

British Imperial Policy Set To Ignite ‘Unstoppable’ Kurdish War

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

The bloody Kurdish terrorist incursions into Turkey, protected by the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the regional Kurdish government, and the subsequent massing of 100,000 Turkish troops on the border with Iraq, could lead to an “unstoppable” war, Lyndon LaRouche commented Oct. 29. The threat to create the “Kurdistan” of the post-World War I Sykes-Picot era is “a war issue,” LaRouche said. It’s British entirely this time; the French are not involved. But Cheney is.”

“Breaking up these countries, like the partitioning of Iraq, and creating of Kurdistan out of pieces of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, etc. is the British imperial policy, and it should be denounced as such,” LaRouche said.

Turkey’s role as a long-term U.S. ally and staunch NATO member is now on the line. Washington is seen as the sponsor of the Kurdish terrorists who have been killing Turkish soldiers, from their safe haven in U.S.-occupied northern Iraq. Although Turkey’s Incirlik military base has functioned as a vital launching pad for U.S. operations into Afghanistan and Iraq, now this crucial regional ally has turned into a leading critic of the Cheney/Bush botched Iraq policy, and also a potential “breakaway ally,” who will challenge the United States in the region, in pursuit of aims it rightly defines as in its own vital national self-interest.

Public opinion polls report that the popularity of the United States among the Turks is about as low as that of the U.S. Congress among American voters.

‘Kurdistan’

The name of the game is “Kurdistan.” The terrorist Kurdish Workers Party, known as the PKK, has initiated a new wave of attacks against Turkish targets, killing dozens of soldiers in southeastern Turkey and abducting others. The Kurdish insurgents intend to establish an independent “Kurdistan” in a region overlapping Turkey, Iran, and Syria—an aim of the British imperial policy going back to World War I.

The PKK conflict with Turkey has now vividly awakened the worst memories of the tragic 23-year-long struggle and its 30,000 dead. No one in Turkey wants that deadly process to be restarted. This time around, however, the conflict is not only Turkey vs. a domestic insurgent force, but a potential new conflict in Southwest Asia as a whole. The PKK is operating not out of Turkey, but out of northern Iraq, in what is

known as the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). And this region, which enjoys relative autonomy, is under the control of the United States, as the occupying power.

Thus, since the PKK renewed its terrorist attacks against Turkish military targets, *from inside Iraq*, the Turkish government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and the military establishment, have demanded that the United States intervene to disarm the PKK, apprehend its leading figures, and extradite them to Turkey.

On Oct. 17, after the PKK killing of Turkish troops, the Turkish parliament voted to approve a government plan to organize cross-border incursions into northern Iraq, in hot pursuit of the terrorists. That vote was facilitated by passage of a resolution in the U.S. House Foreign Relations Committee on Oct. 10, which acknowledged the 1915 massacres of Armenians in Turkey as “genocide.” Turkey saw the committee vote as an affront, demonstrating an “irresponsible attitude” which could jeopardize U.S.-Turkish relations, and it responded by recalling its ambassador from Washington. Furthermore, it was mooted that Turkey could close the vital Incirlik base to U.S. operations.

After another 17 Turkish soldiers were killed by PKK terrorists on Oct. 21, the Turkish cabinet went into emergency session. Prime Minister Erdogan, under tremendous domestic pressure to move against the threat, told the London *Times* the next day, that his country would move to smash the PKK in northern Iraq. “The target of this operation,” he explained, “is definitely not Iraq’s territorial integrity or its political unity. The target of this operation is the terror organization based in the north of Iraq” which “must be driven out ... its training camps ... dismantled, and its leaders ... handed over.”

Erdogan minced no words regarding the U.S. responsibility. “In northern Iraq,” he said, “we feel that both the terrorist organization and the [Kurdish regional] administration there are sheltering behind America.”

The decision by the Turkish parliament to approve cross-border incursions into northern Iraq, sounded an alarm bell in Washington. The well-grounded fear among government officials was that, if Turkey were to make good on its threats of incursions into northern Iraq, it would provoke a reaction by the Kurds inside Iraq. Then Kurds in Iran and Syria could join forces with the Kurds in Iraq, and strive to establish their in-

dependent state, Kurdistan. This would be the realization of a nightmare vision hatched by the 1916 British-French Sykes-Picot Treaty, which carved up the Ottoman Empire among the imperial powers after World War I. The British idea was that the ethnic Kurdish population, dispersed among the regions to become newly defined states of Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, could come together in an entity, whose emergence would challenge the very existence of those states.

Sykes-Picot was the result of a rotten deal between imperial France and Britain; today the threat of a Kurdish entity in the region comes from imperial-thinking factions in Britain and the United States. It is now an open secret, which the Bush crowd thought it had been able to keep under wraps, that the Cheney/Bush Administration has been a long-term sponsor of the PKK, and worshipped as such by the terrorist group itself. On Oct. 30, the *International Herald Tribune* reported the fact that supplies for the PKK are allowed to pass through a government checkpoint in Raniya. Former American Ambassador to Turkey Mark Parris was quoted saying: "That couldn't have happened without their permitting them to be there. That's their turf. It's as simple as that."

The *Herald Tribune* went on to report how Fayik Muhamed Ahmad Golpi, the leader of the PKK-linked Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party (KDSP), which operates freely in Raniya and Sulaimaniya, is an outspoken fan of George W. Bush.

Turkey has long accused the United States of supporting the PKK and allied Kurdish separatists, on the obvious grounds that the terrorist group has lived and flourished under American occupation in Iraq. On July 20, then-Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul reported on Turkish television, that PKK terrorists had been arrested in possession of weapons manufactured in the United States. Gul said, "U.S. officials told us those were the weapons they handed over to the Iraqi army ... 1,260 weapons captured from the PKK, are American made. We documented it to the United States." U.S. Defense Department officials confirmed that weapons provided by the United States to Iraqi military and police trainees in 2004 and 2005 had ended up in the hands of the Kurds, according to the *New York Times*.

On Oct. 28, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki joined with his Turkish counterpart, Ali Babcan, in a press conference, to denounce the foreign sponsors of the Kurdish groups threatening to detonate an explosion in the region. Mottaki cited the PKK, the PJAK (or PEJAK), and the MEK/MKO (Mujahideen e-Khalq), an Iranian terrorist group operating also from Iraqi soil against the Islamic Republic.

Ankara: U.S., Iraq Must Rein In PKK

The Turks have rightly demanded that the United States, as the occupying power in northern Iraq, take action to curb

the PKK, and have asked the allegedly sovereign Iraqi government to do the same. They have also stated that the KRG, led by Massoud Barzani, has protected the PKK. Barzani has repeatedly refused to hand over PKK elements to Turkey, "no matter what the cost." Orders to the KRG to close all PKK offices have been ignored.

However, as it became evident in late October, that the Turks would carry through on their threats to send some of the 100,000 troops they had amassed on the border into northern Iraq, to seek out and kill PKK terrorists, the Iraqi Kurdish authorities changed their tune. One reason is that Turkey had also made good on its threat to impose economic sanctions on northern Iraq. Flights between Istanbul and Irbil were stopped beginning November. Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari announced at the same time, that checkpoints were being set up on the Turkish-Iraqi border to cut off the PKK supply lines.

For this reason, the PKK began to cry "uncle." Falah Mustafa Bakir, the head of foreign relations for the KRG, said Nov. 2, that he hoped Turkey would "reconsider its position and work for a peaceful solution." He claimed that the KRG did not support PKK terrorist activity. On Nov. 2, it was reported that a PKK leader, Abdul Rahman al-Chadirchi, was calling on Turkey to present a peace plan to overcome the crisis. This came after Turkish troops succeeded in hunting down and killing dozens of PKK elements in Turkey.

Whether or not Turkey will move militarily into northern Iraq, will be decided officially, only after talks that Prime Minister Erdogan will hold with President Bush in Washington on Nov. 5. Statements made by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, as well as by U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, on Nov. 2, stressed Washington's desire that the Turks desist from any such military cross-border incursions. Ankara, however, has argued, if the United States waged war on Afghanistan and invaded Iraq, on grounds that elements from those countries had been involved in terror attacks against the United States, why should Turkey not do the same?

The dangers inherent in a Turkish military incursion across Iraq's borders, are best appreciated by Turkey's immediate neighbors, Iran, Syria, and Iraq itself. These three countries host Kurdish minorities which could be catapulted, by a Turkish attack, into a military campaign to establish an independent Kurdistan, thus destabilizing all three nations. It is for this reason, that the three have taken steps to defuse the crisis before it blows up. In a coordinated effort, Syria and Iran have been consulting, to eliminate the PKK threat without Turkish military action inside Iraq.

A meeting was held in Istanbul Nov. 2-3, of the foreign ministers of the region, and included all Iraq's neighbors, plus the permanent members of the UN Security Council, and some G8 members. As we go to press, the meeting is taking place, and no results have been announced.