

# GERMANY AND TURKMENISTAN: SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS

## GERMAN BUSINESSES AND THE RUHNAMA

Germany is one of Turkmenistan's preferred partners. In 2007, bilateral trade between Germany and Turkmenistan was worth EUR 16123 million. The following German companies are active in Turkmenistan: Siemens, Bentech, Deutsche Bank, DaimlerChrysler, Technip-Mannesmann, MAN Ferrostaal, Zeppelin (as a dealer for Caterpillar USA), Heidelberger Druckmaschinen, Wintershall, Lufthansa, Wirtgen International and Hospitalia.

Until Saparmurat Niyazov's death in December 2006, a seemingly sure way to enter the lucrative but highly exclusive marketplace in Turkmenistan was to translate his pseudo-religious propaganda text, the Ruhnama. German companies have been among those to take advantage of this opportunity, and both of the book's volumes have been translated into German.

### DAIMLERCHRYSLER - TRANSLATORS OF RUHNAMA VOL. 1

DaimlerChrysler, the automobile giant based in Stuttgart, Germany, and Auburn Hills, Mich., sells ambulances and other vehicles to the Turkmen government. The firm published the first volume of Niyazov's propaganda book, the Ruhnama (translated into German), in November 2003. "I can tell you that employees of DaimlerChrysler translated the book," said Ursula Mertzig-Stein, a company official. "A contract was signed and the book was presented to the leader".

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A45332-2005Feb22.html>

[http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page\\_id=3&lang\\_id=en&elem\\_id=4317&type=event&highlight\\_words=daimler&sort=date\\_desc](http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=en&elem_id=4317&type=event&highlight_words=daimler&sort=date_desc)

### ZEPPELIN BAUMASCHINEN GmbH - TRANSLATORS OF RUHNAMA VOL. 2

Zeppelin Baummaschinen, a German machinery company, translated the second volume of the Ruhnama book and presented it to Niyazov in February 2005. "We sponsored it for inter-cultural understanding," Arantxa Doerrie, a spokeswoman for the company said. "In principle, yes, it is a dictatorship, but simultaneously we see that very much is being done to help the people there - for the infrastructure with the building of streets, for example. That is what we understand. We sell building equipment, so yes, there is a market for us there, but we see our contribution as a way to help the people there." Zeppelin Baummaschinen GmbH company is an official dealer of Caterpillar equipment in Turkmenistan. Niyazov and Caterpillar chairman Glen Barton signed an agreement on long-term cooperation on supply and servicing of road-construction and other techniques in Turkmenistan. In March 2007, Turkmenistan extended the cooperation agreement with Caterpillar until 2020. The machinery will continue to be distributed by Zeppelin Baummaschinen.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A45332-2005Feb22.html>

[http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page\\_id=3&lang\\_id=en&elem\\_id=9594&type=event&highlight\\_words=zeppelin&sort=date\\_desc](http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=en&elem_id=9594&type=event&highlight_words=zeppelin&sort=date_desc)

### SIEMENS & NOKIA SIEMENS NETWORKS, NIYAZOV'S WIRETAPPING MINIONS

With both volumes of the Ruhnama already having been translated into German, the Siemens leadership requested a signed copy of the book from Niyazov and sent a letter of praise to the late president upon receipt. Siemens' open support of the Ruhnama seems to have helped the company to make lucrative business deals in the country. Since entering the Turkmen market, Siemens has been involved in building power plants, clinics, and a summer residence for President Niyazov. It also participated in the development of automation techniques for the country's oil and gas industry, and helped modernise Turkmenistan's television broadcasting system. When Niyazov was diagnosed with a heart problem in 2003, Siemens provided him with medical assistance.

The Turkmenistan Ministry of Communication was an important client of Siemens, who supplied the country extensively with telecommunications technology in Niyazov's time. According to an article published in Der Spiegel newspaper on November 2003, Siemens provided a major wiretapping system for Turkmenistan's secret police, enabling them to arrest dissidents and opposition members.

In spring 2007, the Finnish company Nokia joined forces with Siemens in the network sector. *Shadow of the Holy Book's* director Arto Halonen and his co-screenwriter Kevin Frazier informed Nokia and the future leadership of Nokia Siemens Networks about Siemens' activities in Turkmenistan. Nokia, however, did not want to comment on the subject or discuss it further. In early 2008, the Turkmenistan Ministry of Communication signed a US \$ 9,2 million contract with Nokia Siemens Networks for procurement of equipment for the national cellular communication network.

On June 9, current Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov received executive advisor to the CEO of Siemens AG Rudi Lamprecht along with Goetz & Partner CEO Stephan Goetz and staff member Hans Gerd Prodel. The guests offered to develop a master plan of cooperation for the next 10-15 or more years.

The largest Finnish national newspaper, Helsingin Sanomat reported in February 2008 that Nokia's dealings with the Turkmen dictatorship can be seen as a violation of its own guidelines for corporate social responsibility.

<http://turkmenistan.neweurasia.net/2005/11/07/how-to-influence-people-and-make-friends/>

[http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page\\_id=3&lang\\_id=en&elem\\_id=6429&type=event&highlight\\_words=Siemens&sort=date\\_desc](http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=en&elem_id=6429&type=event&highlight_words=Siemens&sort=date_desc)

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Nokia%20doing%20business%20with%20Turkmenistan%20dictatorship/1135234386924>

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## DEUTSCHE BANK - NIYAZOV'S BANKERS

In April 2006, a Global Witness report found that Niyazov had deposited, alongside other funds, all income from Turkmen gas deliveries to Ukraine over a five-year period into a private Deutsche Bank account. The revenues amounted to \$1.68 billion for 2002 alone, and according to Turkmenistan's former Central Bank director Khudaiberdy Orazov (in Der Spiegel's April 2006 article), \$1.8 billion had already been posted to the Turkmen government's main account with Deutsche Bank by 2003.

Through a web of deception, the dictator was able to conceal this income from the official records of the state treasury for some years. President Niyazov apparently saw these funds as his own "personal spending money" and these resources were used to bolster his expensive cult of personality on Turkmen soil. His dealings with Deutsche Bank even extended to loans worth three quarters of a million dollars.

Upon Niyazov's death in December 2006, there was concern over the eventual destination of this money and even a year later it remained unclear where this money is and who controlled it, with some experts saying that Turkmenistan's new leadership had no interest in pursuing the issue.

In October 2008, Deutsche Bank coordinated a Turkmen-German business forum, and said it would mobilize its wide international and business contacts with the purpose of developing cooperation with Turkmenistan.

[http://www.globalwitness.org/media\\_library\\_get.php/296/its\\_a\\_gas\\_april\\_2006\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.globalwitness.org/media_library_get.php/296/its_a_gas_april_2006_lowres.pdf)

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,412923,00.html>

<http://www.rferl.org/content/Article/1079155.html>

<http://www.innercitypress.org/dbbt.html>

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND BERDYMUHAMMEDOV'S VISIT TO GERMANY

In February 2008, the Human Rights Watch organisation addressed a letter to German Minister of Economics and Technology Michael Glos on the eve of his visit to Turkmenistan. This letter touched on subjects such as the lack of human rights reform in the country; concerns over political prisoners, freedom of expression and freedom of movement; and the European Union's position on cooperation with Turkmenistan. It also stated that Turkmenistan has "one of the worst repressive and authoritarian governments in the world." Glos' visit was as part of a business delegation which included Germany's high-rank officials, members of Bundestag, foreign ministry representatives as well as a number of big German companies.

In November 2008, Berdymuhammedov made an official visit to Germany, during which he held meetings with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Horst Koehler, Minister of Economics and Technologies Michael Glos and Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier, as well as representatives of German businesses.

<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/02/20/letter-german-economic-minister-glos-turkmenistan>

[http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page\\_id=3&lang\\_id=en&elem\\_id=13961&type=event&highlight\\_words=german&sort=date\\_desc](http://www.turkmenistan.ru/?page_id=3&lang_id=en&elem_id=13961&type=event&highlight_words=german&sort=date_desc)

## GERHARD SCHRÖDER & GAZPROM, EXPORTER OF TURKMEN GAS

On December 9th, 2005, former German chancellor Gerhard Schröder took the position of board chairman for Nord Stream AG, a Russian-German gas pipeline that he championed while in office, a post that deepened his already close relationship with the Russian government and President Vladimir Putin. Schröder's move received wide criticism in the media, and his ability to distinguish between private and public affairs was questioned.

The Russian gas giant Gazprom is a major shareholder in this project and is currently the main buyer of Turkmen gas, accounting for well over half of the country's total production. Gazprom and Russia were responsible for perhaps the biggest attempt to flatter Niyazov when in 2005, the text's first volume was launched into orbit from the Russian Baikonur launch site in Kazakhstan. Celebrations of the Ruhnama were also held in St. Petersburg (Niyazov's university town) and Moscow.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/09/AR2005120901755.html>

<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav060608.shtml>

## VISA DENIALS OF TURKMEN CITIZENS

Farid Tuhbatullin, one of the key characters in *Shadow of the Holy Book*, is a Turkmen human rights activist currently living in exile in Vienna, Austria. His close relatives have been denied visa rights (for holiday visitation purposes only) by both the German and Austrian embassies without explanation. Farid speculates that the two governments are hesitant to cause any controversy for fear of damaging highly profitable business relations with the Turkmenistan regime. According to the agreement between the countries of the European Union, it is the German consulate which is responsible for issuing European visas for Turkmenistani citizens. Other enemies of the Turkmen state have received similar treatment, as can be seen in the following document:

[http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/2007/07/25563\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/2007/07/25563_en.pdf)

<http://www.chrono-tm.org/> (Farid Tuhbatullin's website offering exclusive data on the human rights situation in Turkmenistan)

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