

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

TCG-1

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December 20th 1990/February 4th 1991

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Dear Peter,

I am not sure when ICWA fellows start their newsletters, but I will launch my first now, still well within December and well before starting the fellowship proper. Call it a trial run.

The reason for this jumping the gun is that a number of things have already started to gel regarding the Central Asia Fellowship. Nothing particularly profound, but perhaps of sufficient interest to warrant a few shared notes.

On my way from Montana to Hanover, I stopped off at Harvard University to check into book stores and to try and meet a few resident experts on the Central Asia region.

The initial prospects did not look good: I had been trying to contact people for a week, but all in vain.

But on an off chance that I could still arrange at least one meeting, I called one Margaret Lindsay, a woman who heads the university's Inner Asia Studies department, at her home on Sunday.

Once again, she had no time, but she did give me the telephone number of a visiting scholar from the region, a certain Kaher Batar, a Uiger Turk from Singkiang/Xingkiang province in western China. As luck would have it, three Uzbek and one Tadjik visitors from Tashkent were staying in his apartment, and I was invited over to meet them.

The date was set for eight o'clock Sunday evening, but in the event the Uzbeks did not show until midnight and our socializing was postponed until Tuesday evening upon my return from Hanover.

It was well worth the postponement as it was a very curious party indeed, and I am tempted to suggest that it evinced a number of subjects which I will be digging into once in Uzbekistan proper.

The first pleasant surprise was language.

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Thomas Goltz is an ICWA fellow studying Central Asia, with an emphasis on the Turkic Republics of the Soviet Union.

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Since 1925 the Institute of Current World Affairs (the Crane-Rogers Foundation) has provided long-term fellowships to enable outstanding young adults to live outside the United States and write about international areas and issues. Endowed by the late Charles R. Crane, the Institute is also supported by contributions from like-minded individuals and foundations.

All the Uzbeks spoke fine English, which became the primary language of communication, but Kaheer spoke Anatolian Turkish as well, and would periodically translate from Uzbek/Uiger into that language for my benefit.

As suspected, Turkish and Uzbek are remarkably close, and with a bit of ear-bending, I soon was able to distinguish many familiar words in which "e's" had become "a's", hard "g's" "k's", etc. I suspect that you will have to get used to forgiving me for giving you little language lessons all along the way...

But Turkish and Uzbek and English were not the only languages at the table. Kaheer, the Uiger, has a Hong Kong girlfriend named Judy, and those two would rattle away in Mandarin Chinese, while the Uzbeks spoke together in Russian--the language they were schooled in. Even their accents in English were stamped with the throaty "h" sound of a Russian speaking English. Although the subject was never confronted directly, it was clear that the four were from the upper crust of Uzbek society, and were probably all CP party members.

By name, they were: Bakhtiyor Anvar Islamov, chief of the Foreign Relations Department of the Uzbek Academy of Science; Sadik Safaev, professor of history at Tashkent University; Ulugbek Ishankhodjaev, a student (and the most talkative about the CP) and Ravsham Buzikhanov, the Tadjik in the party who doubled as cook and court jester.

Aside from Kaheer, who has been resident in the United States more than five years, all the Uzbeks were at Harvard on temporary scholarships. Their purpose was to make academic contacts and research various aspects of American society which they could then use as their own country undergoes its transformation into a "market economy" and "full independence".

I was a bit surprised by the casual manner in which the Uzbeks flipped off these key words relating to the wrenching changes in store for their country, but let it go without comment.

Reality began to rear its uncomfortable head when they began inquiring into my plans to visit their country.

If one can be casual about terms like "independence" and "market economy" when in the USA, it instantly became clear that the same sort of casualness does not exist back in good ol' Uzbekistan.

"Why do you wish to stay in our country?"

"To write a book."

"But Dr Allworth (Edward, of Columbia University) has already written one."

"I will be writing another."

"In which discipline?"

"Well...general."

"Who will be your sponsor?"

"That's why I'm here, talking to you--to find out the best department in the Academy of Science for me."

The interrogation continued for some time: if a professor, what was my field? If research was my thing, which section of the Academy of Science had invited me? None yet? Then which did I want? Numismatics? Anthropology? Archaeology?

For my part, it was the first bath of the bureaucratic fire I will have to anticipate for the next few years: Uzbekistan, like the rest of the Soviet Union, does not seem to be a society that deals with

ambiguity very well. People, especially the wandering foreign scholar/writer type of person, should be pigeon-holed into as specific a niche as possible.

I did, however, have one confusing weapon on my side: I had fortuitously brought along a copy of my guide book to Istanbul, which, if I do say so myself, is a lovely book indeed. I let my new friends pass it around, and they were very pleased.

"We hope that you will do a book like this on Uzbekistan," said Sadik the historian, "It shows much love and understanding."

The conversation now changed from an interrogation of my mission to Uzbekistan to the situation of Turks in general and the sad fact that whether from Tashkent or Istanbul, Turks are pigeon-holed as a barbarians and fanatics by the outside world. The Uzbeks especially lambasted the parachute type of western press man who have started dropping in to cover ethnic violence and such in recent years. In essence, they were at pains to insist on the modernity of their country and its contribution to civilization as a whole.

At around this time there arrived the last element of the party--Dr Jamel Akbar, a Muslim fundamentalist Uzbek professor from Saudi Arabia. I will refer to him as "the Mufti".

Immediately, the atmosphere at the little party changed, with Sadik the historian even going so far as to hide his glass of vodka. (He later took it back out to toast the Mufti's tea glass).

The Mufti's family had moved to Saudi Arabia during the course of some distant Hajj, and he spoke both Uzbek and excellent English as well as Arabic. His young daughter spoke only Arabic, in which language we communicated, to the delight and amazement of my hosts.

I should avoid reading too much into the languages and politics represented at the table, but it seemed that nearly all elements of the Uzbek equation were present:

Here was Kaher, born a Muslim, but whose speciality was pre-Islamic Buddhism among the Turkic peoples of the East, and whose personal preference, as reflected in Judy, his mate, drifted toward things Chinese. Across from him sat Dr Akbar, the Mufti, whose vision of the past and future of things Uzbek focused on Islam. He had come to deliver his new book about Muslim city builders which he wanted placed, along with reviews, in the Uzbek National Library.

Between the Buddhist and the Mufti sat the four Uzbeks, chatting to each other in a mixture of Uzbek and Russian, raising Vodka toasts to me, the *gavur* American in one breath, and then professing a deep and abiding interest in Islam and Muslim culture in the next.

What about alcohol in Turkey? someone asked.

"Raki (or Turkish ouzo)," I pronounced, "is nearly a religion in Turkey," and I began an expostulation on that country's ambivalent attitude toward all things Muslim.

The Mufti, although a very decent sort of guy, did not like the turn in the conversation and began to expound upon the evils of drink in general. Then, in a confession made to shock and confuse, he admitted to having been an "alcoholic" during his errant youth in Saudi Arabia and during his years as a student in the United States. Happily, he had recognized alcohol as the infamy and evil it was, had re-embraced religion and been "reborn".

The clear suggestion was that the Uzbeks at the table might think about doing the same.

"But the Quran only bans date-wine," opined Ravshan, the Tadjik, baiting the Mufti.

"Oh, no," the Mufti replied, "It is the last prohibition because it is the most difficult to comply to, but it is very rigorous indeed."

The Mufti proved his point by reciting the relevant verse from the Quran in the sing-song voice of a muezzin, and everyone at the table, with the exception of Judy and I, bowed their heads and piously raised their palms. Kaher gave me a long wink to let me know what he thought of public prayers.

Discussion next turned to observances of Islam in Turkey, and then Uzbekistan, which, I was informed by my four new friends, had once been a center of science and learning.

The subject of the general decline of the great religion had been broached, so I jumped in with both feet, bringing forth the favorite theory of my friend and former professor David King, to wit, that Islamic Science was all informed and inspired by a single goal: finding the qibla, or direction of Mecca, from any place where Muslims were to be found. It was no coincidence, I said, that the greatest flourishing of scientific endeavor during High Islamic Times had occurred in exactly those regions where the problem of qibla-finding was most acute, namely, the most distant reaches of the Dar Al Islam: Spain and Central Asia. King's argument, to which I subscribe, is that — by dint of distance alone the Muslims were compelled to develop the mathematical sciences to new heights, and as related spin-offs to their endeavors, managed to develop the related sciences of geometry, trigonometry and geography far in advance to anything known of in Europe at the time. But when the stated goal of all this heady research was achieved, IE, the ability to plot the exact qibla from anywhere on earth, Muslim science went into irreversible decline.

The Uzbeks at the table nodded their heads and reached for the vodka, while the Mufti reached into his bag of religious tricks to score a point.

"But Islam is on the rise again," said the Mufti, "And the truth of the Quran has been verified now by contemporary science."

The man of religion proceeded to explain the "19" theory: namely, that computers have shown the perfect Quran to be perfectly divisible by perfect number, 19, the same number of Arabic letters that go into the first phrase of the Quran--~~Bismillah Arrahman Arraheem~~.

Subscribers to this numerical theory say that the mystery and beauty of this mathematical code, taken with an obscure reference within the Quran about "19", proves absolutely that the Muslim Holy Book is the very literal word of God.

Kaher and the Uzbeks nearly laughed out loud.

"Which edition did they use to divide?" asked Kaher.

"They're all the same," opined the Mufti.

"The Tashkent Quran?" asked all the Uzbeks at once.

This was a bit over my head, but my hosts went on to explain that one of the oldest Qurans in the world is the so-called Tashkent Quran, which evinces significant differences with the later, canonical versions produced and copied in Baghdad and other early centers of Islamic civilization.

The fight was on, but I was largely cut out of it because the Central Asians and the Mufti lurched into rapid Uzbek, which was way beyond my level of comprehension.

"Barbarians," said Judy loud enough for Kaher to hear her, and both smiled.

Finally, the Mufti decided it was time to go. But to prove there were no hard feelings, the Uzbeks invited him to close the evening with a little prayer, which he did.

Once again everyone raised their palms upward and hummed a communal "Amen" as the Mufti completed his sing-songing of the sura "Zilzal," or the "The Earthquake".

It is, curiously, one of the five or six suras that I have memorized, and I do like it, but I have no idea if the Uzbeks knew the meaning of the words or if the Mufti had specifically chosen it to resonate on the 1966 earthquake which leveled most of Tashkent. If so, it was a nice touch.

Meanwhile, my scholarly argument with the Mufti had not only established me as a legitimate orientalist among my hosts but opened up the discussion into a number of different, if related avenues.

"It is difficult to distinguish between religion and tradition," said Ulugbek, the youngest of the group, once the Mufti was gone.

He elucidated what he meant by giving several examples of "high people in the party" whose careers had been ruined when they showed any speck of Muslim feeling.

One such anonymous gentleman, Ulugbek related, was obliged to bury his father within two hours of his father's 4:00 am death in order to disguise the fact from his neighbors and thus prevent them from paying their public condolences over the next twelve hours: opening his doors to traditional Islamic death ritual would have scotched the man's further rise within the party.

But now this was changing, and the Party, keen on preserving its hold over Uzbekistan, was almost encouraging local officials to "bridge the gap" between the religiously-inclined masses and public policy by re-embracing the outward symbols of faith, or at least tolerating "tradition."

Clearly, this subject will be a major avenue of exploration once I am on the ground.

The discussion turned from religion to culture and then to education, and I had to ask my interlocutors why they spoke to each other in Russian more often than Uzbek.

"Education and Russification," came the simple reply, and I noted a trace of regret that it was so.

Still, the younger two seemed more inclined to rap in Russian than the older pair: Sadik, especially, was keen on all things Uzbek.

"To Uzbekistan!" he shouted, raising the last of the vodka.

"To Uzbekistan!" replied the other three.

"To Montana!" toasted Kaher, and the four Uzbek's smiled.

Sadik jumped up and ran to his library, producing a book of poems in Uzbek. He then turned to his favorite and proceeded to recite. It was either entitled "Friends" or "Remembrance"--I forget which, because I had Kaher translate from Uzbek into Turkish for a sort of running, literary language lesson: once again, meaning would emerge from the initial obscurity of the text once the connecting links were made.

For example, most of the lines ended with an emphatic "Is Da Tur", with the accent on the second word. At first it made no sense to me, and then I managed to put it together as Iz De Dur, with the accent on

the first word, meaning, in Anatolian Turkish, "stay with the trace"-- a rather peculiar way to express "remember", but with a little imagination, it fit.

The hour was late, the vodka dry, and Kaher and Judy wanted to go to bed. More to the point, a friend had dropped off a copy of Gorbachev's most recent speech to the Soviet Parliament, and all four Uzbeks were keenly interested in seeing what their leader had to say about the future of their country. (And the sense was that all of the USSR was their country, and not just Uzbekistan).

Addresses were exchanged, along with the names of friends, family and officials to contact during my preliminary journey. All four gave sincere promises to help in which ever way they could, and then we kissed good-bye Turkish style, which, I gather, is also Uzbek style.

"When I get there, what should I bring as gifts?" I asked.

"Cocaine," said Ravshan with a straight face, and they all broke up laughing.

"No, seriously," I continued.

"Good health, that's all," said Sadik.

Then they walked me to my car and waited until I had driven away before returning to their abode.

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The little party had been my first real contact with Uzbeks, and it had been extremely pleasant. As suggested, there were a number of themes that emerged from the various conversations that I will develop once on the ground.

Chief among these are:

- 1) What role does the CP still play in Uzbek intellectual life?
- 2) To what degree have young Uzbeks been russified? How deep is the reaction to that process at this time?
- 3) What is Islam in Uzbekistan? Or put another way, what is tradition and what is religion?
- 4) How deeply is Buddhism still entrenched among Chinese Uiger Turks, if at all, or have the Beijing authorities attempted to reimpose it in preference to Islam?
- 5) What is the visceral relationship between Uigers and Uzbeks?
- 6) What, if any, role do the migrant communities in Saudi, Turkey and elsewhere play in contemporary Uzbek life?

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Continued: January 31st 1991

Same desk, same subject, a month and more later.

Much has happened since I penned that first epistle to you; I thought about throwing it, but have decided to include it for what it is worth and leave the evaluation up to you.

The month--January 1991--has brought many developments, not the least of which is the delay and then confirmation of my reconnaissance trip to Tashkent, now scheduled for the day after tomorrow. Thus I feel compelled to get this off to you before I get lost in another month of study, insight and development.

For that is what it has been.

First of all, with no relevance to the fellowship whatsoever aside from my ability to devote my attention to Central Asia, is that I have finally flung an old albatross from my neck--a book on my wanderings as a One Man Shakespeare Show in Africa so many moons ago. It was first drafted about ten years ago and unsuccessfully reworked several times. Now, however, I am done with it and if not totally delighted--how could one be?--at least it is in the sort of shape my agent can show around, and if it meets with rejection everywhere, it can sit and gather dust on a shelf until grandchildren discover it.

The final version is labled "10%" on my word processor, signifying a last minute gouging of what I had previously regarded as the leanest version I could produce. I simply pretended it was somebody else's book and hacked out paragraph and sub chapter right and left, with no mercy...

Enter a free man!

The other, and more significant development is that I have become a professor, and thanks to George and Saddam, may be the hottest one <sup>on</sup> the campus of Montana State University, if not always in the most positive sense: inside and outside the classroom, I find myself defending the hawkish position in the conflict, often to my own discomfort, but more of that anon.

As you know, I thought it best to pursue an academic "cover" for the Central Asia venture on the general notion that the authorities would probably feel more comfortable with Professor Goltz than loose-canon Goltz the journalist rolling around on the deck of the sinking Soviet ship of state. As such, I volunteered as an adjunct professor of Politics to Montana State University, had an article written about me and the Middle East in the local press, and started teaching on January 7th--a week and a day before the start of the war.

My class is set up as a special ~~■~~ seminar for juniors and seniors, with an enrollment of 10. The first day there were over 40 registered and non registered students. It has now settled down to around 25 or 30, and it is a lively affair indeed, starting with the first session: I was cruel enough to give my own "Middle East Placement Quiz"--an assortment of profound and ridiculous questions pertaining to the geography, politics and religions of the region. I don't think anyone in the class was surprised that just about everyone failed. That is why they were taking the class. <sup>But</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>unnerving</sup> to establish that these otherwise intelligent and tuned in folks were so ignorant about an area so subject to press overkill coverage--or maybe that is the source of their ignorance. Iraq, for example, was uniformly described as the second largest Muslim country in the world, with population estimates ranging upward of 70 million. Arabs and Muslims were usually

regarded as identical, and Turks were regarded as Arabs. You can imagine the rest.

But in addition to correcting through the dispensation of whatever wisdom and insight I may have accumulated throughout my contact with the region, I also discovered that there is much to be learned by the teacher through the very act of teaching: as the cliché goes, the best way to study something is to instruct it. And in keeping a week's reading ahead of my class, I am doing exactly that. And herein lies the first taste of the beauty of an ICWA fellowship: I am reading, voraciously, tearing through any number of books which I have collected or thought about paging through but have always managed to escape because I was too busy hustling or churning out an article or generally worrying about paying the bills...I won't detail my diet save for saying that I have been spending much time working through and filling in the holes of my own education as well as reviewing everything from the early history of the Baath party in Syria and Iraq to rereading the Quran to putting together the various factions of the PLO and trying to make some sense out of the mess of Lebanon. In a word, I have come out of the confines of my Expert-on-Turkey closet and have embraced the larger Muslim world. Obviously, enlarging the scope of my interests--even if in review--takes away from the number of hours I should be devoting directly to the theme of Central Asia, but I am certain that this in-depth review of the modern Middle East will come in very handy when out on the fringes of that world.

A last note on teaching before I move on: As a basic text I have been using the 1919 King-Crane report on the Near East. I hope this warms the heart cockles of old fellows and ICWA supporters, having the founder's vision of the Middle East ~~blatant~~ unearthed and investigated, but in my instance, it has put me in the often uncomfortable position of representing a position of American involvement and international responsibility in order to counteract the familiar urge toward isolationism of folks hereabouts which has become acute with the events of January 16th--the war with Iraq.

'Nuf said on that one for now.

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In parallel with my grand review for my class, I have also made a direct engagement with the study of Central Asia. Useful in the larger picture has been a subscription, with back issues, of the Radio Free Europe "Report on the USSR"; there are also a number of specific books and publications I have been plugging through for basic background on history, economics as well as Uzbek as a language.

Let me address the language issue first:

I am hardly in the position to voice a critique at this point, but have to note that the only text (at least in English) used in teaching Uzbek is an Indiana University-issued translation of a Russian-Uzbek grammar unusually interested in whether Akhmad or Khatije are going to the cotton field today or whether they are good workers in the office of the kolkhoz...it rather reminds me of Kiswahili grammars which teach one how to order tea in the imperative voice.

And more.

I have to say that although learning the Cyrillic characters has been remarkably easy due to my Turkish base (I was reading chapter ten my second day) I have to wonder how suited Uzbek is to Cyrillic. The same question could be asked of all the adopted alphabets the Turkish languages have gone through--Arabic in the early days of Islam, Latin ala Ataturk in the Republic of Turkey in the 1920s, etc--but the Russian script seems totally arbitrary and imposed. I can't say much more at this point, aside from an intuitive sense that if and when vital changes come to Central Asia, the orthographic symbols of socialist unity may be the first thing to be thrown out, along with colonial lexicons like the one I am currently using.

In discussions with the Seattle-Tashkent sister city crowd (see more below) the subject of Uzbekification has continually come up. Apparently, the nationalist authorities are now demanding that Uzbek be used for all records, including those kept for patients in hospitals, and this has outraged and driven away any number of non-Uzbek physicians. With a growing jingoistic attitude, a script reform cannot be too long off.

One thing I will have to watch out for is my own sense of ease with Anatolian Turkish and the natural impulse to use it, or at least its cognate intonations, instead of Uzbek. Another way of saying that is to slip into the mind set of Anatolian Turkish being "right" and Uzbek something less than correct. For your monthly language lesson of record, regard the following differences between Anatolian Turkish and Uzbek--"Men" for "Ben" (I); "Ouq" for "Yok" (No); "Kham" for "Hem" (Both). The accusative case is just slightly different: "Bu Odam-ni" for "Bu Adam-a" (To that man), as is the dative: "Ou-ga" for "Ev-a" (to the house), etc.

Attitude will be important, as I have gathered in conversations in Seattle and Boston that there is not a little resentment among Uzbeks against the Anatolian Turks for having abandoned their kinsmen and for having claimed the mantle of "Turkishness" for themselves. How much of this has been fostered by Moscow is one of the many questions I will be addressing. Pundits are now speculating that <sup>with</sup> the snubbing of Turkey by the EC and its rise in prominence in the fractured world of the Middle East, coupled with the fracturing of central authority in the Soviet Union, Ankara will be looking to play the kinship card.

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The other notable thing about Uzbek studies in the USA is that they virtually do not exist outside the two rival--even inimical--centers of the University of Washington at Seattle and the University of Indiana at Bloomington.

The Bloomington folks have been helpful by sending me their prospectus as well as the aforementioned plantation lexicon, and I have had long and useful conversations with several of their staff, but have not yet visited them and thus remain opinionless about the merits or demerits of their program.

As for the Seattle crowd, Hicran and I did have the occasion to meet with the University folks, and I suspect that it was the beginning of a long relationship, despite what I might term a near

obsessive "claiming" of Uzbekistan as its own, exclusive academic balliwick.

The reasons for this is the very lively sister city relationship between Seattle and Tashkent, which is nearly 20 years old, and thus predates glasnost euphoria.

Today, it is expressed in everything from visiting puppet shows to the construction of a peace park to exchanges of school kids to the placement of a Seattle doctor there for a year's research in hepatitis vaccines.

The putative prime mover in all this traffic is one Professor Ilse Cirtautas, a Lithuanian nationalist and Central Asia scholar who now heads the University of Washington's Near East Department. We had a long and very productive coffee shop conversation, during which she promised to replace my plantation lexicon with a much better Uzbek grammar she is working on. She also was kind enough to supply the names of several poets and other Uzbek scholars in Tashkent; her department also has four young students there on a non-IREX exchange. UW does not like the folks in Princeton any more than they like the folks in Bloomington.

Hicran and I were also invited by the good professor to a well-attended Uzbek tea and lecture on Kazakistan by one Paul Buell at the university. The lecture itself was close to brilliant, but what was most impressive was the attendance: over 20 students who had dropped their Friday lunch to come and listen and talk. In addition to the Americans, there were about a half a dozen students from Uzbekistan, Mongolia and Xingkiang/Singkiang. The discussion following the Buell lecture was lively, focusing on Kazak studies in general and rising Kazak nationalism in particular.

I sought out Buell after the talk and invited him to lunch, but he asked that I visit him at his home instead, which I did. It turns out his lecture was entirely derived from the reading and translating of Kazak newspapers over a period of 10 years or so. He has never been there and has only met one Kazak in his life. (!) His linguistic talents of dealing with text appear to be truly remarkable: at a loss to find a decent Kazak dictionary, he learned Turkish, because there is one in that language; his approach to Mongolian was much the same, learning German and Chinese for the task. For kicks he overlapps his MacIntosh with Georgian and Armenian fonts and is working on Syriac so as to get behind medieval Mongolian written top to bottom in the transmogrified alphabet brought by the pals of Prester John, in which ~~parts~~ of the cookbook of Ghenghiz Khan was written...

Both at his lecture and during our chat Buell also addressed the sticky issue of academic sources, charging that most of the books I am currently reading are all drawn from Russian material, and thus slanted. It was pretty self-serving, but maybe accurate: most of the academic experts have arrived at Central Asian studies via Soviet Russian studies, looking for a new niche. Again, it is far too early for me to comment at this point, but it feels that on the academic level I am walking into a very cramped hornet's nest of extreme loyalties and positions.

But if Buell was fascinating, he was also just a tad pathetic: either due to personal reasons or simply bad timing, he seemed to be on the edge of bitterness born of neglect. Here was a lingual hermit genius who missed the train due to the sheer obscurity of his area of

interest and expertise, which is only appreciated by the precious few Thomas Goltz's of this world. With whom else are you going to discuss verbal tense conformity between Uzbek dialects and the peculiar lack of vowel harmony in southern Kazak?

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Happily, Seattle was also full of others who were directly involved in Central Asia but without the sense of despair or displacement, namely, the sister city circle.

For some peculiar reason or magic, the idea of direct, personal involvement in a place no-one had ever heard about before struck a chord in Seattle's doctor/lawyer/real estate developer and late hippie crowd, and now the city fairly vibrates with folks who have spent a week or two or ten in Uzbekistan either working on the Peace Park Project or, more recently, involved in such diverse exchanges as puppeteers and R&R bands...

The unique relationship seems to have developed out of a mixture of fluke, fastidiousness and fate.

The first is described as the personal rapport established between the then mayor of Seattle and the then mayor of Tashkent at some international mayoral conference in the early '70s; the second by the devotion of Professor Cirtautas for her Uzbeks (and her Lithuanian antipathy for Moscow dictating the terms of IREX exchanges) and the third by the fact that a couple of old Peace Corp volunteers decided to reactivate themselves to ameliorate the tensions of the Cold War. This last group, Ploughshares, seems to have provided the emotional glue so lacking in other sister-city relationships, and as such, they deserve some comment here. Ploughshares essential mission was to get just-folks in the USA and USSR to impact on government policy through citizens' diplomacy. This might have gone nowhere fast but for the personal rapport of the two mayors and the constant pro-Uzbek prodding of Prof Cirtautas: but with it, the peculiar coalition of forces soon conspired to having well-heeled Seattlites spending their vacations whacking nail and slopping mortar at the Peace Park in the middle of Tashkent town. In a word, there is a consciousness in Seattle about Tashkent; it is (or at least was) a subject of conversation at cocktail parties, the way a New Yorker might talk about a recent trip to Puerto Rico or the Catskills...This is an accomplishment indeed. And it is thus not surprising that there grew up a near identity between Ploughshares people and the members of the sister city committee, and when I met with one group, I was usually meeting with both.

But therein lies the rub. Most of the Ploughshare contacts seem to have been among the non-Uzbek or at least assimilated Uzbek crowd, and with growing anti-Russian tension in Uzbekistan, many of Ploughshares' pals are leaving. Also, with the completion of the Peace Park (1988) and the larger sea-change in perceptions of Soviets and Americans during the last decade, Ploughshares' essential mission and specific task seem to have been accomplished.

Where it goes from here is anyone's guess.

There was a follow-up mission to Soviet Armenia to work on earthquake relief housing at the end of 1988, with the Soviets reciprocating by sending a group to build public housing on an Indian

reservation outside Seattle the next summer. Currently, the two groups have mounted a joint project in Ethiopia to build a model village/farm south of Addis Ababa. I gather that the Soviets involved are not Tashkentites; I also gather that there are problems. Significantly, Ploughshares founders are now going back to their regular jobs, and an answering machine has been set up in what was formerly a very lively office.

Hal Green, a founder of Ploughshares and a member of the Sister City committee (and a pal of ICWA trustee and expert Seattle host Albert Ravenholt) took us to a pot-luck celebrating the return of the Ethiopian volunteers, where I met Dr Aldon Bell, the chairman of the Sister City committee, as well as several other folks who had once been involved the Peace Park project. All seemed to be drifting away from interest in Tashkent.

The committee folks, however, did promise me letters of introduction to relevant institutions, and gave me a host of names and addresses to look up, including that of the aforementioned Seattle doctor currently on a one year sabbatical to Tashkent.

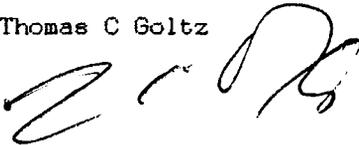
Rather like an ICWA newsletter, the good doctor and his wife have been writing every month to friends and family about an increasingly bleak scene: all the letters of introduction in the world and nearly two decades of sister cityhood could not get the family out of a government hotel and into their brand new apartment for months: the hosts had decided that the couple had to wait until the new, shoddily made building had achieved 70% occupancy, at which point the heat would be turned on...

The litany of stiff-upper-lip despair as well as the many small thrills and joys of living as one of the small (but apparently growing) community of Americans in deepest darkest Tashkent expressed in the letters is a sobering and attractive reminder of what we will also face.

Well, enough for now: the next report will be from ground zero.

Best Regards,

Thomas C Goltz



Received in Hanover 2/9/91