

## British destabilize Turkey to sabotage land-bridge

by Konstantin George

The year 1997 will be the most decisive year in modern Turkish history since the 1923 founding of the Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The reason lies in the coming to power last June of a coalition led by the Refah (Welfare) Party, with Refah leader Necmettin Erbakan as prime minister. Erbakan, an "Islamist" (a semi-misleading label which merits closer scrutiny), staged a revolution in Turkish foreign policy on Aug. 10-11, 1996, in a visit to Iran, which established a Turkish-Iranian axis of economic development, as part of a broad Eurasian development policy drive. That visit culminated in a mammoth deal, whereby Iran will become Turkey's main supplier of natural gas, and a potential supplier of oil. Linked to last year's resumption of Iraqi oil exports to Turkey, Erbakan has created the energy basis for Turkey to become economically independent of London-centered oligarchical forces. Concerning the term "Islamist," Erbakan's emphasis on working closely with Iran, constitutes the continuation of a centerpiece of Turkish foreign policy in the 1920s and 1930s under Ataturk, the founder of the "secular" Turkish state.

Since August, and indeed earlier, British and allied interests have mobilized their assets within the Turkish political class to prevent expansion of the Turkey-Iran-centered Eurasian development strategy launched under Erbakan. The British-orchestrated destabilizations have been occurring along two parallel thematic tracks: 1) the creation of a strategic deflection, to shift Turkey away from its development course, by engaging it in a military adventure, using the vehicle of a new Cyprus crisis, and 2) orchestrating the parliamentary toppling of Erbakan, to replace him with a coalition of all main parties, excluding Refah.

Erbakan's vulnerability lies in the fact that his government is a coalition of parties. He was forced to take on as Refah's junior partner, the Dev Yol (True Path) Party (DYP), led by Tansu Ciller, a close friend of former British Prime

Minister Margaret Thatcher, who is both deputy prime minister and foreign minister. Ciller and her DYP cohorts are the leading British assets in Turkey.

### London plans another Cyprus crisis

The Cyprus crisis was launched last May (when the London establishment knew Erbakan would become prime minister), when a senior foreign policy figure of the British Privy Council, Sir David Hannay, was pulled out of retirement and appointed to the newly created post of British Special Emissary for Cyprus. The move was timed with a European Union policy establishing a 1998 "deadline" for settling the Cyprus partition, to have the Republic of Cyprus join the EU. With no proposed settlement plan that would meet the common interests of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, each of whom in their own way have suffered immensely under partition, the arbitrary deadline did exactly what it was really intended to do: raise tensions and create the psychological frame of mind on both sides in which a new conflict could be created.

The opening shot of that planned conflict was not long in coming. In August, while Erbakan was on a tour of Iran and Muslim nations in Asia, the "shop" back in Ankara was left in the hands of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ciller. Ciller took personal command of a Turkish Intelligence slush fund, and financed the deployment of up to 3,000 extremist "Grey Wolves" to Turkish Northern Cyprus. It was these Grey Wolves who staged the killing of Greek Cypriot protesters in the island's demilitarized strip, and thus began the crisis. Ciller threatened a new Turkish invasion. Erbakan was silent, and, notably, after he returned to Turkey, the violence on the island ended, and everything cooled down.

Then, in January, a new round in the crisis began with the Russian sale of modern S-300 surface-to-air missiles to the Republic of Cyprus. In military terms, this defensive weapons system does not constitute a threat to the Turkish position on

the island, given the 3-1 superiority of the Turkish Army over the Cypriot National Guard on the island. Politically, the Greek Cypriot side, knowing the sensibilities of the Turkish military, committed a provocative blunder. Ciller, joined by the Turkish military leadership, under General Staff head General Karadayi, threatened military action, even a new invasion, should the missiles be deployed. Again, Erbakan, the "Islamist" cast as a "fanatic," had the least heated reaction of the Turkish leadership. Then came the news that the missiles would arrive, if ever, in 16 months, and with that, the crisis cooled down.

The timing of the January tumult was not coincidental. On Jan. 4-5, Erbakan had hosted a meeting in Istanbul, of the foreign ministers of Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Egypt (represented by its deputy foreign minister), to create a new grouping, the "Developing 8." Erbakan presented the D-8 as a vehicle to "put an end to the Western industrial nations' domination over the developing sector." Membership in the new group, which, as Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati stressed, represents 800 million people, would be open and the D-8 would expand multilateral cooperation in various fields, as well as through political consultation. The Swiss bankers' newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* commented at the time, that the D-8, as interlocutor of the Group of Seven industrial nations, would "represent the rights of the developing countries in Asia and Africa, which are identical to the Islamic world. In the name of these developing countries, the D-8 should even co-determine the birth of a new world order." While the Swiss paper pinpointed the potential, that the D-8 might revive the Non-Aligned Movement, Erbakan's critics inside Turkey ridiculed him for having "delusions of grandeur," of setting up an "Islamic club," and so forth.

### **The plot to topple Erbakan**

Erbakan, to become prime minister, also agreed to a rotation system, whereby Ciller should become prime minister in 1998. As Erbakan knows, were that to happen, the grand Eurasian development design which he is working toward, would be overturned. It is an open secret in Turkey that Erbakan, out of necessity, is maneuvering to arrange the fall of his coalition government on his terms, i.e., followed by new elections. It also means launching this move at the point where the DYP will be at its weakest, and Refah at its strongest. Since autumn, Ciller and the DYP have been continually discredited through scandals alleging connections of Ciller, her husband, Ozer Ciller, and many top DYP figures, to organized crime, the heroin trade, and corruption.

To date, Erbakan has mobilized to "protect" Ciller in every parliamentary vote on whether to investigate her. The effect of this is the exact opposite of what it appears: By keeping her on a "hook," she and the DYP become weaker each month, as new scandals emerge. When the plug is pulled, in new elections, the DYP would collapse into peripheral party status, while Refah would be the leading party and likely

to pull 30% or more of the national vote. Under Turkish electoral law, especially under conditions of relatively small votes for other parties, Refah, with as little as 33-35% of the vote, could end up with an absolute majority in the parliament.

During January, Erbakan made three moves toward expanding his potential 1997 voter base, and to defuse British-induced attempts to drive what could become a wedge between him and the Turkish Armed Forces. These were: granting a 30% pay raise to all Turkish civil servants; granting a 100% pay increase to all soldiers and officers; and visibly joining with the military leadership to denounce the international "human rights" lobby for its attacks on Turkey. Then, along came the "Sincan" incident.

### **The Sincan provocation**

On Jan. 31, a crowd of Refah supporters was addressed on "Jerusalem Day," in the town of Sincan, on the edge of Ankara, the capital, by Iranian Ambassador Reza Bagheri. The event was sponsored by Sincan's Refah mayor, Bekir Yildiz, a notorious figure in the radical Islamic wing of Refah, and, as subsequent events showed, was designed to damage Erbakan. Allegedly, both the Iranian ambassador and the mayor made subversive statements, demanding that Turkey be turned into an "Islamic state," under "Islamic law." The Turkish media reported the event thusly, creating a uproar in the military and the non-Islamic parties, with the heated denials by the Iranian ambassador lost in the shuffle. These denials were buttressed by the government of Iran, which refused to allow the incident to poison relations. Messages of congratulations on the anniversary of the Iranian revolution were sent by Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, and greetings at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan were exchanged.

The Sincan incident was timed with British appointments that showed that London is committed to both destabilizing Turkey internally, and to a Cyprus conflict. On Jan. 29, Sir Kieran Prendergast, Britain's ambassador to Turkey, former head of the Foreign Office's Greek desk, and a Cyprus expert, was named UN undersecretary general for political affairs. One day later, Prof. Norman Stone of Oxford, a close friend of Margaret Thatcher and a trustee of the Thatcher Foundation, announced he was going to Ankara in March to become Professor of International Relations at Bilkent University, and to set up an "Institute for Russian-Turkish Studies" there.

Through Sincan, and the mountains of coverage spun around it, the damage had been done, despite a pointed intervention by Erbakan. On Feb. 2, the end of Ramadan (in Turkish, Ramazan), he declared on television: "Adoption of the secular state was a turning point in the rise of the Turkish Republic, enabling the reconstitution of religious freedom in our country with a pluralist political democracy." Nonetheless, coup rumors began sweeping Turkey. On Feb. 2, General Staff head General Karadayi declared the Army was the "guarantor of the constitution" and would ensure the "separation of religion and state." On Feb. 4, units of a Turkish armored division drove tanks through the main street of Sincan,

in a distinct warning to Refah. There is no real threat of a military coup now, but the coup scare was integral to setting up a concerted move by an alliance of opposition political forces, including the Democratic Left Party (DSP) of former Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit; the ANAP, or Motherland Party of former Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz; and powerful forces within the DYP, all to topple Erdogan.

On Feb. 5, both Ecevit and ANAP announced they would present a motion of no confidence in the parliament, which they did, and the showdown vote is scheduled for the last week of February. Ecevit thundered, "With this meeting [Sin-can], the secular democratic republic has been clearly challenged, and the rehearsal to carry the dark and oppressive Iranian revolution to Turkey has been put on stage." The third main opposition party, the Democratic Republican People's Party (CHP), joined Ecevit and ANAP in backing a no-confidence vote. Senior CHP official and MP Guldal Okutucu declared: "Soon, they [Refah] will be forcing everyone to wear the *chador*. And those who don't will have their faces slashed with razors. Turkey will become like Iran, if these people have their way."

All these parties taken together could not topple Erdogan. However, during Feb. 10-17, a series of meetings started among the most influential DYP figures, except for Ciller. In the words of the meeting's sponsor, Necmettin Cevheri, the most influential DYP politician after Ciller, they are to discuss "building a grand coalition" of all parties (DYP, ANAP, CHP, DSP) to the exclusion of Refah. He added, that the agreement, in order to function, would exclude both Ciller and ANAP leader Mesut Yilmaz from cabinet posts, due to mutual animosities. Ciller denounced the proposed grand coalition, because if she's frozen out, she and her husband will end up on trial.

However, the plot to topple Erdogan could succeed. The first cabinet minister, Health Minister Yildirim Aktuna, has threatened to resign, and denounced Erdogan and Refah, saying: "Those who agree with me in the DYP are plentiful." Meanwhile, the intensity of the accusations against Refah are rising. On Feb. 12, Ecevit accused Refah of "rehearsing a bloody accession to power," alleging that since 1990, some 100,000 handguns, rifles, and shotguns had been "distributed illegally to Refah members." He was echoed by Yilmaz, who repeated the charges, saying, "Something has to be done, urgently." These accusations are also designed to convince the military that Refah, should it fall from power, would put Turkey through a repetition of the civil war-like bloodbath of the late 1970s that preceded the 1980 military coup.

The accusations also show, that should Erdogan survive the vote, and even maneuver the situation into new elections, he will not be out of danger. The war between real Turkish national interests and those working, wittingly or unwittingly, for foreign interests, will not stop. London will do everything possible to prevent the grand design breakthrough from becoming irreversible.

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## Interview: Seyed Hossein Mussavian

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# Regional cooperation will bring prosperity

*His Excellency, Mr. Seyed Hossein Mussavian, is Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Germany. Mr. Mussavian, who has held the post in Bonn since 1990, granted this interview to EIR on Feb. 13.*

**EIR:** Your Excellency, great progress is being made in Iran on various infrastructure projects, especially transportation, which are linked to the Silk Road project for Eurasia. We have just read that the Kerman-Zahedan rail stretch [toward Pakistan] will be completed by the year 2000, and that Iran will be hosting the second international conference on the Silk Road next year. There has been a flurry of activity in Teheran, with visits of government representatives from many Central Asian Republics, as well as Armenia, Pakistan, and Russia, to discuss both the economic aspects and political initiatives to establish peace in the region. What is your evaluation of the progress being made?

**Mussavian:** In the name of Allah. Regional cooperation is the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Through this policy, not only will the people of the region come closer to each other, but it also brings prosperity to the countries which for years were ignored [and deprived] of basic infrastructure projects, like transportation.

**EIR:** In November, the Indian paper *The Hindu* published an article, by a member of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis there, stressing the need for India to become actively engaged in the southern route of the Silk Road, which would go through Pakistan into Iran. Can you tell us something about cooperation with India on this—and on the pipeline?

**Mussavian:** We do have good relations with India. If we succeed in interconnecting the regional cooperation, particularly in the economic fields, then it will be a good promotion of peace and security in the whole region. The talks on the gas pipeline to India via Pakistan are going on, and, I hope, in time, it will be implemented because the will is there [on all sides].

**EIR:** The Pakistani elections have brought a new government to power, which may entail a shift in policy toward Afghanistan. There have been many contacts between Iran and Pakistan, and a visit of President Rafsanjani has been announced to Islamabad. It has been reported, that the Chinese