

## Interview: Safa Giray

# 'The earth is always moving in Turkey'

*Mr. Giray is Turkey's Minister of Housing and Construction. This interview was conducted by EIR correspondents Webster Tarpley and Thierry Lalevée in Ankara on July 27.*

*"The earth is always moving in Turkey," Giray said, in conclusion of the discussion. More than 100,000 workers are involved in some of Turkey's major projects which are handled by his ministry, such as the construction of the world's sixth-largest bridge, across the Bosphorus, or the world's third-largest dam, the Atatürk Dam, which is part of the "Grand Anatolian Project."*

**EIR:** Can you give us an idea of the scope of the projects in which you are involved?

**Giray:** We have several major projects in southeast Anatolia. We have two big and historic rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris. They collect the waters from the mountains and go down through Syria and Iraq, converging around Basra in the famous Shatt al Arab. The area between the two rivers is Mesopotamia. It is a historic area, with old civilizations, like Sumer. When the land is irrigated, the area is very fertile. The whole Mesopotamian region was under Ottoman rule. Now, upper Mesopotamia is in Turkey. It is an area of approximately 4 million hectares of land.

Through these waters, we can irrigate approximately 1.6 million hectares of land. To do this, we have to build some 21 dams, and a lot of canals on both rivers. So far, we have one large dam, the Karakaya Dam [on the Euphrates River—ed.],

The Karakaya Dam is not for irrigation, but is a hydro-power plant which will produce 7.5 billion kilowatt hours (kwh). We have finished the dam, and two of the units [of a total of six—ed]

in four months. The construction had started in 1976, but because of financial difficulties, nothing much was done. By 1983, 10%, or perhaps 15%, of the work had been completed only. We have since completed the remaining parts. . . .

We have some 13 different projects. One of these is the Atatürk Dam. It is a very large one, with 85 million cubic meters of embankment, with a lake of some 50 billion cubic

meters, or approximately the equivalent of two years of the waters of the Euphrates. It will produce 9 billion kwh. For the irrigation, we are excavating two canals, each 26 km in length, with a 9-meter diameter—the longest in the world. Some 53% of the work has been completed. It is a very large job. Through these canals, we will transport the waters to Upper Mesopotamia. Approximately 800,000 hectares of land will be irrigated by the canals—half of the land wanted.

Since we are going to bring the waters to Upper Mesopotamia, we could also irrigate the lower portion of Mesopotamia. We can give some water to Syria. That will depend, of course, on our mutual agreement. During the recent visit there of Prime Minister Turgut Özal, we discussed the matter. They could receive up to 10 billion cubic meters of water through these canals. That water can be used in all the area. If we do not reach an agreement, some 2 billion cubic meters will pass through the region. Today, there is nothing there [in northern Syria—ed.], get water through the Euphrates River, but there is no irrigation.

**EIR:** What is the timeframe for the Atatürk Dam?

**Giray:** We will begin to fill the dam at the end of next year [November 1988—ed.].

construction up to 65 million cubic meters. The power station will begin to operate by 1991, and the dam should be completed by 1992. The canals will take a little longer to be completed.

**EIR:** How much electricity will be produced, and what will be the proportion to Turkey's needs?

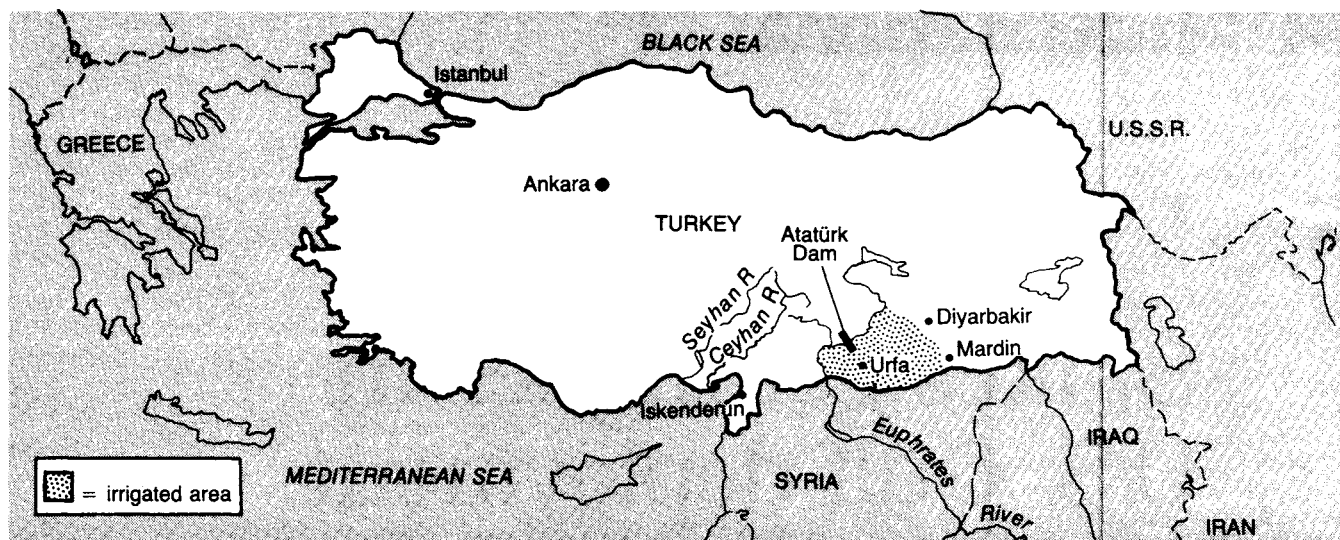
**Giray:** It will produce approximately 8 billion kwh. Turkey consumes right now 46 billion, with an increase of 5-6 billion per year. We need 10 billion more by 1995. By the year 2000, our consumption will be around 200 billion. We have some 120 billion kwh in potential production from our hydroelectric power plants. Today we are producing approximately 18 billion kwh. Next year, with the Karakaya Dam, we will have an additional 10 billion.

**EIR:** Do you plan a nuclear program?

**Giray:** Yes, we have, but not under the control of this ministry. Because of various negotiations, we do not have a nuclear power plant yet. But first we have an enormous potential in hydro-power, around 120 billion, as I mentioned. We also produce energy through fuel and gas. We just inaugurated a natural gas pipeline with the Soviet Union, in the Thrace region. which a

**EIR:** What is the outlook for the country for the next decades?

**Giray:** Today, we have 900 kwh per capita consumption. By the end of the century, we think it will have to be around 3,000. By then, we will be approximately some 70 million [people].



energy, and an average GNP growth of some 6%. Last year it was 8%. This year we are trying to slow it down to 5.5%, but it will probably be 7%.

This new energy will go into industry. Our economic philosophy is based on Liberalism. The private sector will create the industries. We think that what the government has to do, is to build the infrastructure, especially in the energy sector; its production should be in proportion to consumption. Today, we are making large-scale investments in highways, dams, power stations, and communications, or railways whenever feasible and necessary, seaports, and airports. We have already given to contractors more than 1,050 km of roads to be built. We just inaugurated a highway project last night [in Istanbul—ed.].

tury, Turkey must have 3,000 km of highways. Ultimately, it will need between 10,000 and 12,000 km.

**EIR:** What is the financial mechanism behind these projects?

**Giray:** They are mainly financed by our own budget, but of course, also with international credit. For the Karakaya Dam, which cost 1,300 billion Turkish lira, we paid some 900 billion; the rest came from credit. For the Atatürk Dam, we are financing it ourselves, but the building of the power stations will be financed by government and private investors in Switzerland.

**EIR:** Have you come under any pressure from the IMF and the World Bank to cut down the size of these projects?

**Giray:** To me directly, I say no, but on our Budget and Treasury Department, there has been some. But they never come to me; I only hear rumors. Of course, if you get a credit for a feasible project, there is no difficulty. Most of the credits will be paid back in less than 10 years. For example, if you take Karakaya Dam, which will produce 7.5 billion kwh: If

the energy price is 3¢ per kwh, that means approximately \$225 million per year. In your country, it is perhaps 5 or 6¢. That means that in a few years, we can pay back the credit.

**EIR:** Can you tell us about the “Water for Peace” pipeline project?

**Giray:** It is a very interesting project, I like the idea very much. It is still at the stage of negotiations, at the level of the prime minister’s office, with countries like Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, etc. In southern Turkey, we have the two rivers, the Seyhan and the Ceyhan, which irrigate the region and carry excess waters to the Mediterranean [into the bay of Iskenderun—ed.].

We think that we can give some of the water to the Arab countries. This will involve the construction of a 2,600-km-long pipeline to Saudi Arabia and another one up to the Emirates. They are paying too much for their water, around \$6 per cubic meter, but they need water, otherwise they cannot live there. With our project, the cost will be around \$3.

This is one aspect of our project. The other important aspect is to have peace among these countries, from Turkey on to the Middle East. A water-line which is mutually owned by all of these countries will foster peace, and we think it will bring them together. It is water, nothing more, but is very important.

**EIR:** Have you considered broader development schemes in the region?

**Giray:** We think that a plan can be worked out. The development of mutual infrastructure will help the countries in the region. We have to have good connecting roads between Turkey and its neighbors, and the Middle East, so that people can travel back and forth, like between France and Germany or Belgium in Europe, either by car, train, or plane. . . .