

## *Pakistan and Turkmenistan: Past and Present*

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Amongst the five Central Asian States (Kazakhstan, Kirghistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan), the Republic of Turkmenistan is one of the first countries to declare independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on 27 October 1991 under the inspiring leadership of President Saparmurat Niyazov Turkmenbashi.<sup>1</sup> It is under his guidance that the country is flourishing as a modern democratic state with its professed aim to revive its tradition, civilization and historical culture. It is a state with about 5 million population and an area of 488,100 km. In the east the Republic is connected with Uzbekistan and Caspian Sea, in the northwest with the Russian federation, to the north Kazakhstan, to the south Iran and Afghanistan. The country is rich in its natural resources especially minerals, petroleum and natural gas.<sup>2</sup>

With a degree in power engineering, President Saparmurat is a man of ideas who is determined to revive old historic importance of the Turkmen people. It is provided in the Constitution of the country that rights and liberty of the individuals, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, shall be promoted. President's motto is "Ten years of hard work to (achieve) 10 years of prosperity" has been adopted as the motto of progress. The State is thus open to

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1. Address of Saparmurat Turkmenbashi to the People of Turkmenistan, Embassy of Turkmenistan Library (Islamabad: 27 October 1995), 14.
2. *Ibid.*, 8-20. Also see Tahir Mansoor Farooqi, *Turkmenistan*, (Urdu) (Lahore: N.p. 1999).

