

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.

Interview: Seyed Hossein Mussavian

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

have indicated to Islamabad, their concern about Afghanistan. How do you evaluate the possibilities for Iran and Pakistan, to intervene jointly, to end the Afghan war?

Mussavian: Both Iran and Pakistan know the strategic importance of bilateral relations. The Islamic Republic has always indicated that the regional problems and crises should be solved by regional cooperation. The officials of both governments of Iran and Pakistan are in contact, in hopes of bringing stability in Afghanistan with the participation of all concerned groups.

EIR: Despite the pressure being exerted by U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N. Y.), and others of his faction, to contain Iran through sanctions, the Europeans seem to be proceeding with their "critical dialogue" approach. There was a glowing report by Chairman of the German-Arab Society Moellemann, following his recent visit, and there seems to have been a breakthrough in relations with Italy. Can you tell us more about what the Italian government has agreed upon, during the visit of the Iranian delegation last month? And, how are relations with Germany?

Mussavian: In fact, it is more in the interest of Europe to have a "constructive dialogue" with Iran. Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is quite different from the Iran of the Shah's time. Unfortunately, some U.S. politicians' way of thinking is out of date. Either they don't have good knowledge of the present situation in Iran, or they—I have to say—are serving their personal or foreign interests against the will of the U.S. people's interests.

Today, Iran has a great role in the Islamic world. Iran is a regional power. Iran is very active in bringing peace and security to the whole region, which includes the vast area of Central Asia. We have ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] cooperation in the region. You might be surprised to hear that some East European countries have requested membership in the ECO. In the near future, we can well establish a kind of cooperation between the ECO and the European Union. Fortunately, these facts are known to the Europeans. On the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs, we can and are ready to improve our relations with European countries, particularly the EU.

Mr. Moellemann's visit to Iran was a normal visit. On the other hand—I am sure you have the economic statistics—our relations with other EU countries are improving steadily. One might say that our relations with Germany are not as they should be. We are not using all the positive available potentials in bilateral, regional, and international fields.

EIR: Every time progress is made in the "critical dialogue," scandals, allegations, and diplomatic incidents occur, as if deliberately, to sabotage peaceful relations. I am thinking of the Mykonos trial in Berlin, which insinuated responsibility of members of the Iranian government, the recent stories spread about an Iranian citizen, Sarkhohi, who claims he was

forced to admit being a German spy, and so forth. What do you think about these stories?

Mussavian: Mr. Sarkhohi is an Iranian national. He was trying to leave the country illegally and he is accused of spying. But the attention paid to it in the Western mass media is surprising, which might create some doubt [raise some questions]. One has to remember that the judicial system in the Islamic Republic of Iran is independent. About the Mykonos trial: We have always asked the German authorities for the court to proceed and end without outside influences. Sarkhohi's case has nothing to do with Mykonos. The "critical dialogue" is a two-way street. Naturally, it has its ups and downs.

EIR: Relations with Turkey, which have developed very positively under Prime Minister Erbakan, are also being targeted, it appears. How do you evaluate the recent incident in Sincan, where the Iranian ambassador was criticized for statements he allegedly made?

Mussavian: Relations between Iran and Turkey, as two important as well as powerful Islamic neighbors, are very good. Our ambassador was supposed to return to Teheran six months ago. The Sincan speech, definitely, will not affect relations.

EIR: On the initiative of Turkey's Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, the D-8 meeting took place in Istanbul, with government officials from Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Egypt. Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati spoke about the initiative as the first step toward a broader grouping in the non-aligned world. There has been some mention of a D-8 development bank, as well. Can you tell us more about this?

Mussavian: As you mentioned, it is the beginning. There are lots of areas in which the Islamic countries' cooperation, both members of the non-aligned as well as regional groups, could be worked out.

EIR: How do you view the possibility of reestablishing mutually beneficial relations with Iraq?

Mussavian: Recent acceptance of the UN resolution by Iraq is a positive sign. This is our belief, that we could overcome the regional problems only by regional cooperation. Iraq has to show some good will. Recently, we have had a process of exchange of POWs. Security arrangements in the Persian Gulf region can be successful only when all the countries in the region are involved. We are still in the process of "confidence building."

EIR: How do you see the perspectives for improved relations with the second Clinton administration?

Mussavian: I don't see any change or development. But the release of Iranian assets by the United States could be a gesture of good will in this regard.