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Date/DTG:	Nov 12, 2004 / 120851Z NOV 04
From:	AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
Action:	RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC *ROUTINE*
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TAGS:	AORC, TSPA, PREL, PGOV, EAID, OSCI, TX
Captions:	~~SENSITIVE~~
Subject:	TURKMENISTAN, CIVIL SOCIETY AND UFOS

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 001028

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DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN (RUBIN)

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TAGS: AORC, TSPA, PREL, PGOV, EAID, OSCI, TX
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN, CIVIL SOCIETY AND UFOS

REF: A) Ashgabat 989 (NOTAL)
B) Ashgabat 406 (NOTAL)
C) Ashgabat 291 (NOTAL)
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Summary
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1. ~~(SBU)~~ Yes, UFOs. Somehow, over time, the Union of

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John Powers, Acting-Director
US Department of State
2/25/2026

UFOlogists of Turkmenabat has established a reputation as a reliable NGO partner for a variety of activities from assisting with small and medium businesses, to distributing humanitarian assistance, to assisting NGOs with registering under the 2003 NGO law. The UFOlogists have developed a good rapport with local authorities, they say, and are able to accomplish their tasks because "everyone is interested in UFOs." The UFOlogists next initiative is to publish an independent newsletter, the first in independent Turkmenistan.

2. ~~(SBU)~~ In the appearances-are-deceiving world of Turkmenistan, it almost seems fitting that one of the USG's most reliable implementers is equally committed to looking for life on another planet. End Summary.

UFOs in Turkmenabat
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3. ~~(SBU)~~ On November 5, DCM and USAID Director met with the Board and interested members of the Union of UfOlogists (UOU) of Turkmenabat, Lebap Welayet (province). The Union of UFOlogists is working on an $8,532 grant to assist other local NGOs navigate the NGO registration process of the new NGO law (reftels). The UOU was the first NGO to register after independence in 1992 and was the first independent NGO to reregister successfully under the new 2003 NGO law.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ Though the Union first was established to pursue the study of life on other planets, over time its activities became more "practical," Board members told the DCM. Members of the Union have attended international UFO fora and published on the subject, but most members assured the DCM, they had limited or no interest in the subject at all. UOU President Ovezberdy Muradov said the Turkmen military and government authorities had consulted him about mysterious occurrences in Turkmen airspace, but he said there had been no confirmed sightings of UFOs in Turkmenistan.

Peace on Earth
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5. ~~(SBU)~~ Instead, the Union has attracted a local brain trust of lawyers, scientists, computer experts, accountants, teachers and others who had joined together to "do good things." Pointing to their mission statement in English, Russian and Turkmen hanging on the wall of their office, members assured the DCM that any assistance they provided would fit their mission. According to their statement, the UFOlogists "help spread the ideas about the struggle for peace and human coexistence on Earth and in the Universe." Because of their diverse activities, the UOU has become an umbrella organization with at least nine member organizations running

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activities from sport, to youth, to business consulting. The Union has over 1000 members including some individual members from other welayets.

Registering Small and Medium Businesses
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6. ~~(SBU)~~ Members told the DCM they first started the "practical" side of their work shortly after independence by assisting small and medium-sized businesses register with local authorities. According to the UOU President, during the `90's the Union assisted 187 enterprises in registering ranging from farmers unions to joint enterprises to a shoe factory. The UOU told the DCM all

this consulting was done pro bono. The Union made money over the years, however, by running for-fee computer, accounting and other "non-traditional" courses such as UFOlogy and massage.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ UOU President Muradov told the DCM the Union had been successful in this effort because it had the respect of local authorities. According to Muradov, "everyone is interested in UFOs" and local authorities were eager to assist and also learn more about UFOs. The Union also regularly ran UFO-related seminars and talks, which were well attended.

8. ~~(SBU)~~ In addition to commercial work, the UOU obtained experience in humanitarian goods distribution when it became a partner of the State Department funded CHAP humanitarian assistance program administered by Counterpart International. UOU facilitated humanitarian assistance to refugees from the civil war in Tajikistan and also with Afghan refugees. Muradov said the Union was eager to continue with such work, should the need arise.

Assisting NGOs
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9. ~~(SBU)~~ Because of their established track record and their success in re-registering after the austere 2003 NGO law was passed, USAID, through Counterpart International, is considering a $15,000 grant to assist the UOU with internal capacity building. The grant passed the local grants committee and has been forward to the regional committee for consideration. The UOU already has successfully registered an NGO and is working on the registration documents of four others.

Next, an Independent Newsletter

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10. (~~SBU~~) USAID was presented with a grant proposal by the UOU for a $30k grant for printing equipment for the UOU to establish its own newsletter. Though printing of independent media is illegal in Turkmenistan, the UOU assured DCM it already had advance approval from local authorities because a license was needed for anything over 1000 copies and the UOU only planned to publish 999 copies. UOU members said the content of the newsletter would be nonpolitical and only would describe the activities of the Union. If members wanted to make additional copies, the UOU told DCM, "that is up to them." Eventually subscribers would be charged for the newsletter, which would then become self-sustaining, according to the UOU plan. USAID has requested that the UOU submit a stronger, more cost-effective proposal.

11. (~~SBU~~) The UOU also is considering opening chapters in other welayets because "our services are in so much demand."

Comment
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12. (~~SBU~~) Crazy? Like a fox; and worthy of USG attention and support. End Comment.

13. (U) Minimize considered.

JACOBSON
BT
#1028

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Signature: JACOBSON

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