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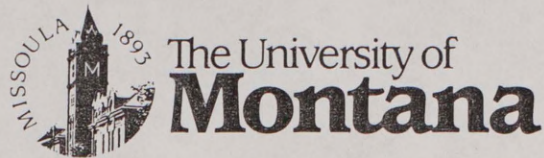
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NEWS RELEASE

March 25, 2005

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AMBASSADORIAL ROUNDTABLES COMING TO UM APRIL 8-9

MISSOULA —

The University of Montana will host two roundtable discussions April 8-9 featuring foreign ambassadors from two former Soviet Republics in Central Asia.

The first roundtable is set for 7 p.m. Friday, April 8, in the University Center Theater. It will feature Ambassador Khamrokhon Zaripov of Tajikistan, Ambassador Baktybek Abdrisaev of Kyrgyzstan and John Fox, director of Caucasus and Central Asian Affairs in the Bureau of Europe and Eurasian Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. Mark Johnson, founder and director of the Montana World Affairs Council, will chair the first panel.

They will discuss various political, social, economic and environmental issues confronting the countries of Central Asia, as well as the emerging ties between their countries and China, Russia, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey.

The second ambassadorial roundtable is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, April 9, in the University Center's North Ballroom. The ambassadors will focus on the potential economic, commercial and educational ties between Montana and the countries of the Silk Road Region. U.S. Sen. Conrad Burns will chair the second panel.

The ambassadorial conference was organized by the U.S. Department of State, UM's Office of International Programs and UM's Central and Southwest Asia Program.

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