



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

BUDAPEST NEWSLETTER

May 2008

Recently at the Embassy



Important Steps Towards Visa Waiver Travel for Hungary

Agreement Signed on Sharing of Terrorist Information: On May 20, Ambassador Foley and Secret Services Minister György Szilvássy signed an agreement on the sharing of terrorist screening information between the United States and Hungary. This agreement marks an important step forward in obtaining Visa Waiver status for Hungary. In her remarks Ambassador Foley stressed her personal commitment to seeing visa free travel to the U.S. by the end of the year, a commitment shared by

President Bush as well. (photo courtesy of Ministry of Foreign Affairs) [More▶](#)



Homeland Security Team Visits Hungary: A technical team from the Department of Homeland Security visited Hungary May 5-9. The team included members from the Office of Visa Waiver Policy, the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Transportation Security Administration. The team held meetings with Hungarian counterparts, and visited Ferihegy Airport and a border crossing. [More▶](#)



Ambassador Briefs Parliamentary Leaders on Visa Waiver Progress:

On May 8, Ambassador Foley and Foreign Ministry State Secretary Dr. Fekszí briefed a group of Hungarian Parliamentary leaders representing all political parties on the progress that is being made in bringing Hungary into the Visa Waiver Program. [More▶](#)



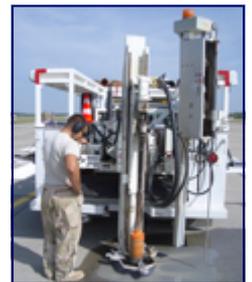
Ambassador Foley Celebrates Tolerance with AISB Graduates

On May 25, Ambassador Foley invited to her residence the graduating class of the American International School of Budapest (AISB). About 100 graduates, family, and friends, as well as AISB leaders and clergy - representing Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, and Hindu faiths - celebrated academic achievements and diversity that strengthen our communities.

[More▶](#)

Successful Testing of the Pápa Air Base Runways for NATO Missions

Pápa Air Base hosted a three-man Airfield Pavement Evaluation team from the US Air Force Civil Engineer Support Agency (AFCESA) between May 15-23. The team brought in specialized equipment to drill samples and test overall strength of the airfield's tarmac. This analysis of runway and taxiway surfaces, in anticipation of future NATO C-17 operations at Pápa, will result a comprehensive report of the airfield's load bearing capacity, which is critical to heavy cargo operations. Although the testing is not complete, the initial assessment is very encouraging. [More▶](#)



Ambassador Addresses Business Owners at Széll Kálmán Foundation

On May 15 Ambassador Foley delivered a major policy speech titled, "Trans-Atlantic Issues in a Time of Transition" to a group of business leaders in Budapest. She spoke on a wide range of issues, including energy security, the close relations with Hungary on NATO, the need for tolerance in the workplace, the importance of having Hungary as an example of democracy for Cuba and Belarus, the empowerment of women, and on strengthening commercial ties between our two countries. [More▶](#) [Remarks▶](#)

Progress on Return of Táncsics Complex

Representatives of the State Department Overseas Buildings Office met in Budapest on May 14 with representatives of the Magyar Nemzeti Vagyonkezelő Zrt. and Hérosz Zrt. (the firm hired to do the work by the Hungarian Government). This was another step in a process that will lead to the return of the historic Táncsics Mihály property to the Government of Hungary in exchange for two office buildings adjacent to the Embassy on Szabadság tér. [More▶](#)





Nabucco Gas Pipeline Project Moving Forward

On May 9, Ambassador Foley hosted counterparts from other Embassies, Hungarian government officials, and energy industry leaders at a luncheon to discuss the Nabucco Gas Pipeline Project. Mihály Bayer, Hungarian Ambassador-at-Large for Nabucco, assumed his new duties in April and aims to catalyze the Nabucco process. One of Bayer's first goals, he said, is to complete an intergovernmental agreement with intended transit countries to show their strong commitment to Nabucco, an EU priority project. [More▶](#)

Piano Recitalist Draws Classical Music Lovers to American Corner

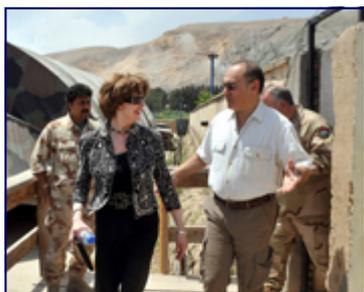
The American Corner in Eger hosted American piano virtuoso John Robilette on May 7. Mr. Robilette performed a program of Beethoven, Brahms, Bach, and Schubert's Hungarian Rhapsody in the beautifully restored performance hall of the College. His second performance, the following evening, at Budapest's Duna Palota, drew Ambassadors, journalists, NGO representatives and many other classical piano aficionados whose sustained applause brought a number of encores from the Artistic Ambassador.



Ohio National Guard to Work with Hungarians in Afghanistan

Representatives from the Ohio National Guard (OHNG), Hungary, and the Netherlands met on May 7 to discuss the future deployment of a combined Hungary and OHNG Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) in a Dutch led Afghan brigade. The conference met to exchange information on the area in which the OMLT will operate, the new Afghan unit it will train, and administrative and logistics support. The combined Hungary and OHNG OMLT will be led by a Hungarian officer. [More▶](#)

Ambassador Foley Accompanies Defense Minister Szekeres to Afghanistan



Ambassador Foley, accompanying Defense Minister Imre Szekeres, arrived in Mazar-e Sharif, Balkh province, Afghanistan on May 3. They met with the Regional Command (RC) North Commander German Brigadier General Dieter Dammjacob and the Afghan National Army (ANA) 209th Corps Commander Major General Morad Ali. They then traveled by helicopter to Pol-e Khomri, Baghlan province where the Hungarian PRT is located. The visit began with a Honor Guard presentation, followed by a general briefing by the Hungarian PRT Commander Attila Simon, and an inspection of PRT weaponry and equipment. (photo: Sz. Koszticsák/MTI) [More with photo gallery▶](#)

Ambassador Foley Re-emphasizes "Never Again" in Visit to Auschwitz



Ambassador Foley took advantage of a visit to the WWII prison camp at Auschwitz on May 1 on International Holocaust Remembrance Day to reinforce her emphasis on zero tolerance for anti-semitic views and other hate speech, wherever it occurs. Accepting the invitation of the Hungarian branch of the March of the Living Foundation, Ambassador Foley and Defense Minister Szekeres participated in the Hungarian memorial ceremony held at the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp commemorating the 20th anniversary of the international March of the Living Foundation. (photo: Sz. Koszticsák/MTI) [More▶](#) Ambassador Foley's [personal thoughts▶](#) on visiting Auschwitz.

American Folk Dancers Attract Full House in Budapest

Brigham Young University's American Folk Dance Ensemble lit up Budapest's Heritage House Theatre with a high-energy performance of American, Quebecois, and Hungarian traditional dances on April 30. Ambassador Foley led an Embassy delegation of 20 to attend the event and presented the Ensemble with the Ambassador's Award for Cultural Diplomacy. [More▶](#)



Ambassador Foley's Outreach to Eastern Hungary



Ambassador Foley paid a day long visit to Nyíregyháza on April 25. She spoke to the students at the College of Nyíregyháza about traveling and studying in the United States. While at this university, the Ambassador presented to the English Department the "American Bookshelf," a collection of American studies books purchased by the Embassy Public Affairs Section. She also met with the Mayor of Nyíregyháza and addressed a Women's Choir group about women's empowerment. [More▶](#)



Celebrating Earth Day

State Department Speaker Catherine Witherspoon helped Embassy Public Affairs Section commemorate Earth Day with a week of presentation on U.S. state initiatives to reduce carbon emissions during her April 20-26 visit. Witherspoon met with environmental NGOs, business leaders, students, the general public, as well as mayors, city officials, and a Member of Parliament during her stops in Budapest, Debrecen, Veszprém, Tatabánya, and Keszthely.

[More▶](#)

On April 22, Ambassador Foley presented awards to the winners of the Embassy's Earth Day Poster Contest. Organized by the Public Affairs Section, the contest received submissions from 50 students who attend one of 30 Hungarian high schools that utilize the [GLOBE▶](#) curriculum. The students, teachers, and family who attended the award ceremony also heard from State Department environment speaker Catherine Witherspoon about how to save energy by killing "vampire" appliances. [More▶](#)



Looking Ahead

Legacy - Edward S. Curtis and "The North American Indian"

Just a reminder: don't miss this unique photo exhibit, which will be open through July 10 (daily 11:00-19:00, except Mondays) at Millenáris, Red and Black Gallery (Budapest II, Fény u. 20-22). More at the Library of Congress' [American Memory site▶](#)



An American Sampler: Art Songs, Arias and Broadway Tunes

A musical journey through 20th century America performed by Marian Stieber, soprano and Tamar Bloch, piano. Dates and venues: June 9, 7:30 pm, Central European University, Popper Room (Nádor u. 9, Budapest V); and June 14, 7:30 pm, Óbudai Társaskör (Kiskorona u. 7, Budapest III). Admission is free!

Philip Glass Ensemble: *Book of Longing*

The new work by Philip Glass, based on the poetry and images of Leonard Cohen, is an evening-length concert work composed for ensemble, singers, spoken word and imagery. Dates and venue: July 3 and 4; Palace of Arts, Béla Bartók National Concert Hall (Komor Marcell u. 1, 1095 Budapest) [Philip Glass▶](#)



Photo courtesy of Palace of Arts

In the News... from Washington



Improved Economies Will Lead to More Visa Waiver Agreement

U.S. officials hope to add eight more countries to the program in 2008

The vast majority of visitors to the United States who overstay their visas do so for economic reasons, and Bush administration officials expressed optimism that as non-U.S. economies improve, more countries will become eligible to participate in the Visa Waiver Program that allows visits for business or pleasure for up to 90 days without a visa. (photo © AP Images) [More▶](#)

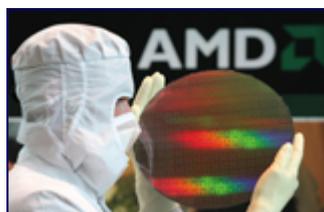
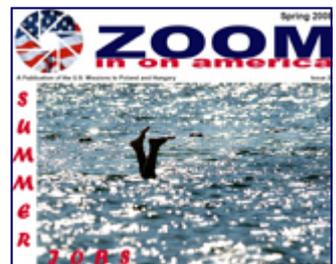
Bush Finds Growing Mideast Agreement on Iran [More▶](#)

Progress toward Israeli-Palestinian peace dominated President Bush's latest visit to the Middle East, but he also returned to Washington reporting growing agreement among regional leaders on Iran's challenge to peace and security, citing actions by Iranian-backed groups in Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and Iraq.

New Publications

Zoom In On America: Summer Jobs

In this issue, six Americans speak about their experience in summer jobs during high school years. You can also listen to their stories, just follow the links accompanying the texts. Learn also about summer jobs available for foreign students in the United States. [Zoom▶](#)



[eJournal▶](#) *Venture Capital Meets Hi-Tech*

This issue explores the phenomenon that drives uncounted Americans — and now citizens of other nations — to create new businesses that explore and exploit the latest developments in high technology. (photo © AP Images)

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