

Turkey falls into British trap; regional war looms

by Joseph Brewda

The U.S., British, and French governments have set up a new destabilization of the Mideast. Over the weekend of March 21-22, Turkish military and gendarmes in seven Kurdish ethnic towns in southeastern Turkey opened fire on Kurdish demonstrators, who reportedly had been peacefully demonstrating for Kurdish autonomy. Ninety demonstrators died as a result, according to the Turkish government, sparking sporadic fighting between Turkish military forces and Turkish Kurds throughout the region. "At least 50,000 rounds were spent. They [the Kurds] fired without let-up on armored vehicles with rockets and automatic weapons," Southeast emergency rule governor Unal Erkan reported, in describing one incident. Over 400 Kurds are being detained, and curfews have been imposed in several areas.

"From now on, the Kurdish insurrection can only be suppressed with a bloodbath," Turkish President Turgut Özal told the press, alleging that earlier efforts at counterinsurgency had been ineffective. The United States and Britain have armed and funded various Kurdish groups in the area, to organize a rebellion in Iraq, CIA head Robert Gates and others have admitted. The same groups claim part of Turkey. Özal failed to mention this fact. Turkish jets have begun bombing towns in the region, asserting that such actions are necessary to quell the "rebellion."

Even more ominously, Turkey is threatening war with Syria and Iran, and has begun bombing Kurdish villages in northern Iraq. Turkey claims that the three states are supporting and training the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), allegedly responsible for the fighting. Although the PKK is described as terrorist, there is at least one known incident in which U.S. military forces on the Turkish/Iraqi border have airlifted weapons to them, according to reports, including in the Turkish press.

The British and U.S. governments officially support the

recent actions by Turkey against the Kurds, and its threats against its neighbors, leading Turkey to believe it has a deal to extend its influence throughout the region, something it was promised after the Gulf war. "The United States condemns acts of terrorism launched in the past week by the PKK, the terrorist organization in Turkey and abroad," State Department spokesman Margaret Tutwiler said on March 24. U.S. and British media have by and large supported the measures, as have the Israelis. General war in the region, ruinous to all sides, including Turkey, is Anglo-American policy.

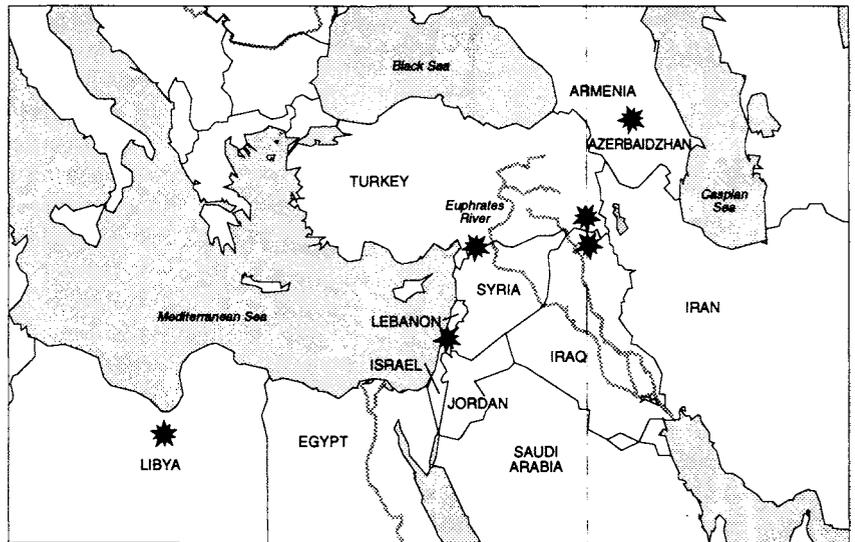
Other potential conflicts in the region include a U.S. strike against Iraq, Iran, or Libya. On March 28, CIA director Gates, testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, claimed that Iraq had already succeeded in "significant reconstruction" of its military industry, and warned that Iran has "not yet abandoned the goal of leading the Islamic world." On March 31, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution (10-5) imposing sanctions against Libya for alleged sponsorship of terrorism; the U.S. media are claiming that Libya will seize western hostages. The sanctions include a severing of Libya's air links, an arms embargo, and a reduction in the number of Libyan diplomatic personnel in foreign countries. The moves are programmed to go into effect April 15.

Conflicts with Syria, Iraq grow

Under the pretext of quelling the uprising which the massacre initiated, Turkey has amassed 100,000 soldiers in Turkey's Kurdish region, which borders Syria, Iraq, and Iran. The populations in those three countries along their borders with Turkey are also Kurdish.

Using as a pretext the claim that PKK cadre infiltrate Turkey through Iraq, Turkish jets have begun bombing Kurd-

Crisis spots in the Middle East which are nearing all-out war



ish villages in northern Iraq. Limited deployment of Turkish ground forces into Iraq has begun. Speaking on March 24, Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel declared that “as soon as the weather permits, the Iraqi border will be made like a wall.”

Meanwhile, Turkey is threatening to bomb alleged PKK terrorist training camps in the Syrian-controlled Lebanese Bekaa Valley, and will be dispatching Interior Minister Ismet Sezgin to Syria the second week of April with an ultimatum. “It’s impossible to kill each mosquito one by one—you have to exterminate the breeding grounds,” Demirel said on March 29, in explicit reference to Syria, adding, “it should be clearly understood our patience has a limit.” According to the Turkish paper *Milliyet*, Turkey is threatening to cut off the flow into Syria of the Euphrates River, which supplies Syria with almost all its water, if Syria does not comply with Turkish demands. “Now is the time to finish Syria off, as there is no longer a Soviet Union to support it,” Turkey’s largest daily, *Sabah*, editorialized March 27.

For such reasons, a Turkish-Syrian war this spring is possible. If it occurs, Israel would probably simultaneously invade Lebanon and Syria as well. Lebanese forces, fearing Israeli attack, went on full combat alert in the last week of March. Turkish conflict with neighboring Iran is also possible. Iran began moving more of its forces to the Turkish border immediately following the deployment of Turkish troops nearby.

In Turkey’s interest?

The Turkish military is working under the following scenario, according to sources close to it.

The first phase involves Turkey establishing a 20-mile “security zone” within Iraqi territory, allegedly to stop PKK infiltration. The zone is modeled on that which the Israelis established in Lebanon. The Turkish-Iraqi border is moun-

tainous. An important feature of the proposed “security zone” is that, by allowing Turkish military control over northern Iraqi valleys, Turkey will be better positioned to deploy its ground forces throughout the Arabian peninsula. Turkey fantasizes that it can then dominate the Arab lands it controlled prior to World War I. Last March, Özal and Bush discussed the creation of this zone.

The second phase of this scenario may begin with a Bush administration announcement that it will ask the U.N. to lift the blockade on northern Iraq, while maintaining a blockade on the rest of the country. The pretext given will be a “humanitarian crisis” in Iraqi “Kurdistan,” allegedly created by an Iraqi military blockade of the region. Those sections of Iraqi “Kurdistan” controlled by the Kurdish forces of Masud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, both openly patronized by the Anglo-Americans, will be supplied through Turkey. Whether or not sanctions against northern Iraq are lifted, the Anglo-Americans are angling for the creation of a Kurdish puppet government in the region.

The third phase of the scenario, or so the Turks believe, involves the gradual assimilation of the northern oil-rich Iraqi Kurdish region by Turkey, under the cover of this new Kurdish entity. Turkey had been promised this region by former U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and others in the fall of 1990, as Turkey’s reward if it did Anglo-American bidding in the Gulf war. Turkey did

Unfortunately for the Turks, the scenario is a trap. Anglo-American policy is general war and the weakening of all states in the region, including Turkey. All important Kurdish organizations, the PKK included, are controlled by the British, and secondarily the Americans, French, and Israelis. A Turkish “Vietnam” in its own Kurdish regions, and those of its neighbors, simultaneous with conflicts with neighboring Armenia, and to the west with Greece, will shatter Turkey, a British-French objective since the First World War.