJ, INS, Postal Inspections (Crime Division), and Customs (Crime Division). Additionally, representatives from the International Organization for Migration and Belgium's Interpol office provided information. Outside of government agencies, the drafter spoke with representatives from the following Universities and NGOs:

Global Survival Network

Network of East-West Women

Women in Development, Technical Assistance Project

The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women

The International Womens Judges Foundation

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes

University of Minnesota, Center on Speech, Equality and Harm

University of British Columbia, Department of Women's Studies

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Health Status of Women in CEE and the NIS

The rapid political, economic and social changes occurring in the countries of central and eastern Europe (CEE) and the new independent states (NIS) of the former USSR have created conditions that fundamentally affect

the population. These changes have led to social and economic hardship and, in some cases, to war. The result is a widening gap in health between the eastern and western halves of Europe, a serious inequity. A closer look at CEE and the NIS reveals that while women bear more of the burdens imposed by change, they also comprise an invaluable, largely untapped resource for improving their communities and their health.

It must be emphasized that the information available on women's health is quite limited. In the past, the collection of gender-specific data was uncommon globally. Only in recent times have the fundamental differences in the health of men and women been formally recognized. Further, a great deal of the available data is uncertain. Not only do the systems of data collection vary greatly in quality and comprehensiveness, the types of data collected and the methods of analysis are often quite limited.

Most of the diseases that are major threats to the health of populations in CEE and the NIS develop over long periods of time. Causal factors interact with other influences in complex ways. Many health problems are related

to the life situation, to conditions of work and to patterns of behavior, all of which tend to vary in gender-specific ways.

Life Expectancy

Data comparing life expectancy at birth provide an overview of differences in survival for the female population of CEE and the NIS in relation to European Union (EU) averages. In 1993, the average life expectancy for women in the NIS was six years less than the average for women in the EU. The difference for women in CEE was five years. Within CEE and the NIS, there is a seven-year average difference between the countries with the lowest and highest figures, from 69.3 years in Turkmenistan to 76.5 years in the Republic of Georgia.

In the 1980s, life expectancy in CEE and the NIS showed a very gradual increase. But for most of the countries, life expectancy fell from 1990 to 1993. Life expectancy at birth in the Russian Federation decreased from 74.4 years to 72. Latvia fell from 74.5 to 73.3 years.

Cardiovascular Disease and Cancer

Diverging trends between CEE and the NIS and the rest of the region in the two



Nurila Marina of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, gave birth to twins at the Institute of Obstetrics and Pediatrics last February. The Institute has improved neonatal mortality, from 8.1 percent in 1994 to 7.5 percent in 1995.

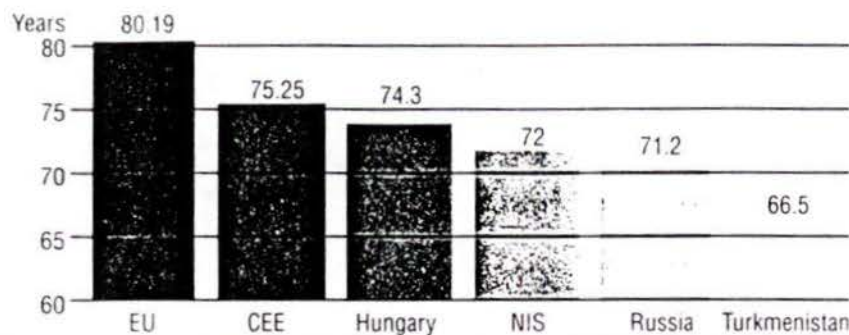
main causes of overall mortality for males and females (cardiovascular disease and cancer under the age of 65) give rise to concern. Particularly worrisome are the death rates for cardiovascular disease for females. The lowest female rate in CEE and the NIS — Lithuania at 72.95 per 100,000 — is more than one and a half times the European average of 47 per 100,000 and more than twice the EU average. Subregional variations in cardiovascular mortality are particularly large — Turkmenistan has 165 deaths per 100,000 women, while Estonia has 81. While mortality from cardiovascular disease (mainly ischemic heart disease and cerebrovascular disease) in females has been decreasing since 1980 in western Europe, no progress was made in CEE and the NIS.

The gap in cancer mortality rates for females is less dramatic than that for cardiovascular diseases, but growing larger.

cerpted from "Investing in Women's Health: Central and Eastern Europe," World Health Organization, 1995 and WHO's "1995 Highlights on Women's Health in Europe."



Female Life Expectancy at Birth, 1993-94



Source: WHO

CEE and the NIS have not enjoyed the consistent decline in mortality from cancer in females under 65 that has been found in other countries of the region since 1995.

The standardized death rate for female lung cancer in CEE is similar to the EU average of 6.48 deaths per 100,000 women under 65. As in the western countries of the region, the rate in CEE rose in the 1990s. Female lung cancer rates in the NIS, however, were low and stable, with 3 deaths per 100,000 in Tajikistan and 5 per 100,000 in Russia in 1991, possibly because of a lower smoking rate among women.

Mortality from cancer of the breast, in contrast to most other major causes of death among women, is lower in CEE and the NIS than the rest of the region. The EU average is 20 deaths per 100,000 women under 65, but the CEE average is 16 and the NIS average is 14.5. It appears, however, that breast cancer may more often reach an advanced stage before being detected. Estonia has reported that 30 to 40 percent of all new cases of breast cancer are advanced.

The rates for cervical cancer are among the highest in Europe: 7 per 100,000, compared with the EU average of 2.3. The NIS average is slightly lower than that of CEE. Cervical cancer is decreasing in the rest of Europe, mainly as a result of effective early detection and treatment.

Maternal Mortality

Maternal mortality rates in the NIS are about twice those in CEE and about four times the average for the region. Maternal mortality in Romania and Albania fell dramatically after the legalization of abortion in 1989. Nevertheless, abortion remains a major cause of maternal mortality in both countries.

In 1990, the maternal mortality rate in Tajikistan was 42 per 100,000 live births; two years later it leapt to 83. In Georgia, the rate rose from 20.5 in 1990 to 50 in 1992. A portion of the increases is probably due to better reporting systems, but real increases in maternal mortality arise from deteriorating socioeconomic conditions, limited access to safe and effective health services and other factors. Still, it is important to note that at the same time, several nations report decreases in maternal mortality, such as Kyrgyzstan, whose rate went from 73 in 1990 to 43 in 1994.

Only in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, where most birth-related deaths are due to hemorrhage, is abortion not the primary cause of female deaths associated with pregnancy and birth.

Family Planning

Because of the reliance on abortion, awareness of family planning alternatives remains quite limited. Although most countries report a growing interest in contra-

ceptives, limited availability and cost remove them as viable options for many people. In a 1993 survey of St. Petersburg women, almost 34 percent said they use no contraception. A 1994 Centers for Disease Control study in Romania found that the most prevalent method of contraception is withdrawal (34 percent) followed by the calendar method (8 percent). Only 14.5 percent of the women studied used "modern contraception" such as birth control pills or intrauterine devices (IUDs).

Abortion remains the most frequently used means of family planning. In many CEE and NIS nations, the rate is as high as one abortion for each live birth. Data from 1992 show three abortions for each live birth in Romania. In St. Petersburg, the ratio rose from 2:1 in 1990 to 2.48:1 in 1992. Estonia's rate rose from 1.13:1 in 1990 to 1.5:1 in 1994. But in several Central Asian nations, the ratio of abortions to live births is dipping slightly: In Kyrgyzstan, the ratio dropped from .606:1 in 1990 to .588 in 1994. In Kazakhstan, the ratio was .975:1 in 1990 and .88:1 in 1994.

Lifestyles

Where information is available, the evidence shows that the prevalence of smoking is still far lower for women than for men. The relatively greater rates of death attributed to smoking among men as compared to women reflect the usually lower smoking prevalence among women. In Albania for example, 7 percent of women smoke, whereas 50 percent of men smoke. In Belarus, 37 percent of deaths of males ages 35 to 69 are attributed to smoking; only 1 percent of women in that age group died of causes related to smoking. However, it is feared that the targeting of young people, particularly young women, in tobacco advertising will lead to higher smoking rates among women.

While little is known about the rate of
See Health Status, page 24

15 Between tradition and modernity: the dilemma facing contemporary Central Asian women

SHIRIN AKINER

Introduction

By the end of the nineteenth century a huge part of Asia had been brought under Russian rule – in terms of surface area, a territory far larger than that encompassed by modern India. The indigenous population was almost entirely Muslim, of the Sunni sect. In the north (approximately equivalent to the territory of present-day Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) and the south-west (present-day Turkmenistan), the local peoples followed a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life. Religion here tended to be syncretic, only superficially Islamicised. In the oasis-river belt of Transoxiana (present-day Uzbekistan and western Tadjikistan), there was an ancient urban culture. The cities in this region had long been famous as centres of Muslim scholarship. There were hundreds of *madrasah* (religious colleges) and thousands of (male) students of Islamic law. The focal point of the social as well as the religious life of the community was the mosque, at least one of which was to be found in every hamlet or town ward. Folk traditions and customs were inextricably intermingled with Islamic practices. At the popular level these were reinforced by the authority and prestige of representatives of the mystic orders – Sufi adepts, wandering dervishes (*kalendar*) and local holy men (*ishan*) – who were frequently credited with possessing supernatural powers of healing and soothsaying.

Under Soviet rule, Central Asia underwent an intensive process of modernisation. In effect, the region was wrenched out of Asia and thrust into Europe. Traditional culture was either destroyed or rendered invisible, confined to the most intimate and private spheres. In the public arena, new national identities were created, underpinned

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Shirin Akiner

by newly fashioned languages and Western-style literatures and histories. Universal compulsory education was introduced, at first at primary level, later extended to secondary level; medical and social welfare networks were established, as a result of which health standards were greatly improved and average life expectancy raised by several years. Society was secularised: Islamic legal and educational institutions were abolished and Islamic beliefs and practices almost obliterated. Western-style cultural amenities such as museums, art galleries, opera and ballet companies and theatres took the place of traditional forms of artistic expression, thereby altering the social, cultural and intellectual environment. These and the many other changes that were set in motion at this time were ideologically driven and underwritten by major allocations of human and financial resources from the central government. This degree of official support (accompanied, from time to time, by ruthless coercion) enabled substantial progress to be achieved within a remarkably short period.

It was against this background of dynamic transformation that the campaign for female emancipation – or more precisely, for gender equality before the law, in the home, in education and at work – was launched. Thus, the struggle to redefine women's rights did not take place in a vacuum, but as part of a larger process, and was strengthened and amplified by other reforms that were implemented concurrently. The basic aims were underpinned by a variety of practical measures that gave substance to these new rights and opportunities for women. These might appear to have been optimum conditions in which to bring about a radical change in the position of Central Asian women. Yet this was only partially achieved: despite the very real improvement in facilities and range of choices, and the greater visibility of Central Asian women in public life, in the private sphere older patterns of behaviour continued to dominate gender relations. Soviet-style modernity was accepted by the indigenous population, but subtly transformed (or subverted) so as to accommodate traditional concepts of social order and propriety.

Today, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and consequent disintegration of the political and economic framework within which the modernisation of Central Asia was accomplished, many aspects of the Soviet legacy are being re-examined. In each of the newly independent states a new phase of nation building has been initiated and a redefinition of the national identity is under way. Traditional cultural and social values are now being emphasised and Islam is again beginning to play a prominent role in public life. At the same

time, this region, which until very recently had almost no direct access to non-Soviet sources of information, is suddenly experiencing a flood of exogenous influences: foreign films and publications, businessmen from all parts of the world, tourists, international civil servants, aid workers and missionaries (representing every shade of Islam and Christianity, as well as other faiths or sects such as the Baha'i and Hare Krishna) are introducing new ideas and helping to shape new aspirations. Attempts at economic and political reform are also creating an impetus for change.

The emancipation movement was one of the defining elements of the ideological construction of Soviet Central Asian identities. It is not surprising, therefore, that as part of the current, post-independence process of refashioning national identities, the validity of the Soviet view of gender relations is being called into question. However, the situation is in flux. It is by no means clear whether the newly independent Central Asian states, individually or as an integrated group, will choose to remain within the European socio-cultural orbit that they have inhabited for the past half century, or whether they will seek to associate themselves more closely with their earlier, Islamic/Asian heritage. Central Asian women themselves are caught between conflicting impulses: some feel the need to return to their 'authentic' roots, with a renewed emphasis on traditional domestic obligations; others, to continue along the road to greater personal independence and freedom of choice. The great majority, however, would like to retain the balance between tradition and modernity that was reached, slowly and sometimes painfully, during the Soviet period. The dilemma that now confronts Central Asian women, poised between two value systems, subscribing in part to both, but not wholly to either, can only be understood in the context of the rapid, enforced, and not fully internalised, transition from a pre-modern to a modern society. It is therefore necessary to take a broader chronological perspective when dealing with this region than with other parts of the former Soviet Union, where the discontinuities have not been so profound. Hence, this paper begins by briefly reviewing the position of Central Asian women in the pre-Soviet period; it then looks at the relevant aspects of the Soviet emancipation movement; and, finally, at the challenges that are confronting Central Asian women in the post-Soviet states.

The term 'Central Asian women' is here used to refer collectively to the women of the titular peoples of these states, namely, the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tadzhiks, Turkmen and Uzbeks. Ideally, were space to permit, each of these national groups should form the subject of a

separate study. However, they do still share a sufficient number of common features – in large part the legacy of a shared Soviet experience – for it to be possible to make some valid generalisations about their present situation. This may not continue to be the case in the future, but as yet the divergences are quite slight. The issues that affect the position of women in the settler communities are rather different and it is beyond the scope of this paper to consider these groups. Likewise, indigenous peoples such as the Bukharan Jews, who have a different cultural background from the majority of the population, are not covered here.

Central Asian women in pre-Soviet society

Central Asia was incorporated into the tsarist empire over a period of some 150 years, beginning with the creeping annexation of the Kazakh steppes in the early eighteenth century and ending with the subjugation of the Turkmen tribes in the deserts of the south in the late nineteenth century. Russian policies towards their new subjects varied over time and from one area to another, but, in general, they were less interventionist than those of other European colonial powers. The tsarist government was mainly concerned with the creation of an effective administrative apparatus and the development and exploitation of the economic potential of the region. The local rulers were generally deposed (in most cases to be coopted into the service of the new regime), but the emir of Bukhara and the khan of Khiva were allowed to retain semi-independent status. Even in the areas that came under direct Russian rule, there was very little interference with traditional institutions. In the legal sphere, the most serious crimes were transferred to the jurisdiction of the Russian courts, but in all other cases *sharia* (Islamic canon law) and *adat* (customary law) continued to regulate the lives of the indigenous population. Although some Russian and Russo-native schools were opened, education, too, remained predominantly Islamic.

Information on pre-Soviet Central Asian society (or more accurately, *societies*, since there were many different groupings, all of which had their own traditions and customs) is very sparse. Moreover, it is almost entirely confined to the 'outsider's' view, as recorded in the accounts of tsarist officials and ethnographers, West European and American travellers, and Soviet field researchers of the 1920s.¹ The evidence they present is valuable, but it is incomplete, and informed by very particular cultural biases. Inevitably, this has given rise to misunder-

standings and divisions. Indeed, such material generally reveals more about the prejudices and ideals of the writers than about Central Asian perceptions of their own society. However, despite the inadequacies of these sources, it is nevertheless important to review the picture they provide of Central Asian life at this period, since this construct has formed the basis for two, mutually contradictory, mythologising projects: that of the Soviet activists, who used it to promote a negative image of traditional society; and that of anti- and post-Soviet nationalists, who created from it an idealised image of a 'golden age', uncorrupted by Europeanising/Russifying influences, and hence an inspiration, if not a model, for the future development of the region.

In this period (that is, the nineteenth century), large extended families were the norm amongst nomads as well as sedentary peoples.² Several married groups, spanning at least two generations, would form a single entity, living, working and, in the case of the nomads, migrating, together. Marriages were arranged by close relatives in accordance with the rules of Islamic and customary law; neither the bride nor, generally, the bridegroom had any say in the choice of their future partner. There was frequently a considerable difference in age between husband and wife, since the financial obligations incurred by the male were very heavy, especially the payment of the 'bride price' (*kalym*); only young men from the wealthiest families could afford this. The minimum age set by Islamic law at which a girl could be given in marriage was nine years. Islamic law permitted a man to be wedded to up to four wives at any one time (on condition that all were treated equally), but local practice in some places allowed many more.³ Concubinage was also not uncommon. In theory, both husband and wife had the right to initiate a divorce, but in practice it was invariably the husband who took such action.

Female members of the family made an important contribution to the family economy, producing foodstuffs, clothing and furnishings. However, child-bearing was probably their most important function. Large numbers of sons were considered to be vital for the security and prosperity of the household, but proverbs suggest that daughters were regarded as a burden.⁴ Female mortality was very high;⁵ this was probably owing to frequent pregnancies starting from a very young age, but it is possible that girls were given less care and nourishment than boys. Medical help was minimal, for the most part restricted to the services of local holy men who were credited with supernatural healing powers, occasionally enhanced by some knowledge of traditional remedies.

In urban communities, girls and women led a segregated existence, contact with males being restricted to close relatives. Within the family home they had their own quarters; when they went out, they wore a cloak-like over-garment (*parandzha*) and a waist-length horse-hair veil (*chachvan*) which concealed their faces. In nomad and semi-nomad communities, and possibly in remoter settled areas, women were not veiled, although they did wear some form of headgear which also covered part of their upper body. They did not have segregated dwellings, but there was a strict division of labour which served to mark out the boundaries of male and female space. Given the paucity of source material, it is impossible to gain a coherent picture of regional, social and economic variations. It is generally supposed that women in nomad communities enjoyed a greater degree of freedom. This may not have been the case at the lower end of the social scale, but amongst the ruling elites, women appear to have been able to act with a substantial degree of autonomy.⁶ In settled communities, women were probably subjected to greater formal controls, although those who were skilled artisans could possibly acquire some independence through membership of craft guilds.⁷ By the early twentieth century, there were some facilities for the education of girls. For the most part, these took the form of elementary religious schools run by the wives of the local *mullah* (religious functionary). In middling and upper-class circles women received a fuller education; a few became accomplished literary figures in their own right.⁸

Almost nothing is known about intra-family relationships and the way in which they affected the position of women. By analogy with societies that have similar traditions (for example, in Afghanistan and Pakistan) and also with modern, post-Soviet family structures, it seems reasonable to assume that although there was strong patriarchal control, and overall gender asymmetry in terms of authority and prestige, within their own domain women had parallel hierarchies that were as rigidly ranked and almost as powerful as those of the male world. Moreover, as wives, and the mothers of sons, women would have been able to exert very considerable influence not only within the family unit, but also in external affairs.

Soviet gender politics

In the aftermath of the Russian revolution, Central Asia, as other parts of the tsarist empire, was swept by civil war. The main contenders were various Slav military and political factions, but in some areas

contingents of foreign (mainly British) interventionists played an active role; there were also nationalist movements that sought to establish autonomous states in Kazakhstan and Kokand, and amorous bands of rebels, known as *basmachi*, under the leadership of local warlords. By 1920, Soviet power had been firmly established in most areas, though the *basmachi* continued to offer a guerrilla-type resistance for almost a decade longer. They claimed to be fighting a 'holy war' in defence of Islam and traditional values. Although they only represented a serious military threat, their influence amongst the indigenous population was so strong, especially in the 1920s, that the Soviet authorities were forced to temper their reformist zeal with a degree of caution, and to delay for some years the full implementation of programmes such as the emancipation of women and the campaign against religion.

Nevertheless, a number of measures were introduced at this time which laid the foundations for later developments. The most important of these was the National Delimitation of 1924–5, whereby administrative-territorial units were created on the basis of the ethnolinguistic affiliations of the main indigenous peoples. Two of these units, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, immediately acquired the status of full Union republics, while Tadzhikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were elevated to this status some years later. These formations were entirely new, with no basis either in the tsarist provincial divisions or in the pre-colonial khanates. The reasons for this exercise in territorial division are debatable, but certainly it was more successful in consolidating the main ethnic groups within a single unit than were similar boundary-drawing projects enacted by other colonial powers in Asia and Africa. Without any movement of peoples, an average of some 90 per cent of the Uzbeks, Turkmen, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were included within the borders of their respective titular republics.⁹ The Tadzhiks fared less well: they were so closely intermingled with the Uzbeks that it was impossible to make an equitable territorial division of the land they both occupied; the new borders deprived many of the historic centres of Bukhara and Samarkand, and, as a result, over a third of the ethnic Tadzhiks were brought under Uzbek jurisdiction.¹⁰ In addition to the indigenous Central Asian peoples, there was already a sizeable Slav (mainly Russian) presence in the region;¹¹ the percentage share of the titular people in the total population of each of these republics decreased during the first decades of the Soviet period owing to the constant influx of migrants from other parts of the Soviet Union, especially from the European

republics.¹² This helped to dilute further the traditional culture and to accelerate the process of social and economic change.

Creating the legal and operational infrastructure

Ideologically, the campaign for the emancipation of Central Asian women grew out of Russian Marxist feminism, drawing inspiration and moral support from leading activists such as Nadezhda Krupskaya, Klara Zetkin, Inessa Armand and Aleksandra Kollontai (who is sometimes credited with being the instigator of the movement in Central Asia).¹³ The project was organised and monitored by the central organs of the Communist Party in Moscow. From the earliest days of Soviet rule it was regarded as a strategic priority. There were three main reasons for this. Firstly, there was genuine horror and disgust at the social injustice: to Russian eyes, the treatment of Central Asian women in traditional society seemed tantamount to slavery. Secondly, there was a political imperative to create a 'surrogate proletariat' to engage in the class war and also the related war against religion.¹⁴ Thirdly, there was an economic necessity to draw women into socialised production.

During the first years of the emancipation campaign (c. 1918–26), the main emphasis was on the creation of an organisational infrastructure. One aspect of this was to establish a legal framework that codified women's rights, as well as the measures that could be used to enforce them. Islamic courts, using the *sharia* and *adat* legal systems, functioned alongside Soviet courts until 1928, but their powers were circumscribed and in some areas of family law they ceased to have any jurisdiction in the early 1920s. Laws and decrees passed by the state took precedence over the provisions of all other codes. In 1918, the official registration of marriages, births and deaths was made compulsory. Also, the option of having recourse to Soviet divorce law instead of the *sharia* code was introduced, in an effort to give women greater protection. Between 1921 and 1923, laws were passed banning such practices as polygamy, the payment of *kalym* and marriage without the consent of the bride; the minimum age for marriage for girls was set at sixteen years, for boys at eighteen years. Any violation of these laws was treated as a criminal act and subject to severe penalties. The land and water reforms of 1925–9 gave women an independent entitlement to a share of these resources, thereby emphasising their autonomous status in law and in society. Great efforts were made to publicise these new legal provisions: the laws were translated into the

cal languages and the texts disseminated widely. Public meetings and rallies were held to explain women's civil and constitutional rights. Moreover, Central Asian women were urged to take an active part in the legal process. Several were given basic training in Soviet law and attached to the courts as People's Assessors. Later, longer courses were provided and towards the end of the 1930s they began to enter the judiciary.¹⁵

Another aspect of the work of these years was the training of local cadres. The first activists were almost all young Russian communists;¹⁶ few of them had any knowledge of the local languages or customs. Gradually, however, from about 1925 onwards, they were joined by Central Asian supporters. These were mostly young girls from poor backgrounds who, for one reason or another, had become isolated from their families; they joined the Communist Party and became actively involved in the emancipation movement.¹⁷ By 1920, a number of women's sections (*zhenotdely*) of the Communist Party had been organised in Central Asia. At first they made little impact on the lives of the indigenous population, but they were later to play an important role in strengthening and consolidating the emancipation movement. Much of the practical support and training for Central Asian women in this period of transition was channelled through these bodies; they also acted as watchdog committees, monitoring working conditions and ensuring that local officials and employees fulfilled their statutory obligations towards women. They were likewise responsible for ideological education and were much involved in consciousness-raising activities among the local women.

One of the most important areas of the work of the women's sections was the organisation of social clubs exclusively for women. Here they were able to provide a secluded, protected environment in which Central Asian women could feel at ease outside their own homes. The first such club was established in the old quarter of Tashkent in 1924; others soon appeared throughout the region, even in remote, rural areas.¹⁸ The clubs offered a range of medical, legal and educational services; other activities included sewing and reading circles; amateur dramatics, devoted mainly to the performance of playlets on contemporary themes; consultations on nutrition, hygiene and child care; and also lectures, film shows and concerts.¹⁹ Given the very controlled and segregated conditions of female existence in Central Asia at the time, the clubs were a remarkable innovation. They represented the first tentative step towards women's full participation in public life.

Casting off the veil

The decision to intensify the emancipation campaign by initiating the mass unveiling of Central Asian women was taken in Moscow in the autumn of 1926.²⁰ The organisation and preparatory propaganda work was delegated to specially constituted regional party committees, but the overall strategy continued to be formulated and directed by the central authorities. By this time some 25,000 Central Asians had joined the party and almost 55,000 were members of the Young Communist League; thus there was a body of 'shock troops' in place to carry out the operation.²¹ In Uzbek it was known as the *khudzhum* (the attack), and indeed it was conceived in terms of a military exercise. The key target areas were the densely populated cities of Uzbekistan, where the practice of wearing the veil was most deeply entrenched.

The first large-scale public displays of unveiling took place in 1927, on International Women's Day (8 March). Preliminary estimates claimed that on that one day 8,500 had cast off their *parandzha* and *chachvan* and ceremonially incinerated them on giant bonfires.²² In reality, the figure of those who unveiled was far lower; moreover, of those who did make this gesture, many, including several Young Communist League members, redonned the veil the following day. However, this did not deter the party-state authorities. The wearing of the veil was not banned by law (although some activists were in favour of this), but a variety of so-called 'administrative' measures were used to further the campaign. Special privileges were given to women who discarded the veil; the husbands of those who did not were liable to be penalised.²³ In some enterprises it was a condition of employment that women should be unveiled. On occasion, more ruthless methods were used; women were intimidated into unveiling, or unveiled by force.²⁴ Meanwhile, there was ceaseless ideological indoctrination through newspaper articles, films, posters, lectures and even house-to-house visits.²⁵ The results of these efforts was that by the mid-1930s it was increasingly rare to see a fully veiled woman. However, in country areas or in the old quarters of the cities, women continued to cover their heads and shoulders with large headscarves.

The *khudzhum* was a definitive episode in the social transformation of the region. To the Russians, the *parandzha* symbolised everything that they were fighting to eradicate: oppression, ignorance, injustice and human degradation.²⁶ However, from the little contemporary and circumstantial evidence that is available, it would seem that, for

Central Asians, the veil had a very different range of associations. It was a protection against unwanted contact with strangers and also against the physical grime of the environment. It could be, too, a status symbol, indicating social standing.²⁷ Most importantly of all, it was a statement about the fundamental ordering of society: the nature of gender relations, the division between public and private space, the conventions of civility. For the Russians, the success of the *khudzhum* was an ideological victory. For the Central Asians, it was a defeat and a brutal rape: the honour and dignity of the community was suddenly and monstrously violated. No other measure of Soviet policy – not the closure of the mosques, the sedentarisation of the nomads, collectivisation or the purges – provoked such violent and outspoken resistance. Even senior party officials at first refused to allow their wives to unveil.²⁸ Women who did throw off the *parandzha* were often rejected by their families. More than a thousand unveiled women were murdered, either by their relatives or by the *basmachi*, in these years.²⁹ It was not, however, only men who were opposed to the *khudzhum*. Published Soviet sources generally present the reaction of Central Asian women to the campaign to cast off the veil in very enthusiastic terms. Occasionally, though, there are hints that there were some who were prepared to speak out openly against it.³⁰ However, the terror that was unleashed in the 1930s effectively put an end to any further opposition. The trauma of the *khudzhum* was suppressed, buried in the sub-conscious, as were so many of the other tragedies of this period. A new generation of women grew up in a world in which Soviet values had already become the accepted norm: for them, the discarding of the veil took on the significance of a rite of passage that marked the entry into a new era of progress and enlightenment. Concomitantly, the former way of life was made to seem very remote, alien and primitive, an attitude which facilitated the inculcation of a negative evaluation of traditional society as a whole.

Political and economic mobilisation

The Soviet authorities regarded education as an essential component of political and economic mobilisation. In Central Asia, in the early 1920s, the level of literacy amongst the indigenous peoples (as estimated in Soviet sources) ranged from an average 7 per cent amongst the Kazakhs, to just over 2 per cent amongst the Turkmen and Tadzhiks; in rural areas it was lower, and amongst women, scarcely above 1 per cent. One of the first priorities of the new state

was to remedy this situation. Special ABC (*likbez*) courses were set up in railway coaches, tents, factories and every other conceivable venue. Great efforts were made to reach the female population. The women's sections were especially active in this field, but the trade unions (*profsoiuzy*), Young Communist League and other socio-political organisations also contributed to the campaign. At the same time, the network of schools and teacher-training colleges was expanded, while the Islamic educational institutions were gradually phased out; by 1927, the entire educational system had been Sovietised.³¹ In the larger towns and cities most of the schools were co-educational, but in rural areas many families refused to allow their daughters to attend mixed establishments. Fully integrated education was not achieved until the 1930s.

Primary schooling was made compulsory for boys and girls alike by about 1930. This was later expanded to an eight-year (incomplete secondary) course;³² eventually an optional two to three years (higher secondary) were added. Central Asian girls began to embark upon tertiary education in significant numbers in the late 1930s and thereafter to enter the professions, particularly law, medicine, teaching and scientific research. Nevertheless, in the 1970s the proportion of Central Asian women with higher education was still considerably lower than the average for the Soviet Union as a whole.³³ The chief obstacle to raising the level of attainment was the tendency of Central Asian girls to leave school early in order to marry. Some later returned to full- or part-time education, but the majority did not progress beyond the minimum school-leaving qualifications.

School was not only the place where a general educational programme was provided; it was also the channel through which the values and goals of communism could be inculcated in the younger generation. The educational process was also used to challenge inherited conventions regarding the role of women in society. As one former Soviet citizen put it, 'they constantly told us that women must be fully equal with men, that women can be flyers and naval engineers and anything that men can be'.³⁴ Central Asian girls were encouraged not only to study, but also to take part in physical training and team sports; in performing arts such as ballet, acting (on stage and in films) and singing; and in occupations requiring technical skills such as tractor driving. Perhaps nothing so vividly illustrates the changes that were taking place at this time as the appearance, in the 1930s, of the first female parachutists in a society in which only ten years previously women had been heavily veiled.³⁵

During the same period, energetic efforts were made to involve Central Asian women in the political-administrative process. Female delegates were elected to represent their communities in public meetings at local and republican level. Activists were sent for training to the Communist University, the Turkic School of Soviet and Party Work and other such institutions.³⁶ In the early 1920s, Central Asian women began to join the party, some no doubt impelled by idealism and belief in the reform programme, but others by a realisation of the practical benefits that would accrue from such a move. In percentage terms their participation remained low, but actual numbers were quite high, given their lack of previous political experience; in Uzbekistan, for example, by the beginning of 1929 there were over 1,000 Uzbek women party members.

In response to Lenin's injunction that more women should be elected to the soviets, Central Asian women gradually came forward to stand as candidates. However, progress was slow; not only were the women reluctant to take part in elections, but there was much covert opposition from the male members of the community. Nevertheless, the authorities continued to press for an improvement in the situation. There was a constant monitoring of the proportion of women in senior managerial posts, and shortcomings as well as successes in this field were widely publicised.³⁷ Positive discrimination was used to accelerate promotion and a quota system was introduced whereby women were allocated approximately a third of the posts in government and in party-administrative organs. This, along with the effusive public acclaim that was accorded to women's achievements in other fields such as the arts, sports and science, provided a high degree of female visibility in society. It created a range of positive, 'progressive' role models with whom Central Asian girls could identify.

Another important aspect of the political mobilisation of Central Asian women in these years was their role in the anti-Islamic campaign. Since women were regarded as the chief victims of religious oppression, it was they who were selected to take a leading part in the campaign to eradicate Islam. The *mullahs* were equated with the wealthy peasants and represented as both class enemies and the enemies of progress. Branches of the Godless League (later renamed the 'Militant Godless League') were set up in all the Central Asian republics. They grew rapidly in the frenzied, fear-dominated atmosphere of the day. In Uzbekistan, for example, in 1928, 3,500 Uzbek women were members of the League; by 1931, the number had

reached 27,000. Anti-religious circles were set up in most enterprises and about 80 per cent of the members were local women.³⁸

The result of this onslaught was that knowledge of the religion was reduced to a minimum. Almost all that survived were some of the rituals connected with the major life-cycle ceremonies (male circumcision and burial rites, for example), and some semi-folk, semi-Islamic practices such as visits to the graves of revered individuals, where prayers and sacrifices were offered up in the hope of securing benediction. Women remained active in keeping such informal aspects of Islam alive. So far as more orthodox beliefs and practices were concerned, some of the older generation of women continued to perform as best they could some of the prescribed ritual prayers and to observe at least a part of the fast of Ramadan. However, few of the generation that grew up after the Second World War maintained this tradition. Islamic prohibitions on the consumption of pork products and alcohol were increasingly disregarded by Central Asian men, many of whom spent most of their working lives in multi-ethnic environments, where they were under constant pressure to conform to the norms of Soviet society; women, however, protected by the privacy of their homes, were able to observe these dietary laws more strictly.³⁹

The first steps to draw women into socialised labour were made through women's cooperatives. These were organised in the early 1920s, and represented a half-way stage, enabling women to continue practising their traditional tasks, such as weaving, sewing and dairying, but outside the family home, in a group environment and for financial reward. Special shops and consumer cooperatives were set up through which women could sell their products directly, without the intervention of middlemen.⁴⁰ Towards the end of the decade there was a proliferation of light industrial enterprises, and increasing numbers of local women found work in factories concerned with food-processing, silk-spinning and the production of garments and hosiery. Heavy industry was developed somewhat later, but relatively few female workers were employed in this sector since conditions were considered to be unsuitable for women for physical as well as psychological reasons.

By contrast, the agricultural sector was regarded as eminently suitable for female labour and a concerted effort was made to draw Central Asian women into the work-force. In the north, this was mainly devoted to various forms of animal husbandry, while in the south, the chief areas were cotton cultivation and silk-worm breeding.

Women's involvement in the development of the cotton-growing industry was the most problematic area, and subsequently attracted much adverse criticism. By 1934, women were involved in almost all aspects of the production of the cotton crop; however, the majority were employed on a seasonal basis for the back-breaking job of harvesting the cotton by hand.⁴¹ Their achievements in helping to secure 'cotton independence' for the Soviet Union were praised in the mass media and those who exceeded their set norms were rewarded with medals and special privileges. The other side of the coin was that work conditions in the plantations were very arduous and that the women were, in effect, used as human tools.

Central Asian girls were taught that it was their right, and also their duty, to seek useful and gainful employment in the public sector. As adults, most of them were to have some experience of work outside the home, but the period of employment was often quite limited, owing to the almost continuous cycle of child-bearing and child-rearing. Moreover, the goal of gender equality at work was never fully attained. Here, as in other parts of the Soviet Union (and in many other countries, too), employers were reluctant to take on female workers on the grounds that they were less productive than their male counterparts; there were also complaints about the length of the statutory maternity leave. Women were frequently (and illegally) paid less for the same work as men; they were also not given as many opportunities for in-service training to raise their qualifications.⁴² As a result, many remained trapped in low-paid, unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. This made them vulnerable to redundancy when more efficient technology was introduced.⁴³

The main motivation for the economic mobilisation of Central Asian women was undoubtedly the need to boost the labour force at a time of major industrial and agricultural expansion. However, it was seen, too, as a means of reinforcing the emancipation movement, since it gave women the possibility of achieving financial independence through waged work. It also provided them with an opportunity to experience new conditions, and to come into direct contact with people from different social and ethnic backgrounds. In most parts of the world, the move to paid employment outside the home has had an important impact on the way women regard themselves, as well as on their position in the family and in the broader community. In Central Asia, however, this did not happen to any significant degree. There was scarcely any redefinition of gender roles, scarcely any extension of the traditional kin-based networks of friendship, solidarity and support.

This is less surprising than it might at first appear: Central Asian women (and men), confronted with the headlong pace of change in the public sphere, reacted by holding on yet more firmly to the order they knew in the domestic sphere, where they had a greater degree of control. Thus, Central Asian women did not in fact assume the role of a revolutionary force to destroy traditional society. Rather, they colluded in its preservation: by accommodating external pressures through the adoption of additional identities, appropriate to the public sphere, they deflected intrusions into the private domain, thereby protecting the integrity of the older disposition of family roles. This is not to imply that the public identities were a sham; on the contrary, all the indications are that they were the product of genuinely held perceptions and aspirations. However, they were confined to one area and were not permitted to penetrate beyond that space, and thus could not bring about the radical change of society that had been anticipated.

Family and community

Family and community relations were (and remain) the most conservative areas of Central Asian society. Even in cities, amongst the most educated and travelled groups, there was relatively little structural change during the Soviet period; in rural areas, social conventions were even more strongly preserved. Hence, there were perceptible continuities with the pre-Soviet period. The extended family networks remained powerful. The actual size of cohabiting units fell sharply, owing to such pressures as the nature and availability of accommodation, changes in employment patterns (including, of course, collectivisation) and the general regimentation and homogenisation of life under Soviet rule. Nevertheless, close contact was retained amongst the members of the larger family even when they were physically dispersed through frequent (wherever possible, daily) visits and telephone calls.⁴⁴ Adult sons would often continue to live at home even after they had married. In such cases, it remained customary for them to hand over their wages, as well as any earnings of their wives, to the head of the family to use as he pleased. The absolute authority of the father was mirrored by the less formal, though perhaps psychologically yet more compelling, authority of the mother. In accordance with the Islamic precept, 'Happiness lies at the feet of the mother', sons treated their mothers with huge respect, regarding her every word as a sacrosanct command. This honoured

status gave her as great a degree of control over their lives, and over the lives of their dependents, as she herself wished to exercise.

Within the family unit there was a high degree of order. This expressed itself through a strong, almost ritualised, code of civility which regulated every aspect of behaviour. Children were socialised in this environment to accept their place in the hierarchical structure, with the attendant obligations, responsibilities and privileges. Constructions of masculinity and femininity were internalised at this stage and gender roles assigned. A strong sense of sibling solidarity was fostered, as well as respect and affection for the older members of the family. Habits of obedience, conformity and submission were fostered in girls and boys alike; the latter may have had greater freedom of action outside the home, but within the family both genders were equally bound by strict conventions. Discipline was maintained through positive encouragement in the form of praise and little gifts. Corporal punishment was very rare: patriarchal authority was clearly enough understood, even by very young children, for a warning tone of voice and a stern demeanour to serve as a sufficient reprimand. There was still a residual preference for sons, though in terms of care, affection and opportunities, daughters no longer appeared to be less privileged than sons.

On marriage, brides moved to the patrilocal residence. From the outset, they were expected to conform to the conventions of their husband's home. Attitudes towards the newcomer were often harsher and more demanding than towards the children of the family. For the young bride, the mother-in-law's word was final. If there was a dispute, the husband would almost always side with his mother, even if he sympathised with his wife's position, and this could cause the young bride to feel very isolated. Her defencelessness was underlined by the fact that her husband would normally take control of any money she might earn, giving back to her only what he considered to be an adequate allowance (thereby defeating the Soviet aim to give women economic independence through waged work). A girl would often not be able to visit her family without her husband's permission. In case of a complete marital breakdown, however, she would normally return to her parental home. There was no social stigma attached to divorce or to remarriage. A wife's status in the family improved with time, with the birth of children, also with the arrival of other daughters-in-law, the wives of younger sons. Initially, the experience of learning to live in the new household could be difficult. However, there was usually a great deal of encouragement and

support from other female members (including, sometimes, the mother-in-law herself) and normally the bride was assimilated into the new environment quite quickly.

Community relations usually involved extended kin-networks as well as neighbours. There was a high level of group solidarity, reinforced through numerous joint activities. The practical preparations for such events as a wedding or a wake were undertaken by the community as a whole, thus relieving the strain on the individual family. These were often huge affairs, requiring vast quantities of food (80 kg each of meat and rice were not uncommon provisions), chairs, tables, crockery, and pots and pans. The utensils and furniture were all provided from the communal stock. Women, whatever their status and professional qualifications, would take their place at the stove and the chopping board. These occasions provided an important opportunity for gossip to be exchanged, a family's reputation and standing in the community to be monitored, problems to be aired, and advice to be given and received. Thus, the community helped to offset the possible isolation of family life. In cases of major family disputes, the senior female of the community would act as counsellor and arbitrator, guiding the different sides towards a compromise. The community also provided additional opportunities for socialising children in traditional values, supervising them when they were out of the home and reinforcing habits of civility, consideration and courtesy. The positive aspect of community life was that it provided a highly effective, informal and very sensitive social security network. The negative aspect was that it was very difficult to escape from its all-embracing control.

Marriage and fertility

It has become an accepted axiom, confirmed by evidence from all over the world, that rises in female literacy rates are accompanied by a decrease in birth rates. Central Asian women, however, have to date proved to be an exception to this rule. Under Soviet rule the crude birth rate remained very high. Consequently, the age structure of the titular peoples of the Central Asian republics continued to conform to the model of the broad-based demographic pyramids of countries such as India, Kenya and Nigeria, with well over half the population under twenty years of age. There are a number of reasons why this pattern was maintained, but principally it was the result of a convergence between pro-natalist attitudes in traditional and Soviet society.

Custom, mediated through family and peer pressure, ensured that

marriage, preferably at an early age, remained the natural goal for Central Asian girls.⁴⁵ As in the past, children were regarded as a blessing, the foundation of the family's happiness and prosperity. Moreover, within the family unit, the young wife's status was to a large extent still determined by the number of children, especially boys, that she produced. At the same time, with improved medical care, female life expectancy rose and hence the period of fertility was extended. Since infant mortality was likewise reduced, the result was a high level of natural increase. The financial strain of a large family was relieved by the state provision of child and maternity allowances. The lump sum allocation at birth, as well as the monthly welfare benefit, increased in accordance with the number of children. Thus, a mother who had only one child received a considerably smaller sum for that one child than she did for her fourth or fifth child; for the eleventh child and above, the benefits were quite large.⁴⁶ In the European republics, where wages were generally higher and families smaller, these allowances were not of great importance. In Central Asia, however, they could constitute a substantial contribution to the family budget.

There were also other forms of state support for motherhood. There was a statutory obligation for employers to provide sixteen weeks' paid maternity leave, as well as entitlements to further unpaid maternity leave without loss of job or seniority. The status of motherhood was reified by the ceremonial award of honours, medals and privileges. The highest rank, that of 'Heroine Mother', was bestowed on those who had borne and reared ten or more children. In Uzbekistan alone, by 1987 over 100,000 women had been given this title; over a million had been awarded the order 'Mother's Glory' (seven to nine children) and over 2 million that of 'Medal of Maternity' (five or six children).⁴⁷ The holders of these honours were treated with great respect, their maternal achievements noted in the press and praised in party reports, alongside accounts of industrial and agricultural successes. Thus, motherhood, or rather, the child-bearing aspect of motherhood, was set on a par with other important contributions to society. By contrast, the domestic routine of child-rearing was regarded as an obstacle to full emancipation, hence to be eradicated as soon as possible through the provision of a full range of socialised welfare services. In fact, this goal was not realised and Central Asian women continued to be childrearers as well as child-bearers for a large portion of their lives.

In addition to these pro-natalist measures, there were other factors

which also helped to perpetuate the tradition of large families. Clo. knit kinship networks ensured that there were generally other females available to help with child care and other domestic chores.⁴⁸ Women who wished to pursue professional careers, therefore, did not have to make a choice between having a family or continuing to work. At the same time, the close proximity of senior relatives meant that they were able to exert continued psychological pressure on the younger wives to produce children.⁴⁹ This, coupled with a high level of ignorance about sexual matters, very little medical counselling on family planning and a very inadequate supply of contraceptives, meant that even those who wished to limit their pregnancies were unable to do so.

Ill-health, domestic violence and self-immolation

For most of the Soviet period the campaign for the emancipation of Central Asian women was described in very positive terms, with great emphasis on the achievements, and a glossing-over of mistakes and unfulfilled goals. In the mid-1980s, however, during the period of perestroika and glasnost, a more critical attitude began to emerge.⁵⁰ One of the issues that attracted wide coverage, both in Moscow and in the Central Asian republics, was the use of harmful substances to sustain the cotton monoculture, and the effect that this was having on the health of the workforce, the great majority of whom were women and schoolchildren (who every autumn spent several weeks assisting with the cotton harvest). It was revealed that a highly toxic chemical, similar to Agent Orange, was being used to defoliate the cotton. Immediately after the spraying had been completed, women and children were sent into the fields to pick the cotton with their bare hands, without any protective clothing. Another malpractice was the use of huge quantities of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides to boost the yield; these then leached into the soil and water and in turn contaminated the food chain.⁵¹ Concerns were voiced at this time as to the possible long-term effects of measures such as these on the health of the population. Some feared that irreparable damage had already been inflicted on their immune systems; the term 'ecological AIDS' was coined to describe this condition.

Some of these reports undoubtedly owed more than a little to journalistic licence. There was also an element of political manipulation, with this and other examples of environmental mismanagement being used by the liberal-reformist lobby as a stick with which to beat the Soviet system as a whole. Until further, unbiased, medical research

has been carried out it will be impossible to assess the full gravity of the situation. It is, nevertheless, beyond dispute that there was gross exploitation of women and children and that this was causing major health problems.

More attention also began to be paid to shortcomings in the domestic sphere. As elsewhere in the Soviet Union, there was criticism of the heavy 'double shift' of work that women had to endure. In Central Asia, the burden was the more onerous owing to the prevalence of large families, relatively low provision of communal amenities such as crèches, canteens and laundries, and, outside the main cities, the chronic scarcity of labour-saving devices such as washing machines and electric vacuum cleaners.⁵² Concerns were voiced, too, about the dangers of frequent, closely spaced pregnancies and the debilitating effect this was having on the physical and mental well-being of Central Asian women, as well as on the health of the nation as a whole. The question of family planning began to be raised in public in the second half of the 1980s, though was soon dropped on account of strong local opposition.⁵³

At this time, there was also some discussion of the psychological pressures that were inflicted on women within the confines of the family. There was little specific mention of physical violence, but anecdotal evidence suggested that it was quite widespread, indicating that it was an accepted, or at least acknowledged, feature of marital behaviour. The one aspect of domestic violence that did come to light was the horrifying and baffling incidence of suicide by self-immolation. According to official sources, in Uzbekistan, in one year alone (1986-7), 270 girls and young women killed themselves in this way.⁵⁴ It was generally agreed that the actual figure was probably far higher and that many such deaths were being passed off as accidents. The phenomenon appeared to be limited to Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan.

Some commentators believed that it was the relentless drudgery of women's lives, compounded by oppressive patriarchal attitudes in the family, that were to blame; others sought an explanation in a possible nutritional deficiency (a lack of protein, for example), which might cause depression and disorientation. It was also suggested that the practice might have its origins in some form of religious belief. However, Islam is categorically opposed to suicide. The more ancient faith of Zoroastrianism, which in pre-Islamic times had many adherents in Central Asia, did involve the practice of fire-worship, but the flame was regarded as holy and pure, not to be defiled by any form of live sacrifice. Animistic cults regarded fire as a cleansing force, but

there is no evidence that they sanctioned human immolation. Interviews with the local population revealed a wide variety of reasons, at least triggers, ranging from persistent bed-wetting among young teenagers to quarrels with best friends; from aspersions cast on the virginity of a young bride to arguments over the payment of the bride price. The method of death, by the girl dousing herself with oil, then setting it alight, was excruciatingly painful; the very few who survived were dreadfully disfigured. Yet this did not seem to act as a deterrent, but rather as a goad to others to take more care with the preparations. Visitors to areas where there had been recent instances of self-immolation described an atmosphere of contagious, almost physically palpable hysteria.⁵⁵ Whether this phenomenon was in any way provoked or stimulated by conditions that were specific to the Soviet regime must be a matter of speculation. What it does indicate, however, is that even after more than sixty years of Soviet rule, there were areas of Central Asian life that were still unknown and unfathomable to outsiders.

Post-Soviet readjustments

The Central Asians acquired political independence not as a result of a struggle for national independence, but as a consequence of the disintegration of the imperial power. In January 1992, the governments of the new states inherited, almost literally overnight, direct responsibility for a formidable array of problems. Other former Soviet republics encountered similar difficulties, but in Central Asia the situation was rendered more acute by a number of factors that were specific to the region. One of these was the high level of specialisation in the production of primary commodities and the relatively low level of industrialisation; these republics were thus more dependent on inter-republican exchanges than were other regions. They were also poorer and therefore more reliant on budgetary transfers from the central government to help support their welfare services. The geographic location of these states, surrounded by steppes, deserts and mountains, and over a thousand kilometres in any direction from an open sea, was an added disadvantage. Moreover, the transport and communication links that had been developed during the Soviet period tied the region to Russia; there were virtually no direct connections of any sort with the world beyond the borders of the Union.

The difficulties of transition from Soviet republics to independent

states are today being compounded by social problems. The rapid rate of demographic increase is placing ever greater pressure on the resources of the new states. There is a high ratio of dependents to wage-earners, thus the rise in unemployment has affected the living standards of a wider section of the population than in the European regions of the CIS, where families are far smaller. The economic deterioration has likewise contributed to a heightening of inter-ethnic tensions. The settler communities feel threatened and many thousands have chosen to emigrate. In some ways this has helped to defuse the situation, but the sudden loss of large numbers of senior managers and technical personnel has inflicted substantial damage on the nascent post-Soviet national economies of the region.

The most potentially dangerous effect of the collapse of the Soviet Union was that it created an ideological vacuum. It was not only that the economic and administrative framework within which the modern Central Asian states had been developed abruptly ceased to exist, but that the theoretical justification for their formation was discredited. Consequently, the physical boundaries of the new states, and even the validity of the national identities that had been crafted during the Soviet period, were suddenly open to question. The result could have been the instant Balkanisation of the region. However, with the exception of Tadzhikistan (arguably the most flawed of the Soviet nation-building projects), this has not happened. The instinctive response to the threat of chaos has been a reassertion of the most conservative features of society. There has been no transfer of power to new leaders: on the contrary, it is because of their links with the previous regime that incumbent ruling elites are regarded as guarantors of stability. Equally, the majority of the population are prepared to accept a high degree of authoritarian control in order to guard against the perceived danger of social and regional fragmentation.

In all the Central Asian states, some appearance of political pluralism is currently permitted, but in reality, only those parties that support government policies are granted official registration. Genuine opposition movements have been suppressed, either, as in Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan and Turkmenistan, by formal bans, or, as in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, by indirect, but scarcely less effective, controls (for instance, by restricting access to the media or creating obstacles to registration). Yet even without these curbs, it is unlikely that dissident groups would attract much support. In the late 1980s, their efforts to draw attention to political and social abuses were welcomed, but today they are regarded as perilously divisive. The emphasis now is on

conformity and solidarity. A form of self-censorship has re-emerged, stifling the discussion of potentially controversial questions. Thus, for example, it is acceptable to discuss mother and child welfare, since these are matters that relate to the health of the nation as a whole; moreover, problems in these areas can be blamed (with some justification) on the shortcomings of the Soviet system. Domestic violence or the phenomenon of female self-immolation, however, are issues which do not fit easily into the idealised image of traditional family life; also, they cannot easily be resolved without the public examination of questions that are still regarded as essentially private, falling within the domain of the patriarchal family. They are therefore treated, as in the pre-perestroika period, as taboo subjects.

New parameters for gender relations

Nation-building projects in the newly independent Central Asian states are drawing on three main elements: the reinstatement of Islamic values as the guiding ethic for society; the rearticulation of the national culture by such means as the rewriting of the historical narrative to establish linkages between the pre-colonial past and the post-Soviet present, and the reviving of 'authentic' traditional institutions, symbols and concepts of propriety; and the reassertion of patriarchal authority through the symbolic identification of the head of state as the 'Father of the Nation'. All three elements are contributing to a redefinition of the parameters of gender relations.

The Islamic resurgence in Central Asia began in the 1970s with the emergence of a small-scale revivalist movement in the Ferghana Valley (eastern Uzbekistan, southern Kyrgyzstan, northern Tadzhikistan). A second and stronger impetus was provided by a sudden shift in government policy towards Islam. Previously, Islam had been condemned as a pernicious force, inimical to progress. At the end of the 1980s, however, there was evidence of a more conciliatory attitude. This was partly the result of a greater tolerance to religion throughout the Soviet Union, but was also an attempt to combat the perceived threat of Iranian influence by fostering a sense of pride in an indigenous Islamic tradition. More mosques were opened in 1989 than in the whole of the previous decade, the public celebration of Islamic feast days was given official support, and copies of the Qur'an and records and cassettes of Qur'anic recitations suddenly began to appear in state-run kiosks. The number of Soviet Muslims allowed to perform the *hajj* (prescribed annual pilgrimage to Mecca) rose from

thirty in 1989 to 1,500 in 1990, and, in general, links with Muslims in other countries increased. These measures did not result in a mass return to religion, but they did reintroduce Islam into the public arena. Islamic symbols and references became an accepted part of life: Muslim clerics were accorded a new respect and invited to contribute to the process of perestroika.⁵⁶

After independence, the re-Islamicisation of the social environment was used as a substitute for the liberation struggle that had not taken place. There was a triumphalist fervour in the rash of mosque building that took place in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. In Turkmenistan, for example, there were only four mosques open for worship in the 1980s; by 1994, there were 181, with 100 or more at the planning stage; in Uzbekistan there were 300 in 1989, but over 5,000 by 1993.⁵⁷ There was a similar proliferation of mosques in the other republics. Schools and voluntary bodies began to teach the Arabic script (abolished in Central Asia in 1930) and to give instruction in reading the Qur'an. *Madrassah* and Islamic cultural centres were opened throughout the region. The finance for these undertakings was provided jointly by local Muslim communities, district authorities and charitable donations from Muslims abroad.

Today, although most Central Asians welcome the reintroduction of Islam into the public space, the majority do not want it to assume a regulative function: they still feel strongly that religion and the state should be separate. Nevertheless, a core of active and committed believers has begun to emerge. Quite a large proportion are from villages and provincial towns, or the poorer quarters of the capital cities, but there is also a substantial number of university students and young professionals. The proportion of women who actively espouse an Islamic way of life is as yet very small in relation to the total population of each of the five states. However, the fact that they have so categorically rejected the Soviet model of female emancipation (and likewise the more recently proffered Western versions) has a significance that goes far beyond mere numbers. Some interpret it as a portent of an imminent mass return to Islam. It is too early to predict whether or not this will happen, but certainly there has been an upsurge in the demand for a Muslim education for girls. In response to this, several women's *madrassah* have been opened and courses at some of the men's *madrassah* now accept women.⁵⁸ Women are also beginning to go abroad for further training to Islamic universities in Turkey, Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries.

Muslim women's organisations in Central Asia have not so far been very successful. Fledgling 'Leagues of Muslim Women' were founded in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan soon after independence. However, the Kazakh organisation collapsed within months, owing to financial improprieties in the handling of its accounts; the other two groups are now also moribund. Schoolgirls and young university students have begun to wear the *hejab* (Muslim headscarf) and ankle- and wrist-length clothes, but this practice is still rare, especially in the cities; in the Ferghana Valley, a few of the older women have resumed the full *parandzha*.⁵⁹ As yet, however, the veil is still regarded as a symbol of a personal commitment to Islam. It has not become politicised as has been the case elsewhere.

While some women are certainly adopting an Islamic way of life of their own volition, in some areas there is a growing tendency for men to impose Islamic norms on women. This is most noticeable in the Ferghana Valley and in Tadjikistan. Here it is men who set the standards for female modesty in behaviour and dress. It is also the men who decide whether or not women should be allowed to attend the mosque or to play an active role in religious undertakings outside the home.⁶⁰ The women here are more vulnerable because not only is the protection offered by the state now much weaker, but usually these women do not know their rights in Islamic law and are therefore unable to argue their case on those grounds.

The second element in the post-Soviet nation-building process – that of a rearticulation of the national culture – has not brought about a qualitative change in gender relations, but it has given renewed respectability to attitudes and practices that, during the Soviet period, were regarded as socially and politically unacceptable. This is most marked in matters concerning the family. The traditional power balance – patriarchal control allied to maternal authority – is now acknowledged with a sense of pride rather than decried as a vestige of primitive practices of the past. This new mood was vividly illustrated by the comment of a young Uzbek, who, when asked recently what were the qualities that had most attracted him to his bride-to-be, answered without hesitation, 'That she should be as a floor-cloth to my mother, then to my elder brothers' wives, then to me.'⁶¹ The phrasing is, of course, crude, and more urbane Central Asian males would certainly not formulate their view of their relationship with their wife in such terms. However, the very fact that anyone should voice such sentiments in public is in itself a sign of the changing times: a decade ago, this would have been inconceivable.

Other indications of the shift in attitude include a greater readiness to admit to the continued existence of a practice such as polygamy: this is still illegal, but the fragmentary evidence that is now emerging suggests that it is quite widespread and, moreover, not regarded with the disapproval that characterised Soviet writings on the subject.⁶² The positive aspects of traditions such as the payment of the bride price – now usually presented in the form of gifts of clothes, jewellery and household items – are also stressed. Likewise, participation in large-scale family and community functions, formerly frowned upon by the authorities, is now regarded as a positive feature of social life. In Uzbekistan, the role of the local neighbourhood (*mahalle*) in poverty alleviation and other social welfare projects has been institutionalised through the allocation of government funds and the formal recognition of the authority of community elders. Finally, the centrality of motherhood is being reaffirmed, but with a telling shift of emphasis: during the Soviet period, the maternal role was divorced from domesticity. Now, the domestic context has been reinstated and child-rearing is being accorded the same importance as child-bearing. Concomitantly, the role of women as the moral educators of the new generation is being highlighted.

The third element, that of the cult of the father-leader, is yet another reversal of a fundamental tenet of Soviet ideology. The image of the head of state as the loving but stern, wise but generous, head of the family-nation firmly reinstates the patriarchal discourse. This was implied in the personality cults that evolved around Soviet leaders, but in Central Asia today, especially in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the notion has been elaborated far more comprehensively. The concept of male guardianship has now been re-established as a parameter of private as well as of public life. Society has finally freed itself from the emasculation imposed by the *khudzhum*. From a traditionalist perspective, it might be said that order and propriety are being restored. The result has been that gender asymmetry in power and status has re-emerged in unashamedly vigorous form, giving rise to a rapid masculinisation of the positions of authority. Today, women in Central Asia are not excluded from public affairs, but their participation is dependent on male sufferance.⁶³ Nevertheless, as in other male-dominated societies, individual women, especially those who are closely related to the ruling elites, may be accepted as honorary males in the highest echelons of the power structures with relatively little difficulty. It is those lower down the social scale who are beginning to experience the brunt of gender discrimination.

Economic pressures

The dislocation of supplies, services and trade which followed the collapse of the Soviet Union has had a devastating effect on the newly emergent national economies of the Central Asian states. Prices for industrial and domestic commodities continue to soar; transport networks have been decimated owing to fuel shortages. Many industrial plants have been forced to close down, or to introduce sweeping redundancies, because of lack of supplies, loss of markets and huge debts. Unemployment has spiralled. Welfare benefits, including child and maternity allowances, have been increased at regular intervals, but have been unable to stave off severe material hardship for large sectors of the population. Education and medical care have also been severely affected; standards have fallen dramatically, while the introduction of 'hidden charges' to services that were formerly free has further reduced the scope of welfare provision. Poverty and malnutrition are now becoming serious problems.

Women have been the chief victims of the shrinking labour market. It is not only the unskilled or semi-skilled workers who have been savagely hit by redundancies, but also the trained professionals. The quota system and positive discrimination that operated in support of female employment during the Soviet period have been abandoned. Now, whenever there is a choice between employing a male or a female, the former is automatically given precedence, on the grounds that he is the main breadwinner in the family. At the same time, features in the mass media and the pronouncements of public figures are helping to alter social opinion, creating a climate in which the home, rather than the shop floor or the office, is regarded as the 'right place' for a woman. Even in Kyrgyzstan, where official attitudes towards working women are still generally favourable, it was estimated that by mid-1993 almost 70 per cent of the unemployed were women; the economic crisis has deepened considerably since then and it is very likely that the present position is a great deal worse. However, it is difficult to gain an accurate picture of the situation in any of these states since, firstly, definitions of joblessness are abstruse, designed to conceal rather than reveal the true state of affairs (a phenomenon that is by no means unique to Central Asia); secondly, women are often retained on the staff of an enterprise or institution, but rarely given any work and paid, if at all, a nugatory salary.

Economic pressures are also beginning to have an adverse effect on female education. Schooling used to be free, compulsory and of a

reasonably high standard. Today, the quality of tuition in the state schools is so poor that those who can afford it send their children to private schools. These are very expensive. The state schools, too, though still nominally free, require so many extra contributions from parents that even this form of education is becoming a financial burden for poor families with large numbers of children. In these cases, it is the daughters' education that is sacrificed. The girls become semi-permanent truants, and are often set to work selling assorted oddments on street pavements in order to supplement the family income.

There are rumours that in return for a substantial down payment to the parents, some young girls are being sent to the Gulf states to work as household servants;⁶⁴ this may be utterly untrue, but the level of material deprivation is reaching such a point that even if this is not so, it is already taking shape as a fantasy solution. Female (and, to a lesser extent, male) prostitution is on the rise in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; for students, it is sometimes the only way of financing their studies.⁶⁵ In Kyrgyzstan, questions have been raised in parliament as to the desirability of licensing brothels, in order to limit the risk of spreading sexually transmitted diseases. The majority of those who are involved in prostitution are Slavs and members of other immigrant groups, but there are also quite a few Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. In the other Central Asian states it is uncommon for women of the titular groups to work as prostitutes. However, in the capital cities of the region (and perhaps in other large urban settlements), sexual conventions are no longer as strict as they once were and it is not unknown for local girls to enter into extra-marital relationships in return for financial benefit.⁶⁶

Another consequence of the economic crisis has been to bring about changes in attitudes to family planning. In urban areas, at least among the professional classes, young couples are beginning to worry about the cost of rearing a large family. Before, this was not a consideration, since all the major expenses were covered by the state. Now, it is not only that the price of essentials such as health care and education are rising, but that many more choices are available in terms of optional extra-curricular activities, fashionable clothes, toys and electronic gadgetry. Parents in these circles are coming to feel that they will only be able to provide the type of upbringing that they would wish for their offspring if they limit the size of their families to two or, at the most, three children.

In rural areas, especially in Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan, birth rates are still amongst the highest in the world (over forty per thousand per

year). Since in all five countries the great majority of the titular people live in the countryside, it is not surprising that in most areas there has been a relatively small fall in the average rate of natural increase over the last three decades.⁶⁷ The governments in the newly independent Central Asian states are beginning to realise the economic implications of this high level of expansion. To date, however, it is only in Uzbekistan that an official family planning policy has been launched. This has involved intensive preliminary research into social attitudes, followed by education and information campaigns. The scheme is still too new for it to be possible to evaluate the likely impact. It is also difficult to know how the related scheme of (semi-) compulsory pre-marital medical counselling for young couples will develop. It is intended to raise awareness of health, sex and family welfare issues, but as it is formulated at present, with the emphasis on producing a population that is sound in mind and body, there is a hint of an underlying eugenic agenda.

External influences

In the immediate aftermath of independence, there was an influx of missionaries and various cultural delegations from Islamic countries. Such events were a novelty and aroused great interest. Now, however, the visits of delegations have become more of a routine activity and are greeted with less pomp, while the missionaries are, in most areas, subject to close state supervision. In all, the impact of Islamic countries on the Central Asian states has been considerably weaker than had originally been anticipated. The chief sources of external influence, particularly so far as women are concerned, are Western. There are two very different areas in which the effects of this pressure are felt: concepts of glamour and concepts of human development.

Little is known of traditional Central Asian concepts of female beauty other than the stereotyped descriptions of classical literature and the elegant, stylised figures in miniature paintings. These, however, are almost entirely images conceived by men; female perceptions of style and fashion, and attitudes to luxury, beauty care and physical perfection, are largely uncharted territory.⁶⁸ During the Soviet period, new stereotypes were introduced, projecting robust workers and indefatigable mothers as the ideal models, but how, why and for whom these women beautified themselves – or even if they did – was regarded as a matter too inconsequential to merit attention. Over the past two to three years, this has changed: the region has been

inundated with Western soap operas, video cassettes of the latest feature films, fashion magazines, advertisements for hair and skin treatments (sometimes even the actual products), and, most recently, beauty parlours and aerobics classes. Initially, Central Asian women were very cautious in their response to these blandishments, but, as with the women's clubs of the early Soviet era, they are gradually being overcome by curiosity and in the larger cities are starting to try these new recipes for health, beauty and a shining future. If the appearance of female parachutists and tractor drivers symbolised one turning-point in the modern history of Central Asia, then perhaps the appearance of the first be-swimsuited beauty contests may be said to have marked another.⁶⁹

A very different form of potential Western influence is diffused through aid and technical assistance programmes. These are administered through international organisations, the agencies of national governments, and also through non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Most have a brief to integrate women into development programmes. In principle, this may be a helpful approach; in practice, however, it often misfires. Central Asians, both men and women, deeply resent what they regard as the patronising attitude of some of the administrators of these programmes. The schemes the latter propose often have little relevance to local conditions; in particular, they frequently fail to take account of the existing high levels of literacy, indigenous professional experience and relatively wide range of modern amenities (albeit that these are now under threat owing to the economic crisis).

Another cause of irritation is the implicit, or even explicit, bias that some Western (or Western-trained) staff display against Islam and traditional society.⁷⁰ The message, in effect, is that the Central Asians must adopt Western institutions and norms since their own culture is characterised as 'underdeveloped'. However, many Central Asians now travel abroad and have access to the Western media, and thus are able to form their own opinion of Western societies. They find much to admire but, equally, are appalled by the social problems, especially those caused by the breakdown of the family. Thus, it is galling for them to have to endure the disparagement of their own values by those who, in their opinion, have been even less successful in creating an acceptable social environment. By contrast, respect for the achievements of the Soviet period are growing. As one Uzbek writer, formerly known for his outspoken criticism of the Soviet regime, commented recently, 'These Western activists are just like the Soviets, but at least

the Soviets gave us schools and hospitals along with their ideology, these give us only the ideology.'⁷¹ Similar sentiments are to be heard with increasing frequency throughout the region.

A third cause of complaint is the 'packaging' of Central Asian issues for the international community. Inevitably (and again as with Soviet activists in the 1920s), foreign aid and development programmes try to enlist the support of local women. However, since project organisers are often more interested in pursuing their own agendas than in gaining an understanding of local conditions, still less of local culture, what they seek is confirmation of their views. Those who would work with them, sometimes out of conviction but sometimes, inevitably, as a means of securing the per diem allowances and other fringe benefits, reflect back what their sponsors want to hear. These are the women who then become the 'independent representatives' of the community and are invited to international conferences and seminars in order to articulate the required position.⁷² Translators and interpreters compound the problem, encasing their words in a straitjacket of jargon that effectively extinguishes any spontaneity or genuine insight into the situation. It is little wonder that such women tend to be regarded as opportunists by their compatriots. The fact that they receive such attention is viewed as additional proof of the insincerity (or at the very least, naïvety) of Western agencies. This severely undermines the credibility, and hence the efficacy, of programmes that might otherwise have much to offer.

Passivity: a coping strategy?

There has been strikingly little attempt on the part of Central Asian women to articulate their views on what their rights should be. In the Soviet period, this passivity could be explained by the fact that they had no option but to support official policies. Now, however, they have a greater awareness of possible choices, and it might have been expected that they would take the initiative in gaining more control over their lives and in extending their political, economic and social demands. Yet to date there has been little sign of this. In 1991-2, a few women's movements made a fleeting appearance, most notably, the Uzbek-based Tumaris (the female wing of the opposition party Birlik). The Muslim Women's Leagues referred to above fared little better, also proving to be unsustainable.

Since independence, throughout the region semi-official Women's Committees have been formed, closely modelled on the women's

councils (*zhensovety*) of the Soviet period. These are chiefly concerned with the dissemination and implementation of official social welfare policies relating to women. There are also bodies that are specifically devoted to mother and child health care. These organisations are mostly staffed by women and, indeed, provide one of the main outlets for female participation in public affairs. However, although they may have some input into policy formulation, their sphere of action is circumscribed by the fact that, as members of these committees, they have an official function. Consequently, they do not have the same degree of independence as representatives of NGOs in Western countries.

On an individual level, some women are exercising choice in the lifestyles or careers that they follow. Some have entered the private sector and are becoming successful entrepreneurs. Regional Businesswomen's Associations are beginning to appear; these, however, are professional bodies that, for the most part, focus on issues relating to the general business environment and not specifically to conditions for women. A number of women are engaged in careers that take them to foreign countries for study or training; a few have taken the opportunity to remain abroad for relatively long periods. In the larger cities, more typically in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, some younger women (generally those who have spent a considerable time in study or work away from home) have distanced themselves somewhat from their families and kin-group networks in order to lead a more independent existence; such a choice often entails the corollary of rejecting, or postponing, marriage. In a very different way, those who have opted to follow an orthodox Islamic way of life have also taken control of their lives.

The above examples of Central Asian women's attempts to establish their own space may seem insignificant when compared with developments elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, but even these are exceptional in the context of the region. The great majority of women have not shown any inclination to exceed the limits sanctioned by society. This apparent apathy is often regarded by outsiders as a sign of 'backwardness', from which Central Asian women need to be liberated. Yet they themselves view their situation in a very different way. They are conscious of being part of an organic whole, no one part of which can be altered without the whole being affected. It is not that Central Asian women see their situation as perfect – indeed, they have as many complaints as women elsewhere – but that they perceive that it has compensations as well as shortcomings, that it offers good-neighbourly support as well as social constraints.

Central Asians are today under greater strain than at almost any other period in recent history. Under Soviet rule, despite all the external changes, these societies remained, in Durkheimian terms, largely 'mechanical', with a high degree of homogeneity, conformity and group solidarity. Now, faced with massive economic, social and environmental pressures, they are in danger of sliding towards anomy – the loss of shared values and the consequent breakdown of social controls. The civil war in Tadzhikistan has provided a dramatic example of how easily and quickly this could happen. There is an acute awareness that the same process could be repeated elsewhere. This has provoked an almost maniacal insistence on the need to preserve stability; all other freedoms are seen as of secondary importance. This is not mere political rhetoric: it is a consistently recurring theme in private as well as public discussion.

Against this background, the 'passivity' of Central Asian women may be seen as a positive rather than a negative stance, a choice rather than a failure to choose. Today, as during the Soviet period, women are instrumental in moderating the pace of change, helping to mediate the effect of external influences. The perceived passivity could be interpreted as a sophisticated coping strategy for protecting the central values of society in a time of flux and stress, thus a crucial contribution to community life, and of fundamental importance in maintaining continuity and identity. It may of course be argued that even if this is so, the women are nevertheless involuntary victims of the system, trapped in a vicious circle of dependency and self-sacrifice. This does not seem to be borne out in practice. There are undoubtedly cases of abuse and oppression here, as in any other part of the world but, in general, Central Asian women, whether in urban or in rural areas, appear to be able to negotiate a position that is, to them, acceptable. If they do not take a public stand to articulate their demands this does not necessarily mean that they are too weak or too ignorant to do this: it could equally well indicate that they believe they are able to operate more effectively by working in an indirect way, using the social levers that are available to them within their families and their communities. This could change in the future: if there were to be a breakdown of society, then they might be forced to take a more independent position, to fight for their rights. Under such conditions, politicised feminist movements, either of a Western or an Islamic orientation, might emerge. It is, however, noteworthy that this does not, as yet, appear to have happened to any significant degree even in Tadzhikistan. The upheavals of the war and the experience of the refugee

Settlements have not acted as a mobilising impetus. Rather, there has been a consolidation of existing networks and of established patterns of behaviour.

Conclusions: Eurasia revisited

Central Asia lies at the heart of the Eurasian landmass. Once, it was the nodal point on the 'Silk Roads' of antiquity, the global trade network of the day. Today, after years of partial isolation on the periphery of Europe, the region is regaining its centrality: the old, long-suspended ties with neighbours to the east and to the south are being restored through modern transport and communications links. This does not mean that the Central Asian states will sever relations with Russia or reject the Soviet heritage. The complex network of personal and professional, political, economic, cultural and educational linkages that has been established over the past seventy years will certainly not be erased in the near future, though in time it may become a less dominant feature of contemporary Central Asian life. Similarly, many of the aspirations that were nurtured during the Soviet period, such as, for example, that of gender equality, will continue to shape people's hopes and expectations, even if they are not actively promoted. It is also very unlikely that contacts with the West will diminish. On the contrary, the Central Asian states have signalled their desire to remain a part of this world through numerous trade and diplomatic missions, as well as through membership of organisations such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO's Partnership for Peace programme. Western-sponsored aid and development projects, whatever their shortcomings, will no doubt continue to be implemented. Informal channels of Western influence, such as the media, will likewise continue to be a major source of influence.

However, these new states are also looking in other directions and finding points of reference and mutual understanding in, for example, China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Pakistan. These countries present models that differ very greatly one from the other, as well as from those of Western countries. Yet they also have some common characteristics, loosely described as 'Asian values', which include an emphasis on the importance of the family, on the interests of the community rather than those of the individual, and on consensus rather than confrontation. Central Asians recognise here a sense of social priorities similar to their own. Over the past few years

it is this discovery of sympathetic cultural echoes in the east and south which has perhaps had the greatest effect on the morale of the Central Asian states, giving them new confidence in the validity of their traditional values. This might well foster the emergence of more conservative trends in the future.

There are still too many uncertainties for it to be possible at this stage, scarcely five years after the traumatic transition to independence, to predict how these new states will develop. However, in view of their past history, it seems likely that there will be a very cautious and gradual recalibrating of the balance between public and private spheres, leading to a greater emphasis on traditional structures, eventually, possibly, of a revivalist hue. It is unlikely that there will be a qualitative change in the position of women in the near future. Further ahead, however, it is possible that in some of the states there may be a move towards a more Islamic way of life, with a reintroduction of the constraints, but also of the freedoms and rights, that Islam gives women. In the north-eastern parts of Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan, where there has long been influence from the settler communities, it is possible that there will be a more pronounced Westernisation of society, at least in the public sphere. However, much will depend on the resolution of present economic problems. If the recession continues to deepen, there could be a very rapid unravelling of society, with consequences that are impossible to predict, except for the very obvious point that in such conditions it is invariably the women and children who are the most vulnerable and are therefore likely to suffer a major deterioration in their situation. In these circumstances, perhaps the present preoccupation with stability is no bad thing.

Notes

Conventional systems of transliteration have been used for foreign words. It should be noted, however, that in a term such as *khudzhum*, which is here transcribed from the Cyrillic script (as used, for example, for Uzbek), since it refers to a specifically Central Asian phenomenon, the sound *j* (as in 'John') is rendered by *dz*; however, in Arabic words which refer to general Islamic practices and are already, therefore, in use in English (e.g. *hajj*), the same sound is rendered by *j*, since this is a more familiar spelling.

- 1 Good surveys of tsarist/Soviet source material relating to this period are given by Ol'ga A. Sukhareva, *Bukhara: XIX – nachalo XX v* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), pp. 3–22; Tahira Kh. Tashbaeva and Mane D. Savurov, *Novoe i traditsionnoe v bytu sel'skoi sem'i uzbekov* (Tashkent: Fan, 1989),

The most informative Western source for this period is probably George Allen (1903).

There appears to have been an exception in this regard in that the available evidence suggests that average family sizes were small, consisting of 4-6 individuals (Sukhareva, *Bukhara*, pp. 106-11). However, the definition of terms is not always clear, hence it is difficult to draw firm conclusions.

3 Bibi Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia musul'manki* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982), pp. 7-8.

4 E.g. 'Qiz bola tuqqandan kora tosh tuqqan iakhshiroq, negaki, tosh hech bolmasa devor qurishga iaraiddi-ku' ('It is better to give birth to a stone than a girl-child, because at least you can build a wall with a stone'). Quoted by Z. R. Rahimboboieva, in her speech to the 'First Uzbekistan Women's Conference', March 1958, published in *Ozbekiston khotin-qizlarining birinchi s'ezdi: stenografik hisobot* (Tashkent: Uzbek SSR Davlat Nashriyoti, 1960), p. 16. Meakin (*Russian Turkestan*, p. 97) confirms that disappointment was the usual reaction to the birth of a daughter.

5 Sukhareva (*Bukhara*, p. 105) gives some statistical information on female life expectancy in Bukhara. In 1920, the percentage ratio of females to males in the Turkestan region was 47.7 to 52.3 (Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, p. 49). Cf. Russia in 1926, where the percentage ratio was 52.8 to 47.2, thus with a preponderance of females, unlike the situation in Central Asia, where there was a preponderance of males. (Source: Soviet Census of 1926, cited in Shirin Akiner, *Islamic peoples of the Soviet Union* (2nd edn, London: Kegan Paul International, 1987), under the relevant ethnic entries. Note: the information in this book is drawn from Soviet statistical material; for ease of reference, the ultimate sources of data are not cited in this article unless they are of particular interest.)

6 For example, Khansha Pupai, the wife of Abulkhair, mid-eighteenth century khan of the Kazakh Little Horde, seems to have played an active role in steppe politics; see Begezhhan Suleimenov (ed.), *Kazakhstan v XV-XVIII vekakh* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1969), p. 141.

7 Very little information is available on this subject. Meakin (*Russian Turkestan*, pp. 100-2) indicates that several of the educated women in urban areas were engaged in trade, generally of objects that they had produced themselves. Zbigniew Jasiewicz, 'Professional beliefs and rituals among craftsmen in Central Asia: genetic and functional interpretation' in Shirin Akiner (ed.), *Cultural change and continuity in Central Asia* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1991), p. 173, speaking of a somewhat later period, mentions the existence of 'a certain form of organisation' amongst craftswomen of the region, notably women potters in the mountains of Tadzhikistan.

8 In the early nineteenth century, there were a number of talented poets at the court of the khan of Kokand, including Nadira (b. 1790), wife of the ruler, Umar Khan; they were presumably not merely literate but highly educated. On girls' schools in the early twentieth century, see for example, Meakin, *Russian Turkestan*, p. 87. However, literacy rates varied greatly from one place to another. According to Sukhareva (*Bukhara*, p. 104), in 1926, 13.4 per cent of the female population of Bukhara were literate, compared with 46 per cent of the male population. The overall average literacy rate for the Uzbek SSR as a whole, though, was only 3.8 per cent (Akiner, *Islamic peoples*, p. 280).

9 According to the 1926 Soviet census, 84.5 per cent of Uzbeks were included within the territory of the Uzbek SSR, 94.2 per cent of Turkmen in the Turkmen SSR, 93.6 per cent of Kazakhs in the Kazakh ASSR, and 86.7 per cent of the Kyrgyz in the Kyrgyz ASSR. For a summary of the regional distribution of these peoples, see Akiner, *Islamic peoples*, under the relevant ethnic entries. (Reference is made here to Kazakh ASSR and Kyrgyz ASSR because at the time of the census they were Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics, not yet full Soviet Socialist Republics.)

10 In 1926, 63.1 per cent of the Tadzhiks were included within the territory of the Tadzhik ASSR, which at that time formed a subordinate administrative unit within the Uzbek SSR; there were a further 35.8 per cent located elsewhere in the Uzbek SSR (see further Akiner, *Islamic peoples*, p. 306). These figures are based on the official ethnic designations as recorded in the 1926 census; some would claim that they do not accurately reflect the population's self-perception of their historical ethnic origins. The negotiation of territorial rights was by no means a smooth and amicable affair: there were many bitter arguments over border regions, especially those with mixed populations. A detailed account of this process is given by Rakhim Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1991).

11 In 1926, Russians numbered 1,279,979 (19.7 per cent of the total population) in the Kazakh ASSR; 116,436 (11.8 per cent) in the Kyrgyz ASSR; 5,638 (0.7 per cent) in the Tadzhik ASSR; 75,357 (7.7 per cent) in the Turkmen SSR; 246,521 (4.7 per cent) in the Uzbek SSR. By 1959, these figures had increased to 3,972,042 (42.7 per cent of the total population) in the Kazakh SSR; 623,562 (30.2 per cent) in the Kyrgyz SSR; 262,611 (13.3 per cent) in the Tadzhik SSR; 262,702 (17.3 per cent) in the Turkmen SSR; 1,092,468 (13.5 per cent) in the Uzbek SSR. (See further Akiner, *Islamic peoples*, under the relevant ethnic entries.)

12 By 1959, the percentage share of the titular group in the total population of their eponymous republic was as follows: Uzbeks 62.1; Turkmen 60.9; Tadzhiks 53.1; Kyrgyz 40.5; Kazakhs 30.0 (Akiner, *Islamic peoples*, under the relevant ethnic entries).

13 Richard Stites, *The women's liberation movement in Russia: feminism*,

- nihilism, and Bolshevism 1860-1930 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 332. For an account of the broader Soviet context of female emancipation see Mary Buckley, 'Soviet interpretations of the women question' in Barbara Holland (ed.), *Soviet sisterhood* (London: Fourth Estate, 1985), pp. 24-53.
- 14 The term was coined by Gregory Massell, *The surrogate proletariat* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); this is the first, and to date only major study by a Western scholar on the politics of female emancipation in Central Asia.
 - 15 For accounts of the creation of the legal infrastructure, see Dilorom A. Alimova, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa v Uzbekistane 1917-41 gg.* (Tashkent: Fan, 1987), pp. 11-12; Shodmon M. Masharipova, *Raskrepostshchenie zhenshchin Khorezma i vovlechenie ikh v sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo* (Tashkent: Fan, 1990), pp. 12-13; Aleksandr M. Lobachev, *Protiv t'my* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1990), pp. 32-6; Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, pp. 26-36; Rakhima Aminova, *The October Revolution and women's liberation in Uzbekistan* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), pp. 37-8, 59-60.
 - 16 Leading Russian activists included: Ida Finkel'shtein, widow of the Tashkent commissar; Lidia Dvorkina; Berta Bendetskaia (b. 1898); Liliia Shumilova (1873-1939); Lidiia Otmar-Shtein (b. 1899); Eustaliia Ross (b. 1896). Serafima Liubimova (b. 1898), who was sent from Moscow to Tashkent in June 1923 to head the women's section of the Central Committee of the Turkestan Communist Party, was responsible for creating an infrastructure of social organisations to support the emancipation movement. See further Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, pp. 49-57; Alimova, *Reshenie*, pp. 14-15; Aminova, *October Revolution*, pp. 12-15; R. Ia. Radzhapova, et al. *Khkhzhum - znachit nastuplenie* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1987), pp. 117-87.
 - 17 These included Risoliat-khon Alieva (b. 1898); Shamsikamar Gaibdzhanova (b. 1897); Tadzhikhon Shadieva (b. 1905). See further Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, pp. 62-7; Lobachev, *Protiv t'my*, p. 136; Masharipova, *Raskrepostshchenie*, pp. 14-17.
 - 18 Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, p. 106.
 - 19 Masharipova, *Raskrepostshchenie*, p. 37; Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, pp. 108-10.
 - 20 Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, p. 165.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 147-8; Masharipova, *Raskrepostshchenie*, pp. 61-2; Aminova, *October Revolution*, pp. 63-4; Alimova, *Reshenie*, p. 61. Dilorom A. Alimova, *Zhenskii vopros v Srednei Azii* (Tashkent: Fan, 1991), p. 25.
 - 22 Aminova, *October Revolution*, p. 95.
 - 23 Alimova, *Zhenskii vopros*, p. 23; Alimova, *Reshenie*, pp. 30-2; Aminova, *October Revolution*, p. 121.

- 24 Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, p. 168, also personal communications made to the present author by Professor Pal'vanova in London, in 1992.
- 25 Lobachev, *Protiv t'my*, p. 40.
- 26 This was not only a Russian view; see, for example, the comments by Joshua Kunitz, *Dawn over Samarkand* (London and New York: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936), p. 274, where he describes the garment as 'monstrous and degrading', resembling 'a gray or dark-blue coffin standing stiffly on end, covered with a black, bulging, heavy lid'.
- 27 Meakin (*Russian Turkestan*, pp. 128-9) noted that "the man in the street" can generally tell at a glance the social standing of a woman by the quality and condition of her *parandzha*; those worn by the rich were often made of silk, but the majority were of cotton. The usual colour was a dull grey, but Tatar women would sometimes wear bright colours, such as canary yellow or bright red. Only women from the lowest strata of society (e.g. beggars) would venture out of the house without a veil.
- 28 Alimova, *Zhenskii vopros*, pp. 25-8; Aminova, *October Revolution*, pp. 92-103.
- 29 Alimova, *Zhenskii vopros*, p. 76; Masharipova, *Raskrepostshchenie*, pp. 23, 32, 51-6; Aminova, *October Revolution*, pp. 49-57.
- 30 Aminova, *October Revolution*, p. 92.
- 31 Alimova, *Reshenie*, p. 55; Aminova, *October Revolution*, pp. 179-92.
- 32 The move to an eight-year course was completed by 1962/63; see K. F. Fazykhodzhaev (ed.), *Deiatel'nost' kompartii Uzbekistana i usileniie sotsialnoi aktivnosti zhenshchin: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov (1959-1975 gg.)* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1986), p. 26.
- 33 The numbers of women of the titular groups of the Central Asian republics who possessed higher (tertiary) educational qualifications in 1970 were as follows (per 1,000): Uzbeks 13; Kazakhs 20; Tadzhiks 7; Turkmen 10; Kyrgyz 15; cf. Soviet average of 37 (Akiner, *Islamic peoples*, under the relevant ethnic headings).
- 34 H. Kent Geiger, *The family in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 130.
- 35 Aminova, *October Revolution*, pp. 211-12.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
- 37 Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, p. 270.
- 38 Alimova, *Reshenie*, p. 55.
- 39 Probably the best study to date on Soviet Islam is Tolib Saidbaev, *Islam i obshchestvo* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984); see also A. Ahadov, *Islom zamonga moslashganda* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1989). For more recent developments, see Shirin Akiner, 'Islam, the state and ethnicity in Central Asia in historical perspective' in *Religion, state and society: the Keston Journal* 24 (2-3), December 1996 (forthcoming).
- 40 Alimova, *Zhenskii vopros*, pp. 35-8.

- 41 Alimova, *Zhenskii vopros*, pp. 47–9; Lobachev, *Protiv t'my*, p. 55; Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, p. 244.
- 42 Pal'vanova, *Emansipatsiia*, p. 205; Darikha Saburova, *Zhenshchiny Karakalpakstana* (Nukus: Karakalpakstan, 1989), pp. 37–46; Alimova, *Zhenskii vopros*, p. 46. The problems over equal pay, conditions and opportunities for women were not of course restricted to Central Asia; for the broader Soviet context see Alastair McAuley, *Women's work and wages in the Soviet Union* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), especially pp. 11–31.
- 43 Alimova, *Zhenskii vopros*, p. 112.
- 44 This section is based mainly on material contained in Tashbaeva and Savurov, *Novoe i traditsionnoe*; also on personal interviews conducted by the present author 1985–95. Although the section is written in the past tense, since in the context of this article it refers to the Soviet period, the conditions described here are very much the same today, in post-Soviet Central Asia.
- 45 This is also part of the Islamic heritage; see, for example, Lois Beck *et al.* (eds.), *Women in the Muslim world* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 87–8; Parveen Shaukat Ali, *Status of women in the Muslim world* (Lahore: Aziz, 1975), p. 21. In 1959, the percentage of married girls of the titular group in the age group 16–19 years was as follows: Uzbeks 31.8; Kazakhs 28.7; Tadzhiks 36.6; Turkmen 32.0; Kyrgyz 44.2; cf. Russians 9.3. By 1970, the percentage of married girls in this age group had fallen to the following levels: Uzbeks 21.7; Kazakhs 12.3; Tadzhiks 24.9; Turkmen 19.1; Kyrgyz 20.1; cf. Russians 9.1 (Akiner, *Islamic peoples*, under relevant ethnic groups).
- 46 For the pre-1981 provisions see Bernice Madison, *Social welfare in the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 61–70; for post-1981, see Jo Peers, 'Workers by hand and womb: Soviet women and the demographic crisis' in Holland (ed.), *Soviet sisterhood*, pp. 116–44, especially p. 136. In 1981 the lump sum payment for the first child was set at 50 roubles, for the eleventh and subsequent children at 250 roubles each.
- 47 Tashbaeva and Savurov, *Novoe i traditsionnoe*, p. 38.
- 48 Geographic mobility was low, hence kin-groups generally continued to live within the same village, neighbourhood or collective farm. The level of urbanisation among the titular groups within their eponymous republics also remained low; in 1970, it was less than 30 per cent for four of the groups (only 14.5 per cent for the Kyrgyz), and only just over 30 per cent for the Turkmen (Akiner, *Islamic peoples*, under relevant ethnic groups). Mixed marriages between different ethnic groups were also comparatively uncommon, especially in rural areas.
- 49 Such is the preoccupation with fertility that even visiting strangers will be interrogated in great detail about the number of children they have, or

- intend to have. According to an Uzbek informant, mothers-in-law in these areas would often accompany their sons' wives on visits to the doctor to ensure that they did not seek contraceptive advice (communication with the author, Tashkent, 1996). For a comparative international perspective, see Helen Ware, 'The effects of fertility, family organization, sex structure, the labour market, and technology on the position of women' in Federici *et al.* (eds.), *Women's position and demographic change* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), pp. 257–84.
- 50 See, for example, Saburova, *Zhenshchiny Karakalpakstana*, p. 49.
- 51 A great deal has been written on this subject in recent years. A fairly comprehensive account is given by Boris Rumer, *Soviet Central Asia: a tragic experiment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 62–75. See also Aleksandr Minkin, 'Zaraza ubiistvennaia', *Ogonek* 13, 1988, pp. 26–7; Aleksandr Minkin, 'Posledstviia zarazy', *Ogonek* 33, 1988, p. 25; Shirin Akiner, 'Environmental degradation in Central Asia' in Reiner Weichardt (ed.), *Economic developments in cooperation partner countries from a sectoral perspective* (Brussels: NATO, 1994), pp. 255–63.
- 52 See, for example, Saburova, *Zhenshchiny Karakalpakstana*, pp. 71–80; Tashbaeva and Savurov, *Novoe i traditsionnoe*, p. 67.
- 53 Alimova, *Zhenskii vopros*, p. 118.
- 54 *Ibid.*, pp. 118–19; E. Gafurov, 'The flames of feudalism', *International Pravda* 2(7), 1986, p. 24; Pal'vanova (*Emansipatsiia*, p. 8) indicates that the practice was not unknown in pre-Soviet times.
- 55 Personal communications to the author in Tashkent in 1990 by an Uzbek film-maker, Shukhrat Makhmudov, and his Kazakh wife.
- 56 Shirin Akiner, 'Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia', *Harvard International Review* 15(3), 1993, pp. 18–21. The article was written on the basis of information gathered by the author from informants in the Central Asian republics 1989–92.
- 57 *Aziia*, 11 June 1994, p. 24; *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 6 January 1994, p. 3.
- 58 Anara Tabyshalieva, *Vera v Turkestane* (Bishkek: AZ-MAK, 1993), p. 123; *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 30 November 1993, p. 3.
- 59 These are subjective assessments, based on the author's personal observation made in the course of several visits in 1994–6 to Tashkent, the Ferghana Valley, Bishkek and Almaty. Some other observers feel that this is an underestimation and that both the *hejab* and the *parandzha* are becoming far more common. This perception may be influenced by the fact that such observers (local and foreign) regard the resurgence of Islam as a threat. It should be noted that the wearing of the *hejab* is a new phenomenon, imported from other Muslim countries; the traditional Central Asian covering is the *parandzha*. To some extent, these different interpretations of the Muslim dress code reflect divergent trends in Islam in Central Asia today. Wearers of the *hejab* tend to favour a more reformist, modernist approach to the religion, while wearers of the *parandzha* are

generally more conservative. However, regional and social factors also play a role here, hence no firm conclusions can be drawn about a woman's religious orientation solely on the basis of her outer garments.

- 60 Gillian Tett, in an unpublished paper on 'Women and Islam in Tadzhikistan', presented at the conference on 'Social change, demographic trends, family structure and gender relations in Muslim societies – with special reference to Central Asia', held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, July 1992, made the point that while it was women who 'de facto carried the greatest religious burden during the Soviet years, it is now men who dominate Islam in the public sphere' and that it is men who are setting the agenda for what Islam should 'mean' for women.
- 61 Comment made to the author by a young Uzbek of about twenty-four years of age, with secondary schooling and further educational training, in the Ferghana Valley in 1994.
- 62 Tatiana Savelieva, in an unpublished paper presented at the conference on 'Social change, demographic trends, family structure and gender relations in Muslim societies – with special reference to Central Asia', at SOAS, July 1992, gave an account of recent fieldwork carried out in Uzbekistan; in one village, she reported, almost 20 per cent of the unmarried women were integrated into polygamous families.
- 63 In June 1995, the senior government posts held by women included the following: in Uzbekistan, deputy prime minister, chairman of parliament (*Oliy Madzhlis*), deputy chairman of parliamentary committee on labour and social security, deputy minister of labour, first deputy minister of social welfare; in Kazakhstan, deputy minister of trade and industry; in Tadzhikistan, deputy prime minister, deputy minister of health; in Kyrgyzstan, minister of foreign affairs. No information was available on the situation in Turkmenistan.
- 64 Personal communications to the author in Bishkek, 1996.
- 65 In one evening, a student can earn at least 30 US dollars, the equivalent of some six times the value of a monthly stipend. (Personal communications to the author in Bishkek, 1996.) In Kazakh and Kyrgyz newspapers of 1994–6 there have been several reports on rising levels of prostitution and other criminal activities carried out by women. See, for example, Gul'mira Arbabaeva, 'Na kollegii MVD otmechen rost zhenskoi prestupnosti', *Panorama* 29, 23 July 1994, p. 9; Kanapiia Gabdullina, 'Bezrabotitsa s zhenskimi litsami', *Dzhuma: Piatnitsa* 17, 20 October 1995, p. 2.
- 66 Personal communications to the author in Bishkek, Almaty and Tashkent, 1996.
- 67 Levels of natural increase (per 1,000 of the population) in the five republics in 1960/1987 respectively were as follows: Uzbekistan 33.8/30.1; Kazakhstan 30.6/18.0; Kyrgyzstan 30.8/25.3; Tadzhikistan 28.4/34.9; Turkmenistan 35.9/29.3. (Source: *Naselenie SSSR 1987*, Moscow: Finansy i

statistika, 1988, pp. 132–42.) The largest change was in Kazakhstan where the birthrate fell quite steadily in rural and in urban areas until 1980; thereafter it began to rise again. A similar pattern was also observed in Kyrgyzstan. These two republics have long had large non-indigenous populations; the birthrate in these non-indigenous communities is significantly lower than amongst the titular peoples, hence the overall slower rate of increase. In Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan the rate of increase is such that, according to some estimates, in the near future for every 100 people who leave the ranks of the working age group, some thirty-five will enter it (Viktor Perevedentsev, *Moskovskie novosti* 41, 11 October 1992, p. 9).

- 68 Meakin, *Russian Turkestan*, pp. 120–8, is one of the few writers to comment on this aspect of the lives of Central Asian women.
- 69 See, for example, the report on the 'Kazakhstan Queen of Clubs – 95' beauty contest, *Delovaia nedelia*, 11 August 1995. *Dzhuma: Piatnitsa*, published in Kazakhstan, is a typical new-style women's paper, full of advertisements for stylish lingerie, cosmetics and beauty treatments.
- 70 This phenomenon has been noted elsewhere. See, for example, Angela Gilliam, 'Women's equality and national liberation' in Chandra Mohanty *et al.* (eds.), *Third World women and the politics of feminism* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 215–50, especially p. 218; also Chandra Mohanty, *ibid.*, pp. 51–80, 'Under Western eyes: feminist scholarship and colonial discourses'.
- 71 Personal communication to the author by a member of the banned opposition party *Erk*, in Germany, 1995.
- 72 Cf. Gilliam, 'Women's equality', p. 227, where the question is posed: 'Which Third World Women speak for which Third World women?'

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Microcredit Summit

Divider Title: _____

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 3, 1997

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
AT THE MICROCREDIT SUMMIT

Sheraton Washington Hotel
Washington, D.C.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much. Thank you, choir, that was wonderful. I got to listen to you as I stood outside. I am thrilled to see such a turnout for this summit, which is one of the most important gatherings that we could have anywhere in our world, to talk about what is possible for raising the sights and aspirations of people, giving them the tools of opportunity, expanding access to credit and creating conditions in which men, women and children will be able to make for themselves better lives.

I'm very grateful to all who have made this summit possible, particularly to the co-chairs, to the heads of state who are gathered, to other distinguished guests, to the Results Educational Fund, to many of the private corporations and other foundations that have helped to sponsor this important gathering.

This is truly an historic occasion. Microfinance is a subject that is near and dear to all of our hearts who are gathered here. And this first global summit on microcredit offers an unprecedented opportunity for us to draw attention to the successes of microcredit in developing countries, as well as in applications in advanced economies around the world.

By bringing together experts from every continent we will be able to learn from each other's challenges and achievements, and apply those lessons within our own borders. I hope that this conference will engender new understanding of microcredit and its potential to transform the lives of individuals, their families, their communities and their nations.

Although it is called "microcredit," this is a macro idea. This is a big idea, an idea with vast potential. Whether we are talking about a rural area in South Asia or an inner-city in the United States, microcredit is an invaluable tool in alleviating poverty, promoting self-sufficiency and stimulating economic activity in some of the world's most destitute and disadvantaged communities.

I first heard about microcredit more than a decade ago when my husband, then the governor of Arkansas, and I were involved in looking for ways to create economic opportunity in the poorest sections of one of the poorer states in the United States. We had heard about the work of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and about the work that the South Shore Bank in Chicago. And we reached out to representatives of both to explain to us how this idea of very small amounts of credit could make such a difference.

I remember well when we met with Muhammed Yunus in the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock in 1986. We sat there and listened as he told us how the idea which he had had as an economics Ph.D. and then a teacher back in his home in Bangladesh began to be put into practice. He offered advice as the project in Arkansas got off the ground. Within a few years we, too, could see how the fruits of the Good Faith Fund, as the project in Arkansas was called, were beginning to take root.

It was so contrary to conventional thinking about finance and economic development. And, yet, before our eyes and based on reports from Bangladesh and India and Chicago and elsewhere, we knew something important was happening that had escaped the notice of many who worked in development, of many who were in finance departments of governments. And both my husband and I were determined that the concept of microcredit would have universal relevance. We looked for ways to apply microcredit in America, taking the best of the principles and values that it represented, but making it sure that it could be put into practice in different settings.

Now, more than 10 years later, we can look around this room, from one end to the other, and appreciate the power of Muhammed Yunus' vision. And we can celebrate the courage and dedication it has taken on the part of all of you today -- pioneers in microfinance, lenders in microcredit enterprises, representatives of government and private business and foundations and grass-roots community organizations from all over the world -- the courage that it took to come and understand how the conventional wisdom about poor people and economic opportunity was no longer adequate. (Applause.)

To really understand the significance of this summit one must recognize that you are here because you have broken a paradigm, you have gotten out of the conventional box of thinking about the poor, about economic opportunity, about the partnership between the public and private sector. It is this type of unconventional thinking that we need more of in our world today, to address the problems that all of us confront. (Applause.)

I know those of us here understand that microcredit is a tool -- not the only tool, but we believe an important tool available to promote economic and social development. We have seen with our own eyes in the last several decades how the global economic revolution has transformed lives, many for the better. People with opportunities in places that never thought or dreamed they could see clean water, roads, their children attending school, access to health care.

And yet, we also know that global economic change has not only made winners, it has made losers as well. And part of our challenge is how do we harness these vast forces of change for the benefit of all people, how do we ensure that no matter where one lives, no matter what race or ethnic background, no matter whether a man or a woman. It is the individual human being willing to work hard who will be given the opportunity if that person takes responsibility to seek and find a better life for themselves.

That is why this idea is important not only on its own merits and that we should work to spread it, be honest about what it can do, make changes where necessary, recognize that it has limitations. But the idea is not only important for what it is, but for what it represents when we put it into the context of the global economic changes that are sweeping through all of our countries. (Applause.)

The United States has long supported microcredit overseas through USAID. And I am pleased that the United States will continue to support microcredit programs and that I hope more American citizens will recognize how important it is to support the economic aspirations of our friends and neighbors around the globe. And one of the ways we will attempt to deliver that message is to demonstrate here within our own borders how microcredit can change the lives of Americans.

Indeed, we are beginning to spread microenterprise throughout the United States. It has to be tailored to our particular economic and social circumstances. And so it is by the very nature of the communities which it is working in going to be diverse -- offering different kinds of loans, resources and business assistance.

But I am pleased that the President, working with the Secretary of the Treasury whom you will hear from later, have recognized the important role that microcredit will play in economic development throughout our country in helping people who are currently on welfare in the United States find opportunities for their own economic self-sufficiency. And to that end, just this last week, the President and Secretary Rubin presented the first Presidential Awards for Excellence in Microenterprise Development. The awards recognize efforts within our country to extend credit and economic opportunity to Americans who otherwise lack the chance to become economically self-sufficient.

The awards also underscore the ripple effect that microcredit projects can create -- not only in lifting individuals out of poverty and moving mothers from welfare to work, but in creating jobs, promoting businesses and building capital in depressed areas.

The United States is also promoting microcredit through the Small Business Administration's Microloan Program -- a public-private partnership which has already awarded \$70 million in grants to nonprofit organizations with nearly half of the loans granted going to women. The loans range from \$125 to \$25,000.

Because of the promise that microcredit holds in the United States, the President announced last week that he is requesting substantial increases in federal funding for the

Community Development Financial Institutions Fund. His budget calls for a \$1 billion increase over the next five years. (Applause.)

As I said last week at the White House when we were celebrating microcredit, there are millions of people in our country as there are millions of people in all the nearly 100 countries represented here who are brimming with initiative and desire to take responsibility and to work hard. But they need what I call the tools of opportunity, and one of those tools is access to credit. For too long, many people -- not only the poorest of the poor, but working people and others -- have had to turn to the lenders in the community that extract great price and cost for the money that they give. Others have been shut out completely from any kind of access to credit. And the result has not only been to depress their opportunities, but to depress that of those in their families and in their communities.

Later today, I will visit a microcredit project right here in Washington, D.C. -- one of the FINCA USA projects. I spent time with a FINCA borrowing group in Managua, Nicaragua, and I'm looking forward to hearing from the borrowers in this group here in Washington -- how that model is working for them.

What we are finding is that modest loans are transforming lives, reclaiming villages and rural areas and cities from decay and decline, and helping to reduce the number of people living in substandard conditions or extreme poverty.

I have seen that with my own eyes. Many of you are veterans of microcredit who are here, but others of you have come for the first time to learn how this concept can be translated and transplanted where you live. And others of you in the press are finding this a new idea, something you had not really focused on before. And still others in government and private business are looking for ways to help the economic development of people in the communities that you serve. And I want to take just a few minutes to visualize why I am such an admirer and supporter of microcredit; why I believe that it has such great potential.

So I brought with me some of the pictures that I have had taken as I have traveled to various continents and countries looking at microcredit efforts, and if I could I'd like to show them to you as I talk a little bit more about why they make such an important difference.

I want to start with a picture from India, and those of you who are familiar with SEWA -- and I believe that Ela Bhatt is here and will be speaking -- know how important the Self-Employed Women's Association has been. This group has made it possible for very poor women to learn about finance, to borrow money, to be part of a bank, to save money. And when I visited I met with hundreds of women, some of whom had walked for 12 or 15 hours to come to meet with me, to tell me what those initial small loans meant. And I want to emphasize that it was not just stories about what the loans bought and what they were able to do with the loans, it was the entire sense of self-worth and potential that those loans created in the women that made the biggest impression on me.

Women stood up and said that they had been vegetable vendors in the markets and had

been abused by police officers, others of authority, with no place to turn to try to keep their businesses going when times were difficult. They told me of working on their family farms, eking out a living in very hard soil with little equipment and little support. And yet, woman after woman stood up and said to me that since they had become members of the Self-Employed Women's Association, they were no longer afraid. They were not afraid to speak up for themselves, to find their place in their family and their village, to help contribute to the income that made it possible for them to think of sending a child to school or having a child get the health care that child needed.

Many of you will find and be able to relate the same kinds of experiences that I have had. And I hope that as we talk about microcredit and as we look at the physical manifestations of loan, ledgers, and I have reviewed -- of businesses that have been started, of milk cows that have been bought, we will also not forget that you are seeding those people with a dream and a hope that they will be functioning members of society whose children's lives will be better.

I've also seen firsthand what happens in Bangladesh, and for anyone interested in microcredit you know that it is a journey to the Grameen Bank that is often part of the learning experience because of the longtime efforts that have been undertaken there. When I visited with a group of women in a village outside of Jasore, I realized that I was visiting a Hindu village, and my schedule did not permit me to go down the road further to visit a Muslim village. And I wanted to see women from both communities who were participating with Grameen. The women in the Muslim village came to the Hindu village, the first time there had ever been such participation together. Never had there been a meeting like that.

And I listened as 150 Hindu women and 150 Muslim women told me how their lives had been transformed by virtue of earning income. These women had lived much harder lives than any I could even imagine, and yet they were filled with hope about their future. And one of the reasons is that Grameen doesn't just extend credit, as many of you know. It tries to put the women and the men who are borrowers not only in borrowing groups for credit purposes, but to help support one another in solidarity, to build stronger families and communities.

Each person who joins the bank has to abide by 16 decisions or principles that range from the mundane such as "we shall build and use pit latrines," to the much more difficult to explain and understand -- "we shall not inflict injustice on anyone; neither will we allow anyone to do so," or "we shall always keep our children and the environment clean." There is even one principle against dowry, which is extraordinary considering the attitudes in many of those communities about the proper role of women and certainly the importance of dowry.

As each woman waits her turn to get a loan, she knows she cannot borrow money until the woman before her has repaid her loan. So there is a built-in incentive to support each other's enterprises.

I saw women making steel and concrete beams they can sell to other women who use them to build houses with loans from Grameen and I visited such a house. So a whole self-sustaining market is created within one village.

Grameen also in Bangladesh attempts to work with children to change attitudes about what is possible for them. Here there was a skit performed in which some of the young children, young boys and girls, were talking about attitudes that were held about education, and in particular, whether or not girls should be educated as well as boys. And by performing that skit, they were serving notice that they understood there was another way, another idea of what could be possible for them.

And so when you go to Bangladesh, and you see, as many of you have, what Grameen means, just like what the Self-Employed Women's Association means in the lives of these women, their husbands, their families, it makes it clear that we're talking about not only economic transformation, but social transformation as well. (Applause.)

Some months later, I visited a microenterprise project in Denver, Colorado, here in the United States. In this case women, many of them Hispanic Americans, received career counseling and vocational training, and entrepreneurial technical assistance. It is provided by a group called Mi Casa. And here, the women were explaining to me what it meant for them to finally be taken seriously. Many had been on welfare or were just off welfare, and they were looking for an opportunity to take the skills that they had acquired and turn them into income.

Many of those women were good bakers, good seamstresses. They could make alterations. They could provide food for small restaurants. But they didn't, as we hear so often, have access to credit to get started. One woman said to me something I have never forgotten, when she described to me what it was like trying to go to her local bank. She did not have any traditional collateral, but she was a hard worker. She's always worked for other people. She had a good product to sell. But she was turned away because the amount of money that it would have taken for the bank to process her loan was not, in the bank's eyes, worth the investment. And she said, too many great ideas die in the parking lots of banks. (Applause.) And one of the hopes I have is that conventional banking will understand that there is an economic opportunity, a market niche for those willing to service this community.

I certainly was impressed by that when I was in Managua, Nicaragua, meeting with women in a borrowing group shortly after the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, where the platform of action included a commitment microcredit. And as I have said, and as the President's said, much of the work that we are doing in the United States to advance microcredit is in part a fulfillment of our responsibilities under that platform of action. (Applause.)

I went here to the weekly meeting of the FINCA Group and there were about 30 women who described how they had received small loans to start neighborhood bakeries, seamstress shops -- one was making mosquito netting; one was selling auto parts door to door. I was surprised and very excited when several of the women not only gave me their products, but also asked me what I had been doing in India because some of them had seen on television some pictures of my trip to the Self-Employed Women's Association. They wanted to know

what the women there were spending their money on and what businesses they were starting. And I felt that there was an opportunity for this to be literally a global movement, with people learning from each other and supporting each other. And this is exactly what this summit means to do.

I've also been impressed by the work I've seen in Santiago, Chile, where community bank relies on peer networks to promote and sustain local microbusinesses. Here in a local market I met the vendors who were showing their commitment to the bank by putting up awnings in matching blue and yellow to demonstrate that they were part of microenterprise.

Most memorable to me was a woman who told me that as a seamstress she could not compete with the larger factories, and yet she knew there was a market for her work because she had many people who had come and asked her to make something for them but she did not have the capacity to do so. With a small loan, she was able to buy a high-speed sewing machine and replace her old, antiquated one. She said that when she got that new sewing machine she felt like a caged bird set free. And that is a good way to describe how many of the people I have met seem to feel when given the opportunity.

I saw that again firsthand recently in La Paz, when I met with borrowers at Banco Sol and had a chance to visit the bank itself -- a physical place that is dedicated to microcredit. And the people there were very proud of what they had accomplished. And the United States is pleased that this bank, now the largest bank in Bolivia, was initially supported through a loan from USAID. It is the first commercial in the world completely dedicated to microlending.

The default rate is extremely low, about 2.2 percent; and the repayment rate, obviously, extremely high. I often say to my banker friends that if they had customers like these people, who paid off their loans at 95, 97, 98 percent, they would be very happy. And I think if more banks understood -- (applause) -- the tenacity, the commitment, the entrepreneurial spirit of people like these who are given a chance to help themselves, we would go a long way in not only extending credit, but in eliminating many of the unfortunate stereotypes about people who are poor. (Applause.)

Anyone who has worked with microcredit or seen its impact around the world as I have will testify that those stereotypes are just plain wrong. Most people who are eligible for microcredit around the world work as hard as they know how, from sunup to sundown, and sometimes for many hours before and beyond. And yet, too often, those of us in positions of influence or authority or power dismiss them. We seem to have a belief that if they are poor, they are meant to be poor and will always remain poor. Yet many of us come from families, generations back who themselves were poor, and through hard work and sometimes lucky breaks and opportunities an extended helping hand, we were able to climb our own way out of poverty and to have the benefits that that gave us and our children.

These microcredit projects are proof of what we can unleash if we invest in the

economic and human potential of all the world's citizens. I am heartened that so many commercial banks and finance ministries and others around the world are beginning to show such an interest in microcredit. We know that this is not the only answer; we still need investments in education and health, infrastructure in many parts of the world, but we know that this is a critical component of what will work in nearly any setting we can define.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that this tool not only transforms lives but lifts communities and societies as well. And that, after all, is what this summit is about. It is not just about giving individuals economic opportunity, it is about community, it is about responsibility. It is about seeing how we are all interconnected and interdependent in today's world. It is recognizing that in our country the fate of a welfare recipient in Denver or Washington is inextricably bound up with all of ours. It is understanding how lifting people out of poverty in India or Bangladesh redounds to the benefit of the entire community and creates fertile ground for democracy to live and grow because people have hope in the future.

So I think all of you who have helped to make the pictures that I've shown a reality, who have been advocates on behalf of microcredit and the concepts of community and responsibility that it represents, and I hope that as a result of this summit, many, many more people will understand how microcredit can transform lives, will learn lessons on how to do it right -- (inaudible) -- all of us will recognize that as we move toward this 21st century, we have an opportunity that has seldom come, if ever, in the history of humankind. We have a world that can, with technology, democracy, free enterprise, extend the benefits of prosperity and peace to countless millions whose lives can be lifted up.

So, for all of us, I hope that we will go forward from this summit more convinced than ever that providing economic opportunity, giving people a chance to be responsible, building community can happen everywhere if we have the will to make it so. Thank you for what you're doing. Godspeed on the work ahead. (Applause.)

END

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FINCA EVENT NOVO-PAULOVKA Roadside market, BISHKEK, KR
 NOVEMBER 12, 1997
 MAIN ROAD

Press
 arrival

Departure

FIRST LADY



Staff



Press



Limo

COVERED VENDORS

covered vendors

vendors

vendors

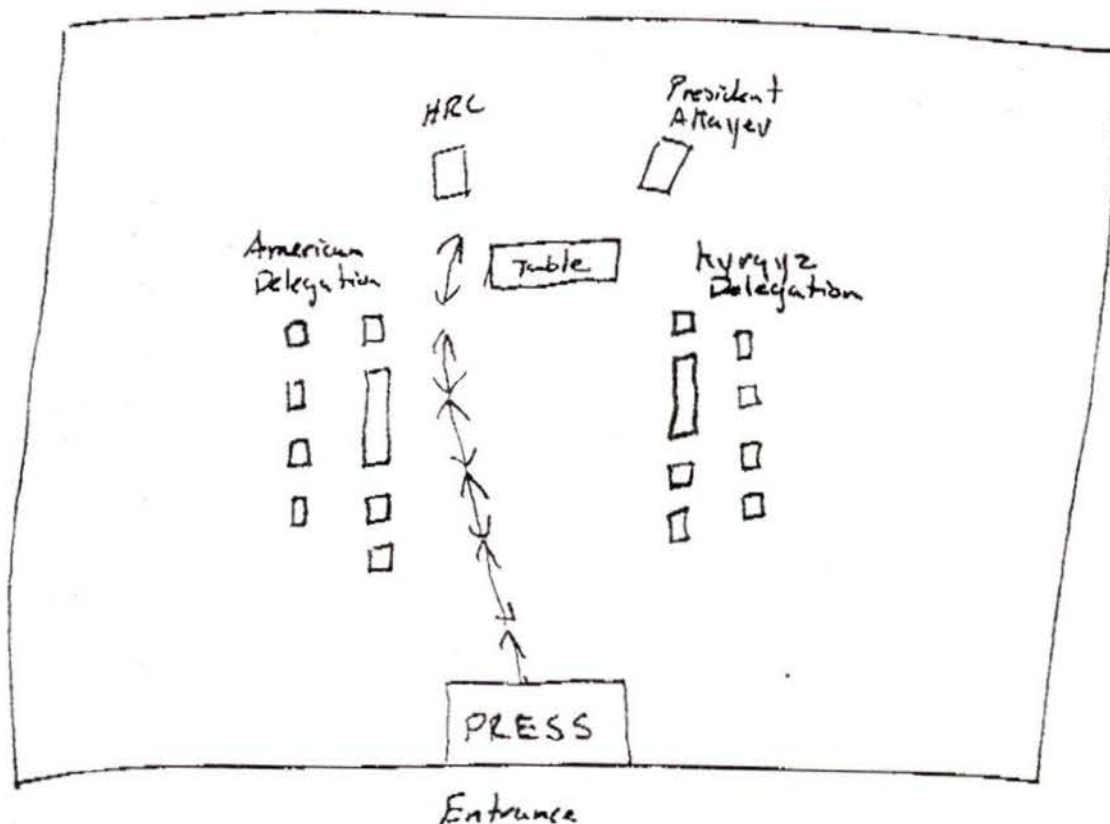
press
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Meat
 market

YURT

Bishkek, KYRGYZSTAN
 Courtesy Call on President + Mrs
 AKAyev

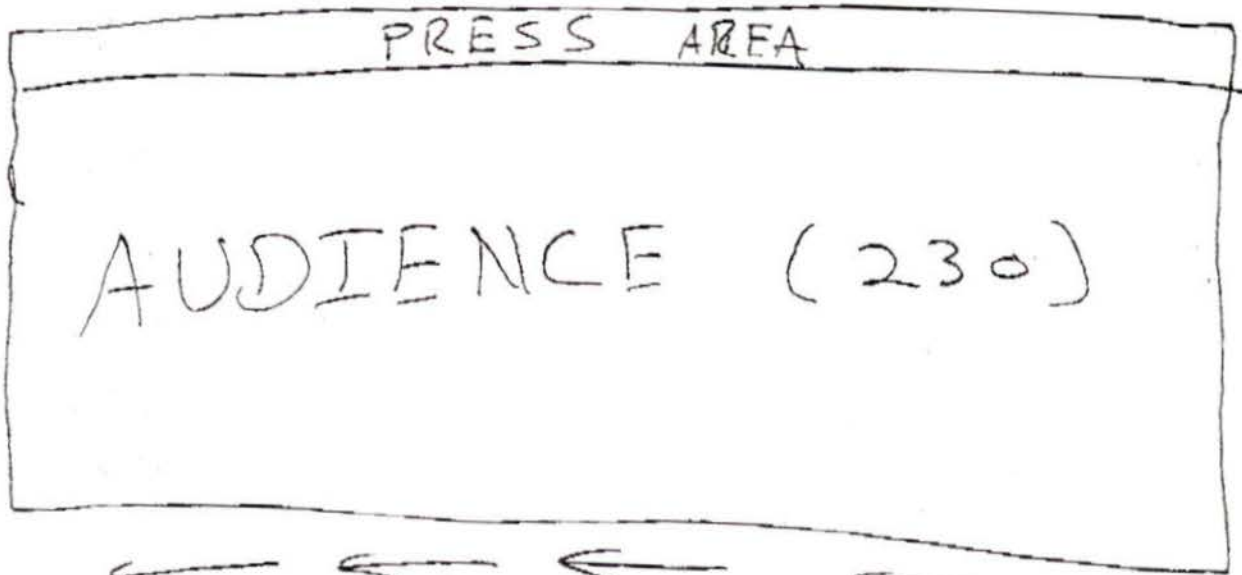
NOVEMBER 12, 1997



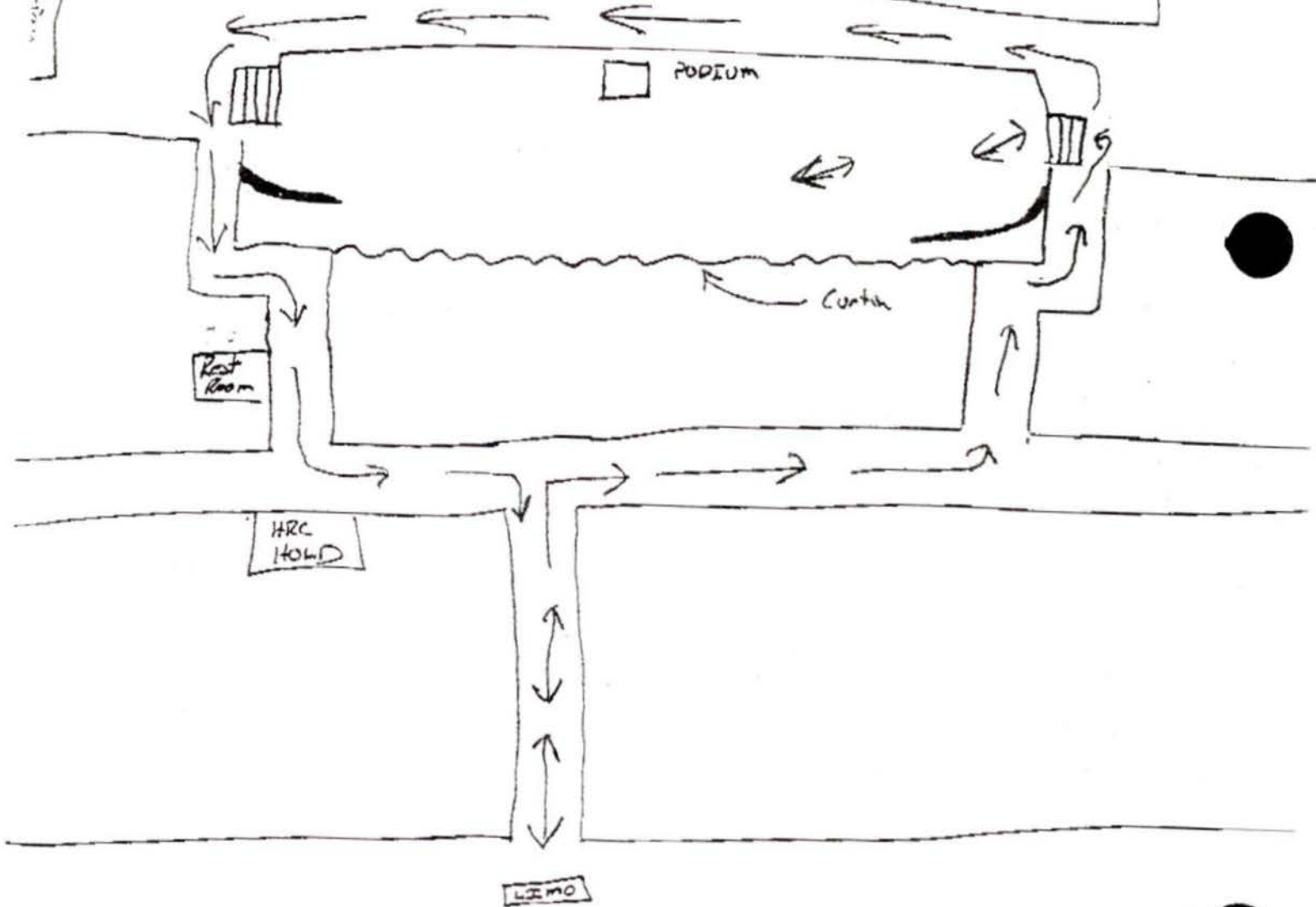
- ① American Delegation Arrives and greets Kyrgyz Delegation (no press)
- ② Press Sprung
- ③ Meeting
- ④ Depart

NOVEMBER 12, 1997
Kyrgyz-American University
BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

P. 12



Entrance



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Thank you so much. Mr. President you may be assured that I will carry your warm words and your kind invitation to my husband who is quite sad that I have had the opportunity to come to Uzbekistan first and I know that if there is any way possible he will want also come and see your beautiful country and I hope that that will come to pass. I want to thank you and Mrs. Karimov for the very warm and gracious welcome and hospitality that I have received from you and from your people. In the last two and a half days I have met with professional and business women in Tashkent to talk about what Non-governmental organizations were doing. I have talked with university students in Tashkent and teenagers in Bukhara about their questions as they asked me in English with great confidence in their voices about what was going on in the United States and what I thought of them and their country. I complimented them because I have met with students from all over the world and I say this not because I am here in Samarkand, I will say it when I return home I have never met a group of young people - young men and young women - who were better prepared and asked better questions than the ones I met in both Tashkent and Bukhara. I have also had the opportunity to visit your ancient monuments and I want to thank the people of Bukhara and Samarkand for opening these monuments for the entire world to appreciate. I have been privileged to see the old and the new Uzbekistan.

This morning, Mrs. Karimova and I visited a Jewish synagogue in Bukhara and there the rabbi in that small and ancient congregation told me of the ways that you, Mr. President, and your government have restored religious freedom and encouraged religious and cultural tolerance. Mrs. Karimova explained to me that under the Soviet/Communist regime, individuals and families were forbidden to exercise their religion and even prohibited from practicing time-honored traditions surrounding the birth of a child, a marriage or the loss of a loved one. Thankfully, those days are over. In Uzbekistan today, people of all religions and worship freely and openly.

And as we heard from our first speaker and from the President the nationalities that are present in this one city alone represented talents and abilities and aspirations of so many different traditions all of whom are living peacefully in this cultural and prestigious heart of Central Asia. I have come to Samarkand and to Uzbekistan on behalf of my husband, President Clinton and the American people to reinforce the young but strong and growing ties between our two countries and to witness first hand the important progress you are making as your move towards democracy, create a civil society and build an economy that helps all citizens realize their own dreams.

But I have come for another reason as well. I have come to learn from you. To learn from you not only about your rich past and rich culture but also about the deeply rooted traditions of respect for religions and ethnic differences which have enabled this culture to flourish for so many generations.

In the last days starting in Tashkent and traveling to Bukhara to here, I have been struck by the beauty of your places of worship. What made the sharpest impression on me, however, is their proximity. Muslims, Christians and Jews following their faith in the same neighborhoods. . Perhaps even more remarkable is that they have done so for centuries.

This spirit of respect extends to all corners of your society. For millennia, people of different backgrounds have lived together peacefully. . and they do so today. In a school I visited yesterday in Bukhara, there were children sitting in a circle asking me questions in Uzbek, Tajik and Russian and the questions came fast and their curiosity raced ahead and they wanted to carry on the conversation for a very long time. I reluctantly had to leave, but I could see in that group of children, the future of this great country. I know that the people of Uzbekistan have a long standing commitment to knowledge and learning. After all, this is the country that invented algebra. Now, when I was growing up, as a young girl and studying algebra in school I'm not sure that I would have been grateful for the invention of algebra. but of course the world advanced because of the scholarship that you had here. You are blessed by a great artistic and literary tradition, and your literacy rate is the envy of many countries. I recognize that these are demanding times as you build your new society and these resources are scarce, but I hope you will protect your strong system of education for girls as well as boys. Because I now from seeing the faces of university students

and the high school students that you have such great potential in the minds of your young people, and we know that a strong foundation of education is essential for building a thriving democracy.

Now perhaps your record for finding strength in your diversity does not seem remarkable to you. And the President told me, and repeated again here, he grew up in Samarkand, he perhaps took for granted the numbers of different people living together. That this tradition, this diversity is rare. For if you look around the world today, you will see where differences, old and new, ethnic and religious, are used as a pretext for hatred, violence and inhumanity.

In Bosnia and Rwanda, in Northern Ireland and in the Middle East, you will also see places where extremist hijack holy traditions not to lift people up closer to God, but to push them apart.

I imagine that the diversity of cultures represented by the caravans which plied the ancient Silk Road helped instill that tradition of respect that has armed you against these darker impulses. Travelers from China, Europe, India, Byzantium and the Arab world would sit, talk, and drink tea together in the caravansaries and experience which could only deepen bonds between individuals.

After all, what does trade depend on? To trade you must live in an open society. Free from walls and barriers. Information, ideas, goods and people must be able to come in and go out.

Trade is built on respect. To trade, you have to believe that someone -- someone who may be unlike yourself - has something of worth to offer. And that you, by the same reasoning, have something of equal value to offer them in return.

This basic transaction does more than spark commerce. It nurtures tolerance, a willingness to at least try to understand those whose race, heritage, or religion might be different from our own.

This openness to ideas led the great philosophers of Islam to incorporate Western thought into their teachings in the medressas of Bukhara and Samarkand in the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries. Their efforts literally preserved wisdom - like the work of Aristotle - that would otherwise have been lost to the ages.

This openness also made Uzbekistan a safe home for the world's oldest Jewish community outside of the Middle East.

It led to the growth of Naqshbandi Sufism, now the largest strain of Sufis. Bukhara is that seat of that remarkable movement, which respects other traditions while at the same time rejecting extremism.

I was very touched and honored when I met the mulla at the mosque in Bukhara yesterday and he expressed hope that echoed that of the president that the relations between our two countries would grow deeper and stronger.

And imagine this openness - which honors so many religions, which accepts people from many different places - is one of the reasons that Samarkand and Bukhara have survived for more than 2,000 years.

Despite your great history, I would not be surprised if your people did not have concerns about the years that lie ahead. Because, while the architecture of communism lies in rubble, the hard work of building the new structures of freedom is just beginning.

I know based on the experience of my own country, which is now the oldest surviving democracy, building democracy is a never-ending task that requires commitment of all citizens generation after generation.

From what I know of Uzbekistan and the other countries of Central Asia that I have visited, Kazakstan and Krygistan, I have every confidence that you will succeed. For it must have taken unimaginable courage and steadfastness to survive under the old order. In a system whose goal it was to stifle difference and erase culture and religion, you held fast, even as the iron curtain cut through the Silk Road. Now that curtain has been torn down and the Silk Road thrives again. as you travel on your journey, not on camels but moving towards a new distention a democracy and looking towards the future.

Like the traders of old who risked their lives to travel the Silk Road to new lands and new opportunities, the work of democracy will take you also to risk for new opportunities as well.

I want you to know that democracy in my country and in yours depends not only on developing institutions that protect individuals and include all individuals from different backgrounds. It not only depends on holding free and fair elections not once but time and time again. It depends not only on freedom of religion and freedom of expression. But it depends ultimately on whether democratic values live in the hearts and minds of all citizens. Nurturing these values, passing them down from generation to generation, is one of the most challenging tasks for any democracy, particularly a new and emerging one like yours. But I'm confident that the tradition of respect and tolerance that has stood this land so well for so many generations has better prepared you to face the challenges that lie ahead.

In a few short years, the bonds between our countries have grown strong. and trust that they will strong even stronger. We have so much to learn from each other. And you have much to teach the world about diversity. For centuries, that ancient Silk Road took the people of Central Asia to new worlds rich in commerce and culture. Today, you are traveling this road again, only this time in a different direction. For new worlds of freedom and democracy. Though the journey is hard and the horizon may at times seem distant, I hope you will take faith in the fact the President and peel of the United States will walk with you every step of the way. We are proud to be your friends and your partners on this journey to democracy.

Thank you very much.

November 13 - Tashkent Uzbekistan

Event: Opening of the Women's Wellness Center at Tashkent Institute

- Talking points to be provided by Jim Smith of AIHA
- Suggested tie-in talking points:

o It was my distinct pleasure in June to participate in a ceremony at Andrews AFB, just outside of Washington DC, which launched the 500th humanitarian mission to the Newly Independent States under Operation Provide Hope. This mission, a USAF C-5A, carried over \$7 million in pharmaceuticals donated through U.S. private volunteer organizations to the people of Uzbekistan.

o This was the beginning of a \$22 million USG medical package that delivered medicines, medical supplies and medical equipment to four outlying regions in Uzbekistan and twelve hospitals in Tashkent.

o I understand that you here at Tashmi-2 received over \$2 million of this Department of Defense relief commodity which included x-ray systems, sterilizers, operating room surgical instruments, and consumable supplies. I sincerely hope that this donation, given from the heart, has helped enhance your ability to provide quality patient care.

o Humanitarian relief efforts like the June Operation Provide Hope mission and AIHA Partnership affiliations like the one we find here at Tashmi, teamed with the University of Illinois at Chicago and focusing on key areas like neonatal care and nursing education, are invaluable links between our two peoples during a difficult period of change and transition. Since I was raised in Chicago, I am particularly proud that a Chicago hospital is involved in this program.

Burkhara:

NOTE: As part of the 500th Operation Provide Hope mission in June 97, the U.S. private volunteer organization AMERICARES distributed over \$900,000 in anesthetics, ophthalmics, vitamins and medical consumables to the Buhara/Karshi region.

Samarkhand:

NOTE: As part of the 500th Operation Provide Hope mission in June of 97, the private volunteer organization PROJECT HOPE distributed \$1.7 million in antihypertensives, anti-infectives, antiulcer drugs, anticeptics, penicillins, and medical consumables to the Samarkhand/Navoi/Dzniznak Region.

TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

EVENT: Ribbon Cutting and Visit to USAID Funded Women's Wellness Center with First Lady of Uzbekistan

DATE OF VISIT: November 13, 1997

TIME: 10:00-11:15am

DURATION: 1 hour and 15 minutes

LOCATION: Second State Medical Institute (Tashmi II)
Maternity Building, 5th Floor
2 Farobi Street, Tashkent, Uzbekistan 70019
Tel: (011-7-3712) 46-47-43

CENTER DIRECTOR: Dr. Dilmurod Yusupov
Dr. Alla Pogorelova

AIHA CONTACTS: Washington, DC: James P. Smith, AIHA Executive Dir.
Tel: (202) 789-1136 Fax: (202) 789-1277
Almaty: Zhamilya Nugmanova, AIHA Regional Dir.
Tel: (011-7-3272) 501-370 or (011-7-3272) 335-240
Fax: (011-7-3272) 501-371 or (011-7-3275) 811-446

BACKGROUND: TASHKENT WOMEN'S WELLNESS CENTER

Under a cooperative agreement with USAID to develop and support partnerships between health care institutions in the US and their counterparts in the NIS, AIHA and the Tashkent-Chicago partnership have developed a model comprehensive women's wellness center that is scheduled for official opening on November 13, 1997.

The Tashkent Women's Wellness Center is based a common model created by a women's health care task force drawn from twelve AIHA sponsored partnerships. The model has been adapted and implemented by the Tashkent-Chicago Partnership. As in the case of its sister women's health centers in the NIS, the Tashkent Center is a "joint venture" made possible by significant local contributions. As its contribution to this partnership effort, the Second State Medical Institute and Tashkent City Health Administration has provided space for the center in the Maternity wing of the Second State Medical Institute (Tashmi II) and undertaken considerable renovations roughly equal to \$70,000. The Center is designed as an adaptation of an ambulatory western women's center and

includes a registration and waiting area, two exam rooms, a procedure room, an adolescent room, a laboratory and diagnostics room, an education room, a conference hall, an office for the director, and a nurse administrator's office. In keeping with the partnership programs commitment to sustainable change, the Second State Medical Institute and the Tashkent City Health Administration is responsible for all operating costs of the center. In its initial year, the Center is expected to see approximately 600 clients per month and a larger number through its educational programs.

Unlike traditional family planning oriented centers, the Tashkent Women's Wellness Center focuses on the whole woman and offers general health services, educational programs and health promotion activities. The Center is a model of a multi-disciplinary approach to women's healthcare that relies on the collaborative expertise of educators, internists, gynecologists and nurses. Through this model, the Center is well equipped to provide women of all ages with access to medical advances and educational programs that impact and benefit their lives and health.

The staff of the Center has been trained in modern primary care screening and services, contraceptive technology, health education and promotion, center management and a "customer" service approach to healthcare. This has been accomplished through partnership exchanges in 1996 and 1997, a series of AIHA workshops for the twelve centers that make up this initiative, and through other USAID training efforts. In fact, the Center represents an important effort to integrate a variety of programs that have been introduced by US and other donor country and international community supported NGOs and programs. The Center's "uniqueness" lies in the integration and packaging of these services in a manner which addresses the needs of women comprehensively and efficiently and which can be replicated by health officials in Uzbekistan and in other NIS countries on a broad scale.

In June 1997, four staff members of the Women's Wellness Center (WWC) traveled to Chicago for a two-week training program related to clinical and administrative aspects of women's services. Nurse-physician teams observed several models of care, with special attention given to the role of nurses in outpatient clinics and the development of procedural guidelines appropriate for the Tashkent WWC. In addition, the Medical Director of the WWC participated in a five-day AIHA sponsored management training seminar in Moscow prior to his visit to University of Chicago.

The Center is currently receiving patients. The Center is especially focused on the prevention and treatment of anemia, prevention and early detection of cancer, diagnosis and treatment of cervical dysplasia and urinary tract infections, and STD screening. The Center will be a distribution site for contraceptives donated by USAID. The Center is in the process of developing a full range of

services to adolescents and incorporating new approaches for addressing the health needs of postmenopausal and elderly women. In all areas, a premium is being placed on patient education. Equipment and educational supplies donated by the partners at the University of Chicago - Illinois and purchased by AIHA under the cooperative agreement with USAID, valued at approximately \$80,000, was recently shipped and installed in early October 1997. These contributions supplemented equipment and supplies provided under Operation Provide Hope as part of the 500th Flight which the First Lady attended. Transportation of both donated and purchased supplies and equipment has been arranged through the US State Department's Office of the Coordinator for NIS Assistance.

Concurrent with the Center's official opening, the Director of Ambulatory Care for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Chairman of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford are conducting an educational program for Center staff which emphasizes the continuum of care required by women as they pass through life stages. The program includes techniques and approaches to address the whole person (body, mind and soul) in the delivery of women's health care.

EVENT SUMMARY:

The visit to the Tashkent Women's Wellness Center will include a brief VIP tour of the center (see detailed schedule and proposed list of participants), followed by a brief visit in the education room with patients of the Center who have participated in a range of educational classes. Upon completion of the tour, the First Lady will participate in a ribbon cutting and initiation of the Center's opening ceremonies that will continue after the First Ladies' departure. At this point, the First Lady will have an opportunity to not only make a few remarks about the Center and its opening but also elaborate on other USG and USAID health and women related projects before departing. These would presumably include Project Provide Hope assistance as well as other USAID programs.

TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN – CHICAGO, ILLINOIS PARTNERSHIP

AIHA's Medical Partnership Program between the cities of Tashkent, Uzbekistan and Chicago, Illinois, funded under a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), was formed in October 1992. The Uzbek partner, the Second Tashkent State Medical Institute (TashMI II), is one of the ten largest hospitals in the NIS, and the largest medical facility in Central Asia. The US partner, the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Medical Center, is a major academic medical center.

In addition to the Women's Health and Wellness Center visited by the First Lady, major areas of programmatic focus for this partnership have been neonatology and perinatal medicine, administration and finance, nursing and medical education.

Neonatology and Perinatal Medicine: A new neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) was equipped and staffed by physicians trained at UIC, and substantial improvement has occurred in resuscitation techniques and the care of premature infants. A focus of partnership activities has been to develop a Neonatal Resuscitation Training Center at TashMI II. The Center was officially opened in April 1997, and trains physicians, nurses and midwives from both TashMI II and other health care institutions in the region in neonatal resuscitation.

Hospital Administration and Financial Reform: Exchanges in hospital management and financial administration have focused on the reorganization of the hospital's management structure and the development of improved relationships between the medical institute and clinical departments. TashMI II has reduced costs and better balanced services by retiring nearly two-thirds of its beds and shifting patient care into more appropriate outpatient settings.

Nursing Reform: Nursing reform efforts have focused on the upgrading of clinical and management skills. Consequently, within the Chronic Disease Center of TashMI II, nurses have assumed primary responsibility for patient care and unit management. The Women's Wellness Center will provide another opportunity for demonstration of the expanding roles of nurses. Along with administrative responsibilities, nurses will also assume expanded roles in outreach and prevention, patient education and counseling.

Physician Training: Over 30 physicians have participated in intensive training programs in Chicago ranging from two weeks to six months. Training modules have been conducted in neonatology, orthopedics, neurosurgery, cardiac diagnostic and surgical procedures, obstetrics, gynecology, and medical education.

Summary Program Data

Total Partnership Exchange Days: 2,653 days

Value of In-Kind Partner Contributions: \$1.7 million



Innovations in Care at the Tashkent Women's Health Center

BY JOANNE NEUBER

Children will soon comprise more than 50 percent of the Uzbek population, according to Uzbek Ministry of Health statistics. This high birth rate, coupled with the fact that Uzbekistan has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the former Soviet Union —

estimated at 46 per 100,000 live births — is placing increasing demands on the country's already strained health care system.

The changing demographic patterns in Uzbekistan prompted the Second Tashkent Medical Institute (TASHMI II) to create one of the country's first women's health centers, in collaboration with the AIHA Tashkent-Chicago partnership program in April 1996.

"We see the importance of promoting a health care system based on primary care," Hamid Karimov, MD, director of TASHMI II said. "And women's health is a necessary component of that system."

This innovative women's health center provides comprehensive "cradle to grave" care for women in the region. It includes a maternity center, a neonatal care unit, and an ambulatory women's health clinic for women with medical, gynecological or obstetrical problems.

In a departure from traditional practice, the center consolidates women's health services in one building — services that tradi-



Alla Pogorelova (left) and Gultera Hashimova show the family planning materials at the Women's Health Center.

tionally were either non-existent, or were situated in buildings far from each other. For example, women deliver in their own private rooms. After delivery, women are transferred to a four-bed unit in the center with their babies to promote greater mother-child bonding. This new "rooming in" technique is also improving the level of breast-feeding in Uzbekistan, which is only 10 to 15 percent, according to US partner Dharmapuri Vidyasagar, MD, director of the Division of Neonatology at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The maternity center also provides fam-

ily-centered prenatal education, screening, and counseling services to expectant mothers. Midwives at the center have been trained to conduct Lamaze classes about childbirth techniques for expectant mothers and their birthing partners, who because of religious and cultural reasons are often a female relative or friend rather than the father. Promotion of family-centered childbirth at TASHMI II is a significant accomplishment, where traditional beliefs formerly discouraged birth partners from being present during childbirth, said the center's director and obstetrician Alla Pogorelova, who has trained with University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) partners in obstetrics, high-risk maternal care and gynecology.

One area where partners have had a great impact is educational training in neonatal and perinatal care. Tashkent partners collaborate with colleagues from Chicago to learn effective, low-tech ways to manage and care for high-risk mothers and infants. Vidyasagar said that partnership training programs at TASHMI II that target low-tech neonatal resuscitation techniques, have contributed to the decline in infant mortality at TASHMI II, from 27 per 1,000 live births (1,000 to 1,499 grams) in 1992 to 15 per 1,000 live births in 1995.

"The positive results in maternal and child health at TASHMI II are a result of the partnerships' collaborative program in neonatal and perinatal care," Vidyasagar said. "This program has been very effective in improving the care of mothers and their newborns."

The ambulatory women's health clinic is a "more effective system than the referral system of the past," Pogorelova said. Women who opt to come to the clinic for a medical consultation are not required to have a special referral from their polyclinic, and may



the clinic throughout the day or evening, she said.

Patient visits at the clinic have doubled since it was opened last year due to a change in pre-natal services practices to include greater patient education, according to Pogorelova. "There is more open discussion between physicians and women of family planning alternatives," she said.

The clinic also provides ongoing, free family planning services to women. A fam-

ily planning education classroom at the clinic was created with the help of many international health organizations to promote increased awareness of contraceptive alternatives, including IUDs, condoms and oral contraceptives. Women are also encouraged to consult with their physicians on possible social and economic issues that may affect the number of children they have, explains Pogorelova. Partner clinical training of doctor/nurse teams at TASHMI II complements

these programs, noted Pogorelova.

The most important outcome of the center may not be measured in hard data, but rather as the "change in the way we view women's health," Pogorelova said. Earlier, certain women's health issues like birth control alternatives and family planning were "simply not discussed" in traditional Muslim society she said. "Now we can openly discuss important and necessary women's health issues." ■

Mother and Child Health Information Center Opens in Albania

New parents and health professionals now have their own resource center at the Maternity Hospital in Tirana, Albania, thanks to the support of AIHA and Albania's Health for All Foundation. A reception and ribbon-cutting were held July 5 to mark the formal opening of the hospital's Mother and Child Health Information Center, with a ministry of health representative, USAID officials, hospital staff and AIHA staff members in attendance.

The center houses a library with medical books and professional journals for physicians and nurses (largely in-kind donations from AIHA partner Jacobi Medical Center in Bronx, New York), and a computer with CD-

ROM capability and a planned Internet connection. For new parents, the center offers educational materials on topics such as breast feeding and care of the newborn. Two full-time staffers, provided by the Health for All Foundation (with support from the Soros Foundation), will coordinate educational seminars for new parents, to be held in the center's large meeting room. This room will also be available for workshops and seminars organized by the hospital's physicians and nurses.

Various officials attended the opening, including: Teodor Todhe, MD, general director for hospitals at the Albanian Ministry of

Health; Deedee Blane, USAID Representative to Albania; Cam Pippitt and Silva Mitro of USAID; Zhani Treska, MD, director of the Maternity Hospital; Tatjana Daci, director of the Health for All Foundation; Bill Walsh, chief operating officer of Jacobi Medical Center; and Charles Brecher, professor of public administration at New York University, representing AIHA's health management education partnership between Albania and New York.



Left to right: Zhani Treska, MD, director of University Maternity Hospital in Tirana, Albania; Teodor Todhe, MD, of the Albanian Ministry of Health; and Anduena Yako, manager of the hospital's Mother and Child Health Information Center, join in the center's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The center will also serve as an office for AIHA's new in-country coordinator for Albania, Judy Biletznikoff.

SAMARKAND

Background

Samarkand celebrated its 2,500th birthday last year. It was a major urban center when it was conquered by Alexander the Great. The arrival of Chinese traders with silk in mid 2nd century, heralded Samarkand's rise as the very heart of the famous Silk Road. Samarkand remained an important trade city until sea routes between Europe and the Orient were opened. The Arab armies carrying Islam reached Samarkand in 712. In the 9th century, it became part of the Samanid Empire based in Bukhara. The city's glory ended with its destruction at the hands of Genghiz Khan in 1220. By early in the 13th century Samarkand bounced back when Tamerlane chose it as his capital.

From the end of the 15th century Samarkand slowly declined into a market town in the Khanate of Bukhara.

Today Samarkand, with a population of about 375,000, is a center of commerce supporting agricultural activity in the surrounding countryside. There has been some light industrial development. Today Samarkand is apart primarily by the presence of its spectacular historical sights.

Samarkand is an appropriate place to encourage preservation of cultural heritage through the revival and adaption of traditional handicrafts as well as through the preservation of the historical sites themselves, as well as the promotion of economic development through micro enterprise.

SITES

The proposed program will cover the major historic sites. They are wide-spread, requiring the use of vehicles to move from one site to another. At press time the order of sites remains to be determined. Orienting from the airport, the first place of interest is the observatory built by Tamerlane's grandson, Ulugbek, a noted scientists whose celestial observations remain valid to this day. Next will be the Shah-I-Zinda Mausoleum which is an avenue of Islamic architectural structures, notable for both the quantity and variety of color and form. Moving in toward the center of town, the next stop would be the famous monument to love, the Bibi Khanum, build by Tamerlane for his wife. It is only partly restored but its sheer size, makes it notable. Tamerlane's resting place, the Gur-I-Mir mausoleum. The Registan (place of sand) was the center of old Samarkand. It is bounded on three sides by three madressas or religious schools, the first, to the left was built by Ulugbek.

Many of the buildings were restored for the 2,500th birthday celebration but damage due to a rising water table and building settlement can still be seen. All of the buildings contain shops in which handicrafts are sold. Of special interest is the shop of Valentina located in the corner of the Tilla Kari Madressa. Valentina is reviving traditional block printing and quilting with traditional fabrics. She has received technical assistance under a USAID project.

BACKGROUND ON SITES

Gur-Amir

The dynastic sepulcher of Timur and his male heirs in the south-western part of the city was erected in 1404. Mosaics, out of light- and dark-blue glazed bricks, decorate the walls and the drum, and the tiled geometrical designs of the cupola shines bright in the sun. Restoration work was started in 1967; the exterior cupola and glazed decorations were restored before that, in the 1950-s. The mausoleum holds tombstones made of marble and onyx, the tombstone of Timur is carved from a slab of nephrite. The burials proper are placed in a crypt under the mausoleum.

Bibi Khanum

Timur's architectural colossus is the cathedral mosque Bibi Khanum, under construction from 1399, the year of Timur's India campaign, until 1404. The mosque was to surpass by far all earlier buildings, consuming a whole block near the main city gate Akhanin in the northern section of Samarkand. The mosque is a marvel, whose impact upon the contemporaries could not be summed up better than by a line from the court historian, Sherefeddin Ali Yezdi: "The dome would be unique were not the dome of Heaven its equal, unique would be the archway were not the Milky Way its match."

Shah-I-Zinda

The memorial ensemble of Shah-I-Zinda is unparalleled for its grandeur in the East. A paved passageway which runs down the southern slope of Afrasiab is lined in either side with sepulchers of the ruling dynasty and feudal nobility. The ensemble was begun near the grave of the legendary Kussam, a cousin of the Prophet Mohammad, who was nicknamed Shah-I-Zinda ("Live Shah"), in as early as the 11th-12th century but its preserved structures date mainly from the 14th century.

Ulughbek's Observatory

Although the least imposing, this site is perhaps the most remarkable. In the same way its builder, although not as famous as his grandfather, the mighty conqueror Tamerlane, was perhaps the most remarkable ruler of Samarkand. Ulughbek, a scholar, architect, thinker, artist, scientist and above all, master astronomer, was in many ways the Thomas Jefferson of Uzbekistan. Ulughbek presided over a period of tremendous progress in the arts and sciences in his kingdom. For his astronomical calculations and observations he gained world wide renown. His observatory was extraordinary, 48 meters in diameter, 40 meters high, equipped with the most modern instruments of the period, decorated in the glazed tiles of the period. From here Ulughbek himself made astronomical calculations that have withstood the test of time even better than these remaining foundations of his observatory. In the centuries since his death the site was lost and the observatory only rediscovered and restored in this century.

Site Visit Information - Samarkand
Show Room and Sales Hall of the
"MEROS" Artisans Association of Samarkand

Located in the Samarkand Art and History Museum across the street from the Registan, the works of over sixty members of the Association are on display. MEROS (Heritage) is a democratically governed, non-governmental organization formed in 1996 by a group of artistan who believed that by working together, they could begin to solve many of the problems facing them during the time of transition to a market economy. With technical assistance from Aid to Artisans (ATA), through a USAID-funded project, MEROS has grown to serve a diverse membership of more then 90 artisan entrepreneurs. Services include assistance with product design and marketing, business training, international networking and advocacy. One focus of attention has been the revival of ancient crafts such as paper making and the adaptation of traditional crafts to modern useage. MEROS has also received financial support from Mercy Corps International using funds from a US Department of Agriculture "Food for Progress" Grant.

Show Room and Sales Hall of the "MEROS" Artisans Association

In 1996 a group of independent artisans decided that they could best deal with the problems and opportunities presented by the transition to a market economy by banding together to form MEROS (Heritage)Artisans Association of Samarkand, a democratically governed, non-governmental organization. Under a USAID-funded project, Aid to Artisans(ATA) rendered technical assistance to the group, whose show room in the Samarkand Art and History Museum today displays the works of over sixty members of the Association. MEROS now provides its diverse membership of over 90 artisan entrepreneurs with service including assistance with product design and marketing, business training, international networking and advocacy.

MEROS also encourages the revival of ancient crafts, like paper making, and their adaptation for modern use. MEROS also received financial support from Mercy Corps International under a US Department of Agriculture "Food for Progress" Grant.

Located across the street from the Registan.

Valentina Romenko Designs, Registan

A success story for the USAID-supported Aid to Artisans project, Valentina's small shop in the Tilla Madrassa markets women's apparel combining traditional Uzbek costumes with contemporary design styling. In just two years Valentina has become recognized by both the local and international fashion community as a skilled and talented new designer. Her use of traditional textiles has also revived a growing market for locally produced handmade and hand-dyed silk materials that had nearly disappeared from Uzbekistan two years ago.

As a member of MEROS, Valentina received support, encouragement and technical assistance under this USAID-funded project, and her growing sales have enabled her to provide employment for four more women.

Located in the corner of the Tilla Kori Madrassa in the Registan.

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
002. list	Press Traveling on the First Lady's Trip [Personally Identifiable Information] (2 pages)	00/00/0000	P4/b(4), b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 23216

FOLDER TITLE:

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Ukraine [binder] [2]

2015-0275-S
rc2104

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
003. email	To Julie E. Mason from Tom [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	11/05/1997	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 23216

FOLDER TITLE:

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Ukraine [binder] [2]

2015-0275-S

rc2104

RESTRICTION CODES

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To: Julie E. Mason

cc:

Subject: CBS folk meeting trip in Tashkent

Hi!

CBS plans to do some reporting near and with the First Lady as she travels through the former Soviet Union. The following people will want to catch up with the trip in Tashkent and will need credentials and hotel rooms for arrival November 11 and departure November 13.

David Hawkins, the producer for this unit, has advised the US Embassy in Tashkent of his plans, but the Embassy needs to know that these folks are accredited.

Hawkins advises that his credit card may be used for room guarantees; it is (b)(6) [003]

The CBS folks are:

richard threlkeld, correspondent
david hawkins, producer
sahsa ovsyannikov, associate producer
eric teed, cameraman
david grout, sound technician
warren arenstein, editor

Thanks! If there are any questions, just call me at 202-457-4542, or reply via e-mail.

Best, Tom