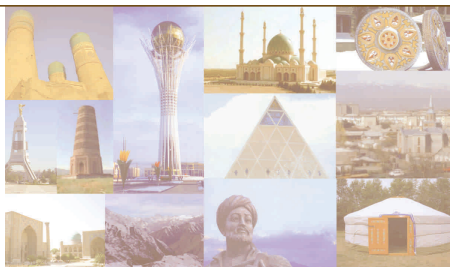




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MARCH 2012



TURKMENISTAN

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

Bimonthly article

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Highlights

The most outstanding event in February was the election of the President of Turkmenistan. Eight presidential candidates were registered by the central commission of elections and referendums. The Turkmen leader Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov was nominated by public organizations as their candidate in the election. The elections were held on 12 February 2012 and the results announced at the joint meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers and the State Security Council. The total number of voters corresponded to 96.7% of the population. With all votes counted, Berdimuhamedov polled 97.14% of the vote. The inauguration ceremony took place on 17 February.

Foreign and international policy

In telephone conversations, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Afghan president Hamid Karzai congratulated President Berdimuhamedov on his success in the elections.

Official visit to Turkey

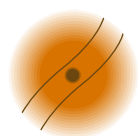
On 29 February, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Turkey celebrated the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. At present, Turkey is one of Turkmenistan's leading foreign policy partners. In 2011, bilateral trade turnover increased by 25% against 2010. In the course of the last 20 years, over 120 official documents at interstate, intergovernmental and interdepartmental levels have been signed by both sides. Today, Turkmenistan and Turkey cooperate in the fields of education and culture, trade and energy, construction and communications, and the textile industry. More than 600 Turkish companies presently operate in Turkmenistan.

Ashgabat hosted the fourth meeting of the intergovernmental Turkmen-Turkish commission for economic cooperation and a joint business forum. Finance minister Zafer Caglayan headed the Turkish delegation. The representatives of Turkish companies and the non-state sector of the economy of Turkmenistan took part in the Turkmen-Turkish business forum. The agenda of the forum on economic cooperation covered issues of bilateral cooperation in trade and economics, fuel and energy, agriculture and water management, construction, textiles, tourism and the creation of a modern tourism infrastructure.

With a view to furthering the development of Turkmen-Turkish relations, President Berdimuhamedov paid an official visit to Turkey, making it the first country to be visited by Turkmenistan's newly elected president. Turkey will be an important energy partner in the region's energy security. Ankara has always expressed an interest in the delivery of Turkmen gas to Europe through the Caspian Sea and Turkey. Moreover, Turkey is ready to assist in finding alternative export routes for Turkmen gas.

In an interview with the Turkish media on the eve of his visit, President Berdimuhamedov emphasized that despite the global financial and economic crisis, Turkmenistan provided Turkish partners with an opportunity to actively participate in the implementation of several large-scale projects. President Berdimuhamedov held talks with his Turkish counterpart and other Turkish officials, and also took part in the opening of the "Turkmenistan" park and the unveiling of the monument to the great Turkmen poet and thinker Magtymguly Fragi.

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Relations with the Asian countries

President Berdimuhamedov received Malaysia's foreign minister Anifah Haman who arrived in Ashgabat at the head of a delegation. The two sides discussed prospects for cooperation in the trade, economic and energy sectors, industry, transport, telecommunications, high technology and tourism, education and the training of highly qualified professionals, as well as science and culture. Issues relating to the upcoming opening of the embassy of Malaysia in Turkmenistan were a special topic of discussion. The Malaysian delegation was also received at Turkmenistan's ministry of foreign affairs.

One of the most important events in January was the visit of the delegation from China headed by Chen Zhili as the special representative of the Chinese president. Cooperation in communication, education, science and information technology, healthcare, tourism and textiles spheres were marked as the priority directions of Turkmen-Chinese partnership.

Prospects for extending cooperation in fuel and energy, transport, construction, textiles and trade were the priority topics in the meetings with Rathakitom Manathata, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand in Turkmenistan. A special topic of conversation was the development of inter-parliamentary cooperation. The Thai delegation was also received in the institutions of the oil and gas sector of Turkmenistan.

The delegation headed by Pinhas Avivi, director general for relations with international organizations from Israel's foreign affairs ministry discussed the expansion of mutual long-term cooperation with Turkmen partners. The Israeli delegation was also adopted in the State concern "Turkmengaz".

European countries in Turkmenistan

The head of the Mejlis held a meeting with Louise Bastos de Almeida, Ambassador Extraordinary and

Plenipotentiary of the Portuguese Republic in Turkmenistan, during which the two men shared information about the main directions and priorities of Turkmenistan's domestic and foreign policy. During the visit, the Portuguese delegation was received at the ministry of petroleum and mineral resources and the state agency for the management and use of hydrocarbon resources.

Prospects for developing traditional interstate cooperation were discussed during a meeting at the foreign affairs ministry with a delegation headed by Tuula Yrjola, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Finland. Tuula Yrjola highlighted the great interest of the largest Finnish companies in ongoing new prospective projects in Turkmenistan.

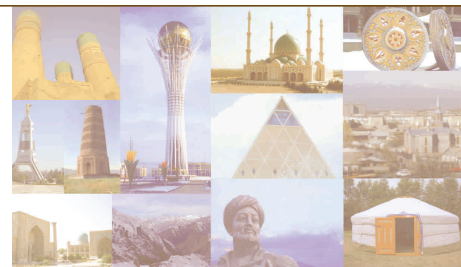
Relations with the CIS

Turkmenistan's foreign affairs minister received a delegation from the Russian ministry of foreign affairs headed by Andrei Karlov, the Director of the Department of Consular Service. The agenda of the meeting covered the issues of further developing Turkmen-Russian bilateral relations, a wide range of consular and visa issues, and specific aspects of implementing Turkmen-Russian agreements.

A meeting with the delegation led by Grigol Vashadze, minister of foreign affairs of Georgia, took place in the ministry of foreign affairs of Turkmenistan. The meeting was devoted to discussing possibilities and prospects for furthering the growth of productive Turkmen-Georgian collaboration in a number of key areas of mutual interest as well as interaction between the foreign offices.

International organizations

Turkmenistan continues to enhance constructive cooperation with international organizations. The international conference and the book exhibition devoted to the 20th anniversary of Turkmenistan's UN membership took place in Ashgabat.



President Berdimuhamedov received Jan Kubis, the U.N. Secretary-General's special representative to Afghanistan and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. The sides exchanged views on strengthening security and promoting the mutual recovery and sustainable development of Afghanistan. The eminent guest noted that the construction of the TAPI pipeline and the railway, as well as electricity supply, directly contributes to the development of the Afghan economy.

The regional representative of the office of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees in Central Asia, Saber Azam, arrived in Ashgabat to take part in a meeting with Turkmenistan officials. The priority topics on the agenda of the meeting were furthering the development of Turkmenistan-UN dialogue in the humanitarian sphere and preparations for the upcoming international high-level conference to be held in Ashgabat on refugees and displaced persons.

Collaboration between Turkmenistan and the International Committee of the Red Cross is in progress. The delegation led by the head of the ICRC regional office in Central Asia Yves Arnoldy was received at the ministry of foreign affairs. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss specific ways of enhancing fruitful cooperation and to sign a number of bilateral documents on cooperation in the field of humanitarian law.

At the U.N. General Assembly, Turkmenistan initiated the establishment of the U.N. Interregional Centre on climate change issues in Ashgabat and expressed its readiness to provide all necessary infrastructures for the activity of this centre. The issue was also discussed at a meeting with Gabriela Fisherova, the UNDP Regional Centre advisor on climate change in Bratislava.

Internal affairs

The CIS observer mission was headed by the chief of staff, Evgeny Sloboda. Another mission of CIS

observers headed by Sergey Lebedev, chairman of the executive committee - CIS executive secretary, arrived in Ashgabat at the invitation of Turkmenistan to observe the presidential elections scheduled for 12 February 2012. In the course of a press conference, Sergey Lebedev stated that the presidential elections in Turkmenistan were organized according to the principle of broad-based alternatives and openness. He also underlined that the shortcomings revealed during the elections were mainly of an inconsequential and technical character.

On 17 February, President Berdimuhamedov began to form a new Cabinet of Ministers. The new government consists of ten vice chairmen, five to supervise the oil and gas industry, economy, foreign policy, science and education. The other newly appointed vice-premiers will supervise transport and communication fields, media and cultural spheres, construction, agriculture, foreign economic relations and trade.

An Iranian delegation headed by Mohammad Mehdi Akhundzadeh, President Ahmadinejad's special envoy for Caspian issues, arrived in Ashgabat and was received at the foreign affairs ministry to negotiate Caspian Sea issues.

The agenda of the meeting of the inter-departmental commission of Turkmenistan covered matters of fruitful cooperation on the Caspian Sea problems, the outcomes of the past year and plans for the future

Economy and business enterprise

Two-month economic indicators were reported at the first official meeting of the new Turkmenistan government, during which the programme of socio-economic development of Turkmenistan for 2012-2016 was adopted.

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