**LREC 2021: US ALLIES IN A CHANGING REGION – CAUCASUS**

LREC to Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia – Second Block Summer 2021

Have you ever marveled at the climate of a new place? Gazed at photos or paintings of mountain or desert landscapes and wondered about the people who live there? Desired to try new things, eat new foods, explore a megacity, or speak in another language? If so, then consider applying for the LREC trip to the Caucasus, scheduled for Second Block Summer 2021.

Organized by Professor Bradford Barrett ([bbarrett@usna.edu](mailto:bbarrett@usna.edu)) of the Oceanography Department, in this cultural immersion trip, we will explore the major cities (Astana, Baku, Tbilisi) of three US ally nations in central Asia, eat lots of delicious foods, hike in the Charyn Canyon, visit the Naval Academies, U.S. Embassies and Navy MILGRPs of the three countries, and experience interesting meteorological & oceanographic, cultural, literary and political sites. We will also be intentional to reinforce the cultural learning via daily de-briefs, blogging, and social media.

**Science and cultural learning objectives**:

1. Discover, by observing first-hand, the incredible meridional, zonal, and vertical diversity of meteorological and climatological conditions found in the topographically steep environment of central Asia, and note the challenges facing the population caused by desertification;
2. Understand the physical mechanisms that cause desertification in the region, with particular emphasis on the different impacts from temperature and precipitation;
3. Understand not only why these climate zones are so unique when compared to other regions in Asia but also how these three countries are similar to other major geographic regions, including in North America and Europe;
4. Begin to understand current geopolitical issues facing the region by discussing them with those actively involved in cross-cultural work at the offices of the Defense Attaché at the U.S. Embassies in Astana, Baku and Tbilisi, and the U.S. MILGRP as well; and
5. Develop cultural and language proficiency

Assessment:

Participants will keep daily journals, upload photos to a social media and blogging web site, and write a short paper reflecting on their experience upon return to USNA. These activities will reinforce both climate and cultural learning, enhance the value of the immersion experience, and form a neat record of the trip for others (friends, family, and the USNA community).

**Timeline**: I anticipate selecting 4 midshipmen, and several alternates, for this trip. After soliciting recommendations from your chain-of-command, I anticipate contacting you for interviews in late September. Once I receive approval from the Commandant, I will notify the final selectees, likely around the middle of October. \*Note: the international program office limits your participation to one LREC (faculty-led short-term) or LSAP (summer abroad) trip during your time as a midshipman. If you have already been a part of an LREC or semester abroad trip, you will not (likely) be allowed to participate in this trip to central Asia (ask me if you have questions).

**Application procedure**: (1) Please thoughtfully reply to each of the questions below. Type your responses and email them to [bbarrett@usna.edu](mailto:bbarrett@usna.edu). I am looking for about 1-2 pages total. (2) You need to also complete the online application in MIDS (reply to the question elements), as that is how your chain-of-command will submit recommendations for you and approve your participation.

Application questions:

1. Have you been on any previous USNA-sponsored international travel? If so, please contact me to determine your eligibility.
2. Please tell me why you want to participate in this LREC cultural immersion program in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.
3. What cross-cultural experience do you have, if any? How do you expect that participation in this program might shape your growth as a future naval officer?
4. Describe how you handle uncertainty and react to changes in plans. Also, give an example of a situation that required you to react to uncertainty and a change in plans.
5. Please (briefly) describe what you know about the cultures of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.
6. Please (briefly) describe what you know about the meteorology and climate of the Caucasus states. (Note: this LREC trip is open to all majors!).
7. What ideas do you have for a research project during your 1/C year that you might carry out in response to this trip, including under the advising of Dr. Barrett? (Recognize that all midshipmen are required to do some kind of research – capstone, thesis, etc – before graduating).

Thank you for submitting this LREC application. I look forward to building a great team for the immersion trip!