

Is Cheney Setting Up Turkey Against Iran?

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

It seems that hardly a day passes without a statement by Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül, denying reports of an alleged deal struck with U.S. intelligence officials concerning belligerent moves against Iran. On Dec. 24, Gül rejected reports, carried by a German press agency a day earlier, that his meetings with FBI director Robert Mueller and CIA head Porter Goss, had dealt with any third countries, be it Iran or Syria (as some reports claimed). Such claims, he said, were “pure imagination.” Two days later, following a meeting in Cairo with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abu Gheit, Gül again was asked about the reports, and again issued a clear-cut denial: “Such allegations are fictitious,” he stated, adding that the CIA and FBI leaders had made “routine visits.”

The story put out first by Germany’s second largest press agency, ddp Nachrichtenagentur, was what the Germans call “hard tobacco;” it said that Goss, during his trip to Turkey in mid-December, had taken with him three dossiers on Iran. One alleged that Iran was working together with the al-Qaeda terrorist organization; another presented material on Iran’s nuclear program; and a third, asserted that Iran viewed Turkey as an enemy, and would try to “export its regime.” The upshot was that Turkey, therefore, should support the U.S. in its actions, including aerial bombardments of nuclear sites and military installations. According to the report, Goss offered the Turks a *quid pro quo*: if they assisted the U.S.—presumably with intelligence information, or basing rights—they would be informed prior to the air strikes in due time, in order to be able to launch strikes themselves, against positions of the Kurdish terror organization, PKK, inside Iran.

The claims made by Goss’s dossier are patently absurd, as any competent intelligence officer should know. Iran has a long history of animosity—including armed clashes—with al-Qaeda, as well as with the Afghan-based Taliban. Furthermore, Iran’s relations with Turkey have not only been unproblematic, but have steadily expanded in the recent period. As for the nuclear issue, that ball is in the court of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in Vienna.

That Goss should have presented such dossiers, especially in light of the political earthquake in Washington, around the manipulated, if not manufactured, phoney intelligence regarding Iraq’s alleged weapons of mass destruction and al-Qaeda ties, is outrageous. But that does not mean the report

is false. Indeed, most interesting in the ddp story is that it cites "German security circles" as its source. Furthermore, the story was given credence in another German wire story by Udo Ulfkotte, a journalist known to have privileged relations with high-level German intelligence circles. So, some German intelligence circles wanted to blow the story, in an attempt to kill the operation, and keep Germany out of it. Memories of the Iraq war are still fresh in Berlin.

Ulfkotte pointed out in his *Passauer Neue Presse* Online (PNP) story, that Mueller's visit to Turkey had preceded Goss's by only a few days, and that Turkish Land Forces Commander Gen. Yasar Buyukanit had been told during a visit to Washington at the same time, that the Turkish army should be prepared "in the middle term" for a U.S. military strike against Iran. Ulfkotte added that, "according to German security circles," NATO General Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, during a stop in Turkey, had been briefed on the American plans.

The story does not end here, however. On Dec. 22, Israeli IDF Chief of Staff Halutz also visited Ankara, for one day, and met with political and military leaders. In his talks with Chief of Staff Gen. Hilmi Ozkok, the agenda included "Islamist terrorism" and Iran's nuclear activities. Ozkok reportedly warned against any Israeli intervention in Iran, which would be very risky, and argued in favor of a diplomatic solution.

The message transmitted by Goss and Muller, however preposterous, was received in Turkish government and diplomatic circles. On Dec. 21, Ankara's ambassador to the U.S., Faruk Logoglu issued the first such official statement, alleging Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions. "In my view," he said at a Washington-based thinktank, "Iran is irreversibly bent on having nuclear weapons." However, he shied away from any military option, and proposed that Washington launch a direct dialogue with Tehran. "Direct U.S.-Iran talks are needed, but I don't think this is likely in 2006," he said, adding, "The Iranian situation will inevitably affect Turkey." He also noted, "Tensions between the United States and Iran will reflect on our relations with the United States and with Iran. This happened on Iraq."

Turks Want No Adventure

Turkish sources, as well as an Arab source well versed in Turkish politics, confirmed the Goss-Mueller mission to *EIR*, and agreed that there is no way that Turkey could or would sign on to any such wild adventure. One Istanbul source reported that the Goss-Mueller visits had taken place in the wake of the revelations of CIA secret flights and secret prisons. The affair had exploded into a scandal in Turkey, since there had been rumors of Turkish involvement in plane landings at Sabiha Gokcen airport on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. The Turkish press had asserted that the U.S. authorities had even questioned persons arrested by Turkish authorities, which created an uproar: Who is in charge here? Who is asking the questions, the U.S. or the Turks? were

some reactions.

All three sources agreed that the Iran caper proposed by Goss, had placed the country somewhere between a rock and a hard place: given that Turkey is a NATO member, a U.S. ally, and has a military agreement with Israel as well, it is vulnerable to such heavy-handed pressure. On the other hand, public opinion is unwaveringly opposed to participation in any regional war ignited by Washington or Tel Aviv. As became manifest during the Iraq war, when the Parliament voted against allowing U.S. troops to move from Turkey into Iraq, the political establishment could not become complicit in the conflict. Whatever assistance might have been supplied, must have been carried out with total discretion.

The bottom line is: the Turkish government does not want confrontation with Iran, and will continue, therefore, to deny that it has even been approached for such a project. The two Turkish sources stressed that Turkey and Iran have not had border disputes or any other such conflict for hundreds of years, and that there is no reason to start now.

Although concern over Iran's nuclear program has increased in the political arena, especially in light of recent anti-Israeli statements by President Ahmadinejad, clear heads realize that there is no imminent danger from Tehran. As Lyndon LaRouche remarked in this connection, the factional strife inside Iran, which has exploded since the presidential elections brought a hardliner to power, is such that there is no rationale to the argument that military action is required, to eliminate Iran's nuclear facilities. Rather, LaRouche stated, the entire affair has more to do with the trials and tribulations of Vice President Dick Cheney, than with anything occurring inside Iran. The political noose is tightening around Cheney's neck, as the multiple scandals around CIA flights, secret jails, and NSA spying on American citizens, are feeding the impeachment fever in Washington. A desperate Cheney could contemplate any wild move—including talk of a military attack against Iran—to try to change the subject. In fact, considering the quality of intelligence that Mr. Goss presented in his three dossiers, it is highly likely that it was produced in the same kitchens and sent up the same stovepipes, as Cheney's pre-war intelligence on Iraq.

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