

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