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United States Government Delivers Humanitarian Aid to the People of Afghanistan

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U.S. Ambassador Laura Kennedy, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Batyr Hudaygulyev, UN Country Representative Khaled Philby and IOM Representative Zoran Milovic on the tarmac at the Ashgabat Airport

The United States Government has continued to deliver humanitarian aid for the suffering people of Afghanistan through the territory of its neighboring countries. Turkmenistan has become a major transit corridor for international and American humanitarian cargoes to northern parts of Afghanistan.

Beginning in October 2001, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has airlifted plastic sheeting, wool blankets, high-energy biscuits and sugar to Ashgabat, which have then been transported by the International Organization for Migration to Afghanistan to assist its vulnerable people.

On November 5-9, the U.S. Department of Defense flew six airlift missions of U.S. Air Force C-17 cargo planes filled with USAID non-food aid items including wool blankets, plastic sheeting and high energy biscuits.

Andrew S. Natsios, Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development, visited Ashgabat on November 10-11 in order to review the U.S. humanitarian operation. "Our focus is getting food and other aid into northern Afghanistan where the greatest number of people are in critical need," said Natsios. "With winter rapidly approaching, it's vitally important that we use every available means, and every possible route to get aid in immediately."

Natsios met with government officials and leaders of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in Turkmenistan to ensure that all avenues of aid delivery are being explored. He thanked the Government of Turkmenistan for its work in facilitating aid to Afghanistan.

On November 12, USAID delivered to Ashgabat an additional shipment of humanitarian goods bound for Afghanistan. The medical supplies, weighing 4,325 kilograms and worth \$21,540, will provide for 50,000 people over a three-month period.

More shipments of humanitarian aid are expected to arrive in Ashgabat from the United States in early December. This aid, worth almost \$775,000 was purchased with donations from American children to President Bush's "America's Fund For Afghan Children". President Bush, at an event in the American Red Cross Headquarters in Washington on October 16, said that more than 90,000 donations had arrived at the White House from children across the United States for the children of Afghanistan. This aid will be flown to Turkmenistan by the American Red Cross on U.S. military planes and transported to Afghanistan by the IOM.



Crates of blankets, plastic sheeting, and food just after arrival in the Ashgabat Airport, bound for Afghanistan (photo by IOM)

Afghanistan was the U.S. government's number one recipient of humanitarian assistance prior to September 11, and remains so today. The United States has supplied more than 80 percent of all food aid for vulnerable Afghans through the World Food Program and will continue to be the leading food donor to the Afghan people.



Afghan people receiving this shipment of American humanitarian aid delivered by IOM to the Northern Faryab Province of Afghanistan (photo by IOM)

The U.S. Government has donated over \$246 million since October 2001 to Afghanistan and is committed to the health and welfare of the Afghan people as well as to its long-term reconstruction and development.

Ambassador Kennedy Hosts Iftar (Agyz Achar) Dinner at Her Residence

Ambassador Kennedy hosted an "Agyz Achar" Turkmen Iftar dinner on November 19, 2001, at her residence, as a sign of respect to Muslim traditions. Foreign Minister Meredov, Mufti Nasrulla ibn Ibadulla, Chairman of the Religious Council Yagshimurat Atamurat Ogly, Minister of Culture Aydogdiyev and Minister of Education Ashirov represented the Turkmen Government at this dinner. The Ambassadors of Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and their wives brought traditional dishes and shared in their meal. The religious leaders opened and closed the dinner with a prayer, and participants shared their own religious and cultural traditions with each other throughout the meal.

Ambassador Kennedy welcomed the guests in remarks made in Turkmen, Russian and English, emphasizing that America, a nation with millions of Muslim citizens, wished to join with Muslims around the world in the celebration of Ramadan. President Bush hosted the White House's third annual Iftar dinner this year. Ambassador Kennedy's guests expressed their genuine pleasure for this opportunity to celebrate Ramadan along with Americans.

National Seminar Summarizes 2001 Demographic and Health Survey in Turkmenistan

A National Seminar to unveil the Turkmenistan Demographic and Health Survey of 2000 was held at the Four Points Ak-Altyn Hotel on November 29, 2001. Deputy Minister of Health of the Government of Turkmenistan Byashim Sopyev and USAID Country Representative John Kropf presented

the survey, which was developed for the Government of Turkmenistan to use in creating health and nutrition policies in the coming years. The National Seminar summarized the results of more than half a year of preparatory work, four months of data collection, data entry and processing, and about nine months of analysis of the results. The day-long seminar included presentations on reproductive health, child nutrition, anemia, and related topics.



USAID Country Representative John Kropf, Rector of Turkmen State Medical Institute Mukhamed Khojanepesov and Deputy Minister of Health of Turkmenistan Byashim Sopyev opening the seminar

The survey, carried out by USAID's contractor organization MacroInternational, contains unique information on maternal and child health in Turkmenistan. Information in the 2000 Turkmenistan DHS was collected from 7,919 women of reproductive age (15 - 49) and their children under age five in all velayats of Turkmenistan using scientific representative sampling, assessment and blood testing. The program was designed to provide current data on women's reproductive health and histories, nutritional status of women and children, knowledge and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. The data collection was carried out by specially trained interviewers using questionnaire and methods of clinical, child immunization and related health issues.

The Demographic and Health Survey of Turkmenistan is part of the worldwide Demographic and Health Surveys program, which has been implemented in more than 70 countries. It is fully funded by USAID.

International Education Week in Ashgabat Involves Alumni and Prospective Students

The American Center and ACCELS hosted ten events in honor of International Education Week (November 12 - 16) which focused on everything from elementary education through international graduate study and how to finance it.

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The most far-reaching event of the week was organized by alumni of the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program for high school students. Pairs of alumni from the program visited local schools to talk to students about their experience in America and how it affected them as people and as students. Alumni visited approximately 50 schools in five cities and spoke to over 1,200 students. They shared what they did while in the U.S., and what they continue to do upon return for their local communities and schools in the form of community service activities and educational projects.

On Monday, November 12, ACCELS hosted a banquet for professors from higher education institutions from throughout the country. Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy Eric Schultz opened the event and spoke to many of the guests throughout the evening. Approximately 45 professors attended the banquet and listened to presentations by Dr. Ejegysz Saparova and Dr. Bryan Roberts. Dr. Saparova has spent the last eight summers teaching the Turkmen language at the University of Indiana. She emphasized to the professors how demanding the American students are of their professors. Dr. Roberts, who has spent time teaching at universities in Armenia and the United States, discussed the differences of being a faculty member in the U.S. and Central Asian higher education systems.



Serdar Akmuradov leads IATP's seminar on Internet search for educational purposes

On Thursday, November 15, alumni of the Teaching Excellence Awards Program (TEA), met with directors and teachers of local schools to talk about how the secondary and elementary education system in the U.S. compares to that of Turkmenistan. Similar events were also held in Turkmenbashi and Balkanabat.

Alumni of the Undergraduate and Graduate/Muskie programs hosted a roundtable discussion with almost thirty guests to the American Center about their experiences while studying in the U.S. They highlighted the differences and contrasts

between the American and Turkmen education systems.

A workshop to introduce visitors to business and economic education programs in Central Asia was held by members of the Resource Network for Business and Economics Education on November 13.

Other events that were held throughout the week were workshops on the process of studying in America and how one can find funding for independent scholarships.

Ambassador Kennedy Meets with Leaders of U.S. Companies in Turkmenistan

U.S. Ambassador Laura E. Kennedy hosted her first business roundtable with representatives of U.S. companies that operate in Turkmenistan on November 1, 2001. Twenty-six businessmen from twenty companies gathered at the Ambassador's residence to introduce themselves and share information on their operations in Turkmenistan. Ambassador Kennedy led the discussion about major issues facing U.S. businesses in Turkmenistan such as currency conversion, visas, taxation and customs.



Ambassador Kennedy leads the discussion

U.S. companies that operate here are watched by potential U.S. and foreign investors as they consider investing in Turkmenistan.

The business roundtable is an opportunity for companies to meet as the American business community and discuss their successes and the obstacles they face. In some sense, the roundtable fulfills part of the role normally played by the American Chamber of Commerce (ACC) worldwide. In Turkmenistan, it gives companies an opportunity to share their understanding of local practices and incorporate the best ones. The roundtable also provides the U.S. Embassy with information to use in its efforts to advocate for American companies and to promote U.S. export and investment.

Participants of ABA/CEELI's Seminar Explore Comparative Law

On November 23-24, 2001, the American Bar Association/Central and East European Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) conducted a two-day comparative law seminar in cooperation with Turkmen State University. Thirty-five students attended the event, which was opened by U.S. Ambassador Laura Kennedy and Professor Murad Khaitov on behalf of Rector Rakhman Odekov. Ambassador Kennedy expressed her support for the work of ABA/CEELI and the University and her encouragement to the law students.



Ambassador Kennedy and Professor Khaitov with law students of Turkmen State University

During the seminar, students had the opportunity to present mock arguments on an American criminal procedure and mock closing trial arguments. Turkmen and American speakers presented topics including Turkmen civil law, comparative Turkmen and American taxation, American criminal procedure and Turkmenistan's Neutrality. Speakers included TSU Professor Murad Khaitov, ABA/CEELI Regional Director Delaine Swenson, and Tim Nader, ABA/CEELI Liaison for Turkmenistan and Stewart Kahn, ABA/CEELI Liaison for Kyrgyzstan.

The seminar was part of ABA/CEELI's ongoing cooperation with the Law Department of Turkmen State University.

USAID Organizes Specialized Computer Training for Turkmen Hydromet

On November 12-16 the Natural Resource Management Project of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) organized a computer training course for specialists of the Turkmen National Hydrometeorological Committee ("Turkmen Hydromet").

This training introduced basic computer skills in MS Windows, Word and Excel to the Turkmen Hydromet specialists. The majority of participants of the program were from outside of Ashgabat.



Hydromet specialists practice their computer skills

This training course was the first in a series of training programs planned and conducted by USAID and the World Bank for Hydromets in Central Asia. These programs are intended to improve the skills of specialists and allow for proper information handling for better resource management.

The training supports the World Bank's Global Environmental Facility Water and Environment Management Project, which is installing water flow and quality monitoring stations at critical trans-boundary locations within the Aral Sea Basin.

The Hydromet specialists will be operating the project's stations in Turkmenistan. USAID and its Natural Resource Management Project are working in Central Asian countries to improve the collection, analysis and transmission of data from these transboundary monitoring stations along Syr Darya and Amu Darya Rivers.

American Embassy Conducts Seminars on Exchange Programs and Use of Internet for Teachers

The American Center under the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat conducted a workshop for thirty English teachers of schools and language centers from all over the country on November 9-10, 2001. Administrators of the Embassy's



English Language teacher and Semi-finalist of TEA program from Buzmein Yekaterina Belobrova finds new resources online

exchange programs presented the eligibility requirements and the application procedure for the programs to which teachers may apply. The U.S. Embassy's Information Resource Assistant Azat Myradov and Cultural Programs Assistant Maya Meredova conducted a workshop on Internet resources for English teachers, basic search engines, listserves, especially those designed for English teachers and their students, opening free e-mail accounts. These workshops are conducted in the framework of the Embassy's English Language Development Program.

226th Birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps Celebrated

On November 10, the U.S. Marine Corps celebrated its 226th birthday, here in Ashgabat and around the world. The Marine Security Guard Detachment at the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat held a Cake Cutting Ceremony at the Ambassador's residence in Berzengi. Seventy-five guests witnessed the Marines perform the colorguard, post the colors (U.S. and Marine Corps flags), and cut the ceremonial cake.



Detachment Commander inspects the colorguard

Celebrating the Marine Corps Birthday is one of many traditions that has been passed on from generation to generation throughout its existence. Marines around the world mark it with a cake-cutting ceremony. Two pieces of cake are cut with a ceremonial sword, one piece for the guest of honor, and the second to be shared by the oldest and youngest Marine present.

This is a tradition that signifies the passing of knowledge and experience from the old to the young of the Marine Corps.

American Embassy Assists Ashgabat International Women's Club in Raising Money for Charity

The Ashgabat International Women's Club raised a total of \$1,845 at its fourth annual charity holiday bazaar on Sunday, November 25 at the Ak-Altyn Hotel. The American Embassy's Community Liaison Officer, Sabine Mau, helped organize the event and helped the Embassy's food and crafts tables to raise more than 5,500,000 manats. The Embassy also had information tables for the Ashgabat International School and the Public Affairs Section, as well as for Marine Corps merchandise.



Guests at the Bazaar including members of Gussey Aliyev's Sport Club of Handicapped Children

The bazaar's lottery raised most of the money for charity. Dozens of organizations contributed the prizes, including the grand prize of a ticket from Lufthansa. Representatives of the Turkmen community, foreign embassies as well as international organizations and private businesses actively contributed to the event.

The Women's Club supports a variety of charities which includes two orphanages, a school for the blind, a school for the deaf, a sport club for handicapped children, and a pensioners' home.

Events in December:

- American Red Cross flights with aid from American children December 10-11;
- Commemoration of September 11 terrorist attacks on three-month anniversary, December 11;
- "Say No to Drugs" campaign by exchange program alumni in schools of Ashgabat December 8-15;

**If you have questions or suggestions on the newsletter, please write us at:
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