

Turkey rejects IMF's 'straitjacket'

Foreign Minister Gündüz Okçün talks to the EIR about debts, drugs,

Now that the three-year-old U.S. arms embargo against Turkey has been lifted, anti-Soviet ideologues in the U.S. are eagerly forecasting a "new era" in Turkish-U.S. relations reminiscent of the close cooperation between the two countries during the Cold War. But how are the Turks viewing this?

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Popular opinion in the U.S. has it that the embargo — imposed in 1975 by the Congress to protest Turkish use of American arms in the invasion of Cyprus — was repealed to encourage the Turks to make concessions on Cyprus. But it appears from the Washington end that certain elements had other things in mind. Brzezinski and Kissinger circles in U.S. foreign policy-making are trying to use the repeal as a bargaining chip to force the Turks into dropping carefully cultivated ties with their Soviet, Balkan, and Arab neighbors and into assuming an anti-Soviet posture to "stem the Communist tide."

Last week Turkish Foreign Minister Gündüz Okçün gave an exclusive interview to the Executive Intelligence Review's United Nations correspondent Leif Johnson, in which he discussed the future of his country's foreign policy.

EIR: *Mr. Minister, you have stated that Turkey is following a policy based on the "Four Ds": detente, development, disarmament, and decolonialization, and that this policy is very much in the spirit of the policies pursued by Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. Could you expand on this?*

Okçün: We attach great importance to the establishment of detente throughout the world, not only in the Mediterranean. Detente is a global, not a regional, concept. In particular, we in Turkey are working to establish close relations with our neighbors.

We have extensive economic, technical, and commercial agreements with the Balkan countries. With the Soviet Union, we have signed a protocol agreement based on detente and Helsinki. We have worked out an agreement with the Soviet Union on the con-

tinental shelf in the Black Sea, and we are currently in the process of concluding a long-term economic agreement. With Iran, our relations are friendly. We want a commercial agreement to buy oil in exchange for certain goods. We have a similar agreement with Iraq. Relations with Syria are normal.

It is our understanding that by strengthening detente in our region, we are contributing to the strengthening of detente in the world. We believe that foreign policy should be based on a network of economic and technical cooperation, and we strive for this.

We also would like to contribute to the work toward disarmament, decolonialization, and, of course, economic and social development.

EIR: *Turkey is rapidly emerging as one of the leading spokesmen for a new world economic order to facilitate worldwide economic development.*

Okçün: Yes, this is so. We believe that the work at the United Nations and elsewhere should be devoted to the establishment of a new international economic order. Our children will blame us if we ignore this problem, just as the League of Nations is now being blamed for not preventing World War II. All efforts should be diverted, all minds should be directed, to the problems of development of the world so that the gap between rich and poor might be breached. This is the problem and the challenge of our age, and we in Turkey take it as a part of our foreign policy to establish a new international economic order, either through bilateral relations or international forms.

Turkey already plays an important role in the East-West dimension. We want to add the North-South dimension now. The Turkish government pays great attention to introducing that aspect into Turkish foreign policy, because we wish to expand our relations with the developing countries. We would like to work closely with the developing countries to establish a new economic order, to share our experiences and have Turkey become a model for them.

Reschedule debts, maintain democracy

EIR: *What do you mean when you say you want Turkey to become a model for the developing sector?*

and Cold War

and detente

Okçün: If you talk to students or statesmen from developing countries, they will suggest certain models taken from Peking or Moscow, but not from the West. We believe that we should create a new model for development, in which we can achieve economic and social development, in a democracy, with due respect to human rights.

We, the Turkish government and the Republican Peoples Party, are in favor of changing the economic and social order at home as well as abroad. It is really difficult in a developing country to achieve economic development. It is more difficult to achieve economic development in a democracy with due respect to human rights. It is even more difficult to achieve economic and social development in a democracy with due respect to human rights when you inherit billions of dollars as debt. That's our problem now and the hardest problem we are facing. We would like on the one hand to reschedule the outstanding debts of the previous governments, to find some fresh credits to set the Turkish economy into motion again, something like pump priming, and on the other hand we would like to try — we are determined — to do this in a democracy. That's our challenge, and if we succeed in meeting this challenge, I think this model will be taken up by other developing countries.

On the IMF and World Bank

EIR: In your speech before the United Nations General Assembly, you made the following statement: "The developing countries are more often than not called upon to restrict their growth for the sake of strict internal financial stability. Some of the lender countries and monetary institutions require certain policies which lead the economies of developing countries to stagnation in the name of stability even after they achieved a feasible level of internal economic adjustment necessitated by the economic crisis. Stability is no doubt one of the prerequisites of the sound economy; yet developing countries can achieve development not through a stagnant but a dynamic stability. Forcing them to a stagnant stability would inevitably cause grave social and political crises and eventual upheavals in these countries." How do you see getting around this problem?

Okçün: In my speech, I was referring to the Inter-

national Monetary Fund and other international institutions such as the OECD and the World Bank. They usually give certain stated objectives or prescriptions for developing countries who lack foreign exchange. From the technical point of view they may be right, but an economy cannot be divorced from the social and cultural dimension.

Stabilization measures should take into consideration certain economic and cultural aspects of a given country and create a new model of stability. We should give that country a chance to achieve economic development without any breakdown, without any collapse, by satisfying the needs of the people on the one hand and achieving economic development on the other. It is a very difficult problem, but it should be taken as a model, otherwise the straitjacket model advocated by those institutions I mentioned would be a model for non-democratic government. We cannot apply such a model by saying to the people, "Shut up! You have no right to criticize!" In a developing country where economic and social development is to be achieved with due respect for democracy and human rights, you can't say this. You have to explain this is for the good of the people. You can't say that one of two generations will have a straitjacket economy and then we'll have economic development. What you can say is that we are going through a financial crisis, that we want economic development and expect fresh money from international institutions or certain banking institutions, that we will establish our industries which will engender our further economic growth. We believe that financial institutions should take another look at this problem.

Controlling opium

EIR: How did Turkey solve the problem of growing and distributing opium?

Okçün: We have attached a great importance to the drug problem. As you know, the cultivation of the poppy plant is very limited in Turkey. The Minister of Agriculture issued a plan which was an international statement on the growing of poppies. We now follow a certain method of cultivation, under surveillance. On the smuggling of opium from Turkey, we are very strict on this.

EIR: You are then saying that it is possible to control or eradicate the growing, shipping, and processing of opium or other drugs?

Okçün: Absolutely. The opium is bought by the Turkish government. It is strictly controlled by the government, under strict observance of the law. We think it is a problem of humanity, and we will do our best to contribute to the solution. I am informed by the Minister of Agriculture that our program is working very well. We have diminished the number of poppy-growing plots, limiting them to certain provinces where no one from town can cultivate the poppy.

As I said, we are dedicated to solving this problem in the interest of humanity.