Social Media and the Online Debate in Central Asia

with

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The emergence of the Internet and the growing participation of people, especially youth, in social media constitute positive change for Central Asia. Uzbekistan as well as the other four countries in the region - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan – has become more connected to the world than ever before. Despite wide-ranging political restrictions and bans, the flow of information through social media is unstoppable. While some debate whether these governments could shut down access to social media altogether to curtail politically sensitive discussion, this author contends that by doing so, they would be making a serious and ultimately unsuccessful gamble. What drives the audience is the quality of the content and the way it is communicated. What keeps people engaged is the sense of forward motion, the anticipation of what will come next and having a desire to shape it. The power and promise of social media for Central Asia is that it gives an unprecedented opportunity for critical thinking and the discussion of the region’s challenging realities to a wider audience than had hitherto been possible.

Tuesday, May 20, 2014
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Voesar Conference Room
1957 E Street NW, Suite 412
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