

Will the U.S. State Department wreck relations with Turkey?

by Thierry Lalevée

Not only did the July 25 visit of Undersecretary Michael Armacost to Turkey *not* help to better relations between the two countries; it had the direct result of worsening the regional crisis. Turkish officials have been stressing recently that American-Turkish relations are fundamentally good, but that “alien factors” have been intervening in recent months, leading to a steady deterioration. These factors include:

- the decision of the U.S. Senate in May to pass a resolution in favor of an “Armenian Day,” condemning the alleged massacre of Armenians by Turks during World War I;
- Congress’s rejection of a \$125 million additional package of economic aid to the country;
- the systematic reduction of yearly economic and military assistance to Turkey, down to \$579 million, with more cuts expected.

Such recent developments, which led to the cancellation of the state visit of Turkish President Kenan Evren to Washington, are calling into question long-term agreements between the two countries. At stake is the economic and military future of Turkey as a sovereign and independent nation, as well as NATO’s entire strategy for its Southern Flank.

‘The forgotten ally’

A study recently published by the New York Council on Foreign Relations was titled “America’s Forgotten Ally: Turkey,” and that is unfortunately the case. Despite efforts by the Turkish government, including the invitation of some 85 congressmen and congressional aides to the country, little is actually known either in the United States or in Europe about Turkey and its relation to the region. In particular, there is little understanding of the war of independence, which was fought from 1919 to 1923 by Gen. Mustafa Kemal, later called Atatürk (“Father of the Turks”), to transform the former center of the Ottoman Empire into a modern nation. An Ottoman general, Kemal had opposed the decision of the “Young Turks” who seized political power in 1909, to lead the country into World War I on the side of Germany. He insisted at the beginning of the war, that this was a British plot, aiming at paving the way for the dismemberment of the country.

The 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement had mapped out the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire and its division among France, Britain, and Russia. According to the 1919 Treaty of Sevres, the Turkish coasts were to be shared by Greece and

Britain; Armenian and Kurdish entities were to be created as buffer zones between Russia and Britain. The Turks were to remain within the Anatolian hinterland. As the terms of the Treaty became known, and were to be accepted by the Ottoman Caliph, Mustafa Kemal launched a war of independence, both against the Ottomans and the remains of the “Young Turk” movement—most of whom had fled into exile—as well as against the British and Greek combined military forces. After four years of war, the powers of the Entente were defeated. A new treaty, the Treaty of Lausanne, was imposed in 1923 by Atatürk. It confirmed Turkey within its present borders, underlining the Turkish right not only to control both sides of the Bosphorus, but to concretize its commitment to Europe by retaining the eastern part of Thrace.

All of the countries in Europe which had accepted the terms of the post-World War I imperial treaties, from the Treaty of Versailles to the Treaty of Neuilly, plunged into further crisis. Within a decade, Italy, Central Europe, and the Balkans were led by fascist dictatorships. Turkey alone retained and developed a new democratic system. Together with Iran’s Reza Shah and Afghanistan’s Nadir Shah, it shared a commitment to lift the region out of the backwardness that centuries of decadent Ottoman rule had imposed, notably to break with religious fundamentalism.

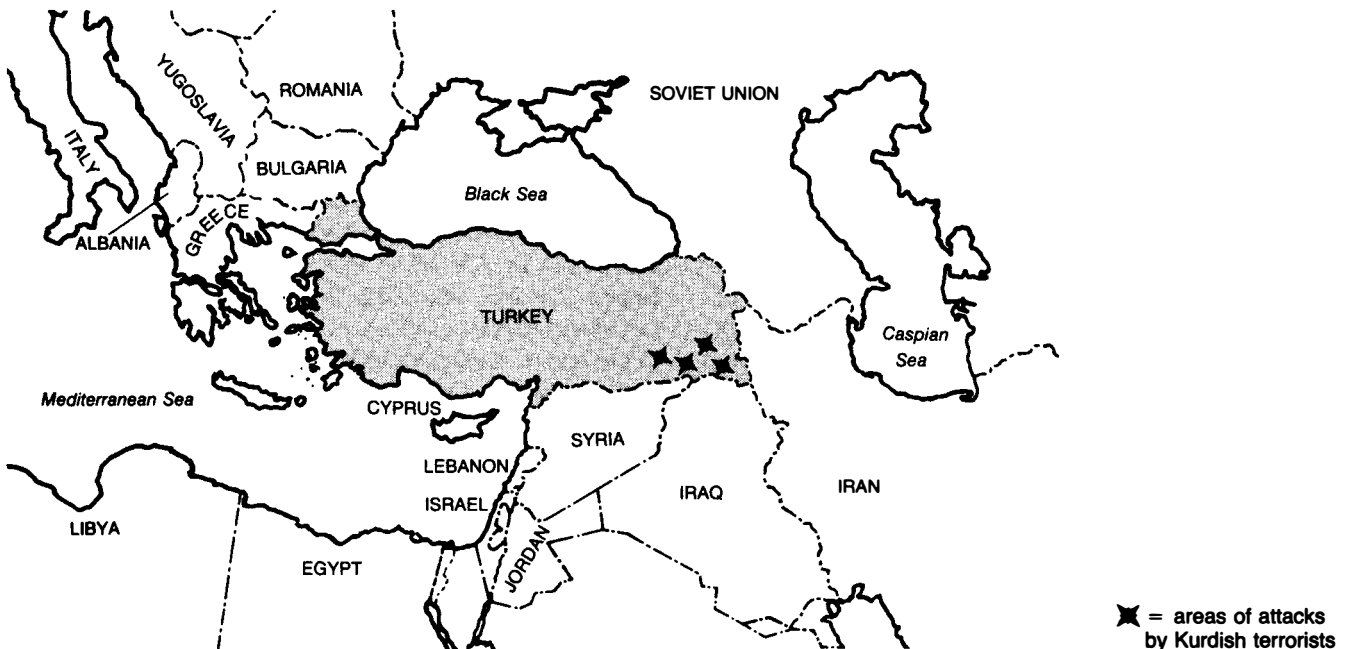
A crucial step was achieved in 1928, when Atatürk launched his linguistic reforms, abandoning the Arabic script in favor of the Roman alphabet—a move which is still protested today by the followers of Ayatollah Khomeini. Indicative of the anger that Atatürk still provokes among the fundamentalists, was the refusal of Iranian Prime Minister Moussawi to lay a wreath at Atatürk’s mausoleum during his June visit to Turkey!

Turkey is a poor country, with a per capita income lower than Portugal’s. However, the war of independence led by Atatürk instilled in the population a sense of national identity and national destiny. This was displayed during the Korean War, when the Turkish contingent sacrificed itself to prevent the American troops from being overwhelmed in the last offensives, and when Turkish soldiers proved that they, alone, had successfully resisted Korean brainwashing methods.

Turkey’s strategic position

This history is directly relevant to the present situation. Because of its geographic location, Turkey would have been

Turkey's strategic position



a natural choice to become a neutral state between East and West, or to fall under a status of "Finlandization." Its land border with the Soviet Union of 610 kilometers is complemented by its sea borders along the Black Sea, close to 2,000 km in length. It has an additional 269 km of borders with Warsaw Pact member Bulgaria, and 877 km with Syria. Its borders with Iran and Iraq are also insecure, as the two countries are embroiled in a war which is continuously spilling over their respective borders. It shares a 212 km border with Greece, a nominal member of NATO, which, however, announced on July 10 that it was withdrawing two armored brigades from its borders with Bulgaria, because the threat "doesn't come from the North, but from the East"—meaning Turkey! Yet, because of Turkey's commitment to Western Europe, which was one of Atatürk's fundamental choices, it has been a member of NATO since the beginning. A look at a map underlines the importance of that alliance, and how, more than any other member of NATO's Southern Flank, Turkey stands between Russia and its imperial dream of making the Mediterranean into a Russian *Mare Nostrum*.

For the very same reasons, Turkey has become the target for multifaceted destabilizations which are run directly or indirectly by the Soviet Union. Throughout the late 1960s, until the Sept. 12, 1980 military coup, Turkey was the theater of one of the bloodiest terror campaigns in the West. With seemingly no other rationale than sheer violence, the terror wave actually achieved two aims: disrupting and almost paralyzing the economic development of the country, and thereby weakening Turkey's ability to defend itself. Since 1984, it has been faced with renewed Kurdish insurgency led by the

Kurdish Workers' Party" (PKK) of Abdallah Ocalan. More than 200 civilians have been killed since January of this year, in bloody massacres reminiscent of the *modus operandi* of the Shining Path in Peru. A typical example of Soviet-sponsored irregular warfare against a NATO member, this terrorism is still considered "purely internal" by most NATO members, which are blind to the fact that the creation of a Kurdish entity would give Russia its centuries-long dream of a direct overland connection with Jerusalem, through Syria. Worse still, members of the European Parliament voted in mid-June in favor of a resolution warning that Turkey would not be admitted in the European Community, unless it recognized the "Armenian genocide" and began "respecting the human rights" of the Kurds! Two days later, on June 20, PKK terrorists lined up and executed 30 villagers from Pinarcik in southern Turkey. As President Evren rightly commented, European MPs have "blood on their hands."

Just as important has been the systematic deterioration of the situation on Turkey's western front with Greece and Bulgaria. As Turkish officials reminded us, Turkish-Greek relations have not always been that bad. In 1930, the Treaty of Montreux on the Dardanelles stabilized bilateral relations, with an organized exchange of Greek and Turkish populations, as well as the demilitarization of the Aegean islands. Throughout the 1930s until the mid-1950s, the two countries enjoyed good neighborly relations, reaching a peak in 1952 with an exchange of foreign ministers. It was the Cyprus question which developed as a thorn between the two countries.

The island of Cyprus, with an 85% Greek ethnic majority

and 15% Turkish minority, was a British Crown Colony from 1878 until 1959. Britain acquired the island during the Congress of Berlin by means of outright purchase for money. After the Second World War, Greek Cypriot Col. George Grivas led an anti-colonialist guerrilla war against the British. Colonel Grivas's guerrilla movement was demanding outright union of Cyprus with Greece. Turkey viewed such union as a threat to the Turkish Cypriot minority. Britain eventually manipulated traditional Turkish-Greek frictions and produced the 1959 Zurich Agreements, which became the basis for the formation of an independent Republic of Cyprus under the pro-Soviet Archbishop Makarios as President and the Turkish Cypriot Dr. Raufg Denktash as Vice President. The British-dictated Constitution of Cyprus proved unworkable, in the sense that, by design, it fed Greek-Turkish rivalries instead of healing them.

During 1964, with Greece ruled by the anti-NATO government of George Papandreu, the father of Greece's present prime minister, and with Cyprus ruled by the pro-Soviet Archbishop Makarios, a massive political crisis on Cyprus ripped apart the Cypriot Constitution. Since then, the island has been ruled by a thinly veiled anarchy in which the intelligence services of East and West thrive at the expense of Turkish Greek and Cypriot national interests alike. Turkey was fortunate in having been endowed with statesmen who understood that the British-authored Constitution of Cyprus would not function.

This ultimately led to the 1974 crisis, in which Israeli intelligence and Henry Kissinger used Greek-Cypriot elements in an elaborate plot to overthrow the Greek military government in Athens. The Turkish army then intervened to protect the Turkish community. Since then, Cyprus has been divided by a Green Line, splitting the island into a Greek and a Turkish Republic. As a result, an immediate arms embargo was imposed by the U.S. government against Turkey; its status within NATO was frozen, with the Congress voting up a law in 1978 to forbid military assistance to communist countries, countries supporting international terrorism—and Turkey! Not until 1980 was the embargo lifted, with a new Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) signed between Washington and Ankara.

Since the election of Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu in 1981, Turkey has been increasingly facing a hostile Athens-Sofia axis on its western borders. Both capitals, which are lobbying in favor of a Balkan Nuclear Free Zone, have welcomed Turkish terrorists, from the Armenian Secret Army (ASALA) to the PKK and others. Sofia is the main center for drug and arms smuggling.

Timed with the new Kurdish assault against Turkey, Sofia launched a systematic repression against the Turkish community in Bulgaria, which has been the subject of several treaties, granting it the status of a national minority. Still, the Turkish community has been used as a political pawn by the Bulgarians. In December 1984, for example, the government began a process of "Bulgarization" of the Turkish commu-

nity, including forcing Turkish Muslims to change their names. Several hundred Turks were killed during the repression which accompanied that decision. In 1986, Bulgaria announced that there was no national minority anymore!

Between Moscow and Washington

Watching Turkey embroiled in regional crisis, Russia has not changed its policies. Only a few months after the election of Mikhail Gorbachov, the Soviet army held a week-long series of maneuvers in the Caucasus in August 1985, testing its ability to invade Turkey. This was simultaneous with the publication by *EIR* of its first *Global Showdown* Special Report. On Oct. 28, 1985, Soviet Ambassador Vladimir Lavrov held a press conference in Ankara to deny the contents of our report, stating, according to Turkish media accounts, that Moscow has no "intent to invade Turkey in 1988." This denial left little impression on Turkish officials, as shown by the accompanying interview with Defense Minister Zaki Yavuztürk. However, coherent with its global foreign policy thrust, Moscow is courting Ankara. One of its chief weapons is economic cooperation. In June 1987, the first section of a Russian natural gas pipeline was inaugurated in Thrace. Earlier, negotiations had opened the way for Soviet investments into Turkey's steel and iron industries. However small, these investments have been welcomed by a country which needs any help it can get, since the United States is not only reducing aid, but is adding obstacles to Turkish exports. For example, a Turkish proposal to sign a Free Trade Zone agreement with the United States, similar to the one signed between Washington and Jerusalem, was flatly rejected.

Many in Turkey know that their country has become a pawn in the broader American-Soviet negotiations. This was, unfortunately, strikingly clear during the recent visit of Michael Armacost and his associate, James Wilkinson, the State Department specialist on Cyprus. Armacost's visit was prompted by the political crisis between the two countries. However, Armacost could not come up with anything new. Arguing that the Senate and House are dominated by the Democrats, he pleaded that the administration was totally committed to Turkey, but that there could be no guarantees of increased economic and military assistance. The visit ended bitterly on July 28. Ankara decided to stick to its position that the DECA would be ratified only after economic aid is voted by Congress. As a gesture, the State Department announced mildly on Aug. 5 that it opposed a resolution in favor of Armenia Day voted by a House Committee, because it would "endanger American-Turkish relations."

It is not only Turkey that is harmed by the current crisis in relations with the United States. American and NATO facilities in Turkey are absolutely crucial to the alliance. Besides the NATO air bases, Turkish territory includes several military facilities, such as a Black Sea listening station and a space monitoring station. For maintaining these facilities, which are leased to NATO, Turkey spends some \$600 million a year!

The Cyprus gambit

One result of Armacost's visit may be to throw the entire region into a deepened crisis around Cyprus. Joining with those Europeans who are arguing that Turkey's membership in the European Community should be linked to withdrawal from Cyprus, the State Department is calling for "further Turkish concessions" on the issue. On July 23, the Ankara-based *Turkish Daily News* quoted sources close to Armacost, arguing that unless Turkey made further concessions, Washington would "be forced to accept the Soviet proposal." Since January 1986, the Soviets have been calling for a U.N. Security Council-sponsored international conference on Cyprus. The conference would discuss withdrawal of "all foreign troops," meaning the Turkish forces and the two British military bases on the Greek part of the island. In Moscow's own words, the Soviet Union, a "neighbor of Cyprus," has a *droit de regard* over the fate of the island. Not surprisingly, the proposal has the full support of Greece's Prime Minister Papandreou, and has received backing from Cypriot President Kyprianou. Against Moscow's initiative, Turkey supports the March 1986 U.N. resolution calling for direct negotiations between the two republics. Papandreou opposes such negotiations.

In recent months, East bloc delegations have been parading through Nicosia. Most spectacular was the late-May visit of a large East German military delegation, including the defense minister and the entire military leadership. Diplomacy is only the public side of more sinister operations. Since September 1986, there have been several Libyan-sponsored terrorist actions against the British bases. In the spring, the Cyprus Communist Party began agitating against the British, while Communist-connected "pacifists" tried to cross the Green Line.

On another level, it is known that some 8,000 Greek troops have been included within the 25,000-strong army of Cyprus, and that Athens is contemplating sending two additional armored brigades to "face the Turkish threat." Additionally, the agreements regulating the water and energy supplies of both republics have been violated by Nicosia. While the Turkish republic supplies water to the southern part of the island, the Greeks are to supply electricity from the power plants built by both communities before partition. In recent months, there has been a systematic disruption of the energy supplies which have affected industrial production in the north.

Obviously a new Cyprus crisis would give the Soviets the perfect pretext to impose their initiative and for the State Department to accept it as "a gesture of goodwill" to Moscow. Armacost made a step in that direction during his trip to Greece on July 29. Not yet acknowledged publicly, the Armacost-Papandreou deal implies that Washington will support Greece's position on Cyprus, in exchange for Greece allowing the United States to keep its facilities in Greece. If that were to be concretized, it would be the last straw for American-Turkish relations, with disastrous consequences.

The Kurdish terrorists: Soviet irregular warfare

The Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), which has carried out systematic massacres of Turkish villagers since the beginning of this year, was created in 1975 as a splinter from the Kurdish Socialist Party. After the Sept. 12, 1980 military coup, PKK members in Turkey were either arrested or driven into exile.

It then established bases in Stockholm, West Berlin, Stuttgart, the Netherlands, and France. According to a mid-July 1987 release from government sources in Ankara, some 70 organizations in Europe are presently giving logistical help to the PKK, including the German Green Party. By 1982, PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan established his new political headquarters in Damascus. In the spring of 1984, meetings were held in Damascus between Ocalan and the Bulgarian ambassador, leading to the establishment of a PKK training camp in Bulgaria. By late 1984, the PKK began hit-and-run operations against Turkish forces, from its bases in northern Iran, northern Iraq, and Syria. In mid-January 1987, it began its massacres of Kurdish villagers in southeast Anatolia. In June 1987, it held its political congress in Latakia, Syria, and announced the creation of a Kurdish National Liberation Army.

The PKK is not a "national liberation movement," but a primary component of Soviet-sponsored terrorism. Since the late 1970s, its main source of financing has been the drugs-for-arms "Bulgarian Connection." It works with the Turkish Communist Party-Marxist Leninist (TKP-ML), West Germany's Red Army Faction, and France's Direct Action. Through the TKP-ML and a shadowy Revolutionary International Movement, established in 1984, it even has ties with the Peruvian Communist Party-Shining Path.

The PKK has military training bases in Lebanon's Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley. It also maintains political offices and training bases in Athens and Sofia. Terror operations are also controlled through Cyprus, where the PKK and the Armenian terrorist group ASALA share camps in the Trodos Mountains, with members of the Abu Nidal terrorist organization.

On July 23, Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal revealed that weapons used in Anatolia by the PKK were shipped from Cyprus. Intelligence reports indicate that an important part of the arms-smuggling operation is run by former EOKA-B terrorist Nikos Sampson, whose name surfaced in 1983 in France in connection with an ASALA terror bombing.