

BREAKFAST MEETING WITH MAURA HARTY, ASSISTANT US SECRETARY OF STATE HEAD OF BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS

(National Hotel, 9:00, February 3, 2006)

Somers: May I have your attention please. We about to start the formal part of our proceedings. Delighted you are all here today. Now welcome Maura Harty, Assistant Secretary for Consumer Affairs of the Department of State.

Voice: Consular Affairs.

Somers: Consular? Okay, that's what I got. I was going to ask you, what does consumer affairs have to do with all this? Thank you for the correction. We are delighted also that Jim Pettit is here who, as you know, is the man in Russia responsible for executing and sometimes creating in a creative fashion visa issuance for Russian nationals going to the States. And I would like to compliment Jim for his very cooperative effort with AmCham, and Mike Hazel, who is here also who is in charge of -- again a very complicated title, but it's essentially issuing visas to Russian citizens, which of course is very important for AmCham as many of our companies have very senior and middle-level and lower-level Russian nationals working very well and very efficiently for American companies. I'd also like to acknowledge Robert Hannan who is the head of the American Citizens Unit, and I am particularly interested to acknowledge Robert because right now he has my passport and I am scheduled to go to the states in about ten days, and I have to get my visa renewed. But, Maura, this is a way of saying that AmCham Russia is very very pleased with the team here, the cooperation that we are getting.

Ambassador Harty has had a very distinguished career in the State Department and her most recent appointment was strongly advocated by Secretary of State Powell, and Maura's position is a position that had to be very strongly advocated for a number of months in the US Congress. I am telling you this to let you know the importance and the significance of her position. And of course she is the key person in Washington overlooking both policy and implementation of visa issuance. She has been Ambassador to Paraguay, she's been the Executive Secretary of the State Department and is a graduate of the distinguished George Town University School of International Affairs. After Maura's commentary, which will probably be ten or fifteen minutes, we'll have about 15 minutes for Q and A. And believe me, this lady can handle the toughest questions. She is in Washington, she is in the middle, if you forgive me, Maura, of turf battles in the US government. We have them in business. Everyone has their own legitimate agendas, and of course, State is right in the middle of facilitating business and protecting the security of the United States. And I think you all appreciate the challenge that she is very ably meeting. Maura, if you come to the podium. Thank you. (applause)

Harty: Thank you very much, Andy, that was a very nice introduction, and I want to thank you all very much for come this morning. It's really a pleasure to be here. I've come to Moscow for years now every February. Some day I have to break that habit and come when there isn't snow on the ground. But it really is a pleasure to be here today, and I appreciate all of you turning out. It's a pleasure to have a chance to talk a little bit, as we did informally at our own table, about what we can do together, and so I appreciate the things that you've already mentioned, Andy, with relationship to how well we work. I think I have to agree with you, we have just one of the best teams we field here at MMC Moscow, and it's not just because Jim and Mike and Barbara are in the room. We are very proud of them, I am very proud of them. We paid particular attention over the years, especially in the post-September 11 world, to who we assign to these jobs in Moscow because it's an important constituency for us and the relationship between our two countries is so important.

I think that that relationship facilitating the business side of that relationship for over 800 firms who are members of the American Chamber of Commerce is also key to understanding between both of our countries. So, it's a pleasure to be here today, talk for a few minutes as Andy said, and then see if we can field some questions. The reason I'd like to hear the questions more than any other is because one of the things I do when I come is meet with my counterpart to discuss with him, in this case as we do twice a year, issues of concern to our respective constituencies. So, I'll say it upfront and try and be brief, but it is impossible to hurt my feelings. If you have a question that you think is offensive, come on right at us and ask it anyway. We think we have made major inroads to be of assistance to business travelers. And if we haven't we need to hear about it. If there are other things that have come up we need to hear about them. And Jimmy is thinking, great, because we are going to hear about them, then I'm going to go home. But we don't mean it that way. We mean that we need to know about them because they are indicators of things that perhaps aren't working yet that we would like to make sure that they do in fact work.

I think that the American Chamber of Commerce in Russia has certainly played a key role in efforts to support business investment between our two nations with considerable success. You know the metrics better than I do. For example, that export of US goods to Russia in 2005, exports were 4.2 billion, up 43 percent from the previous year. That's massive in anybody's book. And those are efforts that we want to continue to try and foster. I think the efforts of the American Chamber of Commerce underscore the importance that I have already mentioned of maintaining a vibrant commercial relationship that is to benefit of both our countries.

Very quickly, so that you have a sense of what I do, why I am here and what we do together through consular sections and Am Chambers all over the world. I want to take a minute to talk about my part of the State Department and why we touch on things of interest to you both personally and professionally. Not only, of course, do we have Andy's passport, although we will give it back soon, we have lots of people's passports. The Bureau of Consular Affairs at the State Department in fact has three main functions. We take care of American citizens in distress overseas in any number of ways. They have lost their wallet, they have become ill, they were arrested, rightly or wrongly for something they were involved in, in natural disasters or civil strife. Part one. Part two, we also adjudicate passports for US citizens to the tune of about 10.1 million of those last year, probably up to 13 million of them in the year to come.

Part three of equal importance I think, to all of us is the adjudication of visas for foreigners who would like to live in the States, work in the States or travel to the United States. We are, in fact, the State Department's only Fortune 1000 company because as we do what we do, and you are aware that we charge a number of fees for what we do, we are the only part of the organization that is in fact fee-funded. So, last year the 7,800 people in 211 posts around the world brought in about 1.3 billion dollars for the State Department that's plowed back into our operation, that's how we work. That's why those fees exist, in fact. They pay Jim's salary and I know he knows that's not enough, but we are working on that too. Jim, take heart because we expect, given the volume of work that we do and the demands placed upon us, that we will continue to grow and so that Fortune 1000 company that brought in 1.3 billion dollars last year will probably bring in closer to 2.2 billion by fiscal year 2007. A massive operation all around the world in all those different areas.

Our mission to protect the lives and interests of American citizens overseas is a pretty big one all by itself. That's a population of about 4 million residents overseas and travelers overseas. We make as Americans about 60 million trips outside the United States annually. And taking care of everybody's needs in those respects is actually a driving force for us. One major example. The tsunami that struck the Indian Ocean in December of 2004. Still very fresh in our memories -- and I'll tell a quick anecdote about it because it gives you a sense of when you, your colleagues, counterparts and loved ones travel. That's just exactly what we will do. In the immediate aftermath

of the tsunami the State Department, Consular Affairs set up several taskforces in Washington to complement the efforts of our embassies in Indonesia, in Malaysia, in Thailand and in Sri Lanka. In Washington we fielded over 35,000 phone calls in the course of about three weeks. Those 35,000 phone calls caused us to compile a list of over 15,000 American citizens who were reported to us as missing. The phone calls ranged in severity from the seemingly silly, did the tidal wave strike Quito, Ecuador -- an easy question, okay, that was one I could answer right away -- to very serious and heart-rending, I haven't talked to my daughter for three years, and last time I talked to her she lived in Vermont. But maybe the reason she didn't call her Mother on Christmas because she was on a beach in Thailand, can you help me?

That's the kind of stuff Bob is likely to hear and the people who work for Bob are likely to hear. Thank Goodness, we don't see that same kind of natural disaster every day, the kind of thing that Bob is handling. At the same time, that he is handling a call from a parent about a child who has not written home in months or an American citizen who is arrested or ill, or whatever the thing might be. That part of our jobs reminds us every day that in every way what we are doing is touching people's lives in getting our job done.

We also transfer that notion of touching people's lives to the passport, the very real passport situations that we have, but also to the visa side of the house. We are very aware that every iteration we have with an American citizen or a foreign guest in our embassy is one that needs to be well-informed, dignified, courteous and efficient. So, one of the things that we say to new officers every day is we have a responsibility and a right to apply the law of the United States, we do not have a right to have anybody walk out of any consulate or embassy feeling diminished by having had a conversation with us. It is, I tell my people all over the world, okay to say no if the answer, regrettably, is no to what somebody has requested. It is never okay to say any ugly thing, it is not okay to have somebody walk out feeling mistreated at an embassy anywhere in the United States.

I also mentioned that we have a national security role. And our national security role with respect to both our passport issuing and visa issuing is guided by the notion that the processes need to have integrity, that what we do matters, that who holds a US passport among the most valuable documents on the planet is as important as who do we give a non-immigrant or immigrant visa to. That is why sometimes the questions that we ask can be regarded by some as intrusive. We need to know that.

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, we changed a lot of policies and procedures. And we did that because we wanted to make sure that we were doing the best job possible for the United States, that we were keeping faith with not only citizens of the United States, but visitors to the United States. One of the things that we will never forget is that 3,000 American citizens died in New York City, in the skies over Pennsylvania, in Washington D.C. on that horrific day. So, did the citizens of 90 other countries.

And so, when I go around the world, as I have had the privilege of doing in the last three years, to say to people, here is what our visa policy is about and we still welcome you, and we want you even if we are measuring twice and cutting once before we issue a visa. We welcome you to our country, we welcome business travelers, tourists, certainly students. The important part for us of the young people getting them into our country is to get them early. We believe in all categories the single best commercial for America is America. And so, our goal here and everywhere else is to identify the greatest number of legitimate travelers that we can -- who apply for visas and get them those visas expeditiously.

I laugh at the fact that a colleague that we have working with us both in Moscow and St. Petersburg, it's called Pony Express, delivering a service or helping us deliver a service as quickly

and efficiently as we can to people who would travel to the United States. We believe it's important. And I will admit something that Andy already mentioned. We know that in the immediate aftermath of September 11 we were extraordinarily inefficient in the provision of visa services to foreigners who would travel to the United States. In a great rush to make more secure our processes we made them simultaneously grotesquely inefficient.

And so for the last three years that I have had the privilege of having this job we worked very hard. We hired over 500 additional consular officers, we invested millions in computer systems to make the processes much more efficient. In fact, it's embarrassing to admit that we were moving paper back and forth from consulates and embassies around the world to Washington and then moving paper around Washington D.C. We were using stone knives and bearskins for a 21st century job. Okay. Put the money into it. And so one of the things I hope that many of you have realized is that in the visa adjudication process it might have three years ago taken weeks, months, in some cases years to get a name check back from the inter-agency process in Washington. On average, most name checks are done now most -- well, let me take a step back. On average, 97 percent sort of all people who apply successfully for a visa get that passport with a visa back in a couple of days. Depends on how far you live from the embassy itself.

But around the world, 97 percent get them back in a couple of days. For those who still need a Washington D.C.-based name check, that name check process and the time it takes has been greatly reduced from those weeks, months even a year, in some cases never to an average between 11 and 13 days around the world for scientists and people involved in technology fields with a possible tech transfer issue. That took about 75 days on average about a year and a half ago. We are down between 11 and 13 days around the world. Truthfully, you are going to ask me if I don't fess up. So, I will admit that here in Russia and several other countries that is still not always the case. But the metrics are completely in the right direction. And because we can -- we spend so much less time on the 97 percent, we are able to work away at that three percent that still needs a special Washington D.C.-based name check. And we are not going to sit on laurels. We are going to work very hard to continue to get that process to be as efficient as it can be.

All over the world we have asked all of our embassies and consulates to post on their websites information on how you get a visa, what is a metrics, how long does it take to get an appointment, how long does it take after you get the appointment and the visa has been approved to get the visa back. We've asked for special programs for students to put them at the front of the line because they don't plan well and they almost always wait till the last minute. We don't want them to miss in school because they forgot the get their visa in a timely fashion.

We have asked all over the world for our consulates and embassies to have a special program for business travelers. As I was preparing for this trip, I said, Hey Jim, how come you don't have one? And he said, because we do, because it's called Mike Hazel, because it's called Jim Pettit, because travelers in virtually every category with an emergency or a quick need for travel that was unforeseen can get that appointment within 10 days' time or even faster if they need it. Consulmo@state.gov., consulmo, right here. Consulsmo(?), here they are. I understand that time and time and time again, very regularly, although not in an abusive way, people from the American Chamber of Commerce can get what they need just as quickly as they need it. And we would like to feedback. If it's not working, or there is some other creative solution, we'd like to hear about it.

Just very quickly -- on January 17 Secretary writes, our boss, and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff articulated together what they call a joint initiative for sort of future efforts to enhance border security and facilitate travel. That means over the next couple of years what we will be doing in this joint vision three major things. The first pillar involves renewing how America welcomes people to the United States. Well, we will continue to make our visa processes

as efficient as we can. We are also looking at a model port program. One of the things that we have heard is that even as we have improved our metrics on how to deliver visa services abroad, sometimes people don't feel so good about what happens when they arrive at a port in the United States.

So, we are starting with Dallas Airport and Houston International Airport. Working with Homeland Security and the business community, we are looking at what will make more sense, what is a -- what is most welcoming for people. And so, over the next couple of years, if you are curious about it, put your travel through Houston and Dallas as we try first with those and then bring that program on a road to other ports around the United States. We are also developing more secure travel documents. Several people at my table are on the verge of getting new passports. But very soon there will be an even newer passport. You may have seen us talk about e-passports. It's still a passport, it's still a book, it still needs a place to put a Russian visa but in the back of the new passport will be a chip. That chip has in it -- on it stored only the very same information that is already in your passport.

It took us about a year longer to roll that passport out than we wanted. One of the reasons for that is we heard so many concerns expressed by people who travel routinely about scheming, about the possibility that that chip could be read surreptitiously and information garnered by those who should not have it. We have beaten that. The book is a greatly improved version of what we originally planned. Even though I wanted to give Colin Powell one when he was my boss, when he was still my boss, he still can get one now as a private citizen, we wanted to make sure we get it right. Again and again our interactions with the business community, with people who travel regularly have helped us, I believe, raise our level of play. That's why your questions are not complaints to me, but indicators, things that help us to get things moving in the right direction. Certain things that Secretary Rice and Secretary Chertoff have talked about is an initiative that is an ongoing record, to continue to share information with other agencies of the government. What we are aiming for is a few years off. But working together every day is to look at what we collect from travelers as they seek a passport or a visa to the United States and could we make sure we share that information most efficiently so that we streamline processing, so that we touch our information wants maybe we don't have to fill out the same forms over and over again, providing the same information to someone else.

A little bit down the line, a little bit revolutionary, it is sometimes hard, hard challenge to integrate all of our systems, but it is a goal articulated by our bosses, so one that we are not only happy to engage in, but we have top level buy-in to make it happen, so it comes from the bottom up, that's us, it comes from the top down, and I think and hope you will continue to see positive changes over the next months and years. Because we don't have so much time, I think I could sort of keep going, but I'd rather hear a little bit from you about things that we continue to do together. I'd like to assure you that the things and the questions that you ask me now with respect to the operating environment you encounter here, both at our mission and within the context of living in Russia, are things that I will continue to raise with my friends and colleagues at the Embassy as well as with my friend and counterpart here in the Russian Foreign Ministry. So, with that quick brief maybe we can open it up for a few questions.

Somers: It's time now for some questions.

Q: First of all, I would certainly support the notion that we've seen a big improvement in the performance over the last couple of years. Having said that, I wanted to ask you a question about the plan that you have here. Is there any hope that the fingerprinting process is going to be changed? I'll give you an example. Many CEOs of Russian companies that I have as key customers when is say, why don't you come to the States for a conference or meeting of our senior executives,

they say we'll never go to the United States. Why is that? Because I'll never get myself fingerprinted. And I think that's an issue. And has the fingerprinting process actually produced any results?

Harty: Oh, yeah. Well, I wish I had the actual hard numbers for you, but number one, the fingerprinting process will change. Over the next several years we are likely to take more fingerprints, not fewer fingerprints, although it is something that is going to occur over the next several years and one of the reasons for this is that it has in fact been so very successful. But I am interested to hear you say what you said about the CEOs reaction to it. Because I remember when Ambassador Vershbow rolled it out here in this country, went on television to demystify a process that takes almost no time, Sandy Vershbow did it here, I did it in a number of countries, including India. When I did it in India in our waiting room on TV I had to do it three times because it was so quick that people were surprised how quick it was, how unintrusive, how you don't walk out with ink all over your hands. I loved it because on air the cameraman accidentally got in and editorialized on what we had just done and said, oh, it's just exactly what I do when I get my India driver's license. Okay, so India was alright with this.

What was reported back to me when Ambassador Vershbow did it here was that some press reports indicated a Russian enthusiasm for it because it was perceived to provide a little bit more security. That's natural, we need to work on that. But I'll tell you, I bet that if Jim doesn't have in his office the facility to take a VIP into his office, I bet Mike does. We have a way to take somebody who has a particular concern, who doesn't want to feel demeaned by this process, which is in no way meant to be demeaning, to treat somebody with kid gloves and make sure that is important for us for them to come to America. We are going to try and make that as elevated and experienced as possible. That's a high road.

Another sort of fact, although I regret I don't have numbers for me, is we have identified, the Department of Homeland Security, I should say, at our ports of entry has identified, through their half of the process, you know we take the print here and then that person goes to America, a traveler does it again, has identified, especially in the first months, before we were taking prints all the way up, actually thousands of people who had a record in the United States, who might never have gone back into the United States. Now, I won't say, I won't try to say to you that there have been thousands of terrorists who have been stopped this way. Every iteration that we have, that prevents somebody from coming to the United States who, perhaps, previously used a passport that wasn't issued in their name have -- we have found many, many cases where somebody who has traveled under different names, aliases to the United States can now no longer do that because of the fingerprint.

I regret, we all regret if someone feels put off by that notion, but we in conversing with many colleagues and counterparts around the world hear other countries considering doing the same thing and hear other countries considering actually adding fingerprints to their national passports. I think that biometrics is here to stay. I think that biometrics perhaps beyond the fingerprint are something that you are going to see in accretion over the next few years as different entities and different governments talk about facial recognition as a biometric, a collection of two or more fingerprints. I've been many times to various companies and corporations that are looking at iris, skin as perhaps less intrusive. And in some ways somewhat argue -- an even better metric. I think this is the way for the future. It is never meant to demean. And if you have somebody who says that, we would like to talk to them. Their presence in America is important to us, it is important to us to get that iteration rate.

Q: Thanks for a really useful and detailed description of what your department does and what the priorities are. One thing you haven't talked about is your interaction with your Russian

counterparts. Over the past year in Russia we have seen -- I think it would be charitable to say some confusion and inconsistency in Russian policy towards those who live and work here, foreigners who live and work here. And it manifested itself through a number of things, various rules about work permits, change in rules about work permits, change in rules about medical tests, possible change in rules about registration, and of course the introduction of a new migration card which curiously is only in Russian. To the extent you are here to have dialogue with your Russian counterparts, are these issues that are on your agenda with your Russian counterparts? Are there things that you can to help the Russians implement a system that is first of all more consistent and secondly more logical and efficient in its implementation?

Harty: I am going to -- thank you for the question and not pretend to exactly represent that I can change all of those ills overnight. I can promise that we will raise them, yes. Three of the four I was perfectly ready to raise right away and the fourth one came on top my personal screen as we flew into St. Petersburg from Finland a couple of days ago, when we had a registration card that I was relatively sure I was holding the right side up. And so we asked the flight attendant, did she by any chance have it in another language. Non-Cyrillic, perhaps. We do a couple of languages among ourselves, but we didn't get any satisfaction that way as many of you have perhaps know but perhaps less challenge than my colleague and I by Russian language document.

I found, I've seen and thought this is great if there is anybody here from Lufthansa. Congratulations because we were aided by Lufthansa. The fellow next to us, taking pity on us, gave us a little sheet Lufthansa had already done for their travelers. So we went from Russian to German till I think I got it right. But is it 4/17 or 17/4 for my birthday, I am still not sure. Anyway nobody cared till yes, a registration card adds to the picture. HIV tests add to the picture. I think, you know, in truth, in our country, we've had some issues with travel by folks who are HIV positive over the years. The law in fact, even in our own country, hasn't kept up with the science. I know that's a shock to you. But sometimes it is the case.

As we worked on our own to make better, more understanding, more representative of current realities, yes, we certainly have to raise this with Russians. From my perspective, one of the talking points is going to be, you are deterring people because confusion is never your friend. If people don't understand how to do one thing, they go somewhere they do understand it. And that is a talking point that works for registration. I think it's a talking point that works for exit permits and certainly for work permits. Those three things are HRD-wise, as well as TY(?) favorites on the agenda. Now with respect to the relationship, I have had the privilege of being in meetings like this for several years in this job and in previous jobs, have never had a better work in relationship than the one we have -- than the one I have now with my counterpart Slava Pavlovsky. And he knows that, I said this before about him.

We will continue to raise these issues, and you are raising them with me. It creates a multiplier effect for that interest on those issues.

Somers: Well, we do have a great US Delta carrier, Mr. Tarasov. Because on Delta flights back they give you all instructions.

Harty: Great.

Somers: Look, number one, that's familiar, that your name and it's very helpful to people.

Harty: Another lesson to us. We should have flown Delta. Okay. We were in Riga. Okay. Sorry.

Q: Are there any initiatives to improve security advisory opinion process for us? Then, is the State Department considering allowing Russian citizens who were subject to technical alert list check to receive multiple visas or at least to provide some kind of fast-track application process? For example, avoiding in-person interview for subsequent applications. That's very critical for us.

Harty: Okay, thank you. Security advisory opinion is mostly related to the folks I mentioned earlier: scientists, people involved in technologies, where we have to take a transfer concern. I actually think that the process of improving the security advisory opinion process is ongoing. Seventy-five days, year, year and half ago, between 11 and 13 days now. So, we continue to try and get as much efficiency out of them as possible. I think we have seen the biggest jump from three years ago to now. We won't stop. We will keep looking. But other agencies of our government are working with us, do continue to have concerns, they want those security advisory opinion processes to continue as they are now. So one of the things that we did do is that hope is held for, I think, my table, some acknowledged that it is, is for people who are subject to the visa process, you might be aware of its name, that name check process is now good for a longer period of time.

So, even though an individual needs to apply for a visa regularly for each trip, the opinion itself is good for a year. And I think that is something that injects some predictability in the processing and lets you know the answer to the question, at least for a year. So, it's only down to one year, a one time per year process.

Third, with respect to whether or not somebody needs -- whether or not we can waive the interview on subsequent visits, truth is we have a law now that we did not have even in the immediate aftermath of September 11. In December 2004 Congress passed legislation that requires us to see every applicant, every time they require a visa. Interestingly, to give you a sense of the atmosphere in Washington, they didn't pass that law three months after September 11. They passed it three years and three months after September 11. So, while we -- I almost was going to make a whole speech with that, saying secure borders and open doors. Well, we strike every day and work hard to strike a balance between the security of our nation as well as the facilitation of legitimate travel. It is a balance we need to strike. And there are many members of our society and certainly legislators who voted for a law that requires this, that they want to make sure that we are always, as we are always, as we are, always going to put security first.

So that is probably a continuing conversation. Right now I can offer no relief on that subject. I do believe as we continue to improve processes, and actually do some confidence-building measures within our own country, as we continue to use biometrics, as we continue to seek efficiency in the process. There are may be ways in the future that will change, it's not on the agenda right now. It's not on the table right now. I think I will probably attempt for one more question is there is one.

Q: Now I see that every single country develops its own biometrics and own IDs, chips for passports. Do you consider any international cooperation -- and of course, I am interested in cooperation with Russia -- to develop some sort of the unified technology which can be used simultaneously by different countries for not just the passports but for the visas, which will definitely simplify and make more efficient counter-terrorist measures?

Harty: Thank you. Actually we are on an eternal quest for efficiencies and systems that talk to each other. Well, I can't speak for the government of Russia. What I can say is that as we move in the United States to the development of what we call the e-passport, one of the things that we did do is speak very regularly to the several countries that participate in our visa waiver program. And as Congress passed laws and legislation that required us to continue to review the visa waiver program, and that helped us get the impetus to put an electronic passport together.

Congress also required that countries that participate in our visa waiver program build electronic passports with a biometric feature and that that biometric feature be defined by ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization so that the biometric feature incorporated by the visa waiver countries, the 27 countries that participate in our visa waiver program are all ICAO compliant. So, there is one standard.

We have, aside from that, had numerous conversations with a number of countries, but Russian experts had come to the United States several times and several of our folks have come here. So, there has been a very regular and robust conversation about how we build our passport. As a matter of fact, my team in Washington enjoyed a briefing yesterday from Russian experts visiting the United States on this subject.

Well, I can't speak, I don't know the specifications of the Russian passport. There is an ICAO standard for that, RFID chip. And we are very hopeful that what that means is that everybody uses the same technology or within the same standard and that that means, of course, it can be read. If you are building something, you know what you need to build at a port of entry so that it is readable. I hope that's the case. We are certainly seeking it.

Somers: I am afraid, we have to close now. First, I'd like to thank United Technologies, SISCO, Intel and Program Line for sponsoring this event and providing this lavish breakfast for us. And Ambassador Harty, thank you very much for a superb presentation and a wonderful, useful and constructive dialog with our business community here. Thank you.

Harty: Thank you so much. Thank you all very much for coming. (Applause).



Print - Close Window

Subject: re-scheduling visa appointment for Ms. Nechayeva
Date: Tue, 4 Apr 2006 17:55:43 +0400
From: "Consular0, Moscow" <ConsulMo@state.gov>
To: kennethwhite99@yahoo.com

Dear Mr. White:

Thank you for your inquiry in which you requested re-scheduling of Ms. Nechayeva's visa appointment for an earlier date.

Unfortunately, due to a high volume of visa applications processed by this Embassy, we are not able to accommodate your inquiry. There is no vacancy available before May 2, 2006.

We can temporarily return passport to Ms. Nechayeva so that she could travel to London. She will be able to submit her passport directly at her visa interview on May 2, 2006.

We regret we cannot provide you with a more favorable response.

Sincerely,

*Customer Service Unit
Consular Section
www.usembassy.ru*