

came a virtual anti-Soviet government-in-exile of Azerbaijan. Moscow is now gearing up toward a military show of strength to bring both republics under control, while fostering a belt of upheaval from northern Pakistan to Baluchistan, Iran, and Kurdistan. This turns the tables on those Western strategists, notably former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, who thought they could foster an Islamic "arc of crisis" in that region which would undermine Soviet rule. For the Kremlin, Turkey becomes the NATO-member target of this reversed "arc of crisis."

The local factors

Presumably such geopolitical considerations and deals are alien to Prime Minister Özal's would-be murderer, 32-year-old Kartal Demirag. He is an ex-teacher who had been sentenced to 10 years in jail in 1986 for murder, but escaped under mysterious circumstances. As many have noted, Demirag looks like a carbon-copy of Mehmet Ali Agca, the would-be assassin of Pope John Paul II. Both belonged to the Grey Wolves of Alaspan Turkes. Demirag was reportedly safehoused by the National Liberation Front, an extremist splinter group principally based in West Germany, at the initiative of one Musa Sardar Celebi, a Frankfurt-based businessman who was interrogated for his past connections to Agca!

But as Turkish investigators have stressed, Demirag's political ties are a bit "too obvious." For a terrorist, he had left a great many leads behind in his hotel room. There was a network that supplied him with false papers and money. While such gross evidence seemed designed to mislead police, at least it establishes that Demirag was no "lone fanatic."

Prime Minister Turgut Özal himself stressed on June 21 that a mafia connection could not be ruled out. After all, he said, his economic policies have lost the cigarette-smuggling mafia at least 900 billion Turkish liras in recent months. Perhaps not enough to murder a prime minister for—but enough to accept a contract.

From there, the investigation proceeds down a well-known track. The cigarette-smuggling mafia leads to the Warsaw Pact's Bulgaria, where Marlboros are counterfeited and smuggled abroad. The same mafia deals in both drugs and weapons along a Middle East-to-Western Europe axis, and as in other countries, has penetrated high levels of the political parties and institutions in Turkey.

During the last six months Turkey has been rocked by the scandal that former Chief of Staff Gen. Necdet Urug and some other senior officers worked with the Istanbul mafia. The scandal prompted Özal to order an investigation into the intelligence service, MIT. On June 22, the *Wall Street Journal* aired the hypothesis a "lone" official of MIT may have been trying to take revenge by killing Özal. While this is unlikely, it would surprise no one if some officials in the army, the police, and MIT were found to have cooperated in the plot.

Are new 'Irangate' deals in the works?

by Thierry Lalevée

Is it a coincidence that rumors of the death of Iran's Ruhollah Khomeini began circulating in mid-June, at a time of intense negotiations between Iran and several Western nations, for the release of hostages? According to several intelligence specialists, the rumors are in fact a disinformation ploy, intended to convince gullible Western governments to bend over backward to appease the Teheran regime. If Khomeini is dead, or about to die, so the argument goes, who will question those who say that Iran's situation is rapidly changing, "potentially for the good," and that it is important to have a foot in the door?

By the time the disinformation ploy is effectively exposed, Khomeini may actually have died. But no one will have opposed the ongoing negotiations for what amounts to a resumption of the type of arms-for-hostages deals for which Lt. Col. Oliver North and others have been indicted.

If any conclusion is to be drawn from the Irangate scandal, it is that the bigger the lie, the better the cover it provides. Hence, what used to be terrorist nations and organizations have suddenly become transformed into "radical states showing signs of moderation," as Muammar Qaddafi's Libya is now described. It is not the regimes themselves that have changed, but for political expediency, the propaganda war has shifted.

The fallacy of this propaganda is shown most sharply in the case of the Middle East conflict, where Washington is day-by-day drawing closer to the Syria of President Hafez al Assad, who opposes negotiations with Israel, but also rejects any official talks with the PLO, which has just authored a new peace plan. It so happens that Syria occupies that part of Lebanon where the hostages are located, under control of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

The reality in the currently ongoing hostage negotiations is twofold. First, they are now receiving the backing of the Soviet Union, and were a direct issue of negotiations at the Moscow Summit at the end of May and beginning of June. General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov has agreed to cooperate in the negotiations, notably through Soviet client state Syria, provided he is kept informed of the steps which are taken. Second, even though Khomeini is not officially dead, Iran's factional situation is extremely fluid. But to conclude

from this, as some do, that the coming months will see the rise of a pro-Western, more moderate faction in Iran, is nothing but wishful thinking. As Irangate has shown, and as was underlined in testimony before Independent Counsel Lawrence Walsh's investigators on June 10 by former CIA agent George Cave, Iranian negotiations with the United States have always involved the Iranian hardliners. Their rationale is simple enough: There is no contradiction in getting weapons and money from the United States, since this helps Iran fight America!

But the lessons of Irangate have not deterred the Western negotiators. President Reagan, sure of Gorbachov's backing, made a stopover in London after the Moscow Summit to brief Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and from that point on, American and British hostage negotiations have intensified.

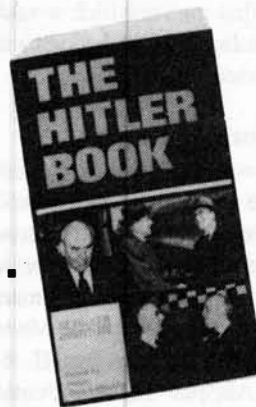
The top-secret negotiations have included a May 15 meeting in Geneva, a late-May meeting in Ankara between Defense Intelligence Agency boss Lt. Gen. Leonard H. Perroots and Iranian representatives, and there was a series of meetings in Algiers, starting June 1. On the American side, the negotiations have been centralized by U.N. Ambassador Vernon Walters, Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs John Whitehead, and Deputy Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs Richard Murphy. The Iranian side has included Khomeini's son-in-law Sadegh Tabatabai, Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Larijani, and U.N. Ambassador Ja'afar Mahalati. On the British side, the Church of England, Lord Kilbracken of the Anglo-Kurdish Association, the Foreign Office, and Lonrho, Ltd.'s chairman, Tiny Rowland, have all been involved.

New arms to Iran

The bottom line, of course, concerns money and weapons. In Ankara, General Perroots reportedly made the commitment that Washington would increase its deliveries of weapons to Afghan resistance movements, especially those based in Iran, now led by Hekmatyar, ensuring that these weapons *are actually delivered to Iran*. Since the United States is forbidden from delivering weapons directly to Iran, Washington also reportedly agreed to make available to European-based arms merchants, the kind of American equipment that Iran requires.

No less important are the demands of Syria. Indeed, most of the Iranian-held hostages have been holed up for several weeks in South Beirut. Syria could have intervened to release them at any time. But this was not done, because Syria wanted to wait for the conclusion of the negotiations between Iran and the West, as well as of bilateral Iranian-Syrian negotiations. One of Syria's demands to Washington is that it should dump the Lebanese Christian forces which control East Beirut. The word from Damascus is: When Beirut is reunified under Syrian control, then the hostages will be released. Washington could not care less about the Lebanese Christian forces, but its ability to force them to withdraw from East Beirut is in any case minimal.

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