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Our Take on “Borat”

The upcoming movie “Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan”, and the Borat character, of course, have nothing to do with the real Kazakhstan. The only actual fact about Kazakhstan in the movie is the country’s geographic location.

At the same time, we hope the movie will spur increased interest in the real Kazakhstan among those who see it. Here are some reasons:

- Kazakhstan is the world’s ninth largest country located in Central Asia between Russia and China. Being at the heart of the Great Silk Road for centuries, Kazakhstan has been and continues to be a link between the East and the West.
- Independent since 1991, Kazakhstan, under President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s prudent leadership, has turned into an economically strong and dynamically developing democratic nation.
- Kazakhstan, a Muslim majority country, is home to 130 ethnic groups and 40 religious faiths. Pope John Paul II, who visited Kazakhstan in 2001, called our country “an example of harmony between men and women of different origins and beliefs.”
- Kazakhstan shut down the world’s largest nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk and voluntarily rid itself of the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal, eliminating its infrastructure in partnership with the United States. Kazakhstan is a recognized global leader in the fight to stop proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.



Miss Universe 2006 Zuleyka Rivera (R) from Puerto Rico congratulates Gaukhar Rakhmetalyeva after she was crowned the Miss Kazakhstan 2006 in a final of the national beauty contest in Almaty October 21, 2006.

- Kazakhstan is a strategic partner of the United States and supports the U.S. in the war on terrorism since the first days after the 9/11 tragedy. Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian country with troops in Iraq who have already destroyed more than 4 million pieces of deadly ordnance and continue their mission.
- With oil reserves estimated at 100 billion barrels, Kazakhstan expects to be one of the world's top ten oil producers within a decade.
- More than 400 U.S. companies work in Kazakhstan and have already invested more than \$15 billion in our economy.

Everyone who wants to know Kazakhstan better will discover a diverse, fascinating and hospitable nation. Welcome to the [true Kazakhstan](#) yet to be discovered!

Americans Marvel at Kazakhstan's Historical Treasures

The highly anticipated exhibit, "Of Gold and Grass: Nomads of Kazakhstan," opened in San Diego on October 21, bringing to the Americans a side of Kazakhstan they know little about.



A horse ornament, part of the traveling exhibit, is a recreation of an ancient find from the Berel Kurgan.

The exhibit, showing at San Diego's Mingei International Museum until April 15, 2007, displays ancient artifacts from different areas in Kazakhstan's long history, including a replica of the Golden Warrior, a nobleman whose clothing is adorned in "wild animal style" ornaments of gold. Also, for the first time in the United States are objects from the Berel Kurgan, where archaeologists found the remains of two nobles, buried with 13 saddled and bridled horses, sacrificed 2,300 years ago to serve them in the afterlife. Among the ornaments discovered was a life-size set of ibex horns meant to be worn on a horse's head.

Yermukhamet Yertysbayev, Kazakhstan's Minister of Culture and Information, attended the unveiling of the exhibit along with a group of museum directors from Kazakhstan. The Minister said, "We are hopeful this exhibit will serve as a bridge between our peoples and strengthen the friendship and mutual understanding between us."

Ambassador Kanat Saudabayev said on the occasion, "The exhibit will introduce Americans to a different Kazakhstan, with its ancient history and vivid art."

The Bethesda, MD-based Foundation for International Arts and Education organized the exhibit in partnership with Kazakhstan's Ministry of Culture and Information. Greg Guroff, FIAE President said, "The opening of the exhibition was the culmination of seven years of work with our colleagues from Kazakhstan, the results certainly have justified all the effort that has gone into this project. The Mingei International Museum has done a wonderful job of mounting a spectacular exhibition, it will remain there until next spring, when we hope it will travel to a number of other museums. The catalogue for the exhibit is available and represents a major contribution to expanding knowledge about this exceptional culture. We are now searching for additional venues. Our goal is to show the exhibit to the broadest possible American audiences."

Rob Sidner, Director of the Mingei International Museum (MIM), said at the ceremony, "MIM is honored to cooperate with the Foundation for International Arts and Understanding and the Ministry of

Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan in presenting “Of Gold and Grass, Nomads of Kazakhstan.” The Museum’s Trustees, Staff, Members and I greatly appreciate the Kazakh government’s entrusting these precious objects to us that are treasured symbols of the rich artistic and cultural history of your ancient land. It is a great pleasure for us to exhibit much of this marvelous Kazakh legacy for the first time in the United States of America.

In the traditional culture of the Kazakhs, all spaces are ornamented, from the interior of their yurts to their garments and even to the tack for their horses. Kazakh ornamentation motifs are part of one of the world’s oldest symbolic languages read easily by those who understand its iconography. Symbols such as the sun, crescent moon and stars, geometric forms, rams’ horns, birds’ wings, flowers, leaves and sprouts combine with colors to give meaning beyond simple decoration. To this people that first domesticated the horse, the act of decorating objects domesticates the objects as well, making even ordinary utensils and tools works of art and philosophy.

The exhibit is expected to be shown in other cities in the United States in 2007 and 2008. Additional details will be announced as they become available.

Horses First Domesticated in Kazakhstan?

Following is the story by Larry O’Hanlon from Discovery News.

Oct. 20, 2006 — New evidence from soil inside the remains of a 5,600-year-old corral indicates that the ancient Botai people of Kazakhstan were among the earliest to domesticate horses. But equine romantics might be disappointed to learn that the Botai probably ate and milked their horses as often as they rode them.

The corrals are part of an archeological site in northern Kazakhstan known as Krasnyi Yar, once a large village occupied by the Copper-Age Botai, said Sandra Olsen, curator at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, Penn.

Olsen leads a team that has been investigating horse domestication for several years. One of her colleagues, Rosemary Capo, will present a poster with some of chemical soil evidence for horses on Oct. 23 at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America in Philadelphia.

“We really don’t understand any major signs of changes in horses with domestication,” said Melinda Zeder, an archaeologist at the Smithsonian Institution who specializes in the origins of animal and plant domestication.

Zeder was referring to physical changes in horse bones from ancient middens. Nor, so far, is there a direct way to determine what people were doing with their horses that early on, she said. For these reasons she and her colleagues have been building their case with less direct evidence.

“Here’s an approach to documenting horse domestication that’s extremely new,” said Zeder. “Sort of like Perry Mason, they’re building circumstantial evidence.”

That evidence comes from circular arrangements of posts and the soil differences found inside and outside the corral. Inside the corral, the soil contained up to ten times the phosphorus as outside soils, but lower concentrations of nitrogen. That’s what you’d expect if the soil there was enriched with horse manure.

Modern horse manure, for comparison, is loaded with phosphorous, potassium and nitrogen. The nitrogen is the easiest to lose to groundwater or the air.

Phosphorus, on the other hand, can be held in place by calcium and iron, says Capo, a geologist who did the soil analyses with Michael Rosenmeier and undergraduates Andy Stiff and James Gardiner of the University of Pittsburgh.

“High phosphorous could also indicate human occupation,” said Capo, “but that’s usually accompanied by other geochemical signatures, which we didn’t find in the corral samples.”

There was also high sodium concentration in the corral samples, which could be from urine, suggested Olsen.

The real smoking gun, said Olsen, will be if they can detect long-lived molecules of lipids, or fat, in

these samples that can be attributed specifically to horses. That analysis is now being arranged.

So what were the Botai doing with those horses? They probably ate them and used them as pack animals, and they may have milked the mares to create a vitamin-rich, mildly alcoholic beverage that's still consumed today in Kazakhstan, said Olsen.

UA Prepares Kazakh Students for Challenges at Home

Following is a story by La Monica Everett-Haynes from the October 20 edition of the Tucson Citizen.

Guzel Ivleva, one among thousands of Kazakhs chosen to study in the United States, hopes her education will make her an asset once she returns home.

A Republic of Kazakhstan-sponsored program paid her way, allowing Ivleva to study English before entering her graduate program in chemistry at the University of Arizona.

"The most advanced information and technology is here. Unfortunately, our country cannot give us this level of education," said Ivleva, 23.

Given the recent history Tucson shares with its Eastern European sister city in Kazakhstan - the appreciation is mutual, and Kazakhs are welcomed and recognized when they arrive.

UA President Robert N. Shelton, Tucson Mayor Bob Walkup and the Tucson-Almaty Sister Cities Committee will join others Saturday to honor the students.

"We welcome them and provide them with a home away from home," said Jerry M. Gary, chairman emeritus of the nonprofit committee.

In 1989, Gary's committee began by supporting eight students. Since then, Kazakhs have come to Tucson through various programs.

Last year, former UA President Peter Likins signed a contract to encourage the exchange of students and faculty with Kazakhstan's Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

Also last year, government-sponsored students arrived at UA through the Presidential Scholarship Program in Kazakhstan, commonly known as "Bolashak," or "the future."

Ivleva is among about 3,000 Kazakhs in the program worldwide.

About 35 students from Kazakhstan are at UA and 29 are Bolashak scholars, said Gary, who noted that the Bolashak students came here, in part, because of the sister city program. They study engineering, law, business, medicine and other fields, then return home to aid in the country's modernization.

"It's important that our government sponsor education in these fields because they are important for improving the country," said Aisulu Nurgozha, 25, a first-year public health student. "The scholarships may encourage students to study in the fields that are not very prestigious right now."

Having seen Kazakh students return to work for their government and organizations, Gary said, "I see the future of the nations" through the exchange.

But he also said the union is about much more. "It's been a labor of love," said Gary, whose committee also helps support a school for disabled children in Almaty, a city in Kazakhstan.

"On Tucson's end, the city becomes aware of another culture and another society that had been shrouded in the mystery of the Soviet Union."

The students are eager to make changes back home, where the unemployment rate is about 8 percent and about 19 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The U.S. figures are less than 6 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

Though Nurgozha earned a degree to practice dermatology in Kazakhstan, she wanted a more broad-based education so she can affect policy to benefit the entire community.

"I felt I could do something more than help only the patient," Nurgozha said.

Like Nurgozha, Ivleva said she is happy to be here, but is also eager to return home. "I hope our country will see more progress and become more developed in its technological programs," Ivleva said. "We need to develop the industry within our country."

New Social Democratic Party Submits Registration Papers

Zharmakhan Tuyakbai, the leader of the new Social Democratic Party of Kazakhstan and a presidential candidate in last year's election, announced his party submitted documents for registration to the Ministry of Justice.

Tuyakbai said the party submitted 127,000 signatures. Under the law, a party needs to have at least 50,000 members to be registered.

Kazakhstan currently has a dozen of political parties, including the opposition.

Modern Day Silk Road to Follow Ancient Route

Kazakhstan, Central Asia's largest energy producer, is planning a highway to carry freight from Chinese manufacturers to European markets.

The 8,998 kilometer (5,591 mile) road from China would traverse 3,200 kilometers of Kazakh territory, cross Russia via its Tatarstan republic, and then run to Europe. The announcement came from the Kazakh Prime Minister's press service on October 18.

This highway would be the shortest land route between China and Europe, which is Beijing's biggest export market.

Speaking in Astana after talks with his counterpart from the Republic of Tatarstan in Russia, Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Daniyal Akhmetov said, "We found out we have a unique opportunity to build the shortest highway from Russia to China. Since the Russian Federation borders on Europe, it will be possible to connect Europe with China. The road that we provisionally named Europe-Saint Petersburg-Moscow-Kazan-Orenburg-Kyzylorda-Shymkent-Khorgos route, will be absolutely competitive."

Kazakhstan has widened 650 kilometers of existing roads to handle heavy trucks and other traffic. The country will need to spend about 300 billion tenge (\$2.34 billion) to widen and strengthen the remaining 2,550 kilometers for the route, the statement from the Prime Minister's office said. It added that the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Islamic Development Bank may join the project.

Economy to Grow More Than 10 Percent in 2006

Kazakhstan's economy, buoyed by strong showing in industry, agriculture and construction, is likely to grow 10.6 percent in 2006, far exceeding earlier expectations for the year. Inflation is expected to reach 8.7 percent.

Bakhyt Sultanov, Chairman of Kazakhstan's Agency on Statistics announced the forecast at a news conference in Almaty on October 23. He said, "We estimate that the economy grew 10.3 percent in the first nine months of the year, including the growth in industry, agriculture and construction. If these trends continue, we expect the gross domestic product to grow by 10.6 percent by the end of the year."

Sultanov's deputy Yuri Shokamanov added that the year-on-year inflation by the end of 2006 will likely reach 8.7 percent.

Kazakhstan's economy has been growing at an annual average rate of 9 to 10 percent since 2000, and has grown by more than 75 percent since that time. The government's goal of doubling the size of the economy from 2000 by 2010 is now likely to be met in 2008.

The economic growth has translated into the improvement of the quality of life for the people and the quadrupling of the GDP per capita.

KIMEP Gets U.S. Accreditation

The Kazakhstan Institute of Economy, Management and Prognosis (KIMEP), the first institution in

Kazakhstan to provide Western style education starting in the early 1990s, received the accreditation from a U.S. accreditation agency.

KIMEP President Chan Young Bang, who is American, announced the news at a briefing after his meeting with the President of Kazakhstan in Astana on October 23.

Bang said “more than 120 universities worldwide submitted their applications along with KIMEP, only 40 were approved, and of these 40 only two are outside the United States, including KIMEP.”

Receiving the accreditation is a sign “Kazakhstan has reached world standards, and academic achievements of our students will be recognized in leading universities in the world,” Bang added.

KIMEP has been bringing Western professors and curricula to Almaty, at a fraction of the cost of Harvard or Oxford, since 1992. With more than 600 faculty and staff and more than 4,000 students, KIMEP offers graduate and undergraduate degree programs in business, economics, finance, accounting, public administration, political science, international relations, journalism, and mass communication.

Smoke on the Steppes? You Bet

Many Americans would probably find it difficult to imagine how it was to grow up a rock fan in the 1970s and 1980s in a totalitarian Soviet Union which banned everything which said “Western culture is good”. Those were the days when vinyl discs with Western rock albums were all but smuggled into the USSR, along with jeans and printed T-shirts with inscriptions in English which the Communist censors could not understand but thought subversive anyway.

Now, fast forward to October 2006, Almaty, Kazakhstan, a former Soviet Republic but now a country independent for almost 15 years. The wildest dreams of those die-hard Kazakh rock fans who still keep the 70’s vinyl discs because they give a ‘nostalgic’ sound, came true in October.

Deep Purple, the legendary rock band, gave two concerts in Almaty in mid-October and blew the fans’ socks off with classics such as Smoke on the Water, Machine Head, and Fireball, compositions from their new album “Rapture of the Deep”, and... a Kazakh song Kozimnin Karasy (The black pupil of the eye) by the great Kazakh poet Abai.

Deep Purple arrived in Almaty in their tenth incarnation led by Ian Gillan, solo, Roger Glover, bass guitar, Don Airey, keyboard, Ian Paice, drums, and Steve Morse, guitar. At a news conference in downtown Almaty, Deep Purple responded to many questions about the band, their music and their views of the modern world besieged by wars and terrorism. Gillan’s response was: “We simply need to learn to live with each other.”

After the two gigs, Glover and Airey showed up at a local hotel bar and bashed out Black Night to an incredulous audience. A reporter from The Independent observed the scene and reported Airey’s words to her: “Kazakhstan is wonderful. The welcome we have had has been beyond belief. Borat makes me laugh, but he couldn’t be more wrong.”

Things to Watch:

- The Embassy has uploaded on YouTube.com a 30-second TV spot which was aired on ABC and featured in stories on ABC News Nightline, CBS and NPR earlier in September and October. You can watch the spot by clicking [here](#).

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