

politics. The big fight will be on the question of scrapping the Politburo. It will be very messy, and no predictions can be made. Those fighting the new structures know that they must win now or never. Should the Politburo be scrapped, its replacement will hold no real power. The new Political Executive Committee, regardless of what "powers" it may have on paper, by its very composition can be nothing more than a debating society.

### Whose 'monopoly of power'?

The much talked-about abolition of Article 6 of the U.S.S.R. Constitution, which stipulates "the leading role of the CPSU" in Soviet society, makes good headlines for Western newspapers, but it doesn't mean anything. The real "monopoly of power" in the U.S.S.R. is the monopoly of power held by the leadership of the *state* apparatus, most emphatically including the KGB, security forces, and the military. The plenum, which with the left hand took away the irrelevant party's "monopoly," increased significantly the state's monopoly of power, by voting up a *presidency* with greatly expanded powers,

The plenum's decisions concerning the party marked the recognition of the reality that the party's move toward its demise as an institution of power and authority is irreversible. How rapid the party's collapse has been, was revealed by the Soviet media Feb. 3, when it was reported that in the past two years, over 4 million of the party's 20 million members have quit, with the rate of resignations is climbing every month. The figures, alarming in themselves, understate the case. In the Transcaucasus, the Communists rule in name only: Over half the membership in the Azerbaijan party bolted in the month of January alone. In the three Baltic republics, as the case of Lithuania shows, the Communist parties have survived only by joining the popular pro-independence movements. Another yardstick has been the total collapse in the past year in the readership of the Communist Party newspaper *Pravda*, whose daily circulation has plummeted from 9 million to 4 million, and no bottom in sight.

At the plenum, Gorbachov wasn't kidding when he candidly presented the crisis of the CPSU: "A certain confusion, a mood of defeatism and liquidationism is noticeable. This is a danger not to be underestimated." If the party's immediate situation is bleak, its future prospects are hopeless, as seen in the Komsomol—the party's youth organization—whose ranks have been so thoroughly depleted by resignations, and the apathy of most of its remaining membership, as to render it unsalvageable.

The depth of the crisis came up repeatedly during the plenum proceedings. The most telltale feature of this was contained in the speech of Yuri Arkhipov, a Leningrad city party secretary. Arkhipov reported that in the past months, not one single person had applied for party membership in Leningrad, a phenomenon unknown since the Bolshevik Revolution.

## U.S. starts to pull plug on ally Turkey

by Scott Thompson and Joseph Brewda

The Bush administration's no-defense budget, recently submitted to Congress, begins to wave "goodbye" to Turkey, the NATO member directly facing the Soviet Union in the easternmost boundaries of Western military alliance. The budget incorporates a decision to close two air bases there, one of which carried out electronic surveillance for early warning of a Soviet surprise attack. While it is unclear precisely how the new defense policy guidance announced Feb. 7 by Defense Secretary Richard Cheney will be implemented in terms of further cutbacks, the plans for such cutbacks occur at the precise moment when, contrary to Bush administration statements, the threat to the Southern Flank of NATO is dramatically escalating.

This point was driven home by the statements of top Turkish political and military spokesmen at the defense seminar of the American Friends of Turkey held on Feb. 1 in Crystal City, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C. Turkish Ambassador to the U.S. Nuzet Kandemir stated: "There have been remarkable changes in the East bloc, but despite the perception of a diminished threat, there has been little change in the real threat." This fact was supported by Vice Admiral Guven Erkaya, the Chief of Plans for the Turkish General Staff, who said: "The false perception of a diminished threat from the East bloc has undercut NATO's deterrence capability."

It is Turkey's official position, under pressure from Washington to support the Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) talks, because, as former Ambassador Nuri Even told *EIR*, "It reduces the threat of a Soviet 'bolt from the blue' surprise attack upon NATO's Central European flank." But one Turkish official after another stressed that the result of the talks will only be to increase the combined threat against Turkey itself. Vice Admiral Erkaya said, "The post-CFE situation may enhance security in Central Europe, but the stability will get worse in the Middle East."

The Soviets have already given the most modern, MiG-29 equipment to their ally Syria. Even pointed out in discussion that even before the Soviets shift more modern equipment there, Turkey is vastly outgunned by the combined weight of Iraq and Syria in combat aircraft (2-to-1), armed helicopters (18-to-1), battle tanks (3-to-1), and artillery (3-to-1). These figures for two Soviet military surrogates, which do not even take into account the additional, massive forces

of the Warsaw Pact to the north, belie the claims of Cheney's new defense policy guidance that there is no "credible threat" to the Middle East from the Soviet Union.

## U.S. spouts Soviet line

Turkish Vice Admiral Erkaya made clear in an interview that Turkey is on an alert right now over the Soviets' possibly using their invasion of the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan as a pretext for a direct Soviet move into eastern Turkey. Soviet Defense Minister Dimitri Yazov admitted that the purpose of the invasion was to crush dissent from the Azeri Popular Front, which looks to Turkey as a model. As the Deputy Turkish Ambassador to the U.S. made clear to *EIR*, Turkey is angered that the Bush administration condoned this bloody crackdown, while the U.S. State Department spouted the Soviet line, that the troops were sent in to protect lives from an age-old ethnic dispute. Turkey's position is unequivocal that this is a territorial, not a religious dispute.

Meanwhile, complementing its military moves in the Caucasus region, Soviet intelligence services have opened up several new potential fronts against Turkey. The U.S. State Department has sought to overthrow Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal ever since he met with Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. in the summer of 1987.

- In the last week of January, Greek mobs looted and burned shops in the ethnic Turkish town of Komotini, in Grecian Thrace. Shortly following the incident, the Turkish

consul general in the region was expelled from the country for alleged inflammatory remarks. Turkish sources fear that a repeat of the events of September 1967 may occur, when agent-provocateurs triggered Turkish rioting against ethnic Greeks in Istanbul. A manipulated revival of the Greek-Turkish ethnic rivalry could profoundly destabilize the already badly weakened Özal government.

- On Jan. 31 Mumamar Aksoy, a leader of the Turkish bar association, and a well-known leftist, was assassinated. Turks fear that a repeat of the KGB manipulated right wing-left wing warfare may soon begin, warfare which in an earlier period left 25 dead a day and helped provoke the 1980 military coup.

- An extraordinary press conference was held by the terrorist Kurdish PKK on the island of Cyprus on Jan. 29 denouncing the Turkish government. This signaled the revival of the "Kurdish card," the use of the Kurdish ethnic population clustered in the mountainous border region among Iran, Turkey, and Iraq, which periodically rises up to demand autonomy, as well as the possibility that Cyprus may again go up in flames. The PKK works closely with the terrorist Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASA-LA). Continuing claims by Radio Yerevan in Soviet Armenia to the eastern Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan shows that the Soviets still contemplate intervention into Turkey, possibly following provoked Soviet Armenian and Kurdish clashes with the Turkish Army in that region.

## U.S. plotted coup against General Aoun

According to the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al Qabas*, the Bush administration was up to its neck in a coup plot against Gen. Michel Aoun. Last Nov. 15, three unnamed American envoys met secretly with Lebanese Forces chief Samir Geagea to offer him a ministerial post in a Syrian-sponsored puppet regime if he would participate in a three-front military offensive to unseat Aoun, the Army commander-in-chief and legitimate interim President of Lebanon.

The plot, said *Al Qabas*, involved a Geagea-led military onslaught against the Lebanese Army inside East Beirut, timed with a similar offensive by another militia group headed by Eli Hobeika in the suburbs north of the city. Reportedly, two unnamed European governments, in collusion with Washington, tried to recruit four top aides to General Aoun into a coup plot against him that was to coincide with the inter-Christian fighting.

*Al Qabas* said that the overall putsch plan was to have been activated Jan. 31.

Apparently, General Aoun learned of the plot and moved preemptively to defeat the Christian militias. In ten days of heavy fighting since Jan. 31, hundreds of Christians were killed, thousands injured, and further sections of East Beirut and adjacent suburbs gutted.

According to several eyewitness accounts reported to *EIR*, the initial heavy shelling of East Beirut was carried out by Syrian units working in conjunction with the U.S.-sponsored putsch attempt.

According to leading figures in the Lebanese-American community, the Bush administration is still pledged to Aoun's overthrow. They say this was discussed at the recent Malta summit, and that the Saudis, along with the U.S. and the Soviets, agree that getting rid of Aoun is a precondition for a new condominium to rule the entire eastern Mediterranean region. The State Department tried to have Aoun's ambassador Abuhabib evicted from the Lebanese embassy compound in Washington, D.C., flouting Lebanese sovereignty and flaunting the Bush administration's complicity in the overthrow plot.

—Jeffrey Steinberg