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Connections

Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies

Freedom House on Central Asia



Sam Patten; Manuela Mot, MA RUES '11; Betsy Potter, MA RUES '11

Sam Patten, Senior Program Manager at the independent watchdog organization Freedom House, discussed the prospects for democracy in post-Soviet countries in a lecture titled "The Improbable Course of Freedom in Central Asia." Speaking at CSEEEES on October 29, 2010, Patten predicted that the democratic deficit in Central Asia would be overcome by 2030.

Citing Central Asia's historically clan-based politics, Patten addressed the numerous challenges that still hinder democracy-building in the region. These include economic corruption in Turkmenistan, a potential second wave of civil war in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan's failure to put together a governing coalition despite recently holding parliamentary elections, and the presence of largely one-man rule in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

However, Patten observed, "history is important but not determinative." The durability of these states, he believes, should now be tested by how they serve the needs of their citizens and how they address the challenge of succession.

Patten identified succession as being "the great unknown of Central Asia." In recent years, the region of the former Soviet Union has been wracked with revolutions—notably the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia, the 2005 Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, and the 2004-2005 Orange Revolution in the Ukraine. So far, genuine succession

has only occurred in Turkmenistan.

Another negative influence on democracy-building comes from the overarching Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), whose leaders in Beijing and Moscow advocate strong, central control. "For now, the SCO exists as a foil and a defender of the status quo, and is expected to block any nascent democratic trends in the region," he said.

Despite these obstacles, Patten said specific policies could help the region begin to democratize. The current concern is an "arch of instability" and a drug-trafficking corridor stretching from Afghanistan to Kyrgyzstan. According to Patten, addressing this should be a high priority for security planners and state builders.

Patten placed hope in Central Asia's younger generation, which grew up after the Soviet era and does not view repression as familiar or tolerable. The U.S. should engage this demographic group and make use of bilateral relations with each country to make demands for these countries to improve their human rights record.

Finally, he suggested the US should speak of "freedom" in a meaningful context for these citizens, emphasizing the potential benefits from a freer market and more transparent governance, and the chance to play a meaningful role in global politics. "All of these goals," Patten concluded, "ultimately are within reach."

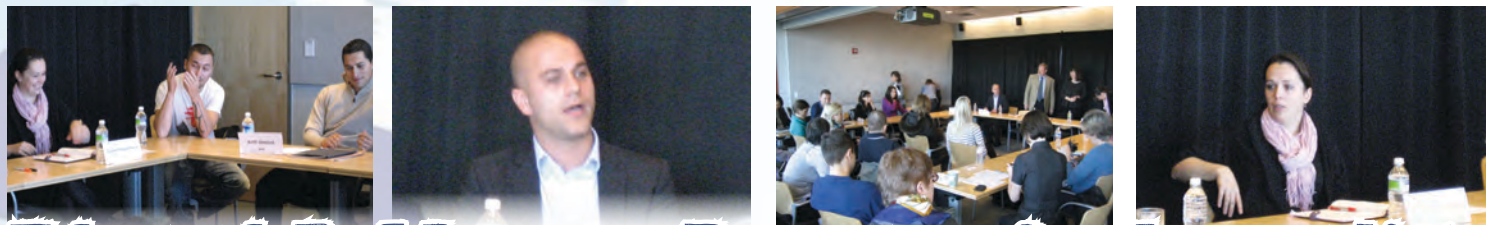
Canadian Perspectives on Afghanistan

In a thought-provoking event that explored Canadian perspectives on Afghanistan, CSEEEES co-sponsored a screening of the Canadian documentary, "Good Morning Kandahar." The film viewing was followed by commentary from Cindy Termorshuizen, former Deputy Head of Mission at the Canadian Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Students, faculty members and area professionals came out to see the 2008 documentary directed by Ariel Nasir, the Canadian child of an Afghan father and an American mother. Nasir has previously worked as an editor for CBS Television and the National Film Board of Canada. "Good Morning Kandahar," his first full-length film, gives poignant voice to the dilemmas felt by thousands of young Afghans around the world as they grapple with the war in their homeland, and brings a deeply needed personal perspective to this international controversy.

"I thought the project was compelling because few of us consider the war in Afghanistan from the perspective of our allies," said CSEEEES Associate Director Jacqueline Olich. Collaboration on this event reunited Olich with a former graduate school classmate, Paula Dickerson, who works at the Canadian Consulate in Raleigh and received her B.A. and M.A. from UNC.

Following the film, Cindy Termorshuizen fielded questions from the audience about Canadian involvement in Afghanistan, the Canada-U.S. alliance, and the role of the Afghanistan and Pakistan governments. The event highlighted the strong alliance between Canada and the U.S. "The objectives of Canada and the US are closely aligned in Afghanistan... what's most noticeable is the degree to which the two nations are working in partnership," said Dickerson.



Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists

The Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists, funded by the U.S. Department of State, invites rising international journalists to travel to the U.S. and examine journalistic principles and practices. Since its inception in 2006, the program has welcomed more than 600 foreign journalists. In the 2010 session, more than 150 journalists from 125 countries traveled to the U.S. where participants met in Washington, DC and then traveled in smaller groups to a school of journalism.

The UNC School of Journalism hosted 25 journalists from all over Europe in Chapel Hill from October 28 through November 2, 2010. While in North Carolina, the participants visited with faculty members and students, participated in academic seminars, and observed U.S. media work. They also visited the Raleigh International Affairs Council and participated in various talks and tours. During a symposium on November 1, which was moderated by CSEEEES Director Robert Jenkins and Interim Director of the Center for European Studies Milada Vachudova, students and professors conversed with journalists from Central and Eastern Europe about opportunities and challenges they face in independent media outlets at home.

Csaba Marosvari, RUES graduate student, spoke with Viktor Janzso, a journalist from Magyar Hirlap of Hungary. Of this conversation, Marosvari said "both of us agreed that the strong bipartisanship of the Hungarian media is eating away analytical journalism." The program concluded in New York City where all participants reconvened to visit major media outlets and attend a symposium to discuss trends and challenges facing the media.

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Announcements

Gary Guadagnolo (Ph.D. Candidate, History) was accepted to the Title VIII Combined Research and Language Training Program from the American Councils for International Education and will conduct research in local archives and study Tatar from August 2011 to May 2012 in Kazan, Russia.

Duke University is offering new area studies courses this semester to include an accelerated elementary Uzbek language class, an Islam in Eurasia course and two courses on Russian art and politics: From Peter the Great to Putin and 1800 to the Present.

Jacqueline Olich (CSEEEES Associate Director) accepted a position on the BRIDGES Academic Leadership for Women Advisory Board.

Anna Kirey (MA RUES '12) participated in the conference "Interrogating Complicities: Postcolonial, Queer, and the Threat of the Normative Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies" at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and in the final meeting of Kartini Asia Research Fellowship, Project "Research on Female Non Normative Sexualities in Africa and Asia" in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Olga Kuzmina (CSEEEES work-study student) is studying abroad in Prague, Czech Republic spring semester 2011 on the European politics program at the Jerome of Prague College.

Betsy Potter (MA RUES, '11) participated in the State Department's Young Leaders Conference in Prague in November. The conference was on transatlantic security, environmental issues and human rights and diversity between the U.S. and Eastern Europe.

Michele Rivkin-Fish (Associate Professor, Anthropology) and colleagues recently published *Dilemmas of Diversity After the Cold War: Analyses of 'Cultural Difference.'*

Graeme Robertson's (Assistant Professor, Political Science) book, *The Politics of Protest in Hybrid Regimes: Managing Dissent in Post-Communist Russia*, was published by Cambridge University Press in December of 2010.

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Elections in Azerbaijan

Gubad Ibadoglu Bayramov, a spring 2009 Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP) Fellow at UNC, made an unsuccessful run for Parliament in Azerbaijan's 2010 elections. He is currently the Chairman of the Economic Research Institute in Baku and an Associate Professor in the Department of Economic Analyses at the Azerbaijan State Economic University (ASEU).



In the elections held on November 7, 2010, 2,500 candidates applied to run in the election, but only 690 candidates from four political parties were given permission by the electoral commission. President Ilham Aliyev's Yeni Azerbaijan Party increased its share of seats to 73 out of 125 seats in Parliament. Other candidates who are aligned with the current

government but not official party members received an additional 38 seats. The remaining 10 seats were won by minor opposition parties. The leading opposition party Musavat failed to secure any seats in Parliament.

Bayramov ran as an independent candidate, but was supported by PFPA-Musavat Bloc from Election District No. 20. During publicized TV debates, Bayramov drew attention to government corruption in oil revenue spending in Azerbaijan and suggested ways in which this money could instead be used for addressing dire living conditions and low pensions, especially for teachers, doctors and pensioners. He was accused by pro-government MP Adil Aliyev of making populist statements.

International observers said Azerbaijan has made improvements to meet democratic standards, but that no elections in Azerbaijan have met international democratic standards since 1992. Limitations of media freedom and freedom of assembly, dominance of one party in the media and an unsatisfactory candidate registration process further weakened the opposition, according to an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe press statement.

New Perspectives

The Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies is happy to welcome new two colleagues into our community.



Originally from Bosnia, **Adnan Dzumhur** is a language teacher and a filmmaker. He currently teaches Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian Language as a Lecturer in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at UNC. He also leads a biweekly Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian Language and Culture Group. He is completing a MFA in Documentary Production at Duke University.

His key academic and artistic inquiries are reflected in his current production: a feature length documentary about the relations between the factual and the imaginary, history and landscape, and memory and language in the context of Central and Eastern Europe's recent past. Starting from the depictions of life under Communism and the war in the former Yugoslavia in literature and film, the film examines how our linguistic and cultural habits shape our perceptions of events that we experience primarily through text and image.

Ewa Wampuszyc is enjoying her first year as an assistant professor of Polish Language and Literature in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. She received her Ph.D. in 2004 from the University of Michigan. Before coming to Chapel Hill, she taught literature, language, and European studies at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Professor Wampuszyc's research interests include: post-communist cultural transformation, 19th C and 20th C Polish literature and culture, and foreign language teaching. She is currently writing a book on cultural and economic capital in Polish literature and journalism of the 1860s-80s.

In addition to her 19th century interests, Ewa is fascinated by magical historicism in contemporary Polish fiction, a trend she has identified in literature of the 1980s and '90s. She is looking forward to working with her colleagues at CSEEEES in advancing Slavic Studies at UNC.



Conference on Central Asia and the Caucasus

In the fall of 2010, a working group was formed of professors, students, and local professionals who have an interest in Central Asia and the Caucasus, led by Anna Kirey (MA RUES '12) and Zumrat Salmorbekova (MA RUES '09). The Central Asia and Caucasus Working Group is planning a conference entitled "New Central Asia and the Caucasus: Policy Challenges 20 Years Later" to be held March 25-26, 2011 at UNC. The conference will feature a rountable on the evening of March 25th, as well as three panel presentations on gender and human rights; energy and environment; and ethnic politics on March 26th. We look forward to seeing you at the conference!

42nd Annual ASEEEES Conference

CSEEEES faculty and affiliates participated in the 42nd National Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEEES), held from November 18 to November 21 in Los Angeles. ASEEEES is a nonprofit, non-partisan scholarly society that is the leading private organization in the world dedicated to the advancement of knowledge about East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.

UNC faculty members Donald Raleigh (Department of History), Louise McReynolds (Department of History) and Jacqueline Olich (CSEEEES Associate Director), among others, presented at the conference.

Dr. Olich contributed to a roundtable titled "Beyond Exceptionalism: Teaching about Russia in European and World History Courses." She also chaired the panel, "Coming of Age in War and Peace: Childhood, Youth, and Gender in the Wartime Soviet Union," and participated in the inaugural meeting of the Working Group on Russian Children's Literature and Culture.

Ernest Zitser, Librarian for Slavic and East European Studies and Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies at Duke University, was elected president of the Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies Association. ECRSA aims to facilitate and expand the study of eighteenth-century Russia across the disciplines.

Zsolt Nagy (Department of History) won the prestigious Graduate Student Essay Prize for his project titled "National Identities for Export: Hungarian, Czechoslovak, and Romanian Nationality Rooms in Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning." Nagy is currently investigating the ways in which the Hungarian leadership used cultural diplomacy to pursue a peaceful revision of the post-WWI Treaty of Trianon. CSEEEES congratulates Zsolt for his recognition!