



**AMBASSADOR OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

TASHKENT

January 27, 2006

Mr. Boris Babaev
Editor-in-Chief, *Novosti Uzbekistana*
Bobur St., 4
700043 Tashkent

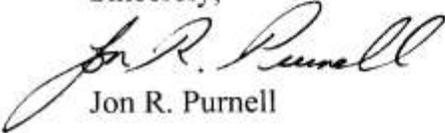
Dear Mr. Babaev:

I read with interest Aydin Gudarzi's article entitled "Loving a Terrorist in the British Style" printed in your December 23 edition. It is important to support public discussion of foreign policies and so I welcome *Novosti Uzbekistana's* willingness to publish materials on this subject. In the same spirit of public discussion, I hope that you will print this letter.

Mr. Gudarzi draws several false conclusions and distorts a variety of facts. I have no desire to enter into a debate with him in this letter, however. Nonetheless, I feel compelled to point out one particularly egregious comment: that a meeting allegedly took place between Muhammad Solih and unnamed United States officials in Karachi, Pakistan, sometime before the violence erupted in Andijon in May 2005. The author claims that during this meeting, Mr. Solih and the unnamed Americans discussed U.S. and British assistance in securing Mr. Solih's accession to power in Uzbekistan in return for his acquiescence to U.S. and British dominance in Central Asia.

These claims are absolutely false. No such meeting ever took place in Karachi or anywhere else. Mr. Gudarzi is simply wrong. U.S. policy toward Uzbekistan has always been guided by a desire for constructive relations as reflected in the Framework Agreement signed in May 2002 during President Karimov's visit to Washington. The United States remains committed to the principles outlined in that document.

Sincerely,



Jon R. Purnell

cc: Aydin Gudarzi