

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

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

#### UFOs in Turkmenabat

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

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

#### Peace on Earth

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

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