

the deals were not to be read as an anti-U.S. gesture, though he acknowledged U.S. attempts to spoil relations—attempts he said were doomed to fail. On the same occasion, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel defended his country's policy, saying, "To those who criticize Turkey for purchasing Iranian gas, we can only respond that Turkey is an independent country. We are determined to develop our cooperation with Iran further."

Inside Turkey, the critics have been loud. First, Erbakan was attacked for the itinerary of his first foreign tour, which was considered too "Islamicist"; now, following the D-8 meeting, some press have accused him of delusions of grandeur, dreams of re-establishing Turkish hegemony in the region. Countering these attacks, both he and Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller have ridiculed the charge that the D-8 is an "Islamic" formation, any more than the European Union is exclusively Christian.

The hysteria which has broken out in response to these developments, is not only a reaction to closer Iranian-Turkish ties or to a new Islamic grouping, but is part of the continuing attempt to sabotage the Eurasian land-bridge economy, of which these developments are an integral part. All the nations in the D-8 lie along the Eurasian land-bridge routes (even Nigeria would be linked to the land-bridge, once the transportation grid is extended into Africa, via Egypt). During Rafsanjani's visit to Turkey, he and Demirel "also made agreements on introductory measures for the reconstruction of the Silk Road," according to *Iran Report*. There is no doubt that the Turkish and Iranian foreign policy is consciously part of the grand design for revival of the Silk Road, which the Beijing government has been implementing for the last decade.

Russian foreign policy is increasingly orienting toward this reality, as the economic and political center of the future world. The latest indication is a statement on Jan. 6, by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin, to the effect that Moscow will look more to Asia in 1997. As LaRouche explained in "EIR Talks," the Russians have been supporting Iran for some time, because they realize that "there is no such thing as development of Eurasia, without Iran," because the most convenient route from China, Central Asia, to the Indian and Pacific oceans, to the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and to Europe, passes through Iran. Russia has gone ahead with plans to help build the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran, which is to be completed in three years, despite pressures from the West not to.

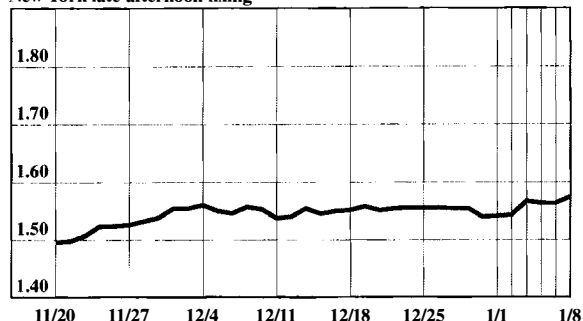
For its part, Iran is intervening to prevent the Afghan war from destabilizing the entire region, which threatens Russia. In fact, it was in the context of the D-8 meeting in Istanbul, that the Iranians and Turks met with the Pakistanis, to seek a solution to the crisis.

In June, there is to be a summit meeting, during which the D-8 is to become a reality. It can be expected, that many more steps will be taken in the interim, to establish that reality on the ground.

Currency Rates

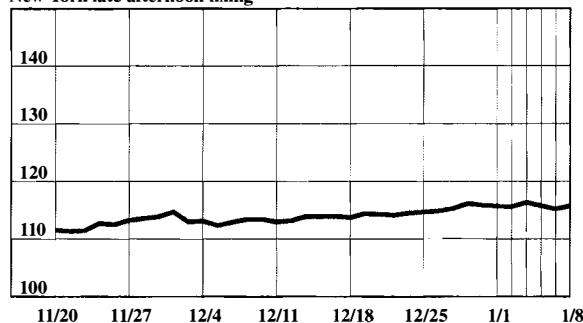
The dollar in deutschmarks

New York late afternoon fixing



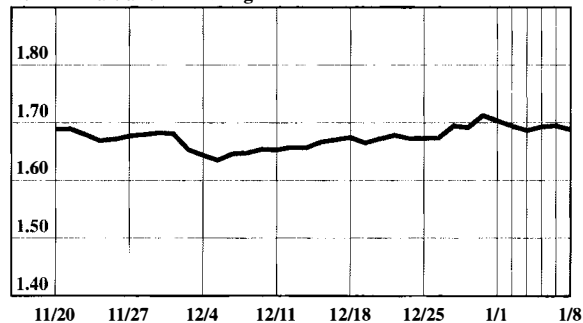
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing

