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U.S. Embassy Newsletter

April-July, 2010

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## SECRETARY CLINTON VISITS ARMENIA



On July 4-5, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Yerevan where she met with President Sargsian and Foreign Minister Nalbandian to discuss bilateral issues as well as issues related to regional

peace and stability. During her visit she also met leaders of civil society and praised them for their efforts to promote democratic values, including accountable governance, free and independent media, and respect for human rights. She also reiterated her support for Armenian democracy and raised concerns about media freedom, stating "I know many of you are concerned about the government's recent changes



*Especially popular with Armenians was Secretary Clinton's decision to walk from the Presidential Palace to the Marriott Hotel.*

to the law on TV and radio. And these are concerns that the United States, the OSCE, and the European Union share. I raised this issue and was told that the government is open to amending the law this fall." The Secretary also made a private visit to the Memorial at Tsitsernakaberd as a sign of respect for the 1.5 million Armenians who lost their lives in 1915.

*Photos by Davit Hakobyan, PanArmenian Photo*

*Prepared by Public Affairs Section*

**U.S. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE TINA KAIDANOW IN ARMENIA**

DAS Kaidanow met with Armenian President Serzh Sarg- sian, senior officials, and civil society representatives dur- ing a visit to Armenia on May 14. She discussed U.S.- Armenian bilateral relations, regional issues, the economic situation, democracy and human rights. "Armenia has been an important partner for the United States in areas ranging from nuclear security to peacekeeping in Kosovo, Af- ghanistan and Iraq, " DAS Kaidanow stated. "We look for- ward to continuing our partnership with Armenia in estab- lishing regional stability, promoting economic develop- ment, implementing structural reform, and accelerating the process of democratization."



*Photo by presidential photographer*

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE HELPS SCHOOL IN REFUGEE VILLAGE**



On May 14, DCM Joseph Pennington, State Department Director of Humanitarian Pro- grams Jerry Oberndorfer, Armenian govern- ment officials, and many other guests partici- pated in the opening ceremony for newly es- tablished heating and sanitary systems in the school of Darbnik village. May 14 has become

a significant day for both the school and the entire village. Built in 1966, the school had neither running water nor a heating system, nor sanitary facilities. As a result of help from the State Department, students and staff of the school now enjoy im- proved heating and sanitary condi- tions.



## U.S. GOVERNMENT PROVIDES 50 TRACTORS TO ARMENIAN FARMERS

*The U.S. Government's total investment in the agricultural and water sector in Armenia through the MCA-Armenia Program will amount to about \$180 million by the time the program ends in September 2011.*



On April 22, for a few hours, farmer Henrik Yeghyazarian's plot in Ararat marz became the site for signing leasing agreements by farmers who took possession of 50 tractors. The event was kicked off by Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch who described U.S. assistance to Armenia's agricultural sector through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. She pointed to Mr. Yeghyazarian as an excellent example of how

ordinary farmers have benefited from U.S. assistance. Ambassador Yovanovitch also highlighted the Farm Credit Association's role in MCA-Armenia's credit program. This USDA-established lender has become an important player in agriculture financing through its own resources and MCA-Armenia funds, thereby insuring the sustainability of U.S. government assistance in the field of agriculture.



## MCA-ARMENIA COMPLETES TERTIARY CANAL RECONSTRUCTION

*In all of its construction and programmatic activities MCA-Armenia emphasizes environmentally sensitive behavior including leaving the construction area clean and planting trees where possible.*

On April 10, the Millennium Challenge Account - Armenia (MCA-Armenia) marked the completion of 550 meters of the tertiary canal in Norabats community (Ararat marz) through a unique event. In collaboration with Foundation for Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) and Sunchild Eco-clubs, MCA-Armenia, its partners, and Norabats community members joined efforts to clean the area around the canal and to plant 150

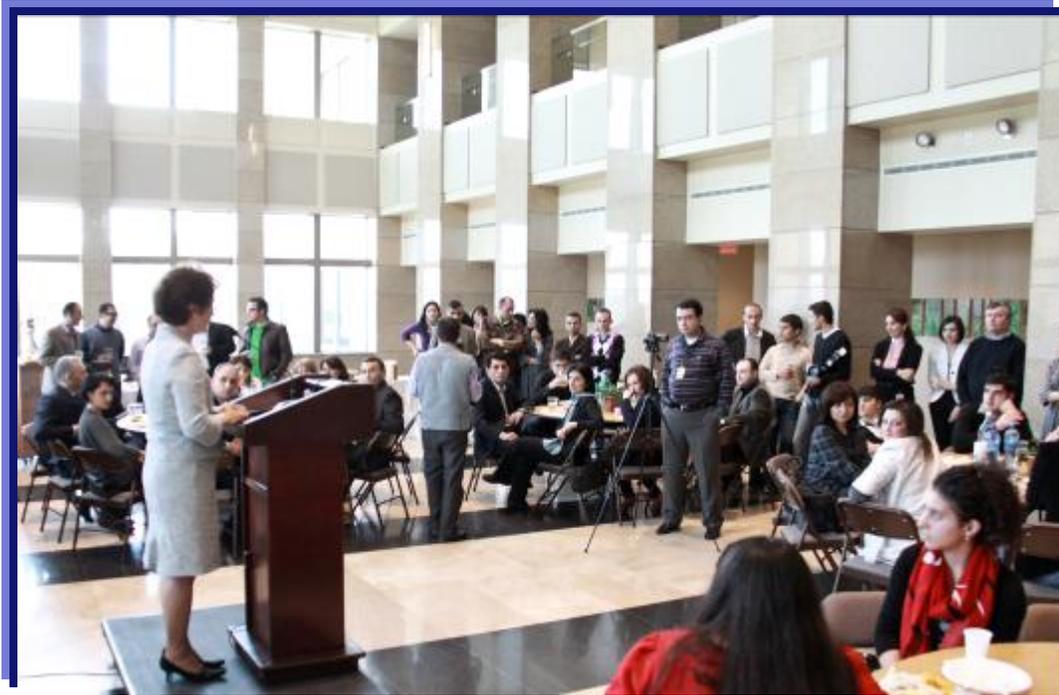
*14 communities in Armavir, Ararat and Vayots Dzor Marzes are currently benefiting from the tertiary canal rehabilitation under MCA-Armenia's Infrastructure Activity.*

trees along the length of the canal.

The event was intended to increase awareness of MCA-Armenia's environmental practices and to contribute to social responsibility for irrigation infrastructure and its surrounding environment. The day started with a small opening ceremony followed by clean-up activities, and the planting of trees before water was released into the canal.



## WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY MARKED IN THE U.S. EMBASSY



*In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed May 3rd as the day the international community sets aside to reflect on the vital role that free media plays in establishing and maintaining open and democratic societies around the globe.*

On May 3, Embassy Yerevan held a picnic-style reception for working journalists on World Press Freedom Day. The reporters were invited to bring friends and family members to partake in a meal of hamburgers, hotdogs, buffalo wings and beer on tap. In her remarks, Ambassador Yovanovitch emphasized the important role journalists play in providing accurate, unbiased information to the Armenian public and policymakers. She thanked them for their commitment to an exciting but, at times, difficult and dangerous profession. The Ambassador noted in her speech that the free flow of information and ideas within countries and across international borders can be a powerful force for understanding and positive change.



## PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION COMPLETES ENGLISH CLASSES FOR JOURNALISTS

On April 15 and 16, two groups of journalists completed an English language class for media professionals held at the U.S. Embassy. For approximately six months, journalists from a variety of print and broadcast outlets practiced their English language skills, with a special em-

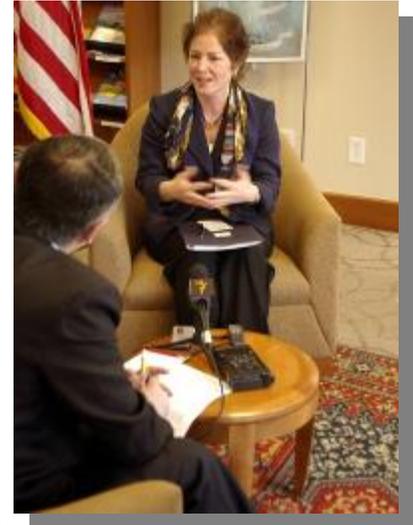


phasis on vocabulary related to work in the field of mass media. The Yerevan-based journalists also improved their ability to gather information available in English from the internet and other sources.

## AMBASSADOR SPEAKS ON ARMENIA-TURKEY RAPPROCHEMENT



On May 4, Ambassador Yovanovitch discussed the current status of efforts to normalize relations between Turkey and Armenia with Radio Liberty. Ambassador Yovanovitch reiterated Washington’s positive reaction to President Sargsian’s decision not to formally withdraw from the Turkish-Armenian protocols signed a year ago in Switzerland. The Ambassador noted that despite a reduction of activity by the two governments, contacts between civil society groups in both countries continue to grow.



*“We applaud President Sargsian’s decision to keep this process alive because we think that that enables Turkey and Armenia both to work towards a vision of peace and stability and reconciliation.”*

U.S. Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch

## MCA-ARMENIA PROGRAM DELIVERS WATER AND TRAINING TO FARMERS



*Ambassador Yovanovitch and Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgian examining the Aygezard canal*

On May 7, Ambassador Yovanovitch and Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgian opened an 8.5 kilometer irrigation canal and toured the 200<sup>th</sup> Demonstration Site under MCA-Armenia’s Water-to-Market activity, a drip irrigation system installed in an apricot orchard.



*Ambassador Yovanovitch observing the new drip irrigation system*

## AMBASSADOR YOVANOVITCH SPEAKS AT AUA



On June 2, Ambassador Yovanovitch met with students of the American University of Armenia and delivered a speech entitled *“Perspectives for the U.S.-Armenia Partnership.”* In her speech, the Ambassador touched upon several topics, including U.S. support for the democratic development of Armenia and energy security. The Ambassador also spoke about U.S. education and visa issues, as well as the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations and the peace-

ful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Ambassador Yovanovitch noted in her speech that the U.S. “strongly supports Armenia’s efforts to normalize relations with Turkey, open the border, and resume commercial and other activities.” She stated, “We applaud President Sargsian’s decision to keep the normalization process alive and to continue to work towards a vision of peace, stability, and reconciliation.”

*“From Martin the Armenian, one of the first American settlers who helped to establish the Jamestown colony, to William Saroyan, Arshile Gorky, Kirk Kerkorian and George Deukmejian, Armenians have made a profound impact on our history, our culture, our politics and our economy.”*

- U.S. Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch

## NEW VISA APPLICATION FORM

On May 22, U.S. Consul Robert Farquhar appeared on *Armenia TV* news program to inform the Armenian public that starting May 31, 2010, the U.S. Government will require all individuals applying for non-immigrant visas to use a new visa application form. Mr. Farquhar led a presentation on the new form and on how to fill it in.



Consular Officer Robert Farquhar presents the new DS-160 form

For more information about U.S. visas, please see the State Department’s web site [http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/visa\\_1750.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html). For information on how to apply for a visa in Armenia, please see the Embassy’s web site <http://armenia.usembassy.gov/visas.html>.

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\* **U.S. INDEPENDENCE DAY MARKED IN THE U.S. EMBASSY** \*  
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On July 2, U.S. Embassy Yerevan celebrated the 234<sup>th</sup> anniversary of U.S. Independence. Armenian National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamian congratulated the U.S. Ambassador on the holiday. Other ministers and high-ranking officials attended. In her remarks, Ambassador Yovanovitch highlighted the importance of U.S. – Armenian ties and mentioned U.S. foreign policy issues, including OSCE Minsk Group efforts to reconcile the differences between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as U.S. efforts to



promote normalization between Turkey and Armenia.

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\* **MUSKIE GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM** \*  
\* **CELEBRATES 15 NEW FINALISTS IN ARMENIA** \*  
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On July 9, 2010, Ambassador Yovanovitch, together with Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, congratulated the 15 Armenian finalists selected for the Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship program. In her congratulatory remarks, Ambassador Yovanovitch mentioned that the USG has supported international educational exchange programs for more than 50 years, adding that of all of the exchange programs, the Muskie Fellowship is the one that is considered a development program. Addressing the finalists, the Ambassador also mentioned that not only will their participation in the Muskie program further strengthen the relationship between the U.S. and Armenia, it will give them the tools they will need to lead Armenia into the future. More than 40 Muskie alumni enjoyed the chance to meet each other in a warm and festive atmosphere, to share a piece of cake and to congratulate this year's finalists.

*Photo by Bravo.am*



## **SPEAKER PROGRAM FOR ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT SPOKESPEOPLE AND PRESS STAFF**

On July 12-16, the Public Affairs Section hosted a Public Relations Speaker Program for government spokespeople. Marguerite Sullivan, the invited speaker, held individual consultations as well as group training for Armenian govern-



ment spokespeople on issues of transparency, public relations, freedom of information, cooperation between press offices of different state structures, work with press and crisis management, dealing with negative and false news, highlighting success, media campaigns, and long-range planning and the short-term execution of plans.

## **DASD WALLANDER VISITS ARMENIA**

On July 16, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Celeste Wallander visited Armenia, where she met with President Serzh Sargsian and gave an exclusive interview to Mediamax News



Agency. In her interview, DASD Wallander focused on U.S-Armenian defense cooperation and also discussed regional security issues. On the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict DASD Wallander noted, "The United States remains committed as one of the Minsk co-chairs to the process. You know there are a lot of good ideas on the table [...] We really believe that we will find the right mix of ideas

and proposals as long as the parties remain committed to a peaceful resolution and to the process."

## AGREEMENT ON INCREASED ASSISTANCE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT REFORM SIGNED

On July 23, Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch and Armenian Prosecutor General Aghvan Hovsepian signed a Protocol on the amendment to the Letter of Agreement on Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Armenia. Under the Agreement, the U.S. Government will provide additional assistance to the Government of Armenia in the amount of \$2,875,284 for several assistance programs that will benefit the Armenian people through a number of Armenian institutions and bilateral projects: the forensic laboratory of the National Academy of Sciences' National Bureau of Expertises, the Central Bank's Financial Monitoring Center, a Resident Legal Adviser from the U.S. Department of Justice, a legal socialization project carried out by the NGO PH International, the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative, assistance for victims of human trafficking, and development of law enforcement in Armenia.

*Photo by Melik Baghdasaryan, Photolur*



## AMBASSADOR YOVANOVITCH VISITS MCA-ARMENIA PROGRAM SITES IN ARAMVIR

On July 26, Ambassador Yovanovitch visited Millennium Challenge Account – Armenia (MCA-Armenia) Program sites in Armavir together with Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian to observe ongoing construction works and their progress, to learn about farmer support initiatives, and to see how MCA-Armenia is helping irrigation management entities.

