



Part 1: News Analysis
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Turkmenistan is increasingly a battleground for competing powers seeking both energy security and regional stability. While Russia remains Turkmenistan's dominant geopolitical partner, this week's news revealed some gains by Ashgabat's Western suitors.

Der Spiegel reported this week that NATO supply planes are now landing at Turkmen military air bases on their way to Afghanistan, based on research from the Bonn-based Eurasian Transition Group (ETG).

The arrangement evidently grew out of talks in April at the NATO summit in Bucharest, where Russia and the states of Central Asia discussed allowing non-lethal supplies for the Afghan security effort to be sent via their countries. Two senior Caspian energy envoys from the U.S. government also visited this week.

Meanwhile, Aleksei Miller, CEO of Russia's Gazprom, was not received by Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, an incident characterized as a "diplomatic failure" by *Vremya novostei* and other Russian media. The move was consistent with the Turkmen leader's apparent strategy of keeping prospective buyers off-balance to get the best price. Miller met Vice Prime Minister Tachberdy Tagyev instead, but no changes were announced to the 2007 agreement to bring the price Gazprom paid for Turkmen gas even with market rates in 2009. Miller had just completed a trip to Azerbaijan, where he had offered Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev a market rate for Azeri gas, and is still awaiting a response.

The intense economic competition in the Caspian basin may relegate Turkmenistan's human rights performance to a secondary priority for the West. ETG's Michael Laubsch said the EU, at least, was focusing on energy and other economic considerations. "From the political aspect, I know that the European Union is now not focusing mainly on democratic reforms and transitions regarding human rights issues in Turkmenistan," he said.

Underscoring the stakes, Amnesty International's annual report this week said that "no fundamental improvement in human rights" had been made in Turkmenistan under the new president. Many political prisoners remain, under poor conditions, while the few cases that have been resolved appear to be symbolic bows to pressure from the U.S., Europe, and Russia. New presidential bodies created to report on human rights and resolve complaints appear to be window-dressing at best or tools for surveillance at worst.

There are signs, too, that economic reforms are falling hard on Turkmen citizens, many of whom are already living in poverty. The Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights reported shortages of bread and flour, due in part to a new exchange rate that has caused a volatile currency market. The cost of public transport increased by a factor of 20 on June 3, and airline tickets are now five times more expensive.

The OSCE, which unlike NATO includes Russia as a participating state, has continued to favor a constructive approach in its dealings with Turkmenistan. On June 5, the OSCE's Chairman-in-Office, Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, met with President Berdymukhamedov. Amb. Stubb talked optimistically of working with Turkmenistan to help reform its legislation and promote democracy and human rights, while also cooperating on security, particularly regarding the border with Afghanistan. Marking an earlier visit by Knut Vollebaek, the OSCE's high commissioner on national minorities, News Briefing Central Asia reported that

harassment and surveillance of minorities continues. Cultural and educational freedoms curtailed under past dictator Saparmurat Niyazov have still not been restored.

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1. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

a. Turkmenistan to Cooperate with NATO on Bases: Eurasian Transition Group

Original title: *Turkmenistan: NATO Finds New Partner In Central Asia*

Source: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty/05/30/08. Copyright (c) 2008. RFE/RL, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington DC 20036. Excerpt by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Full version: <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2008/5/6E37F2C0-47EE-4A30-A2C0-B28E7E29BDDF.html>

Excerpt: [Passages omitted: on Turkmenistan's status as a "neutral nation"; on history of relationship with NATO since joining Partnership for Peace in 1994; on Turkmenistan's opening up to NATO after the death of isolationist former leader Saparmurat Niyazov; on quick evolution of relationship with NATO, and strategic relevance of Turkmenistan due to its wealth of natural gas and long border with Afghanistan; on surprise attendance of President Berdymukhamedov at NATO summit in Romania in April; on trips to Ashgabat by high-ranking NATO, U.S. and EU officials.]

The German magazine *Der Spiegel* this month printed a report about NATO planes landing at military air bases in Turkmenistan. Michael Laubsch, an expert on Central Asia and the head of the Bonn-based Eurasian Transition Group (ETG), concurs with the report. He says the article "was based on our recent reports" and "we fully confirm this information. Starting with May 15, our correspondents and informants in Turkmenistan reported that the transport flights between Western Europe and Afghanistan via Turkmenistan increased by 20 percent. So [NATO] already started to focus more on the air bases in Turkmenistan to make transport flights from the West to Afghanistan via Turkmenistan. I think this is the first practical solution regarding the negotiations which took place between the Turkmen government and NATO."

In hindsight, there was a clue something new was happening when Berdymukhamedov went to Bucharest for the NATO summit, the first such visit by a Turkmen president. Farhat Ilyasov, an independent expert in Moscow, tells RFE/RL's Turkmen Service that a one-on-one meeting that Berdymukhamedov had with U.S. President George W. Bush indicated Turkmenistan's relationship with the West was shifting.

"The active contact of Berdymukhamedov with the West, in particular with American officials, and the fact that at the last NATO summit, which Berdymukhamedov attended, and at which only Berdymukhamedov had a personal meeting with President Bush, such things do not happen accidentally in big politics," Ilyasov says. "Who is Berdymukhamedov and who is Bush, that [Bush] would give him a personal meeting," he adds. "This

indicates that by that time many questions were already worked out and it's highly probable that serious progress on the part of the U.S. and NATO had already been made."

[Passages omitted: on agreement reached at Bucharest summit on NATO's use of Central Asian land routes for non-lethal cargo bound for Afghanistan, but absence of public announcement on landing of NATO's military planes in Turkmenistan; on Laubsch's opinion that this could be the start of NATO-Turkmen military cooperation.]

"I think the negotiations between the Turkmen government and NATO were finalized already and I think that we can expect in the nearest future that more NATO forces will be located in Turkmenistan, definitely," says Laubsch. Allowing NATO the use of military air bases is already a bold move for Turkmenistan, which risks the wrath of Russia and southern neighbor Iran in forging closer ties with the Western alliance.

There is also the question of Turkmenistan's official status as a neutral country. Turkmenistan has always refused to participate in military alliances because of this special status. Ilyasov says the Turkmen government and NATO might simply use special phrasing to preserve Turkmenistan's neutrality. "Turkmenistan's status as a neutral nation is a big question but it does not obligate [Turkmenistan] to anyone or anything, it is not legally binding," he says. "For example, if a [military] base is established there, one can find a justification for it -- it's for peacekeeping, it helps stability in the region or the development of peace in the world, it helps the long-suffering Afghan people. There is no problem, everything can be explained."

But Laubsch says it is also possible that the new Turkmen president "will shift away from this neutral status of Turkmenistan because he wants to expect something from the West and therefore I think he will give any signs and signals to the Western countries – especially to the EU, to the United States, but also to NATO – that his government is a reliable partner also for the West and I think this also includes any plans for a military presence in Turkmenistan."

[Passages omitted: on Turkmenistan's poor human rights record as an obstacle to the NATO relationship; on President Berdymukhamedov's lack of real reforms; on pressure from Western human rights organizations to improve human rights and expectation that NATO will be asked to pressure Turkmenistan to democratize.]

But Laubsch says that the EU is already prepared to subordinate rights issues in favor of important geostrategic interests.

"I don't know how intense the pressure from NATO regarding changes and reforms in the sphere of human rights and democracy in Turkmenistan will [continue]," he says. "From the political aspect, I know that the European Union is now not focusing mainly on democratic reforms and transitions regarding human rights issues in Turkmenistan. So this will be one main factor for future relations between the EU and Turkmenistan. They focus on economic issues. I just had a meeting with [EU special representative for Central Asia] Pierre Morel and he definitely said this."

[Passage omitted: on hope by rights activists that as it ends its isolation, Turkmenistan will improve human rights.]

b. “No Fundamental Improvement in Human Rights” in Turkmenistan: Amnesty International

Original Title: Amnesty International Report 2008: State of the World's Human Rights -- Turkmenistan
Source: Amnesty International/05/31/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project
Full version: <http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/regions/europe-and-central-asia/turkmenistan>

Synopsis: In its annual report, the human rights watchdog Amnesty International (AI) said there was "no fundamental improvement in human rights" in Turkmenistan, despite the release of some prisoners after the international community intervened. The released individuals included: environmental activist Andrei Zatoka; former Mufti Nasrullah ibn Ibadullah; conscientious objectors Nuryagdy Gairov, Suleiman Udaev and Aleksandr Zuev; and former Director of the government association Turkmenatlary (Turkmen Horses) Geldy Kyarizov. Despite the resolution of these cases, dozens of people remain imprisoned following unfair trials, many incommunicado, said AI. Some of these people were connected to an alleged assassination attempt on

the late president in 2002, and were sentenced following unfair trials and exposed to harsh conditions, ill treatment, and torture.

President Berdymukhamedov has reversed some of his predecessor's worst moves, such as restoring the cuts in the length of school and university education, and reinstating pensions, but reforms are limited. The much-reported Internet cafes opened in 2007 were too expensive for most people and dissident websites remain blocked and users monitored. Some internal travel restrictions were removed, but the Soviet-era registration system remains in place, making it impossible for citizens to migrate to find work. Dissidents, religious believers and their relatives are still prevented from leaving Turkmenistan.

The president created the Interdepartmental Commission of Human Rights to prepare reports to UN treaty bodies and draft a national human rights program. He invited the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to visit Turkmenistan, but other UN investigators received no response to their requests to visit. The president also established a state commission to review citizens' complaints against law-enforcement agencies. So far, the commission appears to be passing on complaints to the government agency which was the subject of the complaint, and some petitioners have received replies that their complaints were unfounded. The Turkmen leader has dealt with the problem of government corruption by personnel shuffles rather than institutional reform.

Ovezgeldy Ataev, who was dismissed from his post as speaker of parliament shortly after first President Saparmurat Niyazov died, was sentenced to four or five years' imprisonment in February. There were allegations that he was targeted as part of a power struggle following the late president's death. According to the constitution, the Speaker of Parliament was the constitutionally designated successor to the president.

Vyacheslav Kalataevsky, a Baptist leader in the Caspian port city of Turkmenbashi, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in May for crossing the border illegally in 2001, a charge believed to have been brought in retaliation for his religious activities. He was pardoned in October but subsequently denied a residence permit in Turkmenistan. Although he was born in Turkmenistan, he subsequently had obtained Ukrainian citizenship, which enabled authorities to prevent his return to join his family.

Turkmenistan continues to refuse applications for conscientious objection to armed service, and at least six Jehovah's Witnesses were sentenced to terms ranging from 18 months' suspended sentence to 18 months' imprisonment. Three were pardoned in presidential amnesties, but two whose sentences were suspended had restrictions imposed on their movements and were denied employment.

Relatives of activists continue to suffer reprisals. Ruslan Tukhbatullin complained to the presidential complaints commission about his 2005 dismissal from the army, which he believed may have been intended to put pressure on his exiled, activist brother, Farid Tukhbatullin. Ruslan Tukhbatullin received a reply from the Ministry of Defense, the agency that had dismissed him, stating that the dismissal had not been a violation of his rights.

c. U.S. Energy Envoys Examine Energy Cooperation in Turkmenistan

Source: U.S. Embassy—Ashgaba/06/04/0t

Full version: <http://turkmenistan.usembassy.gov/pr20080604.html>

U.S. President George W. Bush's Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy Ambassador C. Boyden Gray and U.S. Coordinator for Eurasian Energy Diplomacy Ambassador Steven Mann are visiting Turkmenistan June 4-6 to hold high-level talks with Turkmen government officials on energy issues. Cooperation in the area of energy is of particular interest to both the United States and Turkmenistan.

C. Boyden Gray is concurrently Special Envoy for EU Affairs and Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy. Prior to his appointment as Special Envoy in 2008, Mr. Gray served as U.S. Representative to the European Union in Brussels from 2006 to 2007. He was also White House Counsel to President George H.W. Bush from 1989 to 1993.

Ambassador Mann previously served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs from May 2006 to December 2007 and as the U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan from 1998 to 2001.

d. OSCE to Cooperate with Turkmenistan on Security, Democracy

Original title: OSCE, Turkmenistan to Intensify Co-operation On Common Concerns, Says OSCE Chairman

Source: OSCE Press Centre/06/05/08. Excerpt by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Full version: <http://www.osce.org/item/31504.html>

Excerpt: Turkmenistan's active cooperation with the OSCE is crucial for promoting stability in the region and strengthening the country's own reform process, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, said in Ashgabat on June 5. Minister Stubb met President Berdymukhamedov and Foreign Minister Rashit Meredov in the port city of Turkmenbashi, and the Chairperson of the Parliament (Mejlis), Akja Nurberdiyeva, in Ashgabat, to discuss the work of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and reforms in areas including education, as well as initiatives to enhance engagement with Afghanistan.

"In my meetings I was encouraged to hear about Turkmenistan's recent efforts to reform its legislation," said Stubb. "The OSCE and Turkmenistan are already cooperating on a number of important joint activities, and I believe we can work together to further support the much-needed reform process in all dimensions of security, particularly with respect to human rights, democracy and rule of law, as well as to promote an independent civil society."

He added that the OSCE stood ready to assist with legislative reforms, and he encouraged Turkmenistan's government to continue dialogue with the OSCE's election body on election legislation, and deepen cooperation in areas such as border security and management.

"Border security and management is a priority in the region, and the decision by the 56 OSCE participating states, including Turkmenistan, to enhance engagement with Afghanistan is a key part of this work," he added. "Closer cooperation on these concerns would be mutually beneficial, and I am looking forward to exploring concrete initiatives."

[Passages omitted: on Stubb's trips to other Central Asian countries; on OSCE work on economic and environmental issues, including cooperation with Caspian countries on waterways, and preparation for the 16th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.]

2. DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

a. Ethnic Minorities Still Face Harassment, Surveillance: NBCentral Asia

Original title: Ethnic Minorities Still Under Pressure

Source: Institute for War and Peace Reporting/News Briefing Central Asia (NBCentral Asia)/05/29/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Full version: http://www.iwpr.net/?p=btm&s=b&o=344832&apc_state=henb

Synopsis: Covering the May 21 meeting of Knut Vollebaek, the OSCE's high commissioner on national minorities, with President Berdymukhamedov, News Briefing Central Asia (NBCentral Asia) reported that minority leaders in Turkmenistan continue to complain of discrimination and surveillance by police.

Vollebaek told reporters that "national minorities living in Turkmenistan should be able to communicate their needs and aspirations to the authorities." Past president Saparmurat Niyazov instituted a policy of "Turkmenizing" other ethnicities, which make up nearly a quarter of the population, according to the last census in 1995. Half of them are Uzbeks, and the rest are Russians, Kazaks, Beluchis, Azeris, Koreans and others.

In 1998-1999, ethnic and cultural centers were closed and non-Turkmen newspapers banned. From 2000 school and university education was available only in Turkmen, while academic credentials from other countries were not recognized. These policies forced many to leave.

A source who remained anonymous in northern Dashoguz told NBCentral Asia that Niyazov's secret directives barring non-Turkmen from appointment to government jobs was still in effect and minorities are

under close surveillance by security agents. An Uzbek woman from Turkmenabat – the administrative center of the northern Lebap region, where the Uzbek population is concentrated – said she felt like "a second-class person," NBCentral Asia reported. She said she was "constantly afraid of the ever-present Ministry of National Security, which forces you to remain silent and put up with things when you want to voice dissent or protest." A Tatar woman said: "They should stop persecuting us and give us a chance to register and work properly."

Not only legal reforms would be needed, but deep changes in attitudes, say minority observers. "Even if the authorities gear up to take radical steps, the habit, inertia and fear of doing the wrong thing that are deep-rooted in decision-makers will continue to be felt for a long time to come," a commentator told NBCentral Asia.

b. Imprisoned Civic Activist in Poor Health in Turkmen Jail Cell: Amnesty International

Original title: UA 99/08 (EUR 51/002/2008, 16 April 2008) Health Concern/Possible Prisoner of Conscience: Turkmenistan Valery Pal, (M), Aged 60

Source: Amnesty International, e-mailed statement/06/01/08

Synopsis: In an e-mailed statement circulated June 1, Amnesty International expressed concern about the health of imprisoned civic activist Valery Pal, and indicated that he may possibly be a political prisoner. Pal, aged 60, was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment on charges of stealing property from his workplace at an oil-refinery in the Caspian port city of Turkmenbashi. Local human rights groups believe the case was fabricated in retaliation for his activism. On May 13, the Turkmenbashi City Court found Pal guilty of crimes including misappropriation of property (Article 229, part 4a), abuse of power (Article 181, part 2), and forgery (Article 187). His lawyer appealed the sentence.

According to Pal's relatives, he was not presented with an indictment before the trial, and held some seven weeks in pre-trial detention. Amnesty International received allegations that Pal was interrogated several times in pre-trial detention without the presence of his lawyer. Temirkhan Misrikhanov, chairperson of the Union of Independent Lawyers of Turkmenistan, an exiles' group, reported June 1 that the investigator had offered Pal's wife the chance to pay a bribe of first US \$10,000, then US \$3,000, promising that if she paid her husband could be freed.

Vyacheslav Mamedov, the director in exile of the non-governmental Democratic Civil Union of Turkmenistan, informed Amnesty International on 1 June: "The case has clearly been dealt with in a biased way. The authorities put psychological pressure on the witnesses, the lawyer and on Valeri Pal himself and threatened and intimidated them." Pal suffered a stroke in 2004 and has been partly paralyzed since then, requiring regular medical treatment and exercise. He also suffers from chronic prostatitis. According to Mamedov, guards at the prison in Turkmenbashi where Pal is held continue to insist that his relatives have to pay bribes in order to pass on medicine and food to him. He recently stated in a letter to relatives that he had not been allowed any exercise for over a week. He and five other detainees are said to be kept in a humid basement cell meant for a total of three people.

c. Lines for Dollars – and Bread – in Turkmenistan

Original Title: Turkmen Residents Queue for Bread and Dollars

Source: Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights. Excerpt by OSI Turkmenistan Project

Full version: <http://www.chrono-tm.org/?0257044163000000000000011000000>

Excerpt: Turkmen residents who can afford to save foreign currency have started buying dollars, which only recently they were trying to exchange for manats. People are wary of the new unified dollar-manat exchange rate introduced by the government in April, and the currency market has been volatile.

On the one hand, prices in manats for imported household appliances have considerably decreased. People are purchasing refrigerators, television sets, and music centers. Korean-manufactured TV sets, previously 3.5 million manats, can now be purchased for 2 million manats. But wholesale costs for the vendors of household appliances are not affected, since the prices for items they buy abroad remain stable at \$140–\$150.

On the other hand, food has noticeably risen in price. There have been disruptions with flour supplies, primarily in the provinces. Flour is difficult to find in the bazaars as it is occasionally sold only at select market counters. In the grocery stores, flour rations have been imposed, with only 4 kilos of flour per month per person, clearly insufficient for local needs as flour is the main ingredient in the diet. People are once again lining up at grocery stores to buy bread and flour.

Meanwhile, many believe that since the introduction of the unified exchange rate, the dollar is unlikely to drop further against the manat. The US dollar, which previously cost 24,000 to 25,000 manats, currently can be purchased at 14,250 manats. Queues are now forming at currency exchange offices. Some residents buy U.S. \$100 and some U.S. \$1000 or more.

[Passage omitted: on long-term negative effects of exchange rate fluctuations, reducing Turkmen savings and confidence.]

d. Steep Hike in Public Transport, Air Fares in Turkmenistan

Original title: *In Turkmenistan, Public Transport Fair Increases 20-Fold*

Source: *trel.ru/RIA Novosti/Turkmenistan/06/05/08. Translation and synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project.*

Full version: *<http://trel.ru/newstext.mhtml?Part=2&PubID=18575>*

Synopsis: The cost of fares on public transport in Turkmenistan increased by a factor of twenty starting June 3, RIA-Novosti reported, citing the government newspaper *Turkmenistan*. Air tickets prices also increased about five-fold.

A city bus trip now costs 1,000 manats (about 7 cents); previously the fare had been 50 manats. Officials decided to increase prices at a government meeting May 30, saying that the longstanding existing fares did not cover operation costs.

President Berdymukhamedov announced that disabled persons and veterans of World War II would retain their right to free public transport.

3. ECONOMIC NEWS

a. Turkmen Leader Fails to Meet with Gazprom Head in Ashgabat

Original Title: *"Best Conditions": Aleksei Miller Did Not Meet with President of Turkmenistan*

Source: *Vremya novostei/vremya.ru/06/04/08. Translation and synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project*

Full version: *<http://www.vremya.ru/2008/97/8/205219.html>*

Synopsis: For the first time this year, Aleksei Miller, head of Russia's Gazprom, did not reach any new agreements on his trip to Ashgabat, and worse, was not received by President Berdymukhamedov, *Vremya novostei* reported. Given that the Turkmen leader is the only person who can make gas decisions, the trip was considered a "diplomatic failure," according to the outlet. Miller said he met with Vice Prime Minister Tachberdy Tagyev regarding gas prices under an agreement reached last year to move to market rates in 2009.

"Most likely the Turkmen leader decided not to demonstrate any particular predisposition to visitors from Russia, as recently he has been actively flirting with alternative buyers of gas," *Vremya novostei* commented. Miller is currently on a trip to the Caspian seeking to keep opponents to Russian control of energy export routes at bay; he offered Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev market prices for Europe-bound gas from Azerbaijan, the report said.

According to sources cited by *Vremya novostei*, a bilateral meeting between the presidents of Russia and Turkmenistan is planned during an informal CIS summit in St. Petersburg this week.

The Turkmen government has not issued any statement about Miller's trip, and he himself issued an upbeat press release, stressing the long-term nature of Turkmenistan's partnership with Gazprom, which he said

could ensure the “best conditions” for cooperation. Gazprom annually purchases 42-44 billion cubic meters (cm) of gas, currently for US \$130/1,000 cm. That price will increase to \$150/1,000 cm after July 1.

b. Turkmenistan Could Boost Oil Exports to 14 Million Tons by 2015, 80 Million by 2030

Original Title: *Turkmenistan Could Boost Oil Exports to 14 Mln Tons By 2015*

Source: *Interfax/05/31/08. Synopsis by OSI Turkmenistan Project*

Full version: <http://www.interfax.com/5/398856/news.aspx>

Synopsis: Turkmenistan could increase oil exports to 14 million tons by 2015, 30 million tons by 2020, and 80 million tons by 2030, Interfax reported, citing Bairamgeldy Nedirow, Turkmen deputy minister of oil and gas industry and mineral resources. Nedirow spoke at a CIS oil and gas summit in Paris.

Turkmenistan's gas exports totaled 50 billion cubic meters (bcm) in 2007 and could increase to 58 bcm in 2008, 120 bcm in 2015 and go as high as 250 bcm by 2030, Nedirow said. Turkmenistan refined 8 million tons of oil in 2007, which will rise to 16 million tons in 2008, 20 million by 2020 and 30 million by 2030. Gas production totaled more than 72 bcm in 2007 and could grow to 80 bcm in 2008, then double in 2015 and more than quadruple in 2030. Russian gas company Gazprom was the country's main customer, Nedirow said, and its share would increase from 50 bcm per year to 70 or 80. China (30 bcm) and Iran (8 bcm) represented Turkmenistan's main other partners currently. Liquefied gas production would quintuple by 2020, the deputy minister said.

Turkmen oil refineries produced 9.8 million tons of oil in 2007 and plan to double output in 2008, and go to 30 million tons in 2030.

c. Ashgabat Hosts International Textile Exhibition

Original title: *Turkmenistan – The World's Textile Producer*

Source: *Official Government website/06/02/08/State News Agency of Turkmenistan (TDH)/06/01/08. Excerpt by OSI Turkmenistan Project*

Full version: http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/_en/?idr=5&id=080602a

Excerpt: On the first Sunday in June, Turkmenistan celebrates Textile Workers' Day. To mark this occupational holiday for Turkmen textile workers, established in 2006, Ashgabat hosted the International Textile Exhibition. The opening ceremony was held at the Exhibition Center.

The exposition brought together textile specialists from the CIS and the abroad. Over 60 foreign companies and firms – leading producers and suppliers of textile equipment and chemical products -- presented the latest innovations at the exposition. These included Turkmenistan's long-term dependable partners as well as those interested in establishing business contacts in the very promising Turkmen market – Jum Shui (China), Bezema, Rieter, Huntsman (Switzerland), Textima (Germany), Sigma Center (Turkey), Alliance Russian Textile, NPF ORT (Russia) and others.

[Passages omitted: on Turkmen officials present at the ceremony and speech by President Berdymukhamedov on achievements of the Turkmen textile industry and need to take it to a higher level; on awards ceremony for best textile workers.]

The national enterprises presented the exposition of textile goods, which are of high demand on the national and foreign consumer markets, demonstrating the impressive achievements of the youngest and most dynamically developed sector of national economy. These included the goods manufactured by the textile giants – Turkmenbashi jins kompleksi, Turkmenbashi tekstil kompleksi, the Gypajk, Geokdepe and the Bayramali textile complexes and the others.

The large-scale textile enterprises located in immediate proximity to raw-material sources and supplied with super-modern equipment use environmentally-friendly raw materials and advanced technologies. The high quality of domestically produced textile goods meeting the international standards is proved by prestigious international certificates including ISO 9001 Quality management systems, ISO 14001 Environment

Management Systems and Standards, WRAP Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production, OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health and Safety Information.

[Passages omitted: on types of goods exported to CIS, Europe, and America; on fashion shows by Russian, Pakistani and Ukrainian designers.]

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