

# Bloodbath in Armenia creates power vacuum

by Anno Hellenbroich

The armed assault on the Armenian Parliament on Oct. 27, which resulted in the killing of Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, Speaker of the Parliament Karen Demirchian, two of his deputies, a minister, and three other Members of Parliament, and the wounding of six other parliamentarians, has thrust the country into another dangerous crisis. At the time of this writing, there are few reliable reports on the group of five assailants, or on the political background to the attack.

In a telephone discussion the morning after the bloodbath, Haik Babookhanian, who was elected to Parliament on May 30, on the *Iravunk* ev Miabautiun (Justice and Unity) slate, provided *EIR* with a preliminary report on the situation. At the time of the attack, Babookhanian was in the plenary hall of the Parliament. A few hours after Prime Minister Sarkisian had been killed, and others had been shot and taken hostage, Babookhanian and a few others were freed. At the same time, President Robert Kocharian had rushed to the Parliament, to negotiate with the hostage-takers. Babookhanian reports that he was also part of the negotiating team, and worked to ensure that the wounded could be taken away for medical treatment.

Babookhanian said that an individual named Unanian was the leader of the criminals, a fact later confirmed by the authorities. Unanian was known as a student leader at the end of the 1980s, and later, in 1992-93, went to fight in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan. In early 1999, he appeared as a journalist, and in this capacity was able to move about the Parliament building freely.

Babookhanian had the impression, during the negotiations with Unanian, that the latter has formulated his aims, very much according to "plan." At any rate, he did not appear to be under the influence of drugs or to be psychologically disturbed. Unanian presented several demands, including permission to appear on national television to read a statement. President Kocharian assured the assailants that, if they laid down their weapons and freed the hostages, they would be taken to prison in safety, and would have a fair trial.

In the early morning hours of Oct. 28, the hostages were released and the assailants taken to the prison in the Interior Ministry.

Babookhanian stated that the situation had calmed down, but that the country is in a very dangerous, volatile situation. With the death of Prime Minister Sarkisian, the carefully constructed compromise solution for power-sharing between Kocharian and Sarkisian has been shattered, and no one

knows how this vacuum can be filled.

The terrorist attack took place at a time when the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia had met four times, under considerable American pressure, to try to find an agreement for a cease-fire in the conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh, before the Russian Parliamentary elections take place as scheduled on Dec. 19. To this end, U.S. Undersecretary of State Strobe Talbott had been to the capitals of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, and Russia for discussions about such an agreement. He had left the Armenian capital of Yerevan only an hour before the Parliament was stormed.

On Oct. 15, *Iravunk*, the largest Armenian opposition newspaper, had reported on a letter from U.S. Vice President Al Gore to the Armenian President, in which he urged Armenia, "for its own good," to come to an agreement with Azerbaijan before the next Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe meeting in November. *Iravunk* situated this letter in the context of sensational new oil discoveries in Iran, and negotiations between Russia and Iran over a possible pipeline that would cross Armenian territory. This would conflict with plans for an Azeri oil pipeline from Baku, Azerbaijan, to the Turkish loading station at the port in Ceyhan.

With the assault on the Armenian Parliament, the British "Great Game" has produced new corpses on the battlefield of the Transcaucasus, and has thrust Armenia into the midst of a contest between Russia and the NATO powers.

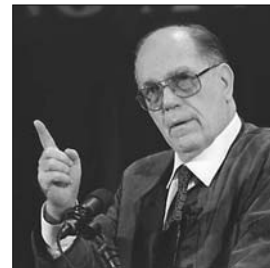
## THE WORLD FINANCIAL COLLAPSE LAROUCHE WAS RIGHT!

### An EIR Video

What does Indonesia's Minister of Economy, Finance and Industry, Ginandjar Kartasasmita, know about the global financial crisis that you don't?

Here's what the Far Eastern Economic Review reported July 23:

"It seems the IMF isn't the only organization



supplying economic advice to the Jakarta government. . . . [Reporters] were surprised to spot, among [Ginandjar's] papers, a video

entitled, 'The World Financial Collapse: LaRouche was Right.' Lyndon LaRouche . . . has been arguing for years that the world's financial system was on the brink of collapse due to unfettered growth in speculative funds; he says now that the Asian crisis is just the beginning. . . ."

Order number EIE 98-005 **\$25** postpaid.

**EIR News Service** P.O. Box 17390 Washington, D.C. 20041-0390 To order, call 1-888-EIR-3258 (toll-free)  
We accept Visa or MasterCard