

# TURKMENISTAN

## CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Chronology prepared by Bruce Pannier from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty ([www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org)). The OSI Turkmenistan Project expresses its gratitude to Mr. Pannier for generously sharing his work.

### 1991

Sept. 30, 1991 - Referendum on independence announced for October 26

Oct. 2, 1991 -- IFX cites co-chairman of Democratic Party of Turkmenistan Durdymurad Khojamukhammet as criticizing call for referendum

Oct. 9, 1991 -- Niyazov visits Iran

Oct. 20, 1991 -- Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (not Niyazov's) holds constituent congress in Moscow, co-chairman Durdymurad Khojamuhammet says the "pro-Communist regime" wouldn't allow the congress in Ashgabat

Oct. 26, 1991 -- Referendum for independence held, 94% are for it

Oct. 27, 1991 -- Constitutional law on independence adopted, October 27 declared Independence Day

Dec. 13, 1991 -- Leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan meet in Ashgabat and agree to join the new Commonwealth of Independent States

Dec. 16, 1991 -- Democratic Party of Turkmenistan holds founding congress, right after last congress of former Communist Party

## 1992

Jan. 6, 1992 -- Niyazov says no plans to set up armed forces for five years

(Jan. 7, 1992 -- dip. relations w/ China)

Jan. 13, 1992 -- Niyazov decree transforms Turkmeninform into Turkmen Press

Jan. 28, 1992 -- Danatar Kopekov who was head of State Security Committee, appointed Defense Minister

Jan. 28, 1992 -- President Niyazov issues decree forming Defense Ministry

Feb. 7, 1992 -- UN Security Council recommends admitting Turkmenistan to UN

Feb. 19, 1992 -- At session of parliament, Niyazov proposes draft for new constitution

Feb. 16(?), 1992 -- Niyazov visits Tehran for ECO meeting, Turkmenistan admitted to ECO at conference

Feb. 22, 1992 -- Saudi FM Saud al-Faisal visits

Feb. 29, 1992 -- Turkmenistan suspends gas supplies to Ukraine in dispute over transportation costs

Feb. 29, 1992 -- Diplomatic ties with Turkey established

Mar. 3, 1992 --Democratic Party of Turkmenistan registered, DPT political council told IFX that the party has nearly 52,000 members, 48,000 of whom are former Communist Party members

Mar. 16, 1992 -- POSTFACTUM reports that Niyazov wants to increase powers "significantly," he proposes that the draft constitution strip parliament of some legislative functions, report says no post of Vice President "because Niyazov said he did not want to be poisoned," says new constitution rejects dual citizenship

Mar. 19, 1992 -- Niyazov decree frees 41 people jailed for "embezzlement of socialist property" during 1986-1990, more than 100 people were accused of involvement in the "cotton affair," almost all set free by now, amnesty is fourth of its kind in two years

Mar. 20, 1992 -- CIS summit in Kyiv

Mar. 25, 1992 -- dip. ties w/Syria

Mar. 30-Apr. 5, 1992 -- Niyazov on visit to Saudi Arabia

Apr. 7, 1992 -- European Commission delegation visits

Apr. 8, 1992 -- Russian FM Andrei Kozyrev visits

Apr. 18-20, 1992 -- Niyazov visits India

Apr. 20, 1992 -- Some 200 Afghan Tekke, armed with 2 heavy machine guns and 43 submachine guns, cross into Turkmenistan and set up tent camp five kilometers inside border

Apr. 22, 1992 -- Dip. ties established with Japan

May 1, 1992-- Turkish President Suleyman Demirel visits

May 16, 1992 --CIS summit in Tashkent

May, 18, 1992 -- Supreme Soviet adopts new Constitution, parliament renamed Majlis, deputies stay until Jan. 1, 1995, constitution of Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic from 1978 declared void, Majlis has sole right to nominate presidential candidates

May 23, 1992 -- Niyazov proposes joint Turkmen-Russian control of military on Turkmen territory

May 26, 1992 -- Niyazov appoints Saparmurat Seidov to be chairman of National Security Committee

May 29, 1992 -- POSTFACTUM reports Agzybirlik nominates Nurberdi Nurmamedov as candidate for the presidency

May 29, 1992 -- Dip. ties w/Malaysia

June 10, 1992 -- Dip. ties w/Greece

### **JUNE , 1992 -- Turkmenistan admitted to OIC**

June 19, 1992 -- Niyazov declares amnesty for 800 prisoners to mark adoption of new constitution

June 21, 1992 -- Niyazov re-elected president, almost 100% turnout, 99.5% for Niyazov.  
Turkmen CEC figures -- 99.8 % turnout, 99.5 % for Niyazov  
Turkmen CEC figures -- 1,883,827 cast ballots, 1,874,357 for Niyazov

June 26, 1992 -- Niyazov takes oath of office

June 27, 1992 -- Niyazov signs decree establishing national teleradio company

July 1, 1992 -- Publishers put out series of books in Turkmen about Niyazov, including "Serdar"

July 2, 1992 -- Niyazov makes new appointments (following June 26 inauguration)

Ministry for Environment and Nature Conservation (newly formed) --Nurmukhamed Ashirov, was head of government control committee

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Supply and Food-Processing -- Paizgeldy Meredov, was managing director of Turkmenagroprompererabotka, abolished as of July 2)

Ministry of Communications -- Omanmurad Jummayev, replaces Shakhargeldy Muradov  
Transforms State Television and Radio Broadcasting Committee into National Television and Radio Broadcasting Company

July 10, 1992 -- Niyazov addresses CSCE summit in Helsinki

July 21, 1992 -- Romanian FM Adrian Nastase visits

July 23, 1992 -- Turkish Interior Minister Ismet Sezgin visits

July 28, 1992 -- Charyyarov Int. Min

Aug. 4, 1992 -- Avdy Kuliev resigns as FM

Aug. 6, 1992 - Moscow Radio Odin reports Niyazov sets goal of 1.2 million tons of grain for 1993

Aug. 7, 1992 -- Khalykberdy Atayev appointed FM

Aug. 19, 1992 -- Tajik PM Akbar Mirzoyev visits

Aug. 24, 1992 -- Niyazov ends visit to Iran (2nd visit), signs agreements n Sarakhs-Meshhed railroad, and Iranian part of Turkmen-Iran-Turkey-Europe gas pipeline

Sept. 12, 1992 -- Niyazov decree changes name of newspaper "Yash Kommunist" to "Vatan"

Sept. 17, 1992 -- Niyazov calls for cotton harvest without losses

Sept. 22, 1992 -- Turkmenistan admitted into IMF (172nd member)

Sept. 26, 1992 -- Ukrainian 1st dep. PM Konstantin Masik convinces Niyazov to resume gas supplies

Sept. 27, 1992 -- Niyazov announces population of Turkmenistan will use gas, electricity and water free of charge

Sept. 29, 1992 -- IFX quotes Niyazov as confirming Turkmenistan's policy of positive neutrality

Sept. 30, 1992 -- Parliament approves list of national awards, votes to give Niyazov first "Hero" title

Oct. 2, 1992 -- "Izvestiya" (pg. 2) reports parliament awards Niyazov "Altyn Ai" for outstanding service to state and society, also given tax free salary that is 50 times the average minimum wage

Oct. 9, 1992 -- CIS summit in Bishkek, Niyazov does not come, (8th CIS summit)

Oct. 10, 1992 -- Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma visits

Oct. 27, 1992 -- Cotton harvest for 1992 is reported at 1,030,000 tons instead of planned 1,287,500 tons

Oct. 29-31, 1992 -- Turkic Language State summit in Istanbul

Nov. 3, 1992 -- Niyazov and Turkish PM Suleymen Demirel sign pipeline agreement

Nov. 6, 1992 -- Russian FM Andrei Kozyrev visits

Nov. 8, 1992 -- Radio Rossii reports newspaper of Ata Vatan Democratic Development Party appears

Nov. 10, 1992 -- Kazakh PM Sergei Tereshchenko signs agreement on principles of trade with deputy head of Turkmen government Dzhorakuly Babakuliyev

Nov. 12, 1992 -- OIC delegation led by Secretary General Hamid Algabid visits

Nov. 28, 1992 -- Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani appeals to Niyazov for aid

Dec. 9, 1992 -- IT cites Niyazov interview with Ukrainian newspaper, Niyazov says no opportunity for constitutional transfer to authoritarian rule, asked about title "Turkmenbashi," Niyazov says no such title exists and that nobody confirmed it on the president, but says if the name helps to strengthen peace and accord in the country he has no right to object to this

Dec. 14, 1992 -- Supreme Soviet confirms Niyazov is supreme commander in chief of armed forces

Dec. 15, 1992 -- Niyazov leaves for visits to Qatar and Kuwait

## 1993

Jan. 11, 1993 -- Turkish state minister meets with Deputy PM Orazgeldy Aydogyev and FM Khalykberdi Atayev

Apr. 2, 1993 -- Niyazov dismisses Serdar Charyyov as Interior Minister, replaces him with Kurbanmukhamed Kasymov, Charyyov fired for "unsatisfactory performance, miscalculations in selection and appointment of personnel and illegal activities of certain subordinates," IT reports dismissal follows "the exposure of a major mafia grouping which had been operating with impunity for several years," Customs service chief Mamed Kabayev also fired,..... Charyyov becomes deputy defense minister

Apr. 11, 1993 -- Turkish President Turgut Ozal visits

April 12, 1993 -- Turkmen parliament grants Niyazov rights to adopt decrees

Apr. 12, 1993 -- parliament grants president right to adopt decrees

Apr. 21, 1993 -- Swedish FM, also chairman of the CSCE Margaretha Af Ugglas visits

May 18-20, 1993 -- Kazakh President Nazarbayev visits Ashgabat

May 26-28, 1993 -- Niyazov visits France

July 5-7, 1993 -- Economic Cooperation Organization summit in Ankara

July 20, 1993 -- "Izvestiya" reports Turkmenistan preparing for Caspian Basin summit in September

July 26, 1993-- Niyazov announces national currency to be introduced in October

July 28, 1993 -- Herat's Ismail Khan leads delegation to Ashgabat, signs cooperation agreement on behalf of Afghan president

Aug. 7, 1993 -- CIS summit in Moscow

Aug. 17, 1993 -- Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze visits after gas talks earlier in the month between representatives of two countries failed to resolve payment problems, new agreement reached

Aug. 24, 1993 -- Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian visits

Sept. 1, 1993 -- Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev visits, signs military cooperation agreement

Sept. 17, 1993 -- "Rossiskaya gazeta" reports Niyazov as saying he will retain censorship (R.G. 17 Sept. pg. 7)

Sept. 29-??, 1993 -- Niyazov visits Belgium, NATO HQ

Oct. 5, 1993 -- 4 to 5 Afghan planes drop bombs near village of Takhtabazaar, Turkmenistan claims to shoot one down

Oct. 22, 1993 --- Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani visits

Nov. 1, 1993 -- Manat introduced as national currency at rate 1 manat = 500 Russian rubles or \$0.5, bank notes printed by British firm Thomas De La Rue

Nov. 30, 1993 -- "Segodnya" (pg. 1) reports FM Khalykberdy Atayev resigns over DPT call to make Niyazov president for life

Dec. 23, 1993 -- Yeltsin visits, signs agreement on dual citizenship

?? CIS summit in Ashgabat



# 1994

Jan. 2-?, 1994 -- Niyazov visits Iran

Jan. 10, 1994 -- Pakistani FM Sadar Asif Ahmad Ali visits, meets with Turkmen FM Khalykberdi Atayev

Jan. 10, 1994 -- Partnership for Peace program created at NATO summit in Brussels

Jan. 15, 1994 -- Referendum on extending Niyazov's term in office held, final results -- 1,959,637 voters, or 99.99%, cast ballots and 99.99% of those voted for extension, Radio Mayak reports 212 people voted against the term extension

Jan. 21, 1994 -- "Segodnya" reports the Galkynsh National Revival Movement held founding congress "a few days ago" with Niyazov as its head

Feb. 1, 1994 -- Niyazov flies from Davos to U.S. for medical examination

Feb. 5, 1994 -- Niyazov has surgery for phlebitis in his left leg in Houston, Texas

Feb. 18, 1994 -- First new passports issued

Feb. 22, 1994 -- Gas supplies to Ukraine cut off, Ukraine's debt for 1993-94 is reportedly \$1.5 billion

Mar. 7, 1994 -- Turkmenistan defers Georgia's \$150 million debt, increases gas supplies from 8 billion cubic meters annually to 9.5 billion cubic meters

Mar. 26, 1994 -- NATO delegation visits, Shikhmuradov (identified as PM in report) announces Turkmenistan will cooperate with NATO

Mar. 28, 1994 -- Radio Mayak reports Niyazov abolishes state collective farms, they are to be turned into "cooperatives and other peasant associations"

Apr. 4, 1994 -- Iranian Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh visits, agrees with Niyazov to allow Turkmenistan to use Iranian pipelines for gas exports to Europe, agreement signed for Turkmen-Iran-Turkey pipeline on April 5

Apr. 7, 1994 -- Gas supplies to Azerbaijan cut

Apr. 12, 1994 -- Gas supplies to Azerbaijan partially restored

Apr. 13, 1994 -- Niyazov appoints Kakamyrat Baliyev to be presidential press secretary, replacing Durdymukhammet Gurbanov, who becomes chief editor of journal "Yashlyk"

Apr. 13, 1994 -- Turkmen gas supplies fully restored to Azerbaijan

Apr. 15, 1994 -- CIS summit in ??, Niyazov and Kravchuk agree on sidelines of summit to resume gas supplies to Ukraine

Apr. 20, 1994 -- Chinese PM Li Peng visits

Apr. 27, 1994 -- French President Francois Mitterand visits

Apr. 29, 1994 -- Turkish FM Ismail Cetin visits

April 30, 1994 -- "Komsomolskaya Pravda" reports that Niyazov creates new body to oversee religious affairs, KP says in 1990 there were 16 mosques, in 1994, 180 with another 100 being built

May 10, 1994 -- Ekho Moskvyy reports Turkmen FM Shikhmuradov signs NATO "Partnership for Peace " agreement, first Central Asian country to do so

May 12, 1994 -- "Segodnya" (pg. 4) reports Niyazov is ill

May 12, 1994 -- Argentine FM Guido Di Terra visits

May 14, 1994 -- "Trud" reports Turkmen presidential press service says Niyazov is not ill

July 5, 1994 -- Israeli FM Shimon Peres visits

July 16, 1994 -- Moscow Radio reports Border Guard chief Andrei Nikolayev says agreement on joint control of southern CIS border signed by Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan

July 18, 1994 -- Iranian Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh visits

July 22, 1994 -- Iranian Minister of Energy Bijan Namdar-Zangeneh visits

July 29, 1994 -- Nazar Suyunov resigns as Oil and Gas Minister for health reasons, Khyakim Ishanov takes his place

Aug. 10, 1994 -- Edict makes Khyakim Ishanov Oil and Gas Minister

Aug. 11, 1994 -- Iranian FM Ali Akbar Velayati visits

Aug. 11, 1994 -- "Komsomolskaya Pravda" (pg. 2) reports "Turkmen Assembly" (Halk Maslahaty?) draws up draft "on the Use of the Turkmen President's Title in Mass Media when Translated from Turkmen into Other Languages"

Aug. ?-15, 1994 -- Niyazov visits Pakistan

Aug. 23, 1994 -- Niyazov arrives in Tehran to sign pipeline deal

Aug. 25, 1994 -- "Rossiskaya Gazeta" (pg. 2) reports over the past two years Turkmen and Russian border guards detained 840 violators and confiscated over a half a ton of narcotics and 44 guns, and exchanged fire with violators 26 times

Sept. 8, 1994 -- Deputy PM Shikhmuradov says Turkmenistan can not accept draft agreement on interstate economic committee of CIS

Sept. 8, 1994 -- "Rossiskaya Gazeta" (pg. 6) reports Turkmen grain harvest is 800,000 tons, report says "But, Agricultural Minister B. Meredov, who recently 'flew off' from his post, was not expecting any ceremonial fanfares"

Sept. 13, 1994 -- "Rossiskaya Gazeta" reports Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia owe \$1.5 billion for gas supplies

Sept. 20, 1994 -- "Komsomolskaya Pravda" (pg. 1) reports Turkmenistan buys planes from U.S. company Delta, 3 - 737s, and 1 - 757

Sept. 22, 1994 -- "Izvestiya" reports Russian language weekly "Subbota" ceases publication, it was a supplement to "Turkmenskaya Iskra" and often criticized Turkmen human rights and economic problems

Sept. 23, 1994 -- CEC names December 11 as date for parliamentary elections, in accordance with paragraph 6 of Article 14 of the constitution

Sept.. 23, 1994 -- Gas supplies to Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia cut due to pipeline break down

Sept. 29, 1994 -- Dip. relations w/Algeria

Oct. 3, 1994 -- Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamed visits

Oct. 17-19, 1994 -- Niyazov in Turkey for the Turkic Language State summit

Oct. 24, 1994 -- Pakistani PM Benazir Bhutto visits

Oct. 25, 1994 -- Turkish President Suleymen Demirel visits, sign gas pipeline deal

Oct. 26, 1994 -- Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani visits

Oct. 31, 1994 -- "Ashgabat Aksamay" (pg. 1) reports that Ismail Khan of Herat and Abdul Rashid Dostum of Mazar-i-Sharif visit

Nov. 4, 1994 - Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma visits, Ukraine's gas debt rescheduled

Nov. 4, 1994 --- U.S. special envoy to NIS James Collins visits

Nov. 8, 1994 -- UN mission opens in Ashgabat

Nov. 8, 1994 -- Niyazov appoints Aleksandr Dodonov head of the Supervisory Service of the President

Nov. 16, 1994 -- Niyazov visits Romania, Austria and Slovakia

Nov. 25, 1994 -- Moscow Radio reports Murad Essenov, Turkmen dissident, director general of Turkmenistan Fund, RFE/RL correspondent, editor of "Turkmen Ili," disappears in Moscow

Nov. 25, 1994 -- "Turkmenskaya Iskra" (pg. 1) reports EBRD to grant \$35 million to support enterprise

Dec. 11, 1994 -- Parliamentary elections held, 51 candidates run for 50 seats

Dec. 12, 1994 -- IT reports parliament will have 50 MPs, instead of the previous 175, 45 are Turkmen, 3 - Uzbeks, 2- Russians, CEC says 99.8% of the registered 2 million voters cast ballots, first session of parliament will be December 26

Dec. 16, 1994 -- IT reports Democratic Party of Turkmenistan holds plenary session to mark 3rd anniversary of existence, 45 of 50 MPs are from DPT

# 1995

Jan. 6, 1995 --Niyazov names Boris Shikhmuradov to be FM

Jan. 18, 1995 -- Turkmen-Ukrainian gas deal initialed, whereby Turkmenistan will ship 11 billion cubic meters of gas in 1995 for \$50-60 per 1,000 cubic meters, Ukraine to pay 40 % in hard currency, rest in goods

Jan. 25, 1995 -- CIS Summit in Moscow

Mar. 17, 1995 -- World Bank gives \$25-million for environment project in Aral Sea region

Mar, 17, 1995 -- Agreement published in Turkmenistan on Turkmen-Afghan-Pakistan gas pipeline project, Pakistan Information Agency says 20 billion cubic meters annually for 30 years

April 11, 1995 -- IFX cites Niyazov and FM Shikhmuradov as appealing to international community to grant Turkmenistan status of neutral state

April 12, 1995 -- IFX cites Turkmen census as showing that population of country is 4,000,460, of which 54% are rural dwellers

May 17-19, 1995 -- Niyazov visits Moscow, meets w/Yeltsin

May 23, 1995 -- Niyazov visits Egypt, meets w/Mubarak

May 24, 1995 -- Niyazov visits Israel, meets w/Weizman, PM Rabin and FM Peres

June 16, 1995 -- Turkmen parliament ratifies Niyazov-Yeltsin agreements

July 4, 1995 -- Niyazov visits Tehran, meets w/Rafsanjani

July 12, 1995 -- An estimated 1,000 people hold demonstration in Ashgabat, calling for new presidential and parliamentary elections

July 14, 1995 -- Turkmen Foreign Ministry tells RTR demonstrators were drunks, drug addicts and petty hooligans, security sources say about 100 people marched, IFX says 300 to 500, Turkmen Interior Minister Kurganmukhamed Kasymov, National Security Committee chief Saparmurat Seidov

July 18, 1995 -- Izvestiya correspondent Vladimir Kuleshov picked up by KNB for anti-Turkmen propaganda

July 20, 1995 -- Izvestiya office in Ashgabat closed

Aug. 7, 1995 -- Niyazov sacks 10 of country's 50 local administrative heads for failing to meet state order for wheat supply, Radio Rossii reports only 850,000 of one-million ton quota met

July 26, 1995 -- RFE/RL reports 100 women march on presidential palace protesting economic decay in country and authoritarian rule of Niyazov, protesters stopped before reaching palace

Aug. 17, 1995 -- Turkish PM Tansu Ciller arrives, IFX says Turkey invested \$1.5 billion in Turkmenistan already

Aug. 28, 1995 -- Third Turkic summit takes place in Bishkek

Aug. 31, 1995 -- Turkmen FM Shikhmuradov visits Dushanbe to make pitch for Ashgabat as venue for next Tajik peace talks

Sept. 6, 1995 -- IRNA reports Turkmenistan and Iran reach deal to build 140-kilometer long pipeline, Iran Oil Minister Golamreza Aghazadeh says cost will be \$190 million, Iran will finance 80%

Set. 8, 1995 -- Turkmen press says ATMs coming to country soon

Sept. 9, 1995 -- Talks in Ashgabat between Turkmen, Iranian and Ukrainian officials on gas and oil exports

Sept. 19, 1995 -- Central Bank of Turkmenistan devalues currency from 75 manat to \$1, to 200 manat to \$1

Sept. 20, 1995 -- India grants \$10 million for small enterprises in Turkmenistan

Sept. 27, 1995 -- Turkmen Press news agency reports that Democratic Party of Turkmenistan will debate awarding Niyazov life-long powers to rule, that decision reached at 8th plenum of political council that met that same day

Sept. 28, 1995 -- Karimov-Niyazov meeting suddenly postponed, Niyazov was suppose to fly to Tashkent

Oct. 24, 1995 -- Turkmen army recently completed first military exercises, Defense Minister Danatar Kopekov watches

Nov. 8, 1995 -- Government increases fuel prices by 250% to 20-25 manat per liter, bread prices rise 8 to 10 times that day also, Niyazov's office announces head of Ashgabat's bread-baking plant and its storehouse chief will be sacked for "artificial increase" in price

Nov. 17, 1995 -- IFX reports new Turkmen-Russian gas company Turkmenrosgaz will supply 23 billion cubic meters of gas to Ukraine in 1996

Dec. 12, 1995 -- UN recognizes Turkmenistan as "Neutral country"

## 1996

Jan. 1, 1996 -- Government orders wages raised

Jan. 16, 1996 -- Niyazov and Uzbek President Karimov meet in Charjou to discuss water conservation

Jan. 17, 1996 -- IFX reports EBRD to give Turkmenistan \$17.8 million for textile industry, Deutsche Bank to give \$24 million to import food, bank earlier provided \$54 million credit to construct runway at Ashgabat International airport

Jan. 23, 1996 -- Niyazov visits Tehran, meets w/President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, next day meets w/UTO no#2 Turajonzoda

Feb. 2, 1996 -- Turkmenistan cuts off gas supplies to Armenia due to \$50 million debt

Feb. 6-12, 1996 -- Niyazov in Turkey for talks on Turkmen-Iran-Turkey gas pipeline, rumors of health treatment also

Feb. 8, 1996 -- Turkish newspaper "Yeni Yuzyil" reports Niyazov undergoing medical treatment

Feb. 19, 1996 -- RTR cites Turkmen press agency as saying Turkmenistan's population figures are 4.5 million in 1995, up from 3.6 million in 1990, as of 195 Turkmen are 77% of population, up from 72% in 1989, Uzbeks still at 9.2%, ethnic Russians drop to 6.7% from 9.5%, rural population 2.5 million, urban 2 million

Feb. 24, 1996 -- Iranian Oil Minister Gholamreza Aghazadeh says Iranian contractors win tenders for two Turkmen projects, \$22 million to lay 722 kilometers of fiber-optic cable for Turkmen section of Trans-Asia-Europe line, and construction of gas pipelines and oil refineries

Mar. 6, 1996 -- Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani visits (??)

Mar. 15, 1996 -- Niyazov sacks governor of Mary province Kurban Orazov, replaces him with dep. PM Amannazar Ilamov, Niyazov shown on national television threatening officials if they do not provide adequate food for people, raises price of bread by 150%

Mar. 15, 1996 -- Pakistani FM Assef Ahmed Ali visits

Mar. 18, 1996 -- Niyazov visits Azerbaijan, meets with Heydar Aliyev to discuss Caspian



Mar. 19, 1996 -- Niyazov visits Armenia, meets with President Levon Ter-Petrosyan to discuss gas supplies

Mar. 19, 1996 -- Niyazov visits Georgia, meets with President Eduard Shevardnadze to discuss Georgia's \$500 million bill for gas supplies

Mar. 27, 1996 -- New Israeli ambassador to Turkmenistan Shmuel Meir says relations between two countries "not just good but even excellent"

Mar. 28, 1996 -- AFP reports Pakistan's Petroleum and Natural Resources Ministry and Unocal submit plan for Turkmen-Pakistan pipeline with Taliban approval

April 8, 1996 -- U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Robert Hunter visits for talks with Niyazov on Turkmenistan's participation in PfP

April 12, 1996 -- Glasnost Defense Fund says press freedom in sorry state in CIS, lists Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as countries where freedom of speech is completely absent, says things better in Kazakhstan where journalists are jailed, and better still in Kyrgyzstan where independent journalists are harassed

May 4, 1996 -- Five Central Asian FMs sign memorandum on mutual cooperation in fighting drug smuggling at international symposium in Tashkent

May 13, 1996 -- The "Junction for the Planet" opens, the railway link between Iran and Turkmenistan, Niyazov and Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani attend opening ceremony, RTR says in first year some 500,000 passengers and 2 million tons of freight will be carried

May 14, 1996 -- ECO summit opens in Ashgabat, Uzbek President Karimov threatens to withdraw delegation over Iran's attack on Israel at summit

June 5, 1996 -- RTR reports presidential decree read over state radio offering \$10,000 to person who writes new national anthem, Niyazov will be on 14-member panel that decides

June 28, 1996 -- Niyazov's decrees farmers no longer have to sell produce to state at regulated prices, according to BBC, "strategic" crops -- Food, grain and cotton -- may only be sold on domestic market

July 1, 1996 -- Niyazov cuts subsidies on gasoline and other fuels, car owners limited to 100 liters of gas per month, one liter = \$0.05

July 12, 1996 -- Turkmen residents required to pay for electricity, above a certain limit

July 13, 1996 -- FM Shikhmuradov in India

Aug. 2, 1996 -- Niyazov abolishes status of dep. PMs that all regional heads had

Aug. 3, 1996 -- Niyazov sacks governors of Akhal and Dahshaowuz provinces after report shows grain harvest for 1996 will be 480,000 metric tons instead of 1,000,000 metric tons

Aug. 4, 1996 -- Three prisoners killed and seven wounded when riot breaks out at Mary prison

Aug. 5, 1996 -- Deputy Interior Minister Altibai Charyez and national prison head Amansakhat Chungayev and other officials sacked, report says in 1995, there were 27 prisoners killed in riots in maximum security prisons

Aug. 5, 1996 -- Radio Rossii reports Turkmen and Russian border guards seized 900 kg of drugs so far in 1996

Aug. 5, 1996 -- FM Shikhmuradov in Islamabad, meets with Benazir Bhutto for talks on gas pipeline

Aug. 7, 1996 -- "Neitralny Turkmenistan" cites Interior and Security Ministry personnel as saying inmates at Mary prison carried out a "daring attack" during routine inspection of cells, after taking some guards hostage and releasing fellow inmates they demanded arms and a vehicle but rescue operation by special police frees hostages, one prisoner commits suicide, two were killed and seven injured

Aug. 8, 1996 -- Niyazov meets with Gazprom head Rem Vyakhirev to sign agreement forming Turkmenrozgaz corporation, Turkmenistan holds 51% of shares, Gazprom 45%, transnational corporation Itera holds 4%, first task of corporation is Turkmen-Pakistan pipeline, RTR says Turkmenistan produced 90 billion cubic meters of gas in 1990, 48 billion so far in 1996

Aug. 13, 1996 -- Unocal, Saudi Arabia's Delta, Russia's Gazprom and Turkmenrosgaz sign memorandum of understanding on \$2 billion Turkmen-Pakistani pipeline

Aug. 19, 1996 -- Iranian FM Velayati arrives on visit, meets FM Shikhmuradov to discuss Afghanistan, Tajikistan

Aug. 20, 1996 -- Uzbek Defense Minister Rustam Akhmedov meets with Niyazov in Ashgabat

Aug. 22, 1996 -- Niyazov relieves Minister of Economy and Finance, and dep chairman of Turkmenistan's cabinet, Valery Otchertsov, makes him economic counselor at Embassy in Moscow, appoints Matkarim Rajapov new Minister of Economy and Finance

Aug. 29, 1996 -- Niyazov sacks Supreme Court Chairman Amanmurad Kakabayev for "failing in responsibilities" and dep. Interior Minister Amangeldy Geldykurbanov for "serious shortcomings"

Sept. 3, 1996 -- Afghan dep. FM Abdurahim Ghafurazai in Ashgabat for talks with Niyazov on Turkmen-Pakistan pipeline

Sept. 6, 1996 -- Russian border guards kill two drug smugglers along Turkmen-Afghan border with 24 kg. of heroin, FIRST REPORTED HEROIN seized in Turkmenistan, first reported heroin seizure in Central Asia, in Kyrgyzstan in October 1995

Sept. 9-11, 1996 -- Niyazov visits France

Sept. 11, 1996 -- UNESCO pledges aid for Turkmen education system, journalist training, cultural programs and protection of historical sites

Sept. 17, 1996 -- "Pravda-5" reports that Turkmen authorities are circulating an official statement declaring that Niyazov is the founder of all local newspapers published in the country

Sept. 18, 1996 -- Turkey's "Zaman" reports Turkmenistan first Islamic theological school, established by Turkey's Religious Affairs Directorate, opens in Ashgabat

Sept. 19, 1996 -- Ministers for CIS affairs meet in Bishkek to discuss debt repayment

Sept. 26, 1996 -- Taliban take control of Kabul

Sept. 27, 1996 -- Halk Maslahaty session calls on Niyazov to be "president for life," as was suggested the previous year, Niyazov rejects idea, says during next five years economy will grow by 50-60%, 100 billion cubic meters of gas produced and 10 million metric tons of crude, says annual inflation will remain within 10-15% band and up to 60% of state budget will be used for social spending

Oct. 1, 1996 -- Halk Maslahaty publishes military doctrine confirming Turkmenistan is neutral country and will not enter into any military alliances

Oct. 7, 1996 -- Special Pakistani envoy Ijlal Haider Zaidi arrives for talks on preserving Afghanistan's territorial integrity

Oct. 10, 1996 -- Journal of Commerce reports Turkmen Embassy in Moscow said Ashgabat does not agree with CIS states that condemned Taliban

Oct. 14, 1996 -- Ceremony held marking start of construction of Korpedzhe-Kordkuy gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Iran, eventually to ship 11 billion cubic meters annually

Oct. 15, 1996 -- Niyazov in Moscow, meets with Yeltsin in Barvikha

Oct. 21, 1996 -- Presidents of Turkic-language speaking countries --Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan -- meet in Tashkent

Oct. 23, 1996 - Japan Export-Import Bank announces \$120 million loan to Turkmenistan to upgrade oil refining industry

Oct. 23, 1996 -- Niyazov officially opens Democracy and Human Rights Institute in Ashgabat, tells citizens not to take their complaints too far

Oct. 27, 1996 -- Fifth anniversary of independence, Turkmen press says on Oct. 23 monument to Niyazov's mother unveiled in Charjoi

Oct. 31, 1996 -- IT reports that Chistopol watch factory in Tatarstan produces rush order of 81,000 watches with Niyazov's face on them in time for Turkmen independence day

Nov. 4, 1996 -- AFP reports that French company Bougues (check!) to build Turkmen convention center, contract reportedly worth \$98 million, same company already building presidential palace estimated to cost \$80 million

Nov. 6, 1996 -- Prince Charles visits

Nov. 12, 1996 -- Representatives from 4 Caspian states (no Azerbaijan) sign agreement recognizing 45-mile off-shore economic zones, Azerbaijan's wealth lies further than 45 miles off its shores

Nov. 13, 1996 -- Russian FM Yevgeny Primakov, Iranian FM Ali Akbar Velayati and Niyazov sign Caspian cooperation agreement on developing sea's oil resources, no mention of Kazakhstan or Azerbaijan

Nov. 14, 1996 -- Niyazov in Turkey for hospital check-up

Nov. 18, 1996 -- Niyazov and Turkish President Suleyman Demirel sign agreements

Nov. 21, 1996 -- RFE/RL reports that 800 Afghans flee fighting in western part of country and end up in Turkmenistan

Nov. 27-28, 1996 -- Turkmen President Niyazov visits Tashkent

Dec. 3, 1996 -- Niyazov decree abolishes Ministry of Construction and Architecture

Dec. 12, 1996 -- Turkmenistan celebrates first anniversary of UN recognition as "Neutral country"

Dec. 18, 1996 -- Niyazov appears on state TV, says natural gas exports to West will turn economy

Dec. 19, 1996 -- AFP and Noyan Tapan report Turkmenistan cuts gas supplies to Armenia over \$75 million debt

## 1997

Jan. 7, 1997 -- Presidential decree decreases amount of flour available at subsidized rates

Jan. 13, 1997 -- Kyrgyz newspaper "Vecherny Bishkek" reports 123 drug smugglers executed in Turkmenistan in 1996

Jan 14, 1997 -- Police make sweep of capital to shut down prostitution

Jan. 18, 1997 -- Niyazov issues decrees giving 80 farmers their land in perpetuity, launching newest agricultural reforms

Jan. 21, 1997 -- RFE/RL reports IMF official Emine Gurgun visits, praises Turkmenistan's progress toward market economy but cautions economic reforms must continue

Jan. 21, 1997 -- Niyazov opens UN-sponsored forum on Afghanistan in Ashgabat

Jan. 23, 1997 -- RFE/RL reports Ashgabat mayor orders that all visitors to Ashgabat must stay in officially approved hotels, order also obliges all businesses and government offices inviting foreigners to register their guests with local authorities

Jan. 23, 1997 -- "Financial Times" article cites Turkmen-Azerbaijani dispute over oil fields in the Caspian

Jan. 30, 1997 -- U.S. State Department releases annual human rights report, shows deterioration in Central Asia, says abuses in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were the worst in the region, but Uzbekistan was not much better, growth of presidential power in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan cause them to lag in the development of democracy

Jan. 30, 1997 -- Oil branch motif added to Turkmen national flag, symbolizing the peace-loving nature of the people and the country's neutral status

Feb. 4, 1997 -- Two earthquakes measuring 5.6 and 6.1 hit Iran and Turkmenistan

Feb. 4, 1997 -- Niyazov says on TV that wages to state employees and military will be doubled

Feb. 4, 1997 -- Turkmen State Statistics Committee says inflation in 1996 was 100.1%, 4.4 billion tons of oil and 35.2 billion cubic meters of gas extracted

Feb. 7, 1997 -- Niyazov calls for early ECO summit to discuss regional pipeline projects

Feb. 12, 1997 -- Niyazov sacks Annamurad Soltanov as first deputy defense minister and chief of Armed Forces General Staff and replaces him with Akmurad Mulkamanov, no explanation given

Feb. 12-13, 1997 -- Niyazov visits Tehran for talks on regional problems, report says Niyazov has visited Tehran 16 times since 1992

Feb. 19, 1997 -- Netherlands bans Turkmenistan Airlines from its airports after a plane carrying 173 Sri Lankan Tamils lands and they ask for asylum

Feb. 25-26, 1997 -- Niyazov visits India

Feb. 26, 1997 -- Typhoid outbreak reported in Ashgabat

Feb. 27, 1997 -- Niyazov arrives in Almaty, meets with Nazarbayev

Feb. 28, 1997 -- Presidents of all five Central Asian states meet in Almaty to discuss the desiccation of the Aral Sea, Nazarbayev says World Bank will spend \$2.5 million of pilot projects to help residents of area, each country agrees to give 0.3% of its national income to the International Aral Sea Salvation Fund, Uzbek President Karimov will head the fund for the next three years, also discuss Afghanistan and Taliban

Mar. 4, 1997 -- "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" reports dispute at Aral Sea summit in Almaty, newspaper says Turkmenistan's Niyazov objected to Karimov being named head of International Aral Sea Salvation Fund

Mar. 7, 1997 -- Kyrgyz newspaper "Vecherny Bishkek" reports execution figures in Central Asia for 1996 -- Kyrgyzstan executed 41 people and pardoned one, Kazakhstan executed 42 people, Turkmenistan could only be estimated and was put at 400, Uzbekistan no figure was given and Tajikistan officially 20 which newspaper called "dubious"

Mar. 7, 1997 -- Niyazov signs the Hydrocarbon law, making republic's hydrocarbon resources national property

Mar. 14, 1997 -- NATO Secretary General Javier Solana visits

March 30, 1997 -- Niyazov says gas supplies to Ukraine cut because of debt totaling 700 million dollars

April 23, 1997 -- Islamic Development Bank agrees to build an \$11-million oil tanker for Turkmenistan

May 5, 1997 -- Niyazov says for gas supplies for first three months of 1997 Ukraine owes -- \$302.5 million, Russia -- \$71 million, Georgia -- \$22.2 million. Niyazov also asks

ministers to work with Russian government to secure return of \$107.2 million currently frozen in Russia's Vneshkombank

May 28, 1997 -- ITAR-TASS reports first shipment of school books in Latin script due to arrive from Turkey shortly

May 29, 1997 -- ITAR-TASS reports World Bank loans \$64.5 million for developing transport systems in Ashgabat, Mary, and Chardjoi, some money for improving water supplies in Dashoguz region.

May 29, 1997 -- Turkmenistan admitted as member of World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC), becomes 172nd member and last former Soviet state to gain entry

June 2, 1997 -- State interbank council set up to oversee reorganization of banking system

June 8, 1997 -- Turkmen FM Shikhmuradov says government not ready to recognize Taliban

June 12, 1997 -- Parliament approves criminal code allowing the death penalty for 17 "capital" offenses

June 13, 1997 -- Krasnovodsk Gulf renamed Turkmenbashi Gulf, Krasnovodsk renamed Turkmenbashi City in 1993

June 19, 1997 -- Russian daily "Delovoi Mir" reports Turkmen industrial production drops 32.7% compared with same period of previous year

June 20, 1997 -- Niyazov pardons more than 2,000 prisoners to mark fifth anniversary of election

June 23, 1997 -- Niyazov visit Dashoguz province and fires officials when they tell him they will not meet grain harvest quota, officials in 3 other provinces fired for same reason

June 24, 1997 -- AFP and Interfax report between 3,000 and 4,000 Afghan refugees cross into Turkmenistan fleeing fighting

June 24, 1997 -- Niyazov suspends activities of Turkmen-Russian company Turkmenrosgaz that delivered gas to Ukraine after purchasing it from ITERA International Energy firm

June 30, 1997 -- RTR reports Afghan refugees numbers double to estimated 8,000

July 7, 1997 -- IFX and RTR report Afghan refugees have returned



July 7, 1997 -- Niyazov sacks Agricultural Minister Pirguly Adayev, governor of Akhal province and all local officials there

July 8, 1997 -- Niyazov summons leading prosecutors and accuses them of criminal activities -- drug trade --and says no official at the prosecutor's office can serve more than 2 years in bid to combat corruption

July 16, 1997 -- Niyazov issues decree firing leader of Mary province for only meet half the grain requirement

July 18, 1997 -- IT reports Pakistan will help Turkmenistan train personnel for a navy

July 22, 1997 -- Turkmen newspaper "Adalat" reports four drug traffickers in Mary province sentenced to death

July 23, 1997 -- Niyazov visits Dashaguz province, fires many officials for not meeting grain target

Aug. 1, 1997 -- IT reports Gazprom head Rem Vyakhirev says will end cooperation w/Turkmenistan after Niyazov dissolves Turkmenrosgaz

Aug. 7, 1997 Niyazov travels to Moscow, meets w/Yeltsin

Aug. 20, 1997 -- Niyazov agrees to allow Turkmen armed forces to participate in NATO Partnership for Peace Program

Aug. 27-30 -- Niyazov travels to Germany, meets with Kohl and Herzog

Sept. 1, 1997 -- Niyazov has heart surgery in Munich

Sept. 19, 1997 -- Niyazov returns to Turkmenistan

Sept. 30, 1997 -- National Security Committee chief Mukhammed Nazarov tells Neitralny Turkmenistan mafia influence growing

Oct. 20-21 -- Taliban delegation visits

Oct. 23, 1997 -- EBRD gives \$50 million credit to reconstruct Tedjen-Mary highway and \$30 million to rebuild good terminal at Turkmenbashi City

Oct. 30, 1997 -- Ukrainian 1st dep PM Anatoly Holubchenko signs deal w/ Niyazov for 3 billion cm in 1997 and 20 billion cm in 1998

Oct. 30, 1997 -- RFE/RL correspondent Yovshan Annakurbanov detained in Ashgabat while trying to board a Prague-bound flight

Nov. 12, 1997 -- Annakurbanov freed

Nov. 13, 1997 -- U.S. Energy Sec Federico Pena in Turkmenistan

Dec. 15, 1997 -- Niyazov signs decree closing Academy of Sciences

Dec. 26-28, 1997 -- Turkish PM Mesut Yilmaz in Turkmenistan

Dec. 28, 1997 -- Iranian President Mohamed Khatami arrives, on Dec. 29 attends w/Niyazov opening of Turkmen-Iranian pipeline, the 200-kilometer Korpedzhe-Kurdkui pipeline

## 1998

Jan. 5-6, 1998 --- All five CA presidents meet in Ashgabat, release statement pledging to improve relations among themselves "based on long-term partnership"

Jan. 14, 1998 - Russian PM Chernomyrdin and Vyakhirev in Ashgabat for talks on gas, offer \$32 per 1,000 cubic meters, rejected by Niyazov

Jan. 17, 1998 -- UN's Kofi Annan sends Niyazov letter confirming Turkmenistan's seat in UN Secretariat

Feb. 3, 1998 -- Niyazov addresses parliament, says agricultural sector needs improving

Feb. 3, 1998 -- Gazprom pulls out of Turkmen-Pakistan pipeline, UNOCAL buys 7 of Gazprom's 10 percent in deal, companies from Japan, Korea and Pakistan buy remaining 3%

Feb. 18, 1997 -- IFX cites unnamed Turkmen official as saying Turkmen government and Russia reach deal on gas shipments to Ukraine

Feb. 19, 1998 -- Flag Day, Niyazov turns 58, signs decree calling on people to report abuses by law enforcement, changes name of "militia" to "police" for image improvement, wages for state employees doubled, pensions tripled

Feb. 23, 1998 -- Niyazov visits Brussels to sign deal with Anglo-Dutch company Shell

Mar. 2, 1998 -- Niyazov says gas exports to Iran to triple in 1999, in 1998 plans called for shipping 4 billion cubic meters along Korpedzhe-Kurdkui pipeline, Tehran pays \$40 per 1,000 cubic meters

Mar. 20, 1998 -- Niyazov tells meeting of government if quotas for grain and cotton are not met, those responsible "at all levels" will be held accountable, and could face criminal charges

Mar. 26, 1998 -- Niyazov tells parliament he is ready to relinquish some power, following 1999 parliamentary elections, says there will be no changes in the cabinet during the next two years

Mar. 5, 1998 -- HRW sends letter to President Clinton opposing April 23 visit of Niyazov

April 3-4, 1998 -- Turkish FM Ismail Cem visits

April 9, 1998 -- "Neitralny Turkmenistan" reports U.S. Export-import bank will give \$96 million in loans to Turkmenistan to modernize gas pipelines, newspaper says it is first time U.S. bank involved in projects in Turkmenistan

April 14, 1998 -- OSCE chairman Bronislaw Geremek visits

April 15, 1998 -- U.S. Ambassador Stanley Escudero gives letter to Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev urging Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan to resolve dispute over Caspian Sea

April 15, 1998 -- Acting Russian Dep PM Ivan Rybkin visits, discusses Russian loans to Turkmenistan, Caspian with Niyazov

April 17, 1998 -- Opposition leader, former FM Avdy Kuliev detained when he arrives in Turkmenistan, charged with trying to organize a coup

April 17, 1998 -- Turkmen dissident Durdymurat Khajomukhammed released from jail on eve of Niyazov visit to U.S., also released were Begmurat Khojayevev and Batyr Sakhetliyev, arrested for their roles in July 12, 1995 demonstration in Ashgabat

April 20-23, Niyazov on first official visit to U.S., meets with President Clinton and VP Gore in White House on April 23

April 20, 1998 -- Kuliev released from detention

April 22, 1998 -- Kuliev returns to Moscow

May 11, 1998 -- ECO summit in Almaty, declaration calls for establishment of bank of commerce and trade, creation of joint air company and abolition of tariffs on trade between ECO members, vows to intensify battle against narcotics trafficking

May 16, 1998 -- At press conference in Ashgabat, Niyazov says he opposes Russian, Kazakh positions on Caspian Sea

May 20, 1998 -- Niyazov dismisses Batyr Sarjayev as Minister of Oil and Gas, appoints Rejepbai Arazov to replace him

May 22, 1998 -- At meeting of agricultural officials Niyazov sacks Agricultural Minister Ata Nabatov, makes him with chairman of State Grain Products Enterprise, tells him if his work is good he will get his former position back, also sacks Governor of Kara-Kala district Amangeldy Rejepov

May 25, 1998 -- Turkmenistan and EU sign agreement to improve political and economic relations, agreement gives Turkmenistan most-favored-nation status for trading with EU countries and provides for increased foreign investment, only Tajikistan had not yet signed such an agreement with the EU

May 26, 1998 -- Niyazov signs deal with U.S. Export-Import Bank for \$96 million loan, also signs deal for \$212 million in financing for developing gas industry

June 5, 1998 -- Niyazov meets with U.S. special envoy on Caspian Stephen Sestanovich

June 6, 1998 -- IT reports former Turkmen Oil and Gas Minister Gochmurad Nazjanov met with Taliban, Northern Alliance officials at end of May to discuss pipeline to Pakistan

June 9, 1998 -- Turkic summit held in Astana, leaders calls on India and Pakistan to halt nuclear testing

July 2, 1998 -- Chairman of NATO's military council Klaus Naumann

July 2, 1998 - Israeli delegation headed by Natan Sharansky visits, meets Niyazov, promises to turn Turkmen desert into garden

July 6-8, 1998 -- Niyazov visits Iran

July 10, 1998 -- Reps from U.S. company Mobil and British company Monument sign agreement to develop Garashsyzyk oil field in western Turkmenistan

July 14, 1998 -- Turkmenistan announces it has met its grain target figure of 1.2 million tons for 1998

July 16, 1998 -- Niyazov addresses Halk Maslahaty congratulating farmers on harvest, raising retirement age from men from 60 to 62, for women from 55 to 57, says Russian offer to repay \$107 million debt through goods unacceptable, declares war on drugs to priority number one

Aug. 7, 1998 -- IFX reports Turkmenistan gives Turkish company STFA exclusive rights to sell Turkmen energy to third countries

Aug. 13, 1998 -- Iranian FM Kamal Kharrazi visits for talks on Caspian Sea

Aug. 19, 1998 -- 38 Iranians convicted of crimes, mainly drug smuggling, in Turkmenistan sent back to Iran

Aug. 20, 1998 -- U.S. launches missile strikes on Afghanistan and Sudan for bombings at U.S. embassies in Africa

Aug. 21, 1998 -- UNOCAL pulls out of Turkmen-Afghan-Pakistan pipeline deal

Aug. 24, 1998 -- Azerbaijani 1st dep. PM Abbas Abbasov and FM Tofik Zulfugarov meet with Niyazov in Ashgabat for talks on dividing Caspian

Aug. 25, 1998 -- Pakistani secretary for foreign affairs Mohammed Kanju arrives on visit

Aug. 26, 1996 -- Niyazov and Pakistani Secretary for Foreign Affairs Mohammed Kanju insist UNOCAL fulfill its part of planned pipeline project

Aug. 25, 1998 -- Turkmen Interior Ministry says 30 police and Interior Ministry officials arrested in anti-corruption campaign

Aug. 30? - Sept. ?? -- Niyazov on six-day visit to China, meets with Chinese President Jiang Zemin on August 31, discusses gas pipeline project from Turkmenistan to China

Sept. 1, 1998 -- Durdumammed Gurbanov, presidential spokesman from 1991-1994, arrested on charges of mismanagement of funds and misuse of state property, Gurbanov had criticized the Turkmen government in the international media earlier in the year and been branded as a dissident by the Turkmen government

Sept. 4, 1998 -- Durdymurat Khojamammedov, head of unregistered Democratic Development Party abducted, driven to the outskirts of Ashgabat, severely beaten

Sept. 7, 1998 -- About 30 people demonstrate in Ashgabat demanding Gurbanov's release

Sept. 8, 1998 -- Durdumammed Gurbanov released, Amnesty International issues statement same day questioning motives for Gurbanov's arrest, saying likely "political" not "criminal," HRW releases statement same day condemning attack on Durdymurat Khojamammedov, both noting he had been "incarcerated" in a psychiatric hospital from 1996 to April 1998, when he was let out "on the eve" of Niyazov's visit to Washington, HRW says "In Turkmenistan, where public order is enforced with extreme vigilance, such an act of brutality could not be carried out without official sanction"

Sept. 12, 1998 -- 5 soldiers steal automatic weapons, handguns and bullet-proof vests and go on rampage that leaves 7 people dead, soldiers steal a truck, drive out on main highway, shoot at car that follow them, killing two people, go to village of Garagan and take 7 people hostage, anti-terrorist forces arrive, negotiations fail shoot-out starts, 1 policemen and 4 soldiers killed

Sept. 17, 1998 -- Niyazov fires Defense Minister Danatar Kopekov and Chief of General Staff Akmurad Mulkamanov following investigation into September 12 soldiers' rampage, Niyazov makes Interior Minister Kurbanmukhamed Kasymov Defense Minister, promotes a deputy, Poran Berdiyev to be Interior Minister (SEE Sept. 24, 1998 "Nezavisimaya gazeta" for details on Kasymov)

Sept. 29, 1998 -- FM Shikhmuradov speaks at UN General Assembly, says Turkmenistan seeking "permanent neutrality"

Sept. 29, 1998 -- According to "Noviye Izvestiya," National Security Committee chairman Mukhamet Nazarov says 760 foreigners deported from Turkmenistan so far in 1998, says "administrative measures" have been taken against another 1,840 foreigners, Nazarov says 50 Turkmen officials, mostly from the banking sector, arrested so far in 1998

Oct. 1, 1998 -- Ukrainian dep. PM Anatoly Holubchenko visits, fails to convince Niyazov to rescheduled Ukraine's \$704 million debt for Turkmen gas supplied in 1996-1997

Oct. 5, 1998 -- Niyazov signs prisoner amnesty freeing from jail women, disabled persons, those suffering from tuberculosis, juveniles, war veterans and those over 60, prisoners convicted of murder, terrorism, rape, or drug-related crimes not eligible, amnesty intended to coincide with October 6 anniversary of 1948 Ashgabat earthquake that killed 160,000 and left Niyazov an orphan

Oct. 13, 1998 -- IFX reports Niyazov visits Mary region to express his disappointment with cotton harvest there, Niyazov says only half the 1.5 million tons target figure will be met, tells officials they grew fat while the country prepared to go hungry and adds that they may be next to face hunger if the situation does not improve

Oct. 16, 1998 -- Karimov visits Turkmenistan, meets with Niyazov to discuss Afghanistan

Oct. 20, 1998 -- "Nezavisimaya gazeta" reports (on Oct. 21) that Niyazov fires Klychmurad Kakabayev, the head of Turkmen Television, for financial violations, replaces him with Anageldy Nurgeldyev, Niyazov also announces that Russian Public Television (ORT) broadcasts will be cut to five hours daily due to costs and because their program contents often contradict the moral standards of Turkmen society, Niyazov calls on Turkmen Television to become advocates of patriotism and a high standard of morality

Oct. 26, 1998 -- Niyazov receives "Altyn Oi," or Golden Moon, award for the third time, parliament and cabinet make decision after July reports show country fulfills target figure for grain harvest for first time since 1991, Niyazov received first "Altyn Oi" in 1992, on first anniversary of independence, second "Altyn Oi" in 1995 when Turkmenistan was recognized by UN as a neutral country

Oct. 27, 1998 -- 7th anniversary of independence

Oct. 29, 1998 -- Turkmenistan and Turkey sign agreement for 16 billion cubic meters of Turkmen gas annually, has to be exported via Caspian pipeline

Nov. 2, 1998 -- Turkmenistan's Oil and Gas Ministry says country reaches record levels of oil extraction, 20,000 tons daily

Nov. 10, 1998 --the German doctor who performed Niyazov's heart surgery, Hans Meisner, re-examines Turkmen president, says Niyazov in good health

Nov. 11-12, 1998 --Turkish President Suleyman Demirel visits

Nov. 14, 1998 -- "Nezavisimaya gazeta" reports former FM Avdy Kuliev forms Committee for National Salvation which intends to campaign for Niyazov's resignation and for free and democratic parliamentary and presidential elections

Nov. 17, 1998 -- "Nezavisimaya gazeta" prints Turkmen Foreign Ministry response to November 14 article in which ministry says Niyazov himself has undertaken to reform Turkmenistan's political system and ensure that both polls are democratic

Nov. 18, 1998 -- OSCE officials arrive to work out final details on opening office in Ashgabat, former Austrian ambassador Paul Ulman will head Ashgabat office

Dec. 2, 1998 -- Central Bank publishes new regulations for conversion of hard currency, the manat can only be converted into hard currency for those who are leaving the country for medical treatment and have a health certificate from the Ministry of Health Care, those leaving to study at foreign schools and state employees leaving on official visits abroad

Dec. 3, 1998 -- At OSCE conference in Oslo, Turkmen FM Boris Shikhmuradov announces Turkmenistan will place a moratorium on the death penalty

Dec. 3, 1998 -- Niyazov addresses State Council, says cotton harvest will bring in \$900 million but he remains disappointed that only a reported as 690,000 tons of a planned 1.5 million tons was gathered, lowers target figure for 1999 to 1.3 million tons

Dec. 4, 1998 -- Central Bank chief Khudaiberdi Orazov announces more manat will be printed, within four days black market rate of manat to dollar nearly triples to 13,000 manat to \$1

Dec. 8, 1998 -- UNOCAL announces it is pulling out of pipeline projects originating in Turkmenistan

Dec. 12, 1998 -- Third anniversary of UN-recognized Neutrality, to mark the occasion a 12-meter high Arch of Neutrality with Niyazov statue on top unveiled

Dec. 16-17, 1998 -- dep. foreign ministers of Caspian littoral states meet in Moscow

Dec. 17, 1998 -- U.S. presidential advisor on the Caspian Richard Morningstar visits, promises U.S. financial support for Turkmen pipelines

Dec. 21, 1998 -- Niyazov unanimously re-elected chairman of Democratic Party of Turkmenistan



Dec. 24, 1998 -- President of BP-Dutch Shell Hank Dajkgraaf says construction of gas export pipeline from Turkmenistan to Turkey via Iran is postponed indefinitely

Dec. 27, 1998 -- Gazprom announces deal that allows Turkmen gas to Ukraine via Russian pipelines

## 1999

Jan. 6, 1998 -- Niyazov signs decree creating a human rights commission that he will head, commission will include representatives of the National Security Ministry, the Interior Ministry and Prosecutor general's office

Jan. 8, 1999 -- Niyazov dismisses Boris Shikhmuradov as deputy PM due Shikhmuradov's involvement in leasing a book store to companies that do not sell books, Shikhmuradov had been reportedly criticized in Turkmen press during December, remains as FM

Jan. 12, 1999 -- Turkmenistan marks the 118th anniversary of the massacre at Goek-Teppe

Jan. 20, 1999 -- "Nezavisimaya gazeta" reports that Niyazov has received more than 13,000 letters of complaint from the population since he invited citizens to alert him to instances of corruption or injustice, Niyazov reportedly amnesties more than 3,000 people some of whom were apparently unjustly imprisoned

Jan. 22, 1999 -- AP reports Turkmen police investigating death by strangulation of 45-year-old American in Turkmenbashi City, crime happened on January 11, appeared to have been robbery

Jan. 25 - 26, 1999 -- FM Boris Shikhmuradov in Pakistan to discuss gas export pipeline via Afghanistan

Jan. 26, 1999 -- Niyazov fires Agriculture Minister Kurban Velmuradov, replaces him with Velmuradov's deputy Kurbanmurod Rozyev, says agricultural officials "do not understand the tasks given them"

Jan. 29, 1999 -- RFE/RL reports Turkmen security breaks up meeting of journalist in Ashgabat where the journalists were planning to announce the formation of an Independent Journalists' Association, Galina Shipotkina of the state-owned newspaper "Neitralny Turkmenistan," who was present at the meeting, is dismissed from her job

Feb. 3, 1999 -- Aleksandr Petrov of Human Rights Watch in Moscow, deported from Turkmenistan

Feb. 4, 1999 -- U.S. State Department delegation led by Ross Wilson visits

Feb. 5, 1999 -- Human Rights watch sends letter to Turkmen government complaining about treatment of Aleksandr Petrov, deported from Turkmenistan on February 3

Feb. 6, 1999 -- Niyazov amnesties 3,000 prisoners, fourth amnesty of 1999, Niyazov tells meeting of agricultural workers the Turkmen state has "strengthened itself .... in plans for

developing democracy and the rights of the individual and today can allow itself to be humane in its relationship toward fellow citizens"

Feb. 6, 1999 -- FM Boris Shikhmuradov makes one-day visit to Tehran to discuss export routes for Turkmen gas and oil

Feb. 10, 1999 -- Taliban and Ahmed Shah Masoud's forces agree to hold talks in Ashgabat

Feb. 11, 1999 -- FM Boris Shikhmuradov says Niyazov has chosen companies that will take part in building the Trans-Caspian Pipeline, says U.S. companies Bechtel and General Electric Capital will head consortium

Feb. 15, 1999 -- Niyazov announces amnesty for 250 jailed foreigners

Feb. 16, 1999 -- At ceremony opening the natural gas compression facility in Kaakhka, Niyazov says Turkmenistan will export 120 billion cubic meters of gas by the year 2005

Feb. 18, 1999 -- Niyazov says 1991 "Ten Years of Stability" program nearly fulfilled, says program for economic development up to 2010 to be adopted in December and next century will be a "golden age" for Turkmenistan

Feb. 19, 1999 -- At National Flag Day celebration, Niyazov names companies to head Trans-Caspian Pipeline project -- U.S. consortium General Electric Capital construction and Finance Group and Bechtel Enterprises

Feb. 20, 1999 - Iran warns against plans to build pipeline along Caspian Sea's bottom, says Iran-Soviet agreements governing sea's status are still in force

Feb. 26, 1999 -- CIS summit in Moscow

Feb. 26, 1999 -- U.S. State Department releases annual human rights report showing little change in Central Asia, Turkmenistan's human rights record said to be "dismal"

Mar. 1, 1999 -- Niyazov gives presidential pardon to 379 foreigners and orders them to be sent home

Mar. 2, 1999 -- Pakistani newspaper "The Nation" reports FM Shikhmuradov in Kandahar on March 2 to meet with Mullah Omar to discuss possible Afghan talks in Turkmenistan

Mar. 3, 1999 -- Turkmen FM Shikhmuradov visits Tajikistan

Mar. 5, 1999 -- Gazprom chief Rem Vyakhirev says systems for shipments of gas allow Russia to "control the fuel supply from Turkmenistan to Ukrainian consumers," says

Turkmenistan lost about \$1 billion since Turkmenistan stopped shipping gas to Ukraine in spring of 1997

Mar. 6, 1999 -- IFX reports Turkmenistan and Pakistan sign memorandum on feasibility study for export of Turkmen electricity to Pakistan

Mar. 11, 1999 -- Afghan talks open in Ashgabat

Mar. 12, 1999 -- Framework agreement for gas supplies signed between Turkmenistan and Turkey

Mar. 15, 1999 -- EBRD says it will participate in Trans-Caspian Pipeline project

Mar. 18, 1999 -- Information Center on Human Rights in Central Asia releases statement claiming reporter for Russian newspaper "Panorama" Nikolai Mitrokhin detained by Turkmen authorities and deported to Uzbekistan

Mar. 19, 1999 -- CIS integration committee meeting in Minsk criticizes Turkmen decision to withdraw from CIS visa-free agreement, Turkmen Foreign Ministry sends note saying action should in no way be understood as an aspiration to break off relations with governments of CIS states

Mar. 19, 1999 -- Niyazov signs decree establishing new regulations for transporting beer, hard liquor, wine and tobacco products through Turkmen territory, says aim is to protect domestic market

Mar. 19, 1999 --Niyazov announces amnesty for 5,000 prisoners to mark Nawruz holiday

Mar. 19, 1999 -- Chairman of the Integration Committee of the CIS Customs Union Nigmatzhan Isingarín says CIS will take "adequate" response to Turkmenistan's announcement it is leaving CIS visa-free regime in June, Turkmen Foreign Ministry sends note explaining the action "should in no way be understood as aspiring to break off relations with governments of CIS

Mar. 19, 1999 -- Niyazov signs decree establishing new rules for transit of beer, wine, hard liquor and tobacco products through Turkmenistan, fee to be paid on entering the country and will be returned when goods leave Turkmen territory within 30 days

Mar. 19, 1999 -- Niyazov announces amnesty to coincide with Navruz, 5,000 to be released from jails, IFX reports 22,000 people amnestied so far in 1999

Apr. 8, 1999 -- Niyazov says after meeting with Nazarbayev that Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan will give priority to exporting Turkmen gas and Kazakh oil via Chinese pipelines in 21st Century

Apr. 8-9, 1999 -- CIS Central Asian presidents meet in Ashgabat

Apr. 21, 1999 - Niyazov says Ukraine owes 223 million for gas supplies since start of 1999

Apr. 21, 1999 -- Niyazov addresses Turkmenistan's National Institute for Human Rights, says Western-style democracy is incompatible with Turkmen national mentality and with the Asian model of democracy, says press censorship needed to preclude publication of articles inciting inter-ethnic hatred, says he will not invite international observers to Turkmen elections but he not prevent them from attending polls

May 4, 1999 -- IFX reports Niyazov issues decree opening embassies in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan, move comes in response to Turkmenistan's announcement of visa requirement starting in June

May 6-7, 1999 -- Taliban officials visit to discuss economic cooperation, agreements signed on start of commercial flights and supplies of Turkmen gas to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, pipeline project

May 11, 1999 -- NATO delegation visits

May 12, 1999 -- Turkmen and Turkish energy ministers sign deal from Turkmen electricity supplies to Turkey

May 14, 1999 -- CIS Executive secretary Yuri Yarov visits, Niyazov tells him it is inexpedient for Turkmenistan to join CIS free trade zone as country would lose \$500,000 million annually

May 17, 1999 -- Niyazov visits Iran's Golestan Province to attend ceremony opening mausoleum of 18th Century poet Makhtum Kuli

May 19, 1999 -- Turkmenistan's CEC meets for first time to plan for December parliamentary elections

May 24, 1999 -- Niyazov names civilian Batyr Sarjayev to be Defense Minister, replacing Gurban Kasymov who is appointed Minister of Justice, names deputy PM Yelly Kurbanmuradov to be head of oil and gas sector and former Central Bank chairman Khudaiberdy Orazov to be deputy prime minister overseeing banking system

May 25, 1999 -- Russian border guard chief Vladimir Konvalov says Turkmenistan informed him of intention to unilaterally revoke treaty signed with Russia allowing for Russian border guards in Turkmenistan

May 27, 1999 --- U.S. special presidential envoy Stephan Sestanovich visits

June 1, 1999 -- Niyazov appears on Turkmen TV and says the Niyazov district of Mary region will henceforth be called the Ogzykhan district

June 3, 1999 -- Uzbek FM Abdulaziz Kamilov visits Ashgabat to discuss Afghanistan

June 4, 1999 -- Chinese deputy chairman of State Council Tang Jixuan? visits, extends \$12 million credit for oil and gas industry

June 8, 1999 -- Russian Foreign Ministry releases statement saying the visa-free regime between Turkmenistan and Russia remains in effect despite impending visa requirement from Turkmenistan for CIS states

June 8, 1999 -- Prosecutor general's office charges Deryakuli Karadurdiyev, the head of the Turkmen Cattle Raising Association, Bakhtiyar Ishankuliyev, the head of the Turkmen River Shipping Agency, and Annangeldy Nurgeldiyev, the chairman of National TV and Radio with abuse authority for personal enrichment, IFX report says Karadurdiyev is accused of taking bribes totaling \$30,000, report says when his home was searched police found \$93,000 amnd narcotics, Ishankuliyev embezzled nearly \$1 million, Nurgeldiyev a little less than that, report says all three admitted their guilt

June 9, 1999 -- Turkmenistan officially introduces visa restriction on CIS countries

June 23, 1999 -- U.S. special advisor to the president and secretary of state on energy development in the Caspian region Richard Morningstar visits

June 23, 1999 -- IFX reports German company Seimens will outfit an international medical center in Ashgabat

June 24, 1999 -- OSCE ambassador for the Central Asian states Wilhelm Hoenyck visits

June 26, 1999 -- "Nezavismaya Gazeta" (pg. 5) reports Turkmenistan will harvest 1,400,000 tons of grain, second year in a row the country would be able to feed itself

June 30, 1999 -- IFX reports Agriculture and Irrigation Minister Kurbandurdy Roziyev resigns for health reasons, is replaced by previous head of Balkan province Serdar Babayev

June 30, 1999 -- Agriculture and Irrigation Ministry says it country will harvest more than the 1.245 million tons of grain it gathered in 1998

July 7, 1999 -- Russian border guard chief Konstantin Totsky visits to discuss the withdrawal of Russian border guards from Turkmenistan

July 8, 1999 -- "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" (pg. 5) reports Niyazov "not long ago" recommended to MPs and CEC members there should be added to the election law

ensuring that "only those of the highest morals, crystal clean people, for whom the interests of the people outweigh all other considerations" are elected

June 16, 1999 -- IT reports Niyazov declines to accept the title of Hero of Turkmenistan for a fourth time, parliament and "many social organizations" wished to give him the award for the record harvest in Turkmenistan

July 16-17, 1999 -- Russian FM Igor Ivanov visits

July 19, 1999 -- U.S. special advisor to the president and secretary of state for Caspian energy affairs John Wolf visits

July 19-20, 1999 -- Meeting of the 6+2 group on Afghanistan held in Tashkent at the deputy FM level, Taliban representatives attend

July 29-30, 1999 -- Kazakh Energy, Industry and Trade Minister Mukhtar Ablayzov visits Ashgabat to discuss transporting Kazakh oil to the Turkmenbashi port and then by tanker to Iran

Aug. 2, 1999 -- Economics and Finance Minister Matkarim Rajabov releases report that says average life span in Turkmenistan will be 75 years in 2010 as compared with 65 years it is now

Aug. 6, 1999 -- Chairman of Turkmenneftegaz Berdymurat Rajepov says gas supplies to Ukraine will not resume any time soon, says Ukraine has not paid for supplies it received up to May 21, 1999

Aug. 8, 1999 -- National Melon Day, IT reports there are 170 sorts of "dini"

Aug. 19, 1999 -- U.S. secretary of energy Bill Richardson visits

Sept. 27, 1999 -- IFX cites Niyazov as saying at a conference dedicated to "Rukhname" that society has shown a great interest in working out a spiritual constitution, IFX says "In numerous letters to him people of all walks of life speak of their view of the moral program, Niyazov said. Rukhname will be a creation of all Turkmen society"

Sept. 28, 1999 -- OSCE rotating chairman Knut Vollebæck visits

Oct. 13, 1999 -- Russian Defense Ministry says Russian troops stationed in Turkmenistan since 1994 will be removed

Oct. 20, 1999 -- Iranian FM Kamal Kharazmi leads delegation to Ashgabat, deal signed to build dam over Tejen River for irrigation projects estimated to cost \$167 million

Oct. 21, 1999 -- IFX reports Turkmen television has resumed shooting of the "Turkmenbashi: My Serdar" series whose script was written by Kakamurad Ballyiev the presidential press secretary

Oct. 30, 1999 -- Start of parliamentary election campaign

Nov. 2, 1999 -- RTR reports Turkmen electoral authorities start registering candidates for the December 12 parliamentary election, registration ends on November 11

Nov. 6, 1999 -- Turkmen FM Boris Shikhmuradov visits Tashkent, signs agreement simplifying visa procedures between the two countries

Nov. 8, 1999 -- IT reports registration process for candidates to Mejlis start, report says more than 110 people are registered

Nov. 8, 1999 -- Uzbek-Turkmen visa agreement comes into force simplifying procedures for the two countries' citizens to obtain visas

Nov. 9, 1999 -- Tajik Security Council secretary Amirkul Azizov says 500 IMU militants and their supporters deported to Afghanistan, deportation operation nearing its end

Nov. 11, 1999 -- Niyazov confirms \$20 million program to fix or install new water pipes and repair or construct new canals (ariq)

Nov. 17, 1999 -- AFP reports no independent candidates will run in December 12 parliamentary elections, says there are 104 candidates, CEC chairman Murad Karryyev says "so far there has not been the chance for public to nominate their own candidates"

Nov. 18, 1999 -- Niyazov and Turkish President sign gas export deal

Nov. 18-19, 1999 -- OSCE summit in Istanbul, Niyazov attends

Nov. 25, 1999 -- RTR reports Khalk Maslahaty will debate polygamy in session at the end of December

Nov. 29, 1999 -- Niyazov sacks officials in the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, deputy minister Gurbangeldy Vilmuradov for inefficiency in allowing water from the Kara-Kum River, formerly the Kara-Kum canal, to spill into the desert due to leaks and cracks

Nov. 30, 1999 -- Delegation led by deputy PM Yelli Kurbanmuradov visits Washington for talks on constructing the Trans-Caspian pipeline

Nov. 30, 1999 -- State newspaper "Turkmenistan" runs article advocating changing the name of country to "Turkmenistan of Saparmurat Turkmanbashi"



Dec. 9, 1999 -- OSCE releases statement saying it will not send monitors to parliamentary elections

Dec. 10, 1999 -- Paul Ulmann, head of the OSCE mission in Turkmenistan, meets with Niyazov and tells him the OSCE will not send any monitors to the parliamentary election, OSCE statement says "the legislative framework is inadequate for even a minimally democratic election," ODIHR chief Hrair Baliyan says "unlike other countries, there is not even a semblance of pluralism in Turkmenistan"

Dec. 12, 1999 -- Elections to parliament held, AP reports 99% of the 104 candidates are from the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, cites CEC as saying turnout was 98.9% of eligible voters when polls closed, IT says 98.9% voted, reports there are 1,560 polling stations for the 2,217,586 eligible voters, different IT report shows 97.8% of Balkan district voting by 14:00 local time, in Ashgabat, "the least active," 92.3% voted by 14:00 local time, AP quotes Shemshat Atajanova, the head of the National Institute of Democracy and Law of the President of Turkmenistan, as saying "no violations were reported to observers so far. The activity of voters has never been so good," the institute monitored the elections, 10 monitors according to IT on Dec. 13

Dec. 13, 1999 -- CEC chairman Murad Karryyev says voter turnout was 99.6%, says about 10,000 people failed to fulfill their civic duty and vote, turnout in 1994 was 99.8%

Dec. 14, 1999 -- IFX reports, every school pupil, student, soldier and military officer in Turkmenistan is to be presented on New Year's Eve with a watch bearing the picture of President Saparmurat Niyazov, Niyazov makes announcement

Dec. 16, 1999 -- Niyazov criticizes the work of the Ashgabat mayor's administration, says officials using money for their own needs, no work being done to repair city streets, of provide water and electricity to all regions of the city

Dec. 27-29, 1999 -- Khalk Maslahaty, 3,000 members, holds session

Dec. 27 - Khalk Maslahaty proposes making Niyazov head of state for life, IFX cites Niyazov as saying that presidential elections would be held in 2002. If the nation entrusts him with heading the state, he is ready to assume the responsibility, Khalk Maslahaty doubles the minimum wage and pensions to 400,000 manats per month, also passes legislation banning smoking in public places, Niyazov orders officials to work on raising life expectancy in the country from 65 to 75 years

Dec. 28 - Khalk Maslahaty passes law keeping Niyazov on as head of state with any term limit, Majlis passes new legislation allowing the constitutional change

Dec. 29 - On last day of Khalk Maslahaty session, Niyazov is presented with a symbols of the Prophet Mohammad, a white robe and a palm staff, awards him a white gold medal "For the Great Love for Independent Turkmenistan," session votes to ban the death penalty, replaces capital punishment with 25-year maximum imprisonment, vote to change the names of 6 cities and one region, henceforth Kushka is "Serkhetaabad" ( from the Turkmen words for 'secure border'), Nebitdag becomes Balkanabad, Cheleken

becomes Khazar (the old name for the Caspian), Kazanjik becomes Bereket (Turkmen for 'happiness'), Kyzylarvat becomes Serdar, Kyzyletek becomes Ertek, Kerki becomes Atamurad and the Charshanginsk region becomes the Koitendag region, Niyazov says no parties offering an alternative to the current reigning Democratic Party will be created in Turkmenistan before 2010, Latin alphabet will replace Cyrillic alphabet

Dec. 30, 1999 -- U.S. government expresses disappointment with decision to make Niyazov leader for life

## 2000

Jan. 2, 2000 -- Niyazov announces new national holiday -- Health Day -- to be observed every January 2

Jan. 5, 2000 -- Niyazov dismisses deputy PM Khudaiberdy Orazov for "serious shortcomings in his work and immodesty in his personal life"

Jan. 5, 2000 -- IFX reports Niyazov "has chaired" a conference on "the restoration and truthful presentation of the historical past of the Turkmen people," tells historians and "members of the artistic elite" that "it is essential to give a new impulse to the important essential work of studying our own history," gives instructions to write a play to portray the Turkmen's past "in a truthful and highly aesthetic way"

Jan. 8, 2000 -- Amnesty given to some 7,000 prisoners to mark the occasion of Uraz-Bairam

Jan. 18, 2000 -- U.S. special advisor on Caspian energy affairs to the president and secretary of state John Wolf visits

Jan. 20, 2000 -- RFE/RL reports Murat Nurmammedov, son of Agzybirlik leader Nurberdy Nurmammedov, receives summons from state prosecutor's office and will be charged with armed hooliganism

Jan. 24-25, 2000 -- CIS summit in Moscow, Niyazov attends and meets with Putin ahead of summit

Jan. 28, 2000 -- Turkmen newspapers appear without a photo of Niyazov on the front page for the first time

Jan. 28, 2000 -- Niyazov dismisses Energy and Industry Ministry also deputy PM Saparmurat Nuryyev, at 66 the oldest member of the government, for using his office to enrich his family

Jan. 28, 2000 -- Niyazov names Khalnazar Agakhanov to be ambassador to Russia, former Turkmen ambassador to Russia Nury Orazmukhamedov named ambassador to Moldova

Jan. 28, 2000 -- Niyazov announces another amnesty for February 19, some 2,000 people will be released, Niyazov says 22,000 amnestied last year and 7,000 already in 2000 and the crime rate has not increased

Jan. 29, 2000 -- IT reports Turkmenistan will strengthen enforcement of the law against relatives working in state positions

Feb. 1, 2000 -- IT reports Turkmen marine department "Turkmedenigizellary" signs contract with Turkish firm "Berk Dengizchilik" to build an 5,000-ton oil tanker for Turkmenistan

Feb. 1, 2000 -- IT reports industrial growth in CIS for 1999 compared to 1998 -- Kazakhstan 2.2% (lowest growth in CIS), Kyrgyzstan -1.7% (decrease), Tajikistan 5%, Turkmenistan N/A, Uzbekistan 6.1%  
GDP -- Kazakhstan N/A, Kyrgyzstan 3.6%, Tajikistan 3.7%, Turkmenistan N/A, Uzbekistan 4.4%

Feb. 4, 2000 -- Conference of the International FUnD to Save the Aral Sea held in Ashgabat, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan send representatives

Feb. 11, 2000 -- IT and IFX report U.S. President Bill Clinton sends Niyazov a letter thanking Niyazov for supporting the Trans-Caspian pipeline project and asking him to extend the contract with PSG, the Bechtel and GE Capital joint venture

Feb. 17, 2000 -- Niyazov tells meeting with foreign diplomats he is concerned about Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev's demand that 50% of the capacity of the Trans-Caspian pipeline be given to Azerbaijan

Feb. 18, 2000 -- Niyazov vows to step down in 5 to 7 years, says he is concerned about a struggle for power, says succession will be ensured, issues a set coins to mark his birthday, silver, gold and platinum with potraits of Niyazov as a young boy, a university student and a state leader

Feb. 18, 2000 -- Gazprom chief Rem Vyakhirev visits, says Russia is ready to buy up to 50 billion cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan annually for 30 years, currently Itera pays \$36 per 1,000 cubic meters and exports 20 billion cubic meters of gas to Russia annually, 40% of payment is hard currency and 60% goods

Feb. 24, 2000 -- Niyazov blames U.S. special advisor to the president and secretary of state on Caspian energy affairs John Wolf for setting political conditions for pipeline project, says Wolf is trying to "blackmail" Turkmenistan

Feb. 25, 2000 -- Agzybirlik leader Nurberdy Nurmammedov sentenced at closed door trial to 5 years in jail for attempted murder and hooliganism

Feb. 28, 2000 -- OSCE secretary general Jan Kubis visits

Mar. 3, 2000 -- Niyazov tells former Energy and Industry Minister also former deputy PM Saparmurat Nuryyev to pay back \$2.5 million by March 20 or face trial

Mar. 4-6, 2000 -- Pakistani FM Abdul Sattar visits for pipeline talks, Taliban representatives attend also

Mar. 9, 2000 -- IT reports Turkmenistan will buy 1,500 Belarus tractors

Mar. 10, 2000 -- Itera says CIS market can not absorb 50 billion cubic meters of Turkmen gas annually at a cost of \$36 per 1,000 cubic meters

Mar. 9, 2000 -- Niyazov and Aliyev agree on Azerbaijani share of pipeline project

Mar. 14, 2000 -- Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh visits, asks Turkmenistan to cut its price for natural gas by 33%, from \$40 per 1,000 cubic meters to \$28

Mar. 14, 2000 -- Rejep Saparov, the chairman of the cabinet of ministers, visits Belarus

Mar. 15, 2000 -- Niyazov says on state television he wants Gazprom to pay \$42 per 1,000 cubic meters of gas

Mar. 16, 2000 -- FM Boris Shikhmuradov tells journalists Turkmen is for dividing Caspian into national sectors

Mar. 20, 2000 -- IT reports Niyazov rejects extending the PSG contract, which expired on February 19

Mar. 23, 2000 -- U.S. firm Case agrees to sell Turkmenistan 200 grain harvesters

Mar. 28-29, 2000 -- Turkish President Suleyman Demirel visits

Mar. 30, 2000 -- Construction of the 530-kilometer Ashgabat-Dashoguz railway line starts

Mar. 31, 2000 -- Niyazov's German doctor gives Turkmenbashi a physical and pronounces him in excellent health

Mar. 31, 2000 -- OSCE delegation visits

Mar. 31, 2000 -- Work starts on a new six-lane Ashgabat-Mary-Turkmenabad highway

Apr. 4, 2000 -- FM Boris Shikhmuradov visits India

Apr. 8-9, 2000 -- 6th Summit of Turkic-speaking countries held in Baku

Apr. 10, 2000 -- IT reports ground from the area where Niyazov's father Atamurat is buried brought to Turkmenistan

Apr. 11, 2000 -- New law on internal exile comes into effect

Apr. 11, 2000 -- Turkmen National Statistics and Forecast Institute says GDP is up 12% in first quarter of year compared to same period in 1999

Apr. 13, 2000 -- Niyazov and representatives of French company Boueges? sign deal to build new parliament building

Apr. 18, 2000 -- RTR reports EBRD suspends public sector loans to Turkmenistan in protest at the anti-democratic rule of President Saparmurat Niyazov

Apr. 19, 2000 -- Niyazov criticizes EBRD for its suspension of loans, says the EBRD is conditioning its loans on the creation of a multi-party system and that Turkmenistan does not need "artificial" parties, says it is possible for any person to establish a political party as long as they do so within the framework of the law

Apr. 20, 2000 -- Commission for youth training and employment established

Apr. 20, 2000 -- Niyazov declares at meeting of representatives from law enforcement agencies that from now on no searches of houses and apartments can be made without Niyazov's permission

Apr. 25, 2000 -- Woman performs self-immolation in front of the UN mission in Ashgabat, she had visited the mission the night before, she is believed to be a Tajik, IFX says there are about 14,000 Tajik refugees in Turkmenistan

Apr. 28, 2000 -- CIS Interstate Statistics Committee reports Kazakhstan's first quarter industrial growth is 15.2%, best in CIS, Tajikistan's is 8.7%, Uzbekistan's is 3.5%, Kyrgyzstan's dropped by 4.8%, no figures for Turkmenistan

Apr. 28, 2000 -- U.S. plane arrives with \$1 million in medical equipment and medicines, mostly for treating tuberculosis

May 2, 2000 -- U.S. presidential advisor on trade and energy cooperation in the CIS Jan Kalitsky visits to try to resurrect the Trans-Caspian pipeline project

May 4, 2000 -- Niyazov signs decree posthumously awarding his father the title "Hero of Turkmenistan"

May 4, 2000 -- Islamic Development Bank gives \$22 million in credits for building 2 cardiological clinics, one in Ashgabat, the other in Dashaguz

May 11, 2000 -- IFX reports Eximbank of Turkey to give \$50 million loan for supporting Turkmen power system

May 12, 2000 -- IFX reports Niyazov signs new law "On Banning Searches in Homes of Turkmenistan's Citizens," which forbids unsanctioned searches in citizens' homes and symbolizes "the sacredness of the family hearth, property and reputation, of human

honor, dignity and pride," the decision was taken by Niyazov "to prevent any officials from infringing on human rights and freedoms"

May 12, 2000 -- IFX reports Oil and Gas Minister Rejepbvaï Arazov says Turkmenistan expected "decisive participation" from the U.S. authorities in the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline project, but this expectation has proved to be "wishful thinking"

May 15-16, 2000 -- Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf visits

May 19, 2000 -- Russian President Vladimir Putin visits

May 28, 2000 -- National Carpet Day (always the last Monday in May) celebrated

May 29, 2000 -- OSCE chairperson, Austrian FM Benita Ferrero-Waldner visits, asks that Mukhametkuli Aymuradov: sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in 1995 for the protests that year, Pirmuguly Tangrikuliyev: sentenced in 1999 for theft of state property, Nurberdy Nurmammedov" sentenced to 5 years imprisonment in February for attempted murder and hooliganism and Shageldy Aytakov: sentenced for embezzling in 1999, be released from jail

May 29, 2000 -- IFX reports Turkmenistan will build an artificial lake in the Kara-Kum desert at an estimated cost of \$4.5 billion

May 30, 2000 -- RTR reports Turkmenistan's leading private telecommunications firm Ariana refuses to stop providing internet service to its customers despite government decision to revoke the firm's license

June 6, 2000 -- Niyazov dismisses deputy PM Serdar Babayev for shortcomings in his performance

June 7, 2000 -- IFX reports Ukgazstroi wins tender to build 50-kilometer gas pipeline to Kazakhstan that avoids going through Uzbekistan

June 8, 2000 -- FMs of Economic Cooperation Organization countries meet in Tehran

June 10-11, 2000 -- Economic Cooperation Organization summit (the sixth) in Tehran, Kazakh PM Tokayev goes, Niyazov goes

June 14-18, 2000 -- U.S. State Department-sponsored conference on struggle against terrorism in Central Asia held, delegations from all five Central Asian states attend

June 15, 2000 -- Niyazov tells session of cabinet of minister the Agriculture and Water Transport ministry will be reorganized, says it is necessary to strengthen the border with Uzbekistan, says Turkmenistan needs more border guards posts along its border with other CIS countries

June 15, 2000 -- Parliament adopts law against smoking in state buildings and imposes fine of average one-month salary - 500,000 manat or about \$90 for those caught

June 16, 2000 -- Niyazov orders creation of inter-organizational council responsible for the control and registration of foreigners arriving in and located in the country, council will have representatives from the National Security Committee, Interior and Foreign ministries and border guard service

June 19, 2000 -- Niyazov signs ban on companies and individuals in Turkmenistan owning foreign bank accounts

June 19, 2000 -- IFX reports Turkmenistan's state budget has released \$37.85 million to buy 160 excavators and 100 bulldozers from Japan's Komatsu to build the Kara-Kum reservoir, reservoir to be built in the Karashor depression of the northern Kara-Kum desert and collect water from the Trans-Karakum and Dashoguz canals

June 20, 2000 -- IT reports Niyazov given the "gold medal" from Geneva-based World Organization for Intellectual Property for his efforts in developing intellectual property

June 20-21, 2000 -- CIS summit in Moscow, Niyazov attends, Turkmenistan does not sign agreement on creation of CIS anti-terrorism center, Kuchma and Niyazov meet and agreement to resume gas talks

June 23, 2000 -- IT cites Uzbek deputy PM Rustam Nusov as saying process of demarcating the Turkmen-Uzbek border has started

June 28, 2000 -- IT reports Niyazov receives present from Belarus President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, a new "Belarus-1221" tractor

June 28, 2000 -- Bechtel and General Election announce they are leaving the Trans-Caspian pipeline project

June 30, 2000 -- Turkmen authorities shut down internet provider Ariana

July 3, 2000 -- Russia deports 31 Turkmen citizens caught with no visas on a train at the Aksaraisk border post in North-Caucasus

July 5-7, 2000 -- Chinese President Jiang Zemin visits

July 9-10, 2000 -- Special advisor to the U.S. secretary of state Steven Sestanovich visits

July 16, 2000 -- The Grain Day holiday marked, government reports another record harvest coming, 1.7 tons of grain already gathered

July 18, 2000 -- Russian special advisor on Caspian affairs Viktor Kalyuzhny visits



July 20, 2000 -- Turkmenistan buys three Boeing-717s

July 25, 2000 -- AFP reports Turkmen women's union forwards initiative to award Gurbansoltan Niyazova the title of "National Mother and Heroine of Turkmenistan"

July 25-26, 2000 -- Ukrainian deputy PM Yulia Tymoshenko visits for talks on resuming Turkmen gas supplies

July 26, 2000 -- RFE/RL reports Taliban radio broadcasts into Central Asia were boosted the day before, the Russian-language broadcasts out of Kabul can be heard in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Xinjiang

July 28, 2000 -- Niyazov dismisses FM Boris Shikhmuradov, replaces him with Batyr Berdiyev

July 28, 2000 -- Niyazov demands members of the cabinet be fluent in Turkmen language

July 31, 2000 -- UN special envoy for Afghanistan Francesc Vendrell visits

Aug. 1, 2000 -- Niyazov officially announces that all government officials must be fluent in Turkmen language

Aug. 7, 2000 -- AFP reports television series "The Epoch of Turkmenbashi" starts airing on state television

Aug. 8, 2000 -- IT cites Turkmen media as reporting Niyazov's new armor-plated Mercedes Benz arrives

Aug. 14, 2000 -- National Melon Day

Aug. 16, 2000 -- AFP reports Niyazov orders Ashgabat mayor Ashir Cherkezev and 8 other senior officials not receive their monthly wage "in connection with the disatisfactory way they had fulfilled work duties," "Neytralny Turkmenistan" wrote

Aug. 22, 2000 -- Moscow-based Information Center for Human Rights in Central Asia releases statement saying demonstration of 200 women was broken up by police on the outskirts of Ashgabat, the women, all from the village of Keshi, were demanding better housing and less spending on grandiose government buildings

Aug. 22, 2000 -- IFX reports IMU infiltrate into Central Asia via two routes: from Afghanistan to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan through Tajikistan, and from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan via Turkmenistan

Aug. 23, 2000 -- Turkmen government files complaint with Russian embassy over IFX report on IMU militants transiting Turkmen territory

Aug. 25, 2000 -- Niyazov says he will not attend the UN Millenium Summit in New York in September for health reasons

Aug. 29, 2000 -- Boris Shikhmuradov, now special Turkmen envoy for the Caspian region, visits Iran

Sept. 2, 2000 -- Turkmen presidential envoy Boris Shikhmuradov meets with Ahmad Shah Masoud in Dushanbe to propose peace package for Afghanistan

Sept. 12, 2000 -- German doctor Hans Meissner visits to give Niyazov a check-up, says the Turkmen president is in good health, IFX reports it was on Meissner's advice that Niyazov canceled plans to attend the UN Millenium Summit

Sept. 20, 2000 -- AP reports PSG will close its office in Turkmenistan at the end of October but will remain in the international consortium to build the Trans-Caspian pipeline

Sept. 21-22, 2000 -- Uzbek President Karimov visits Ashgabat, he and Niyazov sign border treaty

Sept. 29, 2000 -- U.S. Central Command chief General Tommy Franks visits

Oct. 2, 2000 -- Moscow-based Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations releases statement criticizing Turkmen government for detaining human rights activist Vyacheslav Mamedov just days before when he was trying to board an airplane in Ashgabat to fly to Almaty for a conference sponsored by the OSCE, Mamedov was accompanied to the plane by OSCE representatives, National Security Service reportedly reused to give OSCE representatives any information about Mamedov's detainment

Oct. 4, 2000 -- Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma visits (fourth time) to sign new gas agreement to supply Ukraine with 35 billion cubic meters of gas during 2000-2001, Ukraine's debt to Turkmenistan currently stands at more than \$400 million

Oct. 17-18, 2000 -- Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer visits

Oct. 20, 2000 -- IT reports Niyazov says artifical lake will be called "Turkmen Lake" when it is done

Oct. 25-26, 2000 -- Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyevev visits Dushanbe to take part in CIS defense ministers meeting, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan do not send representatives, Sergeyevev meets with Ahmad Shah Masoud

Oct. 26, 2000 -- Niyazov announces amnesty for some 10,000 (of 22,000, IFX) prisoners, date set for December 23, the Islamic holy day of Kadr

Nov. 1, 2000 -- Turkmen gas exports resume to Ukraine

Nov. 2, 2000 -- U.S. House of Representatives approves resolution urging Central Asian states to allow free multi-party elections, warns that attempts by governments in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to curb democracy only fuel public discontent and may help extremists groups gain supporters

Nov. 4, 2000 -- Niyazov encourages people to come out and take a walk along Serdar Yoly, says from now on the first Saturday in November will be Health Day instead of January 2

Nov. 6, 2000 -- Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's plane forced to make unscheduled stop in Ashgabat on route to Kazakhstan, Musharraf takes advantage of stop to discuss building the trans-Afghan pipeline with Niyazov

Nov. 12, 2000 -- Niyazov says on television that he will hold senior government officials responsible for producing only 1.03 million tons of cotton, instead of 1.3 million

Nov. 14, 2000 -- EBRD says Turkmenistan has made little progress toward a market economy, urges Niyazov to abandon "Soviet-style investment plans"

Nov. 16, 2000 -- Niyazov says on television that family background check will be made on all government officials, their wives and their families going back three generations

Nov. 17, 2000 -- Niyazov visits Dashoguz province, says in 2001, Turkmenistan will produce 1.8 million tons of cotton

Nov. 22, 2000 -- "Neitralny Turkmenistan" reports Niyazov sacks 7 district chiefs and three deputies in the Lebap region and demoted the Lebap mayor to the post of Turkmenbat mayor due to failure to deliver 12,000 tons of cotton as it was required to gather under the state plan, Niyazov quoted on state television as saying "One can always find reasons for failure in the cotton campaign: water shortages, cold weather and so on. This is all pure nonsense"

Nov. 23, 2000 -- IFX reports Niyazov blasts Mary region officials for using child and female labor in the cotton harvest, IFX reports Niyazov has replaced nine of 10 district heads for not meeting cotton harvest figures

Nov. 23-24, 2000 -- Presidential envoy Boris Shikhmuradov visits China to discuss an Afghan settlement

Nov. 27-28, 2000 -- Iranian deputy FM Ali Ahani visits, "Neitralni Turkmenistan" reports Niyazov says Iran and Turkmenistan's position on the Caspian are close

Nov. 29, 2000 -- Armenian President Robert Kocharian visits

Nov. 29, 2000 -- IT reports Niyazov decree places image of his horse into national symbol

Dec. 1, 2000 -- CIS summit in Minsk, Niyazov does not attend, says in Ashgabat neutral Turkmenistan is unwilling to take part in setting up a CIS anti-terrorist center

Dec. 5, 2000 -- Taliban officials visit, sign agreement for Turkmenistan to build a 72-kilometer power line from Turkmenistan to Sherbergan

Dec. 6, 2000 -- Earthquake measuring more than 7 points on the Richter scale at epicenter which is Nebit-Dag, 25 kilometers southeast of Turkmenbashi City, casualties and damage difficult to estimate, China TV says 11 dead, Turkmen government says none

Dec. 10-11, 2000 -- Rabbani and Taliban representatives meet in Ashgabat, agree to having Turkmenistan and the OIC as mediators

Dec. 14, 2000 -- Niyazov announces at least 11,000 medical workers and 10,000 teachers will lose their jobs by January 1, 2001 due to budget cuts

Dec. 22, 2000 -- Amnesty comes into effect, freeing 12,000 prisoners, opposition leader Nurberdy Nurmammedov is among those released

Dec. 30, 2000 -- Niyazov calls on all citizens to fly the national flag on every government and residential building

Dec. 31, 2000 -- Turkmenistan terminates gas supply to Itera

## 2001

Jan. 8, 2001 -- Amnesty International releases statement criticizing police surveillance of opposition leader Nurberdy Nurmammedov

Jan. 10, 2001 -- "Neitralni Turkmenistan" reports GDP rose by 17% in 2000

Jan. 12, 2001 -- RFE/RL cites opposition leader Avdy Kuliev as saying Turkmenistan's State Library will be closed

Jan. 15, 2001 -- National Institute of State Statistics and Information reports population increased by 3.3% in 2000, is now 5,369,400, urban population is 2,463,500 or 45.9%, rural population is 2,906,000 or 54.1%, population of Ashgabat is 676,400, populations of provinces -- Mary 1,226,000, Dashoguz - 1,142,000, Lebap - 1,109,600, Akhal - 754,200, Balkan - 461,200

Jan. 17, 2001 -- Niyazov fires deputy PMs Chary Yazlyev, responsible for education, and Khudaikuli Khalykov, responsible for transportation and communications, Niyazov says Yazlyev's choice of textbooks of Turkmen history left a lot to be desired, Education Minister Abat Rizayev fired for incompetence, Agricultural Minister Amanmukhammed Atayev fired for shortcomings, also sacked are Railway chief ATdabeg Agajanov and chairman of state committee for fisheries Bairam Bairamov, Niyazov appoints Transport and Communications Minister Rovshen Kerkavov to be deput PM, deputy PM Rejep Saparov to be agricultural minister, Muhametnazar Hudaikuliyev to be construction minister, Gurbannazar Nazarov to be oil and gas minister and Matkarim Rajapov minister for environmental protection

Jan. 17-18, 2001 -- NATO secretary general George Robertson visits

Jan. 18, 2001 -- Radio Voice of Shariah of Balkh Province reports meeting between Taliban officials from Balkh province and Turkmen officials to discuss road links

Jan. 25, 2001 -- State newspapers publish new requirement to fly flag on all buildings in country

Jan. 26, 2001 -- Niyazov says National Security Committee will get 1,000 new employees in connection with monitoring the activities of foreigners

Jan. 26, 2001 -- IFX reports 3 new monuments to Niyazov unveiled in Ashgabat

Jan. 26, 2001 -- "Neitralni Turkmenistan" reports GDP was up by 17.6% in 2000

Jan. 30, 2001 -- Niyazov says on state TV that KNB will crack down on drug trafficking and religious extremism and more closely monitor the activities of foreigners, says some 2,200 kilos of drugs were seized in 2000, 220 kilos of it heroin, says "350,000 religious books, incompatible with our faith and about 80,000 video cassettes" were confiscated, says of foreigners "last year alone 988,000 people visited Turkmenistan from abroad... if some of them came with good intentions, then some of them didn't"

Jan. 30, 2001 -- "Neitralni Turkmenistan" reports Turkmen citizens want Niyazov's mother depicted in statues and paintings with scales in her hands, like the ancient Greek goddess Themis

Feb. 4, 2001 -- IT reports pipeline accident cuts off supplies of natural gas to Ashgabat

Feb. 6, 2001 -- Construction of a second line of the Trans-Asian-European optic fiber communications project between Shanghai and Frankfurth-on-Maine starts in Turkmenistan

Feb. 8, 2001 -- AP report cites Keston Institute and Helsinki Commission expressing concerns about Baptist leader Shageldy Atakov, serving four years in a labor camp after being convicted of swindling people, both groups say Atakov is being given powerful mind-altering drugs that are damaging his health

Feb. 9, 2001 -- Ukrainian parliament refuses to ratify presidential resolution "On the construction and financing of state-important investment objects in Turkmenistan"

Feb. 13, 2001 -- Turkmen state news agency says Caspian summit will be held on March 8-9 in Turkmenbashi City

Feb. 16, 2001 -- RFE/RL cites Niyazov as saying the country may hold presidential elections in 2010

Feb. 16, 2001 -- Niyazov says deal signed with Itera to sell Russia 10 billion cubic meters of gas

Feb. 18, 2001 -- Khalk Maslahaty meets, Niyazov repeats pledge to step down by 2010, says no country should have a leader older than 70, declines to be leader for life, says the book "Rukhname" should become the second most important book for Turkmen people after the Koran

Feb. 23, 2001 -- State media call on Turkmen population to contribute to a "spiritual constitution" for the country

Feb. 26, 2001 -- Niyazov says Caspian summit, planned for March 8-9 in Turkmenbashi City, is postponed

Feb. 26, 2001 -- Niyazov fires Minister of Water Resources Sakhatmurad Kurbanov, appoints Tekebai Altiyev, dismisses Mered Khalovezov as acting chairman of the State Customs Service "for serious flaws in his work"

Feb. 28, 2001 -- Niyazov writes open letter to the people urging them to fly the Turkmen flag

Feb. 28, 2001 -- IT reports Turkish Polimex company Erol Tabaja is to present Niyazov with a certificate stating that star in the Ursa Major constellation has been renamed "Turkmenbashi"

Mar. 1, 2001 -- Iranian FM Kamal Kharrazi visits

Mar. 6, 2001 -- Turkmen gas starts flowing to Russia after more than one year

Mar. 11, 2001 Former FM Boris Shikhmuradov appointed ambassador to China

Mar. 31, 2001 -- Niyazov takes part in ceremony starting construction of Ashgabat-Mary-Turkmenabad highway

Apr. 2, 2001 -- German cardiologist Hans Meisner visits to give Niyazov his physical, Meisner says Niyazov's condition is satisfactory

Apr. 4, 2001 -- Niyazov abolishes the last opera and ballet theater in Ashgabat, says "our viewers find it strange to see the suffering of heroes, who express their highly artificial feelings in roulades and in dances that are not always very modest," says the theater has "exhausted its creative life"

Apr. 4, 2001 -- Ashgabat court rules that house belonging to city's Pentacostal church should be confiscated without compensation, upholding the March 14 decision of the Kopetdag district court

Apr. 9, 2001 -- Niyazov says Caspian summit, scheduled for April 14, has been postponed again, this time until the fall

Apr. 16, 2001 -- IT reports U.S. delivers \$107,000 in medicinal supplies to Dashoguz province

Apr. 26-27, 2001 -- Turkic-speaking nation summit in Istanbul, Niyazov goes

May 13-14, 2001 -- Niyazov visits Ukraine

May 18, 2001 -- Amnesty International releases statement expressing concern over the detainment of Dmitry Melnichenko, who the statement says is being tortured after refusing to serve in Turkmenistan's armed forces, Melnichenko is a Baptist

May 22, 2001 -- Niyazov tells the World Humanitarian Turkmen Association he is tired of being worshipped, however the 64 members of the association representing Turkmen societies from 24 countries, vote to confirm the title of "Beik President" (Great President) on Niyazov

May 23, 2001 -- "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" (pg. 5) reports U.S. Central Command chief Tommy Franks visited Turkmenistan

May 24, 2001 -- IT reports Turkmen vodka "Serdar" wins "Yalta-2001" prize at the Yalta international competition of vodkas and spirits

May 31-June 1, 2001 -- CIS summit in Minsk, Niyazov does not go

June 4, 2001 -- Turkmen Foreign Ministry announces it is closing its embassy in Baku for financial reasons

June 5, 2001 -- EBRD president Jean Lumierre says at Tokyo investment conference for Central Asia that EBRD aims to increase investment in Central Asia from \$220 million in 2000 to between \$250-\$300 million per year starting in 2001

June 8, 2001 -- OSCE rotating chairman Mircea Geoana visits

June 13, 2001 -- Turkmen Foreign Ministry announces any foreigner wishing to marry a Turkmen citizen must pay into state treasury \$50,000, to support any potential children or the Turkmen citizen in case of divorce

June 14, 2001 -- UN special envoy to Afghanistan Francesc Vendrell visits

June 15, 2001 -- General Annamurad Soltanov dismissed from armed forces for illegally selling military equipment abroad, fires chief of police from Mary region, accuses deputy PM Rejep Saparov of using his position to make his brother the head of Ahgabat's Tekin market and orders Saparov's brother be stripped of his doctorate, criticizes president of the Daikhan Bank for having four houses, says the banker gave houses to the state, "we must accept such presents from thieves"

June 15, 2001 -- FMs of Caspian littoral states meet in Baku

June 26, 2001 -- "Neitralni Turkmenistan" reports Niyazov orders closure of country's only madressah, Islamic religious school, in the Dashoguz province

June 26, 2001 -- Niyazov fires media chief Akhmurad Mukhadov, Niyazov quoted as saying "your programs don't have any influence on people. We have to teach young people about the national spirit. Turkmenistan has a rich history, and we have to use this in TV programs. We have to give an official denial to all the rumors about Turkmenistan"



June 27, 2001 -- Niyazov names Gurbanberdy Begenjov to be Defense Minister, replacing Batyr Sarjayev who becomes chief of the country's railway system, also fires chairman of the cabinet's coordinating committee Akmurad Mukhadov for poor work

July 3, 2001 -- Niyazov orders Interior Minister Poran Berdiyev's wages for July be withheld because he had "failed to take enough measures to prevent crimes"

July 3, 2001 -- Niyazov announces biggest mosque in Central Asia to be built in his home village of Kipchak, French company "Bouygues" to build it

July 4, 2001 -- AFP cites "Turkmen officials" as reporting grain harvest is 2 million tons

July 5-6, 2001 -- Nazarbayev and Niyazov sign delimitation agreement of Kazakh-Turkmen border in Astana

July 7, 2001 -- Niyazov dismisses FM Batyr Berdiyev for failing to perform his duties, names chairman of parliament Rejep Meredov to replace him as FM, former oil and natural resources minister Rejepbai Arazov takes over as chairman of parliament

July 7, 2001 -- Police raid Baptist church in Balkanabad (formerly Nebit-Dag) during service, take down the names of everyone present and warn them not to meet again under threat of confiscation of the church building

July 9, 2001 -- Niyazov dismisses communications minister Rovshan Kerkavov for laws in his work, appoints head of Lebap province Berdymurad Rejepov to replace him, fires water minister Tekebai Altiev

July 11, 2001 -- IT cites Turkmen newspapers as reporting the International Aviation Committee gives Niyazov the Golden medal and an honorary diploma "For Great Services in Aviation Development"

July 24, 2001 -- Kazakh state-owned gas company Intergaz says supplies of Turkmen gas to Ukraine should resume soon after Ukraine pays \$20 million ofdet to ITERA

July 27, 2001 -- EBRD sends open letter to Turkmenistan warning the bank may stop lending money as it has seen virtually no evidence of democratic or economic progress, EBRD expresses concern about the \$1.7 billion "foreign exchange fund" that Niyazov directly controls and does not form part of the state budget

Aug. 1-3, 2001 -- Informal CIS summit in Sochi, Niyazov a "no-show"

Aug. 6, 2001 -- Niyazov fines central bank chief Seitbai Kandymov, also a deputy PM, one month's wages for nepotism

Aug. 6, 2001 -- The river-class oil tanker "the Hero Atamurad Niyazov" is launched into the Marble Sea from shipyards in Turkey, ship can hold 5,000 tons of crude oil

Aug. 17, 2001 -- U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom says the State Department should declare Turkmenistan as one of the ten worst religious freedom violators

Aug. 21, 2001 -- IT reports Niyazov signs decree stripping police colonel Kakabai Seyidov of his rank and all other material benefits for failure to properly raise his children, Sayidov's son and wife were caught with 3.1 grams of heroin recently, and Sayidov's second son was caught and sentenced for robbery in February

Aug. 21, 2001 -- Niyazov fires Ashgabat mayor Ashiberdy Cherkezov for flaws in performing his duties

Aug. 27, 2001 -- Niyazov fires Ilyas Berdiyev as head of Turkmenavia airline, fires Cgary Yazliyev, the head of Makhtumkuli State University

Aug. 27, 2001 -- Niyazov tells cabinet session the Caspian summit is again postponed, Niyazov says the summit would interfere with Independence Day celebrations

Aug. 30, 2001 -- Ukrainian government delegation visits to discuss Ukraine's debt, which is \$282 million

Aug. 31, 2001 -- "Neitralny Turkmenistan" reports Niyazov fires Mary region deputy governor Bairam Berdiyev because he "drank, spent time with drunk people, used drugs" and was careless in his attitude towards work, dismisses another Mary deputy governor, Tore Akmammedov, for misusing state funds and a relative was accused of murder, newspaper says Akmammedov was an "immoral and weak-willed person"

Aug. 31, 2001 -- IT reports a new television series is ready -- "Turkmenbashi the Patron," six episodes to air next week, follows the 19-part TV series "Turkmenbashi My Leader" which aired in 1999-2000

Sept. 4, 2001 -- Foreign Ministry announces starting September 5, it will limit the number of visas it gives out in connection with the upcoming Independence Day holidays

Sept. 5, 2001 -- Altyn Asar state TV channel starts the "Turkmenbashi My Patron" series

Sept. 11, 2001 -- Terrorist attacks on New York and Washington

Sept. 19, 2001 -- Foreign Ministry says no plans to allow the U.S. to use military bases in Turkmenistan

Sept. 20, 2001 -- U.S. State Department authorizes the removal of some embassy staff and their dependents from Turkmenistan

Sept. 24, 2001 -- Niyazov says on state television that he will not allow foreign troops to use Turkmen soil

Sept. 25, 2001 -- Turkmen chief Mufti Nasrullah ibn Ibadullah supports idea of an international conference on "Islam against Terroris"

Oct. 1, 2001 -- Ekho Moskvyy and AP report CIS security ministers, from all 12 countries reportedly, meet in Dushanbe, Russian border chief Nikolai Patrushev attends

Oct. 3, 2001 -- "Neitralny Turkmenistan" reports Niyazov fires Mary province head Shary Kuliyyev for "serious failures" in his management of the cotton industry

Oct. 6, 2001 -- Niyazov lays the cornerstone of what he says will be the largest mosque in Central Asia, in his hometown of Kipchak, mosque will cost an estimated \$86 million and will be able to accomodate 10,000 worshippers

Oct. 11, 2001 -- U.S. Ambassador Laura Kennedy says the U.S. will give \$15,000 to help restore the Seitt Jamal-Endina mosque, damaged in the 1948 earthquake

Oct. 17, 2001 -- International conference on the Caspian starts in Ashgabat, Russian special envoy for the Caspian Viktor Kalyuzny attends, Turkmenistan announces it will implement new regulations for licensing of operation for exploration or exploitation of oil and gas

Oct. 22, 2001 -- IFX reports 301 square metere carpet named "The Golden Age of Great Saparmurat Turkmenbashi" has been put in the Guinness Book of Records

Oct. 26, 2001 -- U.S. State Department annaul report on international religious freedom released, Turkmenistan is not on the list, the following day HRW releases statement criticizing the U.S. government for failing to list Turkmenistan as a country of concern

Oct. 30, 2001 -- Niyazov announces shuffle of diplomatic missions, says KNB and Foriegn Ministry will conduct an inventory of all Turkmen diplomatic representations abroad, dismisses Boris Shikhmuradov as ambassador to China

Nov. 1, 2001 -- Former FM Boris Shikhmuradov releases a statement from Moscow announcing he is an opponent of the Turkmen regime

Nov. 1-2, 2001 -- Austrian FM Benita-Ferrero-Waldner visits to talk about security issues

Nov. 2, 2001 -- Prosecutor general's office announces charges have been filed against former FM Boris Shikhmuradov

Nov. 6, 2001 - U.S. government lifts travel warning on Turkmenistan

Nov. 14, 2001 -- Niyazov fires Colonel Gurbangeldy Gandymov and Khovly Allaberrenov of the Interior Ministry's investigative department and strips them of their ranks saying "for a certain fee, the officers covered up crimes, illegally closed criminal cases, reducing the perpetrators to the status witnesses and at the same time illegally persecuted and intimidated certain innocent people," reprimands border guard chief General Turkish Termyev and fines him one month salary for "grave drawbacks in work and a careless attitude to organizing the operations of the service"

Nov. 21, 2001 -- President's office says foreign legal entities, foreign citizens and joint ventures will be able to lease land with the president's permission

Nov. 30, 2001 -- CIS summit in Moscow, Niyazov goes

Dec. 2, 2001 -- The oil tanker "The Hero Atamurad Niyazov" docks at Turkmenbashi port

Dec. 3, 2001 -- EU External Affairs commissioner Chris Patten says EU may double its aid for Central Asia to help build strong societies, says "today's weak states can easily turn into tomorrow's failed states"

Dec. 4, 2001 -- Interior Ministry announces Niyazov will pardon some 9,000 prisoners and halve the time the country's remaining 9,500 prisoners have left to mark the start of Ramadan, first group of prisoners released December 5

Dec. 5, 2001 -- RFE/RL announces it is increasing its broadcasts to Central Asia and Caucasus

Dec. 11, 2001 -- Niyazov and Itera chief Igor Makarov sign deal for Turkmenistan to export 10 billion cubic meters of gas in 2002, Niyazov also signs a deal with Zarubezhneft president Nikolai Tokarev for the Russia oil company to help develop Turkmen oil fields

Dec. 24, 2001 -- IT reports Niyazov signs decree abolishing the exit visa requirement for Turkmen citizens starting January 1, 2002

Dec. 29, 2001 -- Romanian FM and OSCE rotation chairman Mircea Geoana says he welcomes decision to abolish the exit visa requirement

## 2002

Jan. 1, 2002 -- Decree abolishing the exit visa requirement for Turkmen citizens comes into effect

Jan. 12, 2002 -- Some 700 people reportedly demonstrate in Turkmenistan's regional capital of Tashauz against Uzbekistan's decision to impose a \$6 entry fee for Turkmen citizens crossing the border, according to census data from the 1980s, some 70% of Dashaguz was ethnic Uzbek

Feb. 2, 2002 -- Niyazov issues decree making both February 18 and 19 Flag Day

Feb. 3, 2002 -- Turkmen ambassador to Turkey Nurmammed Khanamov announces he resigns and criticizes Niyazov saying "he takes decisions on his own, whatever he thinks, whatever dream he had the night before, or the next day he hears something, he without caring whether it is true or false, takes his decisions. He swings his sword to the right and to the left, no matter right or wrong. One man decides the fate of all."

Feb. 5, 2001 -- Turkmen newspaper carry Niyazov dismissal of ambassador to Turkey Nurmukhammet Khanamov

Feb. 12, 2002 -- IT reports Niyazov endorses the program to enhance the combat ability of the army, Niyazov says "A neutral state must be able to defend itself and rebuff resolutely any possible aggressor," IT says "the training of soldiers is entrusted to the industrial ministries which will be responsible for the young soldiers and provide them with all that is needed, up to accomodation and housing. This form of service will engage the young men in military training for five days a month, and the remaining time will be given to road building, grain and cotton growing, mastering first medical aid skills and other trades."

Feb. 13, 2002 -- RTR reports Turkmenistan seeking extradition of Boris Shikmuradov and Murmukhammed Khanamov from Russia

Feb. 13, 2002 -- Parliament gives Niyazov the Order of Rukhybilent (High Spirituality), an award "for individuals who make a special contribution to the promotion of high morals," Niyazov is the first recipient of the award, parliament also gives the Makhtumkuli award to Niyazov the "First and Lifetime President of an Independent and Eternally Neutral Turkmenistan the Great Saparmurat Turkmenbashi for writing the Rukhnama holy book of the Turkmen people"

Feb. 14, 2002 -- Niyazov invites Shikmuradov back to Turkmenistan, says the former FM can bring lawyers with him

Feb. 18, 2002 -- Niyazov announces that every citizen of Turkmenistan will receive a three-day paid holiday when they reach 62 years of age

Feb. 18, 2002 -- Former deputy PM Khudaiberdy Orazov, speaking in Moscow, says Turkmenistan has a "profound structural crisis," Orazov says officials are manipulating statistical data to "disguise the total collapse of the economy"

Feb. 26, 2002 -- International Caspian conference in Moscow, envoys attend

Mar. 1, 2002 -- U.S. ExxonMobil announces it is closing its office in Ashgabat "for economic reasons"

Mar. 1-2, 2002 -- Informal CIS summit in Almaty, Azerbaijan's Heydar Aliyev does not attend because he had surgery in U.S., Niyazov goes

Mar. 4, 2002 -- Niyazov demotes the chairman of the National Security Committee General Muhammed Nazarov, though he remains head of the KNB, and dismisses his deputies, Orazmuhammed Berdiyev and Khaiyt Kakayev for "serious shortcomings and failure to perform their duties properly"

Mar. 6, 2002 -- UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species secretary general Willem Wijnstekers says Caspian countries can start exporting caviar again

Mar. 7, 2002 -- Afghan President Hamid Karzai visits, signs deal for electricity for Afghanistan

Mar. 10, 2002 -- Niyazov signs decree stripping KNB officers Captain Gochmamed Esenov and Captain Saparmamet Babayev of their ranks and awards, kicks them out of the military services

Mar. 11, 2002 -- Prosecutor general's office says it has an embezzlement case against former central bank head Khudaiberdy Orazov

Mar. 13, 2002 -- AP reports prosecutor general's office files charges of embezzling \$120 million against Khudaiberdy Orazov

Mar. 13, 2002 -- IT reports Annageldy Menliyev, the prosecutor of the Akhal province, is accused of drug addiction and polygamy

Mar. 13, 2002 -- Former special advisor to the Turkmen embassy in Washington Chary Annaberdyev announces he is joining the People's Democratic Movement of Turkmenistan, he gets asylum in the U.S.

Mar. 14, 2002 -- Niyazov dismisses KNB chief Muhammed Nazarov, replaces him with Poran Berdiyev, fires Defense Minister Kurbandurdy Begenje, new Defense Minister is parliamentary speaker Rejepbai Arazov, new parliamentary speaker is Tagandurdy Khallyyev, also dismissed is Border Control Department chief Hosse Rejimov, Niyazov

says 80% of the KNB's top leadership has been replaced after falling under suspicion of abuse of power, even drug dealing

Mar. 25, 2002 -- German cardiologist Hans Meisner visits to give Niyazov a check-up, says the Turkmen president is in great physical shape

Mar. 26, 2002 -- Members of Central Asia's Interstate Coordinating Water Economy Commission, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, attend conference on water use sponsored by the Global Ecological Foundation, and held in Tashkent, IFX says countries of the region lose an estimated \$1.4 billion annually, or 30% of the potential economic output, due to inefficient water use resulting in the salination of soils

Apr. 1, 2002 -- Niyazov dismisses Mary governor Amangeldy Atayev, accusing him of taking a \$100,000 bribe from a factory director, parliament votes to expel deputy Nurtach Velmamedova accusing her of taking bribes, Niyazov demotes former KNB chief Muhammed Nazarov, Turkish Tyrmiyev to rank of privates, deputy PM for Industry and Energy Aman Atayev fired for bribery, so is chairman of the Food Industry Association Kakajon Ovezov

Apr. 1, 2002 -- "Neitralni Turkmenistan" publishes Niyazov's advice to youth where he tells young people they should not be afraid to lose their lives for their country, says "every Turkmen young man and every Turkmen young woman must be truthful and sincere in everything, you must condemn bad things, struggle against evil, immorality and illegal things," also advises youth to believe in Allah and worship God, and said children "should be ashamed of idleness and useless waste of time"

Apr. 15, 2002 -- John Schlosser, an official at the State Department's Non-Proliferation Bureau, tells international conference on terrorism and non-proliferation held in Tashkent that the U.S. will provide \$30 million to Central Asian states in 2002 to fight trafficking in weapons of mass destruction

Apr. 15-16, 2002 -- Group of 50 people protest outside KNB building in Ashgabat, demanding crooked KNB officials be punished for abuses

Apr. 18, 2002 -- Former deputy PM Aleksandr Dodonov sends RFE/RL a fax saying he has joined the opposition

Apr. 23-24, 2002 -- First Caspian State summit held in Ashgabat, all five presidents -- Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran -- attend, no major agreements reached

Apr. 28, 2002 -- U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld visits

Apr. 28-30, 2002 -- Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma visits for talks on gas

May 15-17, 2002 -- Belarus President Alyaksandr Lukashenka visits

May 17, 2002 -- IT reports Niyazov receives his medal from the International Aviation Committeem the chairwoman of that organization General Tatyana Anodina presents Niyazov with the medal

May 18, 2002 -- 10th anniversary of the constitution

May 18, 2002 -- IT reports Niyazov signs decree giving the duties of traffic police over to the Defense Ministry

May 24, 2002 -- Former deputy PM, and Mary province governor Amannazar Atayev sentenced to 10 years of correctional labor for "unscrupulous conduct"

May 24, 2002 -- "Vremya MN" (pg. 1) reports Niyazov claiming average life expectancy in Turkmenistan has risen from 59 to 71 years since independence

May 27, 2002 -- IFX reports that Niyazov tells Ukrainian President Kuchma during a phone call that Ukrainian workers in Turkmenistan do their jobs too slowly

May 29-30, 2002 -- Presidents of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan meet in Islamabad and sign agreement on building natural gas and oil pipelines to export Turkmen fuels to Pakistan

June 5, 2002 -- USAID approves \$3 million to fight HIV/AIDS in Central Asia, announcement made in Almaty

June 8, 2002 -- Neftegaz Ukraine head Yuri Boiko says agreement reached to postpone Ukraine's \$46 million debt to Turkmenistan

June 13, 2002 -- Exiled opposition representatives from the United Turkmen democratic opposition, National Patriotic Movement of Turkmenistan, National Democratic Movement of Turkmenistan and the popular social movement "Mertebe," meet in Vienna and announce they are forming an umbrella opposition group

July 15, 2002 -- USAID announces \$22.2 in grants for the five Central Asian states

June 17, 2002 -- Niyazov appears on television and says "that's enough of your all your praises and glorification," asks people not to praise him so much

June 18, 2002 -- State information agency reports that Supreme Court sentences former KNB chief Muhammed Nazarov and his deputy Khaiyt Kakayev to 20 years in jail for abuse of office, including murders, former KNB branch chief A. Allakuliyev sentenced to 18 years in jail



June 18, 2002 -- Turkmen Habarlary news agency reports Niyazov takes in record harvest of wheat on his private plot, 4.2 tons per hectare

June 21, 2002 -- Niyazov says at ceremony to mark the anniversary of his election that presidential elections will be held in about 6 years and anyone planning on running should start preparing now

June 25, 2002 -- Niyazov says homes confiscated from corrupt officials will be given to the poor

July 4, 2002 -- Niyazov declares that citizens traveling to neighboring Iran or Uzbekistan will have to comply with tighter rules for the next two years, exit visas re-introduced

July 5, 2002 -- Parliament votes to give Niyazov's mother, Gurbansoltan, the title of "Hero of Turkmenistan" for her "remarkable services to the homeland during the 1941-45 Great Patriotic War and immediately after the war"

July 9, 2002 -- Asian Development Bank announces it will finance a feasibility study for the Trans-Afghan pipeline

July 11, 2002 -- "Neitralny Turkmenistan" reports Niyazov promises two-week holidays to government officials for recording the country's best grain harvest, Niyazov says this year Turkmenistan harvested 2.3 million tons of grain

July 16, 2002 -- IT reports Rukhnama becomes one of the main subjects to study in school and the main exams given are on the book

July 22, 2002 -- Niyazov orders tighter controls on cable TV, also says advertising on TV has turned into a source of income for a small group of people, says advertisement offer poor-quality products and low-quality services

Aug. 8, 2002 -- Halk Maslahaty meets in Turkmenabad and decides to make Niyazov president for life, also makes a number of other decisions like renaming the days of the week, months of the year, January - Turkmenbashi, February - Baidag, March - Nowruz, April - Gurbansoltan, May - Makhtumkuli, June - Oguz, July - Gorkut, August - Alp-Arslan, September - Rukhnama, October - Garashsyzlik, November - Sanjar, December - Bitaraplyk, Monday is now Bash Gyun, Tuesday - Yash Gyun, Wednesday - Khosh Gyun, Thursday - Sogap Gyun, Friday - Anna Gyun, Saturday - Rukh Gyun, Sunday - Dynch Gyun

Aug. 9, 2002 -- Niyazov says he rejects life-long presidency

Aug. 11, 2002 -- Justice Ministry says up to 16,200 prisoners could be amnestied in honor of the start of the Muslim fasting period Oaza

Aug. 12, 2002 -- Niyazov says specialized units will be created in the military to take over civilian tasks

Aug. 14, 2002 -- Niyazov issues a decree defining childhood as lasting until 13, adolescence until 25, youth until 37, maturity until 49, from 49 to 62 is the age of the prophet, 62 to 73 is the age of inspiration, 73 to 85 the age of the aksakal, 85 to 97 is old age, and from 97 to 109 the age of Oguz Khan (an ancient ruler of the Turkic ancestors)

Aug. 21, 2002 -- HRW writes to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell complaining that Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were left off the list of "countries of particular concern" this year

Aug. 22, 2002 -- Ukrainian first deputy PM Oleg Dubin says Ukraine has settled its debts to Turkmenistan for gas

Aug. 22, 2002 -- Energy Ministry says supplies of electricity to Iran have started

Aug. 23-24, 2002 -- International Foundation for the Salvation of the Aral Sea meets in Dushanbe, representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan attend

Aug. 24, 2002 -- IT reports Halk Maslahaty adopts regulations requiring officials and state leaders have their ancestry checked and the ancestry of their close relatives to ensure they are qualified

Aug. 26, 2002 -- Niyazov says Turkmenistan ready to sign treaty of keeping Central Asia a nuclear-free zone

Aug. 26, 2002 -- The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's working group on the Caspian Sea Andrei Urnov says Russia favors enlarging national sectors in the sea to 15 miles from shore

Aug. 26, 2002 -- IT reports U.S. technical aid to Turkmenistan for 2002 comes to \$16.4 million

Aug. 27, 2002 -- U.S. Central Command chief Tommy Franks visits, promises help for Turkmenistan in fighting the drug trade

Aug. 27, 2002 -- Turkmenistan.Ru reports Niyazov signs law making the Halk Maslahaty responsible for naming candidates for the presidency

Aug. 28, 2002 -- Gundogar reports anti-Niyazov leaflets were distributed in Ashgabat, Mary, Bairam-Ali, Charjoi, Charshanga, Kerki, Khalache, Kaakhka, Nebitdag and several other cities and towns on August 26-27

Aug. 31, 2002 -- IT reports there are no more Russian schools in Turkmenistan

Sept. 2, 2002 -- IT reports the first day of school starts with the teachings of "Rukhnama" being the main subject, deputy PMs go to each of the 16 higher schools to open lessons on "Rukhnama"

Sept. 2, 2002 -- IT reports the largest underground parking lot in Turkmenistan will be opened next to the mosque being built in Niyazov's home village Kipchak

Sept. 3, 2002 -- Iranian Caspian envoy Mahdi Safari visits, Niyazov proposes establishing national and economic zones on the shores of the Caspian as a partial solution to the problem of dividing the sea

Sept. 6, 2002 -- Russian Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov proposes setting up an anti-drug force in Central Asia

Sept. 6, 2002 -- IT cites CIS Interstate Statistics Agency industrial growth figures for Jan.-July 2002, Kazakhstan - 8.9%, Tajikistan - 7.8%, Kyrgyzstan - drop of 17.1%, no figures for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

Sept. 11, 2002 -- Niyazov dismisses KNB chief Poran Berdiyev, makes him governor of Balkan province, new KNB chief is Batyr Busakov

Sept. 11, 2002 -- "Neitralni Turkmenistan" reports Nurmurad Atayev, the head of the state-owned animal husbandry association, is fired for illegally owning 2,000 sheep, 26 camels, a large amount of cash and 2 Japanese cars

Sept. 11, 2002 -- Niyazov orders the posthumous rehabilitation of 5 people illegally arrested, tortured and murdered by former KNB officers

Sept. 13, 2002 -- Keston news reports members of the Russian Orthodox church are prohibited from subscribing to the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, as well as any other Russian church publications

Sept. 26-27, 2002 -- OSCE fourth Central Asian Media Conference held in Tashkent

Oct. 3, 2002 -- National Institute of State Statistics reports population increased from 4.48 million in 1995 to 5.79 million, 46% urban, 54% rural, birth rate is 17.2 per 1,000

Oct. 6, 2002 -- German cardiologist Hans Meisner visits to give Niyazov check-up, says Niyazov is healthy

Oct. 7, 2002 -- CIS summit in Chisinau, Moldova

Oct. 7, 2002 -- Kazakhstan turns down Turkmen request to extradite dissident Gulgeldi Annaniyazov, sentenced in 1995 to 15 years in jail for helping organize a pro-democracy

rally in Turkmenistan, he was freed in 1999 under international pressure, Annaniyazov was trying to get to Russia from Kazakhstan

Oct. 7, 2002 -- Cotton harvest reported to be a little more than 300,000 tons, instead of planned 2 million, Niyazov blasts governors of Dashoguz and Balkan provinces

Oct. 8-9, 2002 -- Russian Duma delegation visits

Oct. 14, 2002 -- Economic Cooperation Organization summit in Istanbul, Afghan President Hamid Karzai attends and asks for aid, Uzbek speaker of parliament Erkin Khalilov attends, Turkmen deputy PM Rejep Saparov, Kazakh FM Kasymjomart Tokayev, Rakhmonov and Niyazov are there

Oct. 16, 2002 -- Niyazov decrees that henceforth, all hard currency transactions must have three signatures on them, those of the president, head of the banking department and chief of the state development fund

Oct. 22-23, 2002 -- UN Secretary General Kofi Annan visits

Oct. 26, 2002 -- Planned summit of Turkmen, Afghan and Pakistani leaders to sign deal on Trans-Afghan pipeline is postponed at the request of Pakistani leader

Oct. 30, 2002 -- Russian Federation Council ratifies agreement on friendship and cooperation with Turkmenistan

Nov. 1, 2002 -- OSCE rotating chief, Portuguese FM Antonio Martins da Cruz visits

Nov. 1, 2002 -- Former presidential press secretary and editor of Esger (Warrior) newspaper Kakamurat Balyyev suggests all Turkmen state institutions, the army, schools and universities, should study "Rukhnama"

Nov. 5, 2002 -- Niyazov criticizes officials for poor cotton harvest, says farm workers "had to deal with their problems without appropriate assistance or support," harvest was 474,000 tons instead of 2 million

Nov. 12, 2002 -- Ovezgeldy Atayev, previously head of the Supreme Court, elected speaker of parliament, previous speaker Tagandurdy Khalliyev retires

Nov. 14, 2002 -- Niyazov orders that Central Bank hold the foreign currency of all banks in the country

Nov. 15, 2002 -- IT reports Niyazov fires the governors of 4 provinces that did not meet cotton harvest target figures, deputy PM Rejep Saparov, who was in charge of agriculture, is also dismissed

Nov. 19, 2002 -- Ukrainian Finance Ministry says it expects its \$282 million debt to Turkmenistan will be restructured under an agreement due to be signed on November 22

Nov. 21, 2002 -- IT reports commission formed to move people from densely populated or undeveloped areas to new locations

Nov. 23, 2002 -- Niyazov signs decree on amnesty for some 8,000 prisoners to mark the Night of Omnipotence and Forgiveness

Nov. 25, 2002 -- Alleged assassination attempt on Niyazov in Ashgabat

Nov. 26, 2002 -- Police say they have already arrested 16 people in connection with the reported attempt on Niyazov's life

Nov. 26, 2002 -- Niyazov says the organizers of the attempt on his life were former deputy agricultural minister Sapar Yklymov, former FM Boris Shikhmuradov, Khudaiberdy Orazov and former ambassador to Turkey Nurmukhammet Khanamov, Niyazov says the organizers were helped by political activists in Russia who protect them

Nov. 26, 2002 -- Sapar Yklymov says from exile in Sweden that he had nothing to do with the reported assassination attempt on Niyazov, Khudaiberdy Orazov and Nurmukhammet Khanamov (and Yklymov) call RFE/RL to deny any part in the plot

Nov. 26, 2002 -- Russian rights group Memorial says more than 100 people rounded up by Turkmen police, many are reportedly members of Sapar Yklymov's family

Nov. 26, 2002 -- IT reports the presidential press service says citizens are sending in letters and telegrams of support for Niyazov and "indignation" at the attempt on his life

Nov. 27, 2002 -- Amnesty International releases statement calling on Niyazov not to take revenge in response to the reported attempt on his life

Nov. 27, 2002 -- IT reports some 1,500 people, representing more than 70 social organizations and unions assemble in Ashgabat to demand the death penalty for those who planned to kill Niyazov, rally called by the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan and the Revival movement

Nov. 27, 2002 -- First Secretary of the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan Onjik Musayev says among those arrested for trying to kill Niyazov there were no ethnic Turkmen

Dec. 1, 2002 -- Amnesty comes into effect on Night of Omnipotence and Forgiveness

Dec. 3, 2002 -- AFP reports U.S.-Russian citizen Leonid Komorovsky is among those arrested in connection with the alleged attempt on Niyazov's life

Dec. 4, 2002 -- AP reports Turkmen state television airs taped confession from businessman Guvanch Jumayev, U.S.-Russian citizen Leonid Komorovsky was staying with Jumayev when he was arrested, Jumayev says in confession he "fell into a web" and "execute me, I'm ready for that"

Dec. 4, 2002 -- Prosecutor general Gurbanbibi Atajanova says Chechen and Turks were involved in the attempt on Niyazov's life, she says there were 3 Chechens, 3 Turks and an Armenian

Dec. 4, 2002 -- U.S. State Department accuses Turkmenistan of breaking the law by arresting Leonid Komorovsky, says no immediate notification to the U.S. embassy in Ashgabat and no timely consular access allowed

Dec. 10, 2002 -- "Ashgabat" newspaper says from now on, all foreigners must stay in hotels

Dec. 12, 2002 -- OSCE criticizes Turkmen media's coverage of those accused of trying to assassinate Niyazov, media rights monitor Freimut Duve says "some of the programs remind me of the show trials on Soviet radio and in the newspapers during the 1930s"

Dec. 13, 2002 -- Prosecutor general's office accuses former parliamentary speaker Tagandurdy Khallyev of complicity in the alleged plot to kill Niyazov

Dec. 16, 2002 -- Niyazov tells cabinet meeting laws must be passed that "will exclude the possibility of such risky ventures, which could undermine the basis of national sovereignty and territorial integrity"

Dec. 16, 2002 -- KNB officers, 15 of them, search and videotape the Uzbek embassy in Ashgabat

Dec. 17, 2002 -- Uzbek Foreign Ministry protests search of Uzbek embassy in Ashgabat

Dec. 18, 2002 -- Turkmen prosecutor general's office accuses Uzbek embassy of sheltering former Turkmen FM Boris Shikmuradov

Dec. 18, 2002 -- State television again airs confessions of "mercenaries," one says he should be shot for his actions, U.S.-Russian citizen Leonid Komorovsky, identified on Turkmen TV as a Moldovan national with a U.S. passport, is shown begging forgiveness from Niyazov, prosecutor general Gurbanbibi Atajanova says 46 people have been arrested in connection with the alleged assassination attempt

Dec. 19, 2002 -- Uzbek FM Abdulaziz Kamilov denies Uzbek embassy in Ashgabat had any role in sheltering suspects

Dec. 19, 2002 -- U.S. delegate to the OSCE Douglas Davidson says U.S. concerned at reports torture is being used in Turkmenistan to extract confessions from suspects in the attempted assassination of Niyazov

Dec. 19, 2002 -- Deutsche Welle reports Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan strengthening their armed forces along the two countries' common border

Dec. 21, 2002 -- Turkmenistan declares Uzbek ambassador Abdurashid Kadyrov persona non grata

Dec. 22, 2002 -- Uzbek ambassador to Turkmenistan Abdurashid Kadyrov recalled to Uzbekistan

Dec. 22, 2002 -- FMs of countries bordering Afghanistan meet in Kabul to sign agreement on friendly relations with Afghanistan

Dec. 23, 2002 -- Environmental activist Farid Tukhbatullin detained in Dashoguz city, he is accused of illegally crossing the Uzbek border

Dec. 24, 2002 -- An ambassador from Azerbaijan is accredited in Turkmenistan for the first time ever, Ambassador Ilkhan Bakhadur ogly Guseinov presents his credentials to Niyazov

Dec. 25, 2002 -- IMF announces \$147 million in loans for supporting small businesses in Central Asian states

Dec. 26, 2002 -- Niyazov says former FM Boris Shikhmuradov arrested

Dec. 26, 2002 -- HRW expresses concern about the detainment of environmental activist Farid Tukhbatullin, HRW says he was detained for participating in a November Moscow conference

Dec. 27, 2002 -- Niyazov, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Pakistani PM Mir Zafarulla Khan Jamali sign Trans-Afghan pipeline deal in Ashgabat

Dec. 30, 2002 -- Turkmen newspapers publish demands of citizens that the death penalty be given to those who planned or participated in the attempt on Niyazov's life

Dec. 30, 2002 -- Former FM Boris Shikhmuradov's videotaped confession shown to the Halk Maslahaty, he says he intended to take over the government, "I really wanted to kill the Turkmen president and undermine the constitutional system"

Dec. 31, 2002 -- Former FM Boris Shikhmuradov tried and convicted, he is sentenced to 25 years imprisonment

Dec. 31, 2002 -- U.S. State Department calls for due process and consular access for people arrested after reported attempt on Niyazov's life



## 2003

Jan. 2-3, 2003 -- Russian security council secretary Vladimir Rushailo visits

Jan. 3, 2003 -- "Neitralny Turkmenistan" reports there will be elections to the Halk Maslahaty on April 6

Jan. 3, 2003 -- State press reports all participants in the failed assassination attempt on Niyazov are traitors to the fatherland and face life imprisonment

Jan. 4, 2003 -- Iranian FM Kamal Kharazzi visits

Jan. 7, 2003 -- Deutsche Welle reports all "unworthy residents" of the area along the Uzbek border will be moved to the area along the Kazakh border

Jan. 7, 2003 -- IFX reports Niyazov dismisses the deputy chairman of the presidential council for religious affairs, former chief mufti Nasrullah ibn Ibadullah, and replaces him with Kakageldy Vepayev

Jan. 7, 2003 -- Niyazov again says there should be presidential elections in 2008 or 2010

Jan. 8, 2003 -- Leader of Turkey's Justice and Development party Tayyip Recep Erdogan visits

Jan. 8, 2003 -- "Neitralny Turkmenistan" prints open letter criticizing U.S. State Department comments on concern over mass arrests in the wake of the reported assassination attempt on Niyazov, letter says U.S. concerns are "groundless," letter questions why in the U.S. "where they better than others know about terrorism after September 11, is criticizing Turkmenistan for its fight against terrorism," letter says the U.S. embassy has sympathy for Uzbekistan's role in the attack

Jan. 10, 2003 -- Punishment for illegally crossing state border strengthened, now law demands 5 to 10 years in jail for violators

Jan. 12, 2003 -- Niyazov says the 6 Turkish citizens arrested in connection with the attempt on his life will be extradited home

Jan. 13, 2003 -- Niyazov asks Russia to cancel the agreement on dual citizenship

Jan. 13, 2003 -- Niyazov says there 187 Turkmen pilgrims planning on making the Hajj will have a special flight arranged aboard a Boeing 757 plane

Jan. 14, 2003 -- AP reports Niyazov has requested that Russia extradite those former Turkmen officials living in Russia who were connected with the plot to kill him

Jan. 14, 2003 -- Russian Foreign Ministry asks for explanation about plans to cancel dual citizenship agreement, ministry spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says agreement still in effect

Jan. 14, 2003 -- Swedish-based opposition group Committee Plus 15 says Turkmen authorities have forced 27 members of the Yklymov family from their home

Jan. 15, 2003 -- IT reports trial process against 32 suspects, 16 of them foreigners, in the alleged plot to kill Niyazov starts, Guvanch Jumayev, Annadurdy Annasakhatov and Nurmukammed Orazgeldiyev all sentenced to life imprisonment

Jan. 15, 2003 -- IT reports Niyazov and Putin agree that 4 Russian citizens arrested in connection with the alleged plot on Niyazov will be extradited

Jan. 16, 2003 -- OSCE media representative Freimut Duve says Turkmen TV broadcasts attacking opposition figures were "racist" and "Stalinist" and an "abuse of television media...to humiliate and destroy individuals"

Jan. 16, 2003 -- Russian presidential advisor Sergei Yastrzhembsky says Russia will protect its citizens in Turkmenistan

Jan. 17, 2003 -- International Crisis Group releases report called "Cracks in the Marble: Turkmenistan's Failing Dictatorship"

Jan. 17, 2003 -- Russian parties Yabloko and Union of Far Right Forces accuse Turkmen leadership of "mass political persecution"

Jan. 18, 2003 -- Parliament names 2003 the "Year of the Turkmen Heroine Gurbansoltan Eje"

Jan. 20, 2003 -- IT reports another 10 suspects in the Niyazov assassination plot sentenced to prison terms of 20 to 25 years, one is former parliamentary speaker Tagandurdy Khallyyev

Jan. 20, 2003 -- RTR reports Turkmen opposition figure Sapar Yklymov on hunger strike in Sweden to draw attention to events in Turkmenistan

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Jan. 28-29, 2003 -- CIS informal summit in Kyiv, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Uzbek presidents do not attend, Tajik President Rakhmonov does show up, neither does Turkmen President Niyazov

Feb. 1, 2003 -- Decree on doubling wages and pensions of public servants comes into effect

Feb. 4, 2003 -- Niyazov signs Halk Maslahaty resolution defining "high treason"

Feb. 6, 2003 -- Niyazov, again, calls on media not to focus on him so much

Feb. 18, 2003 -- Niyazov and the head of French company Bouygues, Martine Bouygues, sign deal for company to build new museum and drama theater at a reported cost of \$85 million

Feb. 20, 2003 -- Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan suspend gas deliveries to Tajikistan, Tajik debt to the 2 countries is about \$22 million, Uzbekistan says it is using the warm weather to make needed repairs to the pipeline

Feb. 20, 2003 -- OSCE media representative Freimut Duve says organization "very worried" about human rights in Turkmenistan after the mass arrests in the wake of the reported assassination attempt on Niyazov

Feb. 21, 2003 -- Niyazov appoints General Ashyr Atayev to be Interior Minister, replacing Annaberdy Kakabayev, FM Rashid Meredov is appointed to be deputy PM as well as FM

Feb. 21, 2003 -- Niyazov announces new rules for entry and exit visas

Feb. 24, 2003 -- Niyazov says a modern medical diagnosis centers will be built in every region of Turkmenistan

Feb. 27, 2003 -- IT reports work in progress on Toragundai-Herat electricity line

Mar. 1, 2003 -- State service for foreigners' registration starts work

Mar. 3, 2003 -- OSCE rotating chairman Jaap de Hoop Scheffer visits

Mar. 3, 2003 -- OSCE draft report says torture, mass arrests and reprisals against suspects' families are widespread in Turkmenistan since reported assassination attempt on Niyazov, says the attack was a pretext for "large-scale violations of all the principles of due process of law" such as arbitrary detentions and show trials

Mar. 3, 2003 -- Amnesty International, HRW, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and the Memorial Human Rights Center release joint statement calling on

Turkmen authorities to release prisoner of conscience and co-chairman of the Ecological Club in Dashogus province Farid Tukhtbatullin and drop all charges against him (concealing a criminal act -- he allegedly knew in advance of the plot to kill Niyazov)

Mar 4, 2003 -- Farid Tukhtbatullin convicted at a trial that last a half-day and sentenced to 3 years in prison

Mar. 4, 2003 -- Deputy speaker of the Russian State Duma Vladimir Lukin says on Ekho Moskv that "We must clearly realize and see what's going on in Turkmenistan. This is one of the most hideous and notorious regimes in the modern world. What is happening there strikingly resembles the bloody and terrible purges staged by Stalin in 1937"

Mar. 5, 2003 -- Amnesty International, HRW, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and the Memorial Human Rights Center condemn conviction of Farid Tukhtbatullin

Mar. 5, 2003 -- U.S. State Department condemns the conviction of Farid Tukhtbatullin

Mar. 6, 2003 -- RFE/RL reports residents of Ashgabat receiving letters informing them of new laws on public gatherings, from now on residents of Ashgabat must register with city authorities any gathering of people, including weddings, funerals or any other celebrations and the names of all people attending the event must be out on a list and given to city authorities

Mar. 10-12, 2003 -- Niyazov visits Iran

Mar. 13, 2003 -- Anti-Niyazov protest organized by Yabloko held outside Turkmen embassy in Moscow

Mar. 14, 2003 -- Former Finnish President Marti Ahtisaari appointed OSCE envoy to Central Asian states

Mar. 14, 2003 -- Niyazov says Turkmenistan will build its own mint to print money

Mar. 19, 2003 -- State prosecutor's office increases punishment for state officials found guilty of corruption and embezzlement, prosecutor general Kurbanbibi Atajanova says 34 former officials have been expelled to remote settlements including former deputy PMs Khudaikuli Khallykov and Amnageldy Atayev, former Defense Minister Begenjov, former energy minister Saparmurat Nuryyev and his deputies Tore Akhunov and Rakhman Berkeliyev

Mar 21, 2003 -- OSCE says in a report that Niyazov is committing "mind-boggling" rights abuses and says it will ask the UN to condemn his rule

Mar. 25, 2003 -- AP reports Russian TV broadcasts resume in Turkmenistan

Mar. 31, 2003 -- Turkmenistan extradites back home the 6 Turkish citizens accused of involvement in the attempt on Niyazov's life

Apr. 1, 2003 -- U.S. State Department annual human rights report comes out, singles out Turkmenistan as having an "extremely poor" human rights record that got worse after the reported assassination attempt on Niyazov, says Kazakhstan's human rights situation worsened with clear pattern of media harassment emerging after allegations of high-level corruption reported, and prosecution of opposition leaders noted, Uzbekistan continues to violate rights of political opponents and torture is wide spread but notes authorities did convict 9 security officers for serious human rights abuses, says Kyrgyzstan continues to periodically refuse opposition publications the right to publish and fines opposition journalists for their reporting, says Tajikistan's citizens still do not have the right to change their government and security forces commit unlawful killings for which they are rarely held accountable

Apr. 1, 2003 -- Niyazov tells Defense Ministry from now on there will be no ranks of major and colonel, instead they will be Yuzbashi and Tumenbashi

Apr. 2, 2003 -- Niyazov signs amnesty for co-chairman of the Ecological Club in Dashogus province Farid Tukhtbatullin, sentenced to 3 years imprisonment for not informing authorities about the attempt to kill Niyazov

Apr. 4, 2003 -- UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva accuses Turkmenistan of failing to meet basic human rights standards

Apr. 6, 2003 -- Elections to the Halk Maslahaty held, electoral officials say 99.8% of the country's 2.4 million eligible voters took part

Apr. 10, 2003 -- Some 30 activists protest outside Turkmen embassy in Moscow

Apr. 10-11, 2003 -- Niyazov visits Moscow, signs 25-year gas deal, Putin says he agrees to terminate the dual citizenship agreement

Apr. 11-12, 2003 -- Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma visits

Apr. 15, 2003 -- IT reports resident number 6 million of Turkmenistan born, IT says government press service claims population rose by 1 million since February 1999 when citizen number 5 million was born

Apr. 16, 2003 -- UN Commission for Human Rights votes 23 to 14, with 16 abstentions, to support EU resolution accusing Turkmenistan of torture and other abuses following the reported attempt on Niyazov's life

Apr. 28, 2003 -- Niyazov decree extradites U.S. citizen Leonid Komorovsky, implicated in the plot to kill Niyazov, back to the U.S.

May 7, 2003 -- Niyazov signs decree doubling pensions and government grants

May 14, 2003 -- Representatives from Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan sign agreement on division of the northern part of the Caspian Sea

May 15, 2003 -- IFX reports Turkmen national airline Turkmen Hava Yollary cuts two of its daily flights from Ashgabat to Moscow because not enough people were flying that route

May 16, 2003 -- Government announces it is buying two Boeing 717-200 planes and spare parts

May 20, 2003 -- New Afghan ambassador Abdulkarim Khaddam presents his credentials to Niyazov

May 22, 2003 -- General Viktor Storonin of the Russian Defense Ministry says on "Ekho Moskv" that the Russian army will admit citizens from CIS countries on a contract basis

May 23, 2003 -- Head of the Russian State Duma's foreign affairs commission Dmitri Rogozin says Duma has received alarming reports that "Turkmenistan is suspected of delivering fuel (to the Taliban) just ahead of the anti-terrorism operation" in Afghanistan, that the Turkmen government supports terrorism and drug trafficking and violates human rights

May 26, 2003 -- Niyazov signs decree dismissing the chief of the Armed Forces general command Serdar Charyyarov who is now accused of playing a role in the attempt on Niyazov's life

May 28, 2003 -- OSCE envoy to Central Asian states Marti Ahtisaari visits

May 30, 2003 -- Foreign Ministry says it could take action over remarks by head of the Russian State Duma's foreign affairs commission Dmitri Rogozin

May 30, 2003 -- Informal CIS summit in St. Petersburg, Niyazov goes

June 4, 2003 -- Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says his government is "taking vigorous measures through diplomatic channels to ensure that the rights and interests of ethnic Russians residing in Turkmenistan should not be affected," says Russia considers the 1993 dual citizenship agreement to be still in effect

June 7, 2003 -- Turkmenistan proposes creating a joint inter-governmental commission with Russia to resolve the issue of abolishing the dual citizenship agreement

June 9, 2003 -- Head of Russian Foreign Ministry's consular service department Vladimir Kotenov says Turkmenistan's hasty and unilateral withdrawal is cause for concern in

Russia, Koetov says "the Russian side is outraged by Ashgabat's demand that one should obtain permission to leave the country and insists that this requirement be cancelled for Russians"

June 11, 2003 -- Economic Cooperation Organization FMs meet in Bishkek

June 17, 2003 -- Foreign Ministry criticizes Russian Duma deputy Dmitri Rogozin's remarks on Turkmen government's connection to terrorism and drug trafficking, says Rogozin is using "information from dubious sources" to "fabricate insinuations using dirty lies"

June 17, 2003 -- Niyazov orders special commission on the dual citizenship agreement with Russia to be created, names FM Rashid Meredov to head commission, Niyazov says "there have been overt attempts to discredit Turkmenistan's policy, made in a most unseemly manner incompatible with the norms of interstate etiquette"

June 17, 2003 -- IFX quotes Duma deputy Dmitri Rogozin as saying "once again we confirm our intention to complete the investigation of the humanitarian situation in Turkmenistan"

June 17, 2003 -- Niyazov says on television that constitutional amendments will be introduced

June 19, 2003 -- Duma international affairs committee puts Turkmenistan on list of countries that Russian citizens are recommended not to visit

June 19, 2003 -- Kazakh Senate ratifies border delimitation agreement with Turkmenistan

June 19, 2003 -- Niyazov says at session of government that he is dissatisfied with television constantly praising him, says the tendency to focus on him demonstrated the low professional level of telejournalists, calls on deputy PM Gurbansoltan Khandurdiyeva to organize competition on "Who Flatters Turkmenbashi Less," says winner will receive "the personal gratitude of the president"

June 20, 2003 -- Russian Duma condemns Turkmenistan for human rights violations, especially toward Russian citizens

June 20, 2003 -- Russian Federation Council chairman Sergei Mironov says "Turkmenistan has already declared its unilateral withdrawal from the dual citizenship agreement, which is a violation of the law" and "we should not forget that Turkmenistan is a sovereign state, but the fate of our compatriots cannot leave us indifferent"

June 20, 2003 -- Foreign Ministry says it could complain to UN over "propaganda" directed at country by Russian media

June 22, 2003 -- Turkmenistan says dual citizenship agreement with Russia has expired

June 24, 2003 -- Turkmen government says individuals with dual citizenship must have Turkmen passports if they are to leave Turkmenistan for Russia

June 25, 2003 -- Turkmen mass media publishes new law giving the State Service for Registration of Foreign Citizens the right to conduct operational investigations

June 27, 2003 -- Russian embassy says it is checking media reports that Turkmen authorities have started evicting people who have dual citizenship

June 30, 2003 -- IT reports 2 new Turkmen websites, one is "Turkmenistan: the Golden Age," and the other is state news agency "Turkmendovletkhabarlary"

July 2, 2003 -- New law prohibiting the keeping of "herds" in Ashgabat comes into effect, also restricts Ashgabat residents from having more than one dog or cat

July 5, 2003 -- Niyazov signs decree requiring that high school graduates work for two years before they can enroll in institutions of higher learning

July 9, 2003 -- Russian lawmaker Sergei Anatenko says during visit to Ashgabat that he has not seen anything that would confirm rumors that ethnic Russian were being kicked out of the country

July 15, 2003 -- Niyazov appoints Gurbansoltan Khandurdyeva to head the 3 TV channels in Turkmenistan because Niyazov says he is bothered by Turkmen television's "monotonous, endlessly repetitive and uninteresting monologues and absence of professionalism"

July 16, 2003 -- Armenia's security service says Turkmen ambassador Toyli Kurbanov has been missing for days, Turkmen government says he has been dismissed and that his diplomatic passport is no longer valid, RFE/RL says Kurbanov is seeking political asylum in the U.S.

July 17, 2003 -- Turkmen embassy in Yerevan says former ambassador Toyli Kurbanov has received asylum in the U.S.

July 17, 2003 -- Foreign Ministry denies Toyli Kurbanov has defected from his post

July 18, 2003 -- Agricultural Ministry says grain harvest is 2.5 million tons, the target figure and another record for Turkmenistan

July 21, 2003 -- IT reports Turkmenistan will buy 1,000 tractors from Belarus

July 24, 2003 -- Gazprom chief Aleksei Miller visits

July 29, 2003 -- IT reports special services uncover fake university diploma scam



July 30, 2003 -- IT reports new law on traffic fines is working in Turkmenistan, since May 1 the fine doubles every 12 hours it remains unpaid, after 3 days traffic police go and collect it personally

July 31, 2003 -- IT reports Niyazov has ordered a new Boeing 767-300 for himself at a cost of \$130 million

Aug. 1, 2003 -- IFX reports parliament has drafted new set of bills aimed at fighting terrorism and attempts to overthrow the government, bill would give Halk Maslahaty more rights

Aug. 5, 2003 -- Opposition leader Avdy Kuliev beaten in Moscow

Aug. 14-15, 2003 -- Halk Maslahaty holds session in Turkmenbashi City, Niyazov says presidential elections will be held in 2006 or 2007, says in 2005 each province will nominate a candidate for the presidency, measure passed that president must be between 40 and 70 years of age, promises to raise wages by 50% in 2005, says per capita income will increase by \$5,000 every five years, says prices for electricity to Afghanistan will be reduced by one-third, Halk Maslahaty declared county's highest legislative body

Aug. 16, 2003 -- Military exercises held outside Turkmenbashi City involving aircraft and artillery

Aug. 18, 2003 -- Halk Maslahaty awards Niyazov the "international" Makhtumkuli prize for his new books "Turkmen Ilim Aman Bolsun" (Blessed Be the Turkmen People) and "Five Epoch of the Spirituality of the Turkmen People"

Aug. 20, 2003 -- "Neitralny Turkmenistan" publishes new constitution with clause outlawing dual citizenship, another clause requires chairman of the Halk Maslahaty be over the age of 55 and must have lived in Turkmenistan for the past 10 years, must speak the national language, Halk Maslahaty becomes the fourth branch of power

Aug. 20, 2003 -- Turkmenistan Helsinki Fund created at meeting of opposition figures in Sofia, Bulgaria

Aug. 22, 2003 -- Turkmen state newspapers report Niyazov signs decree creating a state committee to fight terrorism

Aug. 25, 2003 -- New U.S. ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson presents credentials to Niyazov

Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2003 -- Fresh Water forum held in Dushanbe, representatives of Central Asian states attend

Sept. 14, 2003 -- RFE/RL correspondent Saparmurat Ovezberdiyev arrested and detained for 3 days

Sept. 16, 2003 -- Speaking on Ekho Moskvyy radio, OSCE media freedom chief Freimut Duve says Turkmenistan is the "most brutal" of all former Soviet republics and that President Niyazov is manipulating the media in the same way as the Nazis. He says Turkmen media are forced to carry racist remarks in "a clear language of facism" and transmit show trials of opposition politicians

Sept. 19, 2003 -- CIS summit in Yalta, Turkmen president does not attend, Nazarbayev and the presidents of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine sign agreement creating common economic space

Sept. 19, 2003 -- Four Central Asian political prisoners are given the Sakharov Prize for their efforts to bring democracy, freedom of the press, and the rule of law to their countries, they are Batyr Berdiyev of Turkmenistan, Muhammed Bekjanov of Uzbekistan, Feliks Kulov of Kyrgyzstan and Ghalymzhan Zhakiyanov of Kazakhstan

Sept. 28-29, 2003 -- Union of Democratic Forces of Turkmenistan formed at conference in Prague

Sept. 29, 2003 -- Defense Minister Rejepbai Arazov resigns, but Niyazov says Arazov, who previously headed the Oil and Gas Ministry, "faced many difficulties" and "only the military must head the Defense Ministry, border guard commander General Agageldy Mamedgedlyev appointed new Defense Minister

Oct. 3, 2003 -- OSCE media envoy Freimut Duve warns of a "return to feudalism" in Central Asia, says in some countries "an old feudalism making use of modern, electronic propaganda opportunities" is emerging, says in Turkmenistan, there was a "feudal dictatorship ruled through electronic media" and a "renaissance of Stalism" and "Hitlerite racism," and television was "misused to show tortured people making public confessions"

Oct. 6, 2003 -- Niyazov reported ill with cold and does not attend annual ceremony for victims of the 1948 earthquake

Oct. 6, 2003 -- Earthquake measuring 3.5 at its epicenter 90 kilometers northwest of Ashgabat hits

Oct. 15, 2003 -- Niyazov criticizes officials for poor cotton harvest, so far only 450,000 tons gathered instead of the 2 million tons called for, Niyazov dismisses Ereshkul Jumayev head of the state cotton company, and Kakageldy Kurbyshev governor of Balkan (? report says Batken) region

Oct. 17, 2003 -- Central Asian forum on ways to avert conflicts and ensure sustainable development held in Ashgabat, officials from the UN, OSCE, European Commission and World Bank attend

Oct. 17, 2003 -- IFX reports Russia archeologist Viktor Sarianidi finds ancient palace-cathedral complex dated to third millenium B.C. he belives is from the city of Gonur, the capital of the Margush country, in the Akhal province

Oct. 23, 2003 -- European Parliament adopts resolution criticizing the five Central Asian states for their poor human rights records and urges the governments there to improve the situation

Oct. 29, 2003 -- For the second time in two months, Turkmen state television reports Niyazov is in good health

Oct. 30, 2003 -- IT reports Niyazov will give an amnesty to 7,093 prisoners to mark Eid al-Fitr on November 21-22

Nov. 1, 2003 -- National currency, the manat, marks 10 year anniversary

Nov. 8, 2003 -- IFX reports construction of new Orthodox church starts in Dashoguz province, report says Turkmenistan currently has 13 Orthodox churches

Nov. 10, 2003 -- State newspapers publish artilce saying freedom of religion may be limited in the interests of national security

Nov. 14, 2003 -- Niyazov reshuffles cabinet, names Bergench Atamuradov to be new Agricultural Minister, also dimisses ministers of construction and industry, water resources and culture

Nov. 14, 2003 -- RFE/RL correspondent Saparmurat Ovezberdiyev forcibly taken by two men to cemetery in Ashgabat and beaten, then dumped alongside the road

Nov. 15, 2003 -- IFX cites prosecutor general Gurbanbibi Atajanova as saying former Water Resources Minister Gurbangeldy Volmuradov faces up to 8 years in jail for abuse of office, prosecutors says Volmuradov is a drug addict

Nov. 18, 2003 - Amnesty comes into effect, first of more than 7,000 prisoners eligible for amnesty start to be released

Nov. 25, 2003 -- UN General Assembly approves resolution calling on Turkmenistan to end what it calls "serious and continuing human rights violations"

Nov. 26, 2003 -- Niyazov says in CBS interview that Turkmenistan intends to introduce a multi-party system but adds that western democracy is not for Turkmenistan

Nov. 26, 2003 -- AP reports the U.S. has warned Central Asian states the staility in their countries may hinge on the credibility of their upcoming elections, AP says that message was taken "in recent days to the leadersof Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and

Kyrgyzstan by the State Department's top official for European and Eurasian affairs Beth Jones, and its chief human rights official, Lorne Craner"

Nov. 26, 2003 -- RFE/RL complains about RFE/RL correspondent Saparmurat Ovezberdiyev being beaten on November 14

Nov. 27, 2003 -- Russian State Duma reviews human rights situation in Turkmenistan

Nov. 28, 2003 -- Niyazov appoints Anageldy Gummanov new KNB chief replacing Batyr Busakov who becomes deputy head of state service for foreign nationals' registration

Dec. 7, 2003 -- IFX reports Russian citizens in Turkmenistan are afraid to cast ballots in State Duma elections, report says there are some 70,000 Russian citizens in Turkmenistan and only 1,800 had cast ballots by 14:00 local time

Dec. 8, 2003 -- IT reports Turkmenistan doubles electricity exports to Afghanistan

Dec. 9, 2003 -- Officials from Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan meet in Islamabad and sign protocol on construction of Trans-Afghan pipeline

Dec, 10, 2003 -- Prosecutor general Gurbanbibi Atajanova placed under house arrest for dealing drugs

Dec. 11, 2003 -- State newspapers publish statement from Foreign Ministry that accuses states hosting Turkmen opposition members of practicing double standards

Dec. 12, 2003 -- State information agency says supplies of electricity to Turkey via Iran start

Dec. 26, 2003 -- Black paint thrown on Turkmen embassy walls in Moscow by "vandals," Turkmen embassy sends letter of protest to Russian Foreign Ministry asking Russian officials to provide normal working conditions for the embassy

Dec. 26, 2003 -- Turkmenistan agrees not to turn U.S. citizens over to International Criminal Court

Dec. 29, 2003 -- Prosecutor general Gurbanbibi Atajanova appears on television at a cabinet meeting, calming rumors she was under arrest for dealing drugs

## 2004

Jan. 5, 2004 -- Russian first deputy FM Elenora Mitrofanova says rights of ethnic Russians in Turkmenistan is a problem that cannot be considered settled

Jan. 6, 2004 -- Reporters Without Borders releases report on journalism around the world, says abuses against press present in Turkmenistan

Jan. 8, 2004 -- Niyazov signs decree abolishing exit visa requirement

Jan. 8, 2003 -- Niyazov announces 15,000 positions in health care system will be cut, says medical care for most people will now require payment

Jan. 13, 2004 -- Niyazov says Turkmenistan spent \$200 million on military equipment in 2003, says in 2004 government will spend about \$80 million

Jan. 20, 2004 -- Memorial rights organization releases statement saying Turkmen authorities are insisting that people planning on leaving Turkmenistan to live in other countries permanently must repay money for the free gas, water and electricity they received while living in Turkmenistan

Jan. 23, 2004 -- Niyazov appoints Amangeldy Pudakov to be new Minister of Oil and Gas, his predecessor Tachberdy Tagiyev was released from his duties in October 2003 when he became the governor of Balkan region

Jan. 29, 2004 -- Russian Information Agency reports Turkmenistan will open a museum to "White Wheat" in village of Anau, near Ashgabat

Feb. 13, 2004 -- Niyazov announces there will be a new satellite TV channel launched to carry news of the country to the world, broadcasts will be in ?? English, Russian, Chinese ?? languages

Feb. 20, 2004 -- IT reports Turkmenistan will destroy some 60,000 land mines it has

Feb. 23, 2004 -- Writer and RFE/RL correspondent Rakhim Esenov, 78, detained and questioned for bringing copies of his historical novel "The Crowned Wanderer" into the country illegally

Feb. 24, 2004 -- Niyazov orders government to increase video surveillance of Turkmenistan

Feb. 24, 2004 -- Turkmen government says it will no longer recognize diplomas from foreign universities

Feb. 26, 2004 -- Writer and RFE/RL correspondent Rakhim Esenov arrested

Feb. 27, 2004 -- State television shows Niyazov denouncing young men who have beards or long hair

Mar. 1, 2004 -- RFE/RL correspondent Ashyrguly Bayryev arrested

Mar. 3, 2004 -- Head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Central Asia Roberto Arbitrio says in Tashkent that the number of heroin addicts in Central Asia is rising, accompanied by a rise in HIV infections due to shared needle use

Mar. 5, 2004 -- Parliament declares 2004 to be the "Year of Hero of Turkmenistan Atamurat Niyazov" Turkmenbashi's father

Mar. 9, 2004 -- Gundogar website reports that copies of Boris Shikhmuradov's book "I Myself and My Fellow Terrorists" has been ordered by Niyazov to be pulled from the shelves, Gundogar claims because there were a number of mistakes

Mar. 10-11, 2004 -- U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia Lynn Pascoe visits

Mar. 11, 2004 -- Writer and RFE/RL correspondent Rakhim Esenov released from custody

Mar. 11, 2004 -- Niyazov signs decree abolishing rule that religious groups must have at least 500 members to be officially registered

Mar. 12, 2004 -- RFE/RL correspondent Ashyrguly Bayryev released from detention

Mar. 14, 2004 -- IFX reports some 4,000 Russian citizens in Turkmenistan cast ballots in Russia's presidential election

Mar. 15, 2004 -- EU external relations commissioner Chris Patten says in Almaty that governments in Central Asia must implement democratic reforms and show respect for human rights, he says torture and violations of human rights "are precisely the conditions which breed and nurture the hate and grievance that underline terrorism"

Apr. 19, 2004 -- Niyazov says a \$450,000 fountain will be built where the Russian theater building once stood

Apr. 23, 2004 -- Niyazov fires Finance Minister Yazguly Kakaliyev for failure to control state funds, also fires the heads of the Turkmenistan and Garahsyzlyk banks

May 3, 2004 -- Reporters Without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists release joint statement criticizing Central Asian governments, complains about Turkmen government's treatment of RFE/RL correspondents, says of Uzbekistan "Censorship was officially abolished in 2002, but the media was still being censored in 2003 and no criticism of President Islam Karimov and his policies was allowed," criticizes Kazakh

government for its harassment of prominent opposition journalists, in particular Sergei Duvanov, says Kyrgyzstan damaged its reputation by approving constitutional amendments in early 2003 that impose "further curbs on press freedom," says the Tajik government "continued their extensive harassment of independent newspapers and refused to issue operating licenses to privately-owned TV and radio stations."

May 4, 2004 – Turkmenistan.ru and IT report ceremony on the Turkmen-Afghan border marking start up of a power plant supplying both countries, report says Turkmenistan supplying electricity to Heart

May 6, 2004 – Dutch council Vitali von Riessen quotes Niyazov as saying he was "ready to let international organizations into our prisons, von Riessen says offer does not include access to those convicted of trying to assassinate the president

May 6, 2004 – IT cites Turkmen Oil and gas Industry and Mineral Resources Ministry as reporting 17.6 billion cubic meters of gas exported in first 4 months of year

May 7, 2004 – Some 2,500 members of the youth organization Makhtumkuli meet in Ashgabat and agree to send request to the Mejlis to name the fifth era of the development of the Turkmen people, the era of independence, the era of Turkmenistan, the group also agrees that the maximum age of members in the "youth organization" is 37, vote to elect Jennet Pirmamedova chairman of the central committee of the organization, Niyazov addresses group, says member of youth union could win the presidential election in 2008

May 7, 2004 – Reporters Without Borders asks Russian prosecutor general to look into the beating of RFE/RL correspondent Muhammet Berdiyev in Moscow

May 13, 2004 – National Institute of Statistics releases report claiming population of country is 6.386 million, an increase of nearly 90,000 since start of year, says 53.2% of population live in rural areas, 46.8% in urban, Mary province has highest rate of rural dwellers (72.3%), Balkan province highest urban population (78.8%), population of Ashgabat is 841,800

May 14, 2004 – AP reports Niyazov signs decree banning child labor in the cotton industry

May 14, 2004 – Turkmen Foreign Ministry releases statement on Pushkin Theater saying it is located in a run-down area of Ashgabat, says theater top be given a better place where the facilities have already been renovated

May 21, 2004 – Ashgabat mayor says portraits of Niyazov are coming down on orders of Niyazov

May 26, 2004 – Turkmen civil defense service says it has no information about British claims that and RAF C-130 collided with another plane over Turkmenistan

May 26, 2004 – “Voenno-Promyshlennii Kur'er” (page 3) reports Niyazov replaces Annanur Atjanov as chief of the state border guards, puts Orazberdy Soltanov in his place

May 26, 2004 – Factory for producing potable water opens in Turkmenabat (Charjoi)

May 27, 2004 – Niyazov says grain harvest for 2004 will be 2.8 million tons

May 30, 2004 – Carpet Day (traditionally last Sunday in May)

May 31, 2004 – Turkmen Foreign Ministry says all border issues with Uzbekistan resolved

May 31, 2004 – New law comes into effect imposing a fine equivalent to one month's salary (\$50) for people caught smoking inside public buildings

June 1, 2004 – Niyazov decree comes into effect invalidating all higher education degrees received outside the country since 1993 and dismissing all those who have such degrees from their state jobs

June 2, 2004 – Niyazov tells meeting of aksakals in Rukhabad district that lines from Rukhname will be etched into the walls of the new mosque in Kipchak alongside verses from the Koran

June 3, 2004 – It reports Niyazov visits Balkan province, says Uzbeks living on land being returned to Turkmenistan (see May 31) must choose in which country they want citizenship

June 4, 2004 -- Aidogdy Mukhanov, 46, from Uzbekistan's western Karakalpakistan region, reportedly beaten to death after illegally crossing into Turkmenistan

June 9, 2004 – Turkmen Foreign Ministry complains Russian media is presenting a bad image of Turkmenistan, especially in reports about Russian diplomats in Turkmenistan

June 14, 2004 – Caucasus Press reports Georgia owes more money to Turkmenistan than to any other country, Georgia's main creditors are: Turkmenistan - \$314,700,000; USA - \$241,100,000; Russia - \$156,800,000; Austria - \$77,200,000; Turkey - \$76,000,000; Kazakhstan - \$12,800,000; Armenia - \$19,500,000; Azerbaijan - \$16,100,000; Germany - \$16,400,000; Iran - \$12,800,000; Japan - \$15,900,000; Kuwait - \$5,100,000

June 22, 2004 – Niyazov tells members of government not to praise him so much, says "You praise me too much. I am upset when all the achievements of the epoch of independent Turkmenistan are linked only to my name. In reality they are the merits of the whole Turkmen people"



June 22, 2004 – State Institute for Statistics says population of Turkmenistan has increased from 4.5 million at the 1995 census, to 6.4 million as of 2004, a 43% increase in 9 years

June 24, 2004 – “Vremya Novostei” (pg. 1,3) reports on plague outbreak in Turkmenistan, along the Turkmen-Uzbek border, says first noticed by Western specialists working in gas fields, says Deutsche Welle reported on June 23 that 7 people in Mary had died from the disease

July 1, 2004 – Uzbek Foreign Ministry summons Turkmen ambassador to ask for an explanation about the death of an Uzbek citizen, reportedly shot dead by Turkmen border guards

July 5, 2004 – Foreign Ministry denies outbreak of plague, same day Uzbek Health Ministry expresses concerns about reported cases of plague in Turkmenistan

July 5, 2004 – IT and IFX report that Health Care Ministry orders medical facilities not to give certificates of good health to students who just graduated high school and are planning to attend college abroad, all high school graduates required to do 2 years state service before going on to university, “Nezavisimaya Gazeta” (pg. 5) carries same report on July 7

July 7, 2004 – Michael Wilson, an advisor to the European Union’s TACIS program, says EU will award Turkmenistan about 35 million euros later in the year to fund increasing safety in the country’s expanding oil and gas sector and supporting reform of the education, environment and financial sectors

July 8, 2004 – Leaflets distributed at Ashgabat bazaars calling for an end to Niyazov’s regime

July 12, 2004 – IT reports Turkmenistan has shut off Mayak radio station

July 12, 2004 – State television reports second volume of Rukhname twill be out in September

July 13, 2004 – IT reports that Turkmen army’s 22<sup>nd</sup> motor-rifle division renamed the Hero of Turkmenistan Atamurat Niyazov division

July 13, 2004 – Prosecutor general Kurbanbibi Atajanova says more than 9.230 million dollars in money embezzled by government officials has been returned to state coffers

July 13, 2004 – AP reports Niyazov orders construction of an ice palace near Ashgabat

July 17, 2004 – IT reports Turkmen government giving \$200,000 for renovation of Russian drama theater

July 21, 2004 – EBRD releases statement saying "the Bank has been seriously concerned for a number of years by Turkmenistan's lack of progress in transition towards multi-party democracy, pluralistic society and a market-based economy," statement recommends critical reforms such as "registering independent political parties, strengthening the legislature and the judiciary, and conducting free elections," as "the country's only presidential election took place in 1992 and had one candidate - Saparmurat Niyazov," calls on government to "lift censorship of the media and improve its human rights record"

July 21, 2004 – IT reports new book published "The Childhood and Youth of the Great Leader"

July 23, 2004 – Liberal Democratic Party of Russia organizes rally outside Turkmen Embassy in Moscow to protest Turkmenistan's policy on Russian-speaking people

July 27, 2004 – "Vremya Novostei" reports Turkmen government does not renew mandate of OSCE office

Aug. 5, 2004 – International Helsinki Federation sends letter to President Niyazov protesting the jailing of Uzbek citizen Khonsaid Sagatovich Safarov for complicity in the alleged assassination attempt in November 2002, Safarov was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment

Aug. 6, 2004 – President's press office says Niyazov will attend the May 9, 2005 celebration of Victory Day in Moscow

Aug. 11, 2004 – Turkmen TV reports deputy PM Dortkuli Aydogiyev is docked 3 months wages for imposing additional taxes on enterprises without authorization

Aug. 12, 2004 – Turkmen media reports Niyazov has finished the second tome of Rukhname

Aug. 12, 2004 – Major-General Geldymukhammed Ashirkulov appointed Interior Minister, replacing Ashir Atayev who was relieved, officially, for health reasons, however, later reports indicated Niyazov said at Atayev's dismissal "I cannot say that you had any great merits or did much to combat crime. Of course you did something: You kept quiet on the sidelines, as if you knew nothing, You were city police chief during the terror-act and how did you behave during the period when for two months they were in the city carrying out subversive acts to overthrow the state and assassinate people, a period when some 50-60 armed and masked men were here and there in the streets and at the crossroads in three or four areas? Such a city police chief is not worth a kopek" Niyazov also sets up the Ministry of Culture and Television and Radio Broadcasting combining the former culture and information ministry and the Main Television Department of Turkmenistan, Maral Byashimova, 31, will head the new ministry, she was given a probation period of six months, former Culture and Information Minister

Gozel Nuraliyeva, who was also the editor-in-chief of the only Russian-language newspaper in Turkmenistan, was dismissed from all posts for health reasons

Aug. 17, 2004 – Contest for children and teenagers announced for cultural works on “The Golden Age of Turkmenistan,” prizes of \$3,000 to be awarded in October for the best set of poems; the best stories, short stories and novels; the best presentations on radio or TV programs; the best theater performances and movies; the best presentation of humor numbers; the best songs; the best singing; the best musical performance; and the best paintings and sculptures.

Aug. 18, 2004 – Various news agencies report an ice-skating rink will be built outside Ashgabat by French company Bouygues

Aug. 19, 2004 – Amnesty announced for some 9,000 prisoners, will take place on night of November 9-10 to coincide with end of Ramadan

Aug. 30, 2004 – Niyazov names December 19 as date of parliamentary elections

Sept. 1, 2004 – IT and IFX report Niyazov will not attend the September // CIS summit in Astana due to a scheduled medical check-up

Sept. 3, 2004 – Iranian FM Kamal Kharazzi visits

Sept. 12, 2004 – Second volume of Rukhname released

Sept. 14, 2004 – ECO holds summit in Dushanbe, Niyazov does not attend, Rejep Saparov attends in his place, Karimov also does not attend, chairman of the Oliy Majlis Erkin Khalilov goes in his place

Sept. 14, 2004 – Niyazov gets medical check-up, first patient at new diagnostic center in Ashgabat

Sept. 16, 2004 – CIS summit (38<sup>th</sup>) held in Astana

Sept. 16, 2004 – Niyazov prohibits use of child labor in cotton harvest, also warns of problem with illegal weapons smuggling along Turkmen-Uzbek border

Sept. 17, 2004 – Asia Plus reports new NATO representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia is Robert Simmons

Sept. 22, 2004 – Niyazov appears on state TV to read his new poetry

Sept. 23, 2004 -- OSCE representative for freedom of media Miklos Harasti tells 6<sup>th</sup> Central Asian conference on mass media in Dushanbe that an important condition for development of civil society is the right of all mass media to get information regardless of their political orientation

Sept. 27, 2004 – Expressing dissatisfaction with the pace of the cotton harvest, Niyazov orders three-months wages withheld from deputy PM in charge of agriculture Begench Atamuradov, the khakim of 4 of the country's 5 provinces, the Minister of Agriculture and heads of Turkmenelkhoztekhnik" and "Turkmenkhleboprodukty"

Sept. 27, 2004 – Niyazov criticizes regional leaders for poor cotton harvest, reports show only 371,000 tons, or 16.88%, have been gathered

Sept. 28, 2004 -- Turkmen Defense Minister Agageldy Mamedgeldyyev and his Uzbek counterpart Kadyr Gulyamov meet in Turkmenbat and agree to cooperate on security issues

Oct. 2, 2004 -- Central Commission on Elections and Referendums in Turkmenistan confirms December 19 as date for parliamentary elections

Oct. 2, 2004 – OSCE chairman's personal representative Marti Ahtisaari visits, says Turkmenistan will not invite observers to monitor parliamentary elections in December, IT quotes him as saying OSCE representatives "should not be insistent in this situation, since the period of transforming society needs time and patience, especially when a national state is being established. What is need in this case is flexibility"

Oct. 6, 2004 – Turkmenistan marks 56th anniversary of earthquake that killed 176,000 people in Ashgabat

Oct. 7, 2004 – Niyazov signs deal to buy two more Boeing 717-200 airplanes for \$58 million

Oct. 7, 2004 – State Statistics and Information Institute reports 534,989 tons of cotton gathered, 24.32% of 2.2 million ton target

Oct. 7, 2004 – New airport at Balkanbat opens

Oct. 7, 2004 – John Deere-Case representatives visit Ashgabat, sign deal to supply \$77 million in agricultural machinery to Turkmenistan

Oct. 22, 2004 – Central Asia's largest mosque officially opens in President Niyazov's hometown of Gipchak

Oct. 23-25, 2004 – Halk Maslahaty holds session, on last day Niyazov "requests" to be allowed to retire and says presidential elections should be held in 2008 or 2009, the suggestion is immediately and aggressively rejected by the Halk Maslahaty

Oct. 30, 2004 – Turkmen television shows Niyazov holding session of cabinet of ministers in Akhal province capital Anau, blames provincial administration for cotton harvest of 123,000 tons instead of 400,000, fires Akhal governor Enebai Atayeva,

"Shame on you! What do you need more? There is such good a land in Akhal, and you have gathered only 600-700 kilograms of cotton per hectare," Niyazov blamed the poor governor (pediatrician by profession) for "drawbacks in the management of land and water resources," then fires the four heads of cotton producing associations and province's deputy governor, telling them "Get out of here - you are all fired without other jobs!"

Oct. 31, 2004 – Uzbek citizen Jamil Rajabov, 39, shot by Turkmen border guards after crossing 4-5 meters inside Turkmenistan

Nov. 1, 2004 – Uzbek citizen Atakhon Jumaniyevov shot by Turkmen border guards while trying to bring gas back by motorcycle from Turkmenistan, Ovoz Ozod reports Turkmen border guards tried to take the motorcycle, an argument broke out and the border guards shot Jumaniyevov

Nov. 1, 2004 – New laws on water, land and tax come into force

Nov. 3, 2004 – Niyazov signs law removing criminal penalties for violating laws on public organizations and signs country's first-ever drug law

Nov. 4, 2004 – IT reports Italian translation of Rukhnama published, coming soon Rukhnama in Croatian and Zulu

Nov. 4, 2004 – In Bishkek, World Bank vice president for Europe and Central Asia Shigeo Katsu urges Central Asian nations to cooperate more closely and encourage regional trade, says "In order to actually move toward regional cooperation, it is going to be very important that the countries don't think in terms of winner and loser"

Nov. 5, 2004 –ICG releases report on dangers of succession in Turkmenistan, report says "Any succession is likely to provoke tension, with a high possibility that it could descend into chaos and possibly political violence -- this is particularly the case if there is external influence, as seems almost inevitable," and "Compromise is made less likely by the level of rivalry among top players and the likelihood that the opposition-in-exile, potentially with foreign backing, would seek to intervene -- rivals are unlikely to settle for second best"

Nov. 5, 2004 – Central Election Commission chief Murat Karriyev announces nominations for candidates in the parliamentary election start, 50 districts, 1,610 polling stations

Nov. 6, 2004 -- Ministry of Oil and Gas Industry and Mineral Resources reports country extracted more than eight million tons of oil and 47 billion cubic meters of gas in the first ten months of 2004

Nov. 9, 2004 – Niyazov urges government officials to ensure parliamentary elections represent a “step toward the creation of a democratic state, says there should be 4-5 candidates running for every seat

Nov. 9, 2004 – Amnesty for Night of Omnipotence releases some 9,000 prisoners

Nov. 11, 2004 – IT reports Rukhnama in Hindi language printed

Nov. 15, 2004 – CIS executive secretary Vladimir Rushailo visits, repeats that Turkmenistan does not plan to invite observers to parliamentary elections

Nov. 19, 2004 – Turkmen and Uzbek presidents meet in Bukhara, sign an agreement “On Eternal Friendship,” agree to a simplified arrangement for people in border areas to cross to visit relatives

Nov. 21, 2004 – Last day to forward candidates for seats in parliament, CEC says there are 139 candidates

Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 2004 -- OSCE envoy and Vice President of the Bulgarian parliament Younal Said Loutfi visits, says OSCE ready to send monitors to Turkmen parliamentary elections, only need to receive invitation from Turkmen government

Dec. 1, 2004 – IT reports Niyazov visits Dashoguz province and personally sacks governor Ishankuli Gulmuradov for taking \$400,000 in bribes in one year and stealing 75% of the province’s cotton

Dec. 9, 2004 – Niyazov names Interior Minister General Geldymukhammed Ashirmukhammedov to be National Security Minister, replacing Annageldy Gummanov who is appointed first deputy Foreign Minister, new Interior Minister is Akmamed Rakhmanov

Dec. 10, 2004 – CEC says only monitors of elections will come from the President’s Institute for Democracy and Human Rights

Dec. 10, 2004 – Niyazov goes to home village of Gipchak for reburial of his parents

Dec. 15, 2004 -- Kazakh Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev says Caspian summit put off again due to widely different approaches to the sea’s legal status

Dec. 19, 2004 – Parliamentary elections held, 131 candidates (23 of them women) run for 50 seats, CEC chairman Murad Karryev says 76.88% of the country’s 2,491,000 voters cast ballots

Dec. 20, 2004 – CEC releases statement saying elections to Mejlis "occurred on a wholly democratic basis with equal opportunities for all candidates (and) in accordance

with the country's legislation and international norms," CEC says run-offs needed to fill 7 seats where no candidate received the required 50 percent plus of votes

Dec. 20, 2004 –Freedom House releases statement on press freedom around the world, rates Turkmenistan among the 8 most repressive countries along with countries such as North Korea, Burma, Cuba, Libya and Saudi Arabia

Dec. 27, 2004 – Foreign Ministry says gas supplies to Russia, Ukraine will be cut due to dispute over prices

## **2005**

Jan. 1, 2005 – Turkmenistan cuts off gas supplies to Russia and Ukraine

Jan. 3, 2005 – Turkmenistan and Ukraine sign deal for gas supplies, Ukraine agrees to pay \$58 dollars per 1,000 cubic meters of gas, Niyazov tells news conference demand to raise prices for gas was due to falling value of U.S. dollar

Jan. 7, 2005 – President Niyazov demotes two deputy prime ministers -- Begench Atamyradov and Rejepdurdy Atayev – for shortcomings in their work

Jan. 9, 2005 – Second round of parliamentary elections held to fill seven seats from districts where no candidate received more than 50% of votes, a reported 72.24% of eligible voters in the seven districts took part

Jan. 12, 2005 – RIA Novosti reports that of the 50 deputies elected to parliament in the first and second rounds, eight are women and 17 members of the last parliament