

PRESS RELEASE

Austin, Texas – In his new book, *Taxi to Tashkent*, author and former Peace Corps volunteer Tom Fleming describes how at the age of 40, he quit a comfortable job to serve in the Central Asian nation of Uzbekistan, a Muslim culture mired in a Soviet past, with an amazingly rich history, and a future that is on the brink of chaos.

Uzbekistan defied all expectations Fleming harbored. Uzbekistan is not the Central Asia of the Kazakh character Borat, and it is not a nation rife with Islamic extremists as is often portrayed in the Western media. Uzbekistan is a land of Korean discos, where blue eyed Muslims listen to Shania Twain, and where shop owners break into applause at the mention of America.

Fleming poignantly and humorously describes his experience as a fish out of water - an infidel in a Muslim culture, teaching AIDS prevention and sex education in Central Asia's most conservative region. Fleming fostered many valuable friendships with local Uzbeks: the gold toothed Murat who lusted after Denny's waitresses; Timur the Pink Floyd loving barber; and the headstrong Gulnora who dreamt of breaking beyond the traditional confines of subservient matrimony.

A former republic of the former USSR and now an independent nation, Fleming witnessed firsthand a nation slowly falling to pieces. The Uzbek government has been accused of political repression and corruption on a massive scale. Street demonstrations and bombings have been on the rise. More recently an estimated 700 people in the city of Andijon were gunned down by government troops during a street demonstration. United Nations representatives were not allowed to investigate.

Taxi to Tashkent portrays a land little known about in the West. Fleming traveled from the ecological disaster site of the Aral Sea to the ancient Silk Route cities of Bukhara and Samarkand. After completing his service, Fleming departed the nation with a different attitude not only of Uzbekistan, but of his own values as well.

For more information or to request a free review copy, please contact the author at tfleminguz@yahoo.com. *Taxi to Tashkent* is available for sale online at Amazon.com or Barnesandnoble.com.