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SCA Weekly Public Diplomacy Report: June 16, 2011

SCA Posts Score Big with Facebook Fans: SCA has put a major push on social media, and we were proud to learn that three SCA posts now rank among the Department's 10 most popular Facebook pages worldwide, with Embassy Colombo ranking number four (35,208 fans) and Consulates General Karachi and Lahore coming in at number seven and 10, respectively. Overall, six SCA embassies and consulates, including Islamabad, Dhaka, and Kathmandu have over 10,000 fans.

Embassy Tashkent Launches Twitter Account and Links Universities in Webchats: Now that two of the three major cell providers in Uzbekistan support Twitter short codes, Embassy Tashkent launched its own Twitter account this week. While Twitter is still very new to Uzbekistan, over 50 people have already signed up. In other social media outreach, PAS Tashkent hosted two webchats linking Uzbek students to the University of Texas and Valparaiso University, allowing students to directly ask about student life and study in the United States. Since the Uzbek Government prohibits Embassy academic outreach activities outside of the capital, transcripts of these webchats will be reposted on the Embassy Facebook page, reaching many more young people. Embassy Tashkent raced past the 4,000 Facebook fans mark this month.

PAS Karachi and Lahore Lead Public-Private Partnership to Organize Pakistan's First-ever Social Media Summit: Just one year after the government briefly banned Facebook, PAS Karachi and Lahore organized Pakistan's first-ever international social media summit. "Network!!" brought together bloggers from Pakistan, Egypt, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the U.S. The event was co-sponsored by Intel, Apple, Newsweek, *PC World* magazine, and the Express Group, Pakistan's second largest media house. The event greatly expanded post's contacts in and understanding of Pakistan's burgeoning social media community and received extensive coverage in print, broadcast, and online media. The buzz extended to Washington, where Pakistan's Ambassador blogged extensively about "Network!!"

Deputy Secretary Nides in Pakistan: "The Future is in Good Hands": During his June 13-15 visit to Pakistan, Deputy Secretary Nides met with several alumni of the Department's largest bilateral exchange program. Meeting Fulbright alumni in Islamabad, he remarked: "To see so many impressive Pakistani young people – each of you talented representatives of this great nation's bright future – is

inspiring. To think my country has had some role in advancing your education and helping your nation's prospects makes me feel very good. You are the real deal of Pakistan, and I can see the future is in good hands."

"Public Art" Hits the Streets of Dushanbe Thanks to ECA Initiative: Our embassy in Tajikistan, the city of Dushanbe, and the Ministry of Culture launched "Public Art" this week, an initiative that is the outcome of an earlier ECA Visual Arts Initiative program with artist and curator Kendal Henry. In 2010, Henry hosted an innovative month-long workshop with local artists to design art to be placed on the main streets of Dushanbe. He stressed that anyone can become an art-maker, and demonstrated how public art can produce social change. The works that were created will now be mounted around the city, a departure from Tajikistan's (and indeed the Soviet Union's) past when most art was created with government support and with little input from the public.

"The Last Three Feet in India" – Locally Tailored Engagement: The American Center in Kolkata organized a two-week exhibition entitled "Face of Bengal" featuring photographs taken by outgoing Consul General Beth Payne during her tour in Kolkata. The top brass from the city turned out for inauguration, which received abundant coverage in vernacular and national media. Meanwhile, PAS Hyderabad arranged for two consular officers to go live on popular FM Radio Mirchi's morning show "Hi Hyderabad." The officers did one show each in which they showed off their Telugu language skills in answering questions about student visas from listeners who called in. The morning program has an estimated audience of 200,000, and feedback was very positive from callers and listeners who were impressed to hear our officers conversing in the local language.

U.S.-Kyrgyzstan Annual Bilateral Consultations in Washington: Kyrgyz Republic Foreign Minister Ruslan Kazakbayev led a delegation of Kyrgyz government officials to Washington June 9-10 for the inaugural session of Annual Bilateral Consultations, hosted by Assistant Secretary Blake. The Annual Bilateral Consultations are a structured policy dialogue designed to advance our common agenda and opportunities for cooperation across the full range of bilateral and regional issues. In addition to the government meetings, the consultations included a dialogue with representatives from non-governmental organizations and a round table discussion with U.S. and Canadian businesses interested in trade and investment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan. These sessions were widely reported in the Kyrgyz media.

Uzbekistan: Hundreds of English Teachers Converge for Skills Training:

Over 200 English teachers from Uzbekistan gathered in Tashkent for the bi-annual USG-funded FORUM Conference (June 10-11) and Access Teachers' Workshop (June 11-13). Regional English Language Officer Harold Samuels, English Language Specialist Donna Brinton, and English Language Fellows Dennis and Ingrid Johnson led interactive workshops on how to improve your English speaking ability independently, the essentials of creative writing, submitting abstracts for a professional conference, and becoming a TESOL professional. In Uzbekistan's increasingly non-permissive environment for public diplomacy outreach, English language training is an area where post continues to gain impressive access and traction.

Higher Education Outreach in India Amplified through Social Media: PAS Mumbai joined forces with the U.S.-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) on a "Building Partnerships" workshop which attracted representatives of 29 colleges, universities, and institutes from throughout western India to discuss the Fulbright program. Meanwhile in Chennai, PAS hosted their most successful live-stream yet, in coordination with USIEF, on the topic of student visas. Over 75 students gathered at the Consulate, while 100 viewers joined the program on post's Livestream.com page. The session was led by two vice consuls who answered questions online, in person, and on the Livestream.com's chat page. Post also led active Twitter discussions and Facebook chats, tweeting Q&As, which were then re-tweeted by our consulates in Hyderabad and Mumbai.

Online Course for Aspiring Journalists in Tajikistan Improves Television Broadcasting: The American Corner in Khujand recently held online courses for students interested in journalism with the assistance of an English Teaching Assistant and two journalists from a prominent local television station. The course culminated with a tour of the station and a roundtable with editors and journalists about writing stories for broadcast and the challenges facing the media in Tajikistan today. Many of the participants volunteered to work for the station without compensation in order to gain experience.