

Nov. 26, when Britain's Lord Rea arrived in Italy to offer his good services in "mediating" the European-Turkish crisis that Britain itself has steered. Lord Rea told the Italian press that he was acting on behalf of British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. He also told them that Ocalan was not a terrorist but "the leader of a popular movement."

Danielle Mitterrand, the widow of the late French President and the PKK's main advocate in Europe, has also become involved. On Oct. 12, even before Ocalan fled Damascus, Mitterrand addressed a pro-PKK gathering in Leuven, Belgium, saying that the "time and conditions" for creating a "Kurdish state" were at hand. According to Mitterrand, the Clinton administration's decision in September to expand operations to topple Saddam Hussein and to find a "federal solution" to Iraq, was a "harbinger of a Kurdish state." She said, "We have to prod the Europeans on this issue."

This is not the first time that the British oligarchy, the British Foreign Office, and their lackeys have supported the creation of a Kurdish state. In February 1998, during the middle of earlier British and Israeli efforts to sucker Clinton into bombing Iraq, Cook told the London *Daily Telegraph* that Britain would "frankly welcome" the "break-up of Iraq" leading to the creation of a Kurdish state. In the ensuing uproar in Turkey, Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit charged that "Britain has been the leading country causing chaos in the Middle East since World War I."

Also at that time, Britain's Lord Avebury, the PKK's main strategist, held hearings in the House of Lords at which Deputy Speaker Baroness Caroline Cox and former Foreign Secretary Lord David Owen called for carving a "Kurdish protectorate" out of Iraq and Turkey.

This is an old story. Britain and France first promoted Kurdish separatism back in the 1890s, as part of their effort to use ethnic and religious movements to break up the Ottoman Turkish empire. Since World War I, Britain and France have run Kurdish separatism, and related movements, as part of their efforts to break up modern Turkey, as well as Iran and Iraq.

Reflecting this century-long imperialist policy, Britain has made London the PKK's international political and propaganda headquarters, despite Turkish protests. It has also allowed the PKK to establish its own satellite television station there, MED-TV, through which Ocalan has regularly beamed marching orders to PKK cadre back in Turkey.

How it was set up

As the smoke cleared around the circumstances of Ocalan's arrest, details emerged indicating that it had been stage-managed by the Italian Refounded Communist Party (RCP) and its behind-the-scenes patrons, apparently without the knowledge of the Italian Prime Minister, in an effort to get Ocalan asylum. The main operative in this caper, Ramon Mantovani, the professional radical who directs the party's foreign policy within the Italian Parliament, has worked

closely with Kurdish and other terrorist sects since the 1960s.

According to a Sept. 17 broadcast of the PKK station MED-TV, Mantovani arrived in Damascus in September to set up the precondition for the operation. His purpose, the PKK reports, was to "develop strategic cooperation" between the Italian RCP and PKK, leading to the creation of a new "revolutionary Socialist International" dedicated to "fighting the globalization of capitalism." Ocalan agreed with Mantovani's proposal, and suggested that "Rome could be designated as the capital of the new international."

Following the terrorist gathering, Mantovani and 14 other Italian parliamentary deputies sponsored a meeting of the PKK's Kurdish Parliament-in-Exile in the chambers of the Italian Senate on Sept. 29, despite the harsh protests of Turkey and the United States.

The two groups remained in contact after Ocalan was forced to flee Damascus for Moscow. And on Nov. 11, Mantovani flew to Moscow to arrange for Ocalan to travel to Italy in order to get asylum. "We were just helping the Kurds find a way to start peace talks," Mantovani told Associated Press on Nov. 25. "Our action will force Italy and Europe to finally—and I hope definitively—face the Kurdish issue."

This is not the first time that British Lords, Madame Mitterrand, and the RCP have teamed up to support terrorist insurgencies. In 1997, for example, Mantovani organized a RCP delegation to Chiapas, Mexico, where his party boss, Fausto Bertinotti, met "Subcommander Marcos," the Mitterrand-patronized leader of the narco-terrorist Zapatista insurgency. Also that year, Mitterrand and Lord Rae called on the (narco-controlled) Colombian government of President Samper Pizano, to stand up to the military, and stop the military's "genocidal" war against the narco-terrorist Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces, the FARC.

Indonesia battles chaos, subversion

by Michael O. Billington

Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation, with more than 200 million citizens, succeeded in holding a special session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) on Nov. 10-13, which passed legislation establishing a schedule for parliamentary and Presidential elections next year, and rules providing for the creation of a multi-party system. While these measures confirmed that President B.J. Habibie is carrying through the democratic transformation of Indonesia, away from the tightly structured political system under the 32-year rule of President Suharto, the country has

nonetheless been subjected to violent demonstrations and bloody riots, once again threatening a breakdown of order.

Student demonstrations during the assembly session turned violent, with four pro-government civilians beaten to death by the mobs, who also charged the military line protecting the assembly. Spokesmen for both the government and the opposition have charged that provocateurs among the students were responsible for initiating the violence. The military had planned a 10-stage process for phased retreat and containment of the demonstrators without the use of firearms, but the plan broke down, and rubber bullets were fired from close range into the demonstrations. In the end, 13 people died, including 8 students, and 400 were injured. The government has placed 144 troops and 12 officers under detention for 21 days over these killings. However, the military also announced that live ammunition of a sophisticated and deadly variety, not used by the Indonesian military, killed at least one of the students. Further investigation is ongoing.

Rioting also broke out in a predominantly Chinese area of Jakarta on the evening of Nov. 13, raising the specter of a repeat of the chaos in May, which left an estimated 1,200 dead. However, unlike in May, concerted efforts were taken by the military, most notably the Marines, to prevent violence.

The following week, however, on Nov. 22, rioting erupted again in Jakarta, in a part of Chinatown heavily destroyed, and not yet rebuilt, from the May riots. Thirteen people were killed in the Ketapang clashes between Javanese Muslims and Christian immigrants from Ambon in the Maluku islands, of whom seven died as a result of a fire that gutted a several-story building. An estimated 11 churches were trashed. Here again, both government and opposition leaders have claimed to have evidence of manipulation for political purposes by provocateurs.

Are there subversive forces, foreign or domestic, using the students to destabilize the Habibie government, and/or deploying agents within the military to provoke chaos?

Differences among the opposition

In the days preceding the MPR assembly, two declarations were issued by opposition forces, one by a coalition of the leading figures who had supported the demonstrations last spring, which brought down the Suharto government, and a second by a newly created organization called the National Front. The first, called the Ciganjur Declaration, was formulated by: Amien Rais, Muslim leader, and recognized spokesman for the students last spring; Abdurrahman Wahid, head of the largest Muslim organization, Nadlatul Ulama; Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of President Sukarno; and the Sultan of Yogyakarta. This coalition, while opposing certain of President Habibie's policies, came out strongly in support of the democratic process being worked out in the People's Consultative Assembly.

Despite differences over the timing of the planned elections, the Ciganjur Declaration endorsed the policies that were ultimately adopted by the assembly for orderly elections, a phasing out over time of the role of the military in the Parliament, a further investigation of former President Suharto's wealth, and the freedom to create political parties.

When the student demonstrators called upon this group to come forward to support their demands for overthrowing the Habibie government before the elections, these four leaders refused. Rais even warned the students: "Restrain yourselves, be capable of restraint. Let us think in a clear way. Only a few hours are left for this assembly; do not ruin it."

On the other hand, the National Front declaration of Nov. 12, signed by 17 prominent retired military leaders, demanded that Habibie step down and that a "Provisional Assembly" take over. The National Front was formed by a group of retired generals and civil servants, led by Lt. Gen. Kemal Idris. They have repeatedly demanded President Habibie's resignation, and have maintained contact with the most radical elements among the student demonstrators.

Following the deadly confrontation on Nov. 13, President Habibie went on national television: "Now it can be seen that there are movements and actions by several groups in this society which clearly attempt to oppose the law and the Constitution by mobilizing masses to enforce their wishes . . . and can be categorized as subversive." Several of the retired generals, who had signed the National Front declaration, including General Idris, were brought in for questioning. Ten signers of the Nov. 12 declaration were placed under arrest.

Opposition leader Amien Rais, although he held President Habibie responsible for the shootings by the military, distanced himself absolutely from the National Front, accusing them of having "openly defied the legitimate government," and of resorting to "unconstitutional methods."

Will Indonesia take on the IMF?

Underlying this unfolding political crisis is the continuing economic dissolution of Indonesia under International Monetary Fund dictates. President Habibie wisely refused to allow the crisis to prevent his trip to Malaysia to attend the Nov. 17-18 meeting of heads of state of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. He met privately with other heads of state, including China's President Jiang Zemin and Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov, who are building a revolutionary alliance of nations, independent of IMF dictates and beyond the destructive reach of speculators (see p. 4).

The case of Indonesia, like that of Russia, has proven that the IMF brings nothing but poverty and chaos. The process now under way among China, Russia, Malaysia, India, and others to create the conditions for a new world financial system, based on the principles of nation-building, provides the necessary framework for Indonesia to counter the subversion and begin reconstruction.