

# War on Iraq Would Be 'Catastrophic': Ecevit

by William Jones

The red-carpet treatment given Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, during his week-long visit to Washington on Jan. 14-20, may have been motivated, on the part of certain circles, by an attempt to "acclimatize" him to the possibility of U.S. military action against Iraq. But he made no pretense of agreeing with the Wolfowitz-Perle cabal's policy of launching "preemptive" military action against neighboring Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

At his July 17 press conference after his meetings with President George Bush and other U.S. officials, *EIR* asked Ecevit what he would say concerning any military action against Iraq. Ecevit replied that it would be "catastrophic" as far as Turkey was concerned. "I understand that a definite decision about how to solve the so-called Iraqi question has not yet been reached," Ecevit said. "President Bush, of course, mentioned it to me in rather strong terms yesterday, saying, as he did so on various occasions publicly, that America cannot stand Saddam Hussein."

At a joint press availability before their meeting, President Bush had responded to a question on Iraq by reiterating what he has been saying for the last month. "I expect Saddam Hussein to let inspectors back into the country," Bush said. "We want to know whether he's developing weapons of mass de-

struction. He claims he's not. Let the world in to see. And if he doesn't, we'll have to deal with that at the appropriate time."

"Well, a way out can be found, of course, and should be found," Ecevit continued, "but I hope that it will not include a military operation, because such an operation could be catastrophic for Turkey, even if Turkey did not participate in it. You know, I am sure, that we have suffered a lot as a result of the Gulf crisis, the Gulf War, when Iraq was virtually divided into three parts, particularly two parts; one major part adjoining Turkey. And this has cost us a lot of money, a lot of lives, and we don't want the same thing to happen again."

The utopian faction, which includes co-thinkers of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz in the administration, are mooting a "Balkanization" of the Iraqi nation into a Kurdish section in the north, a Sunni section (minus Saddam Hussein) in the center, and a Shiite entity in the south. If this were to occur, as the Turkish leader warned, there would be even greater calls for an independent Kurdistan, which would threaten the integrity of Turkey, which has a very active Kurdish minority population in the eastern part of the country. "But the human mind is imaginative," Ecevit said, "and I'm sure that we can find a better way out for the solution."

## Pipeline Politics

The importance of Turkey was underlined by the tremendous attention Ecevit received on his visit. Aside from his meeting with President Bush on July 16, Ecevit also met with Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Commerce Secretary Don Evans, and Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, as well as International Monetary Fund (IMF) Director Horst Köhler and World Bank President James Wolfensohn. There was certainly a lot of "courting" going on.



*Turkey's President Bulent Ecevit, after meeting with President Bush, firmly opposed any American attack on Iraq as disastrous for the well-being and interests of Turkey.*

With the blessing of the Bush Administration, Turkey looks as if it will succeed in the dubious goal of obtaining a deal with the IMF. During Ecevit's visit, the U.S. State Department announced on Jan. 16 the creation of a joint United States-Turkey Economic Partnership Commission, thereby upgrading the economic cooperation and the trade relationship with Turkey. At his press conference, the Prime Minister also announced that the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline—a major project for building a pipeline from the Caspian Sea which does not pass through Russia or through Iran, but through Turkey—was again on the table. The pipeline, developed more for political than economic reasons during the first Bush Administration, has remained something of a dead letter, largely due to the lack of funding for such a major undertaking, when it is not even known how much oil can be gotten out of the Caspian Sea.

While President Bush has announced a “new relationship” with Russia's President Vladimir Putin, there are efforts being made by the Brzezinski faction to use the “war on terrorism” to establish a permanent military presence in Central Asia, against Russian influence in the area, and to use Turkey as a counter to Russia in the primarily Turkic-speaking countries in this part of the world.

In addition, Turkey's new strategic relationship with Israel has also enhanced its importance in the eyes of the Perle-Wolfowitz faction, who work hand-in-glove with the “Mega” networks comprising the extreme right-wing of the Israeli political scene. Turkey realizes this carries the danger of being placed in confrontation with Russia, on behalf of this faction of “new imperialist” war-mongers.

In response to another question from *EIR* at his Jan. 17 press conference, Ecevit indicated that he felt that Turkey would not be placed in such a position. “With regard to the Caspian oil and gas, sir, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan gasline project is a very important project not only for economic reasons, but also for strategic and political reasons.

“Our relation with Russia does not present a difficulty,” Ecevit continued. “I have been able to detect in recent months that a much warmer atmosphere seems to be emerging between the United States and the Russian Federation, and maybe we could all cooperate in other forms of gas and oil pipeline projects so it will not be any handicap in the way of normal and friendly relations between the West and Russian Federation.”

Time will tell whether Turkey will indeed be willing to serve as a “marcher lord” for the New Imperialism. Turkey's own disastrous economic situation would benefit greatly by increased regional economic cooperation, in particular with their great neighbor to the north, Russia.

In addition, there is Turkey's significance over the past century, as a secular nation with a Muslim majority, in which Ecevit takes great pride. Thus Turkey would certainly take a beating in the Muslim world were it to enlist as a centurion in the “New Empire” scenario, which clearly aims to foment a “clash of civilizations” against the entire Muslim world.

## Cooperation Was Focus Of Zhu's Visit to India

by Mary Burdman

Amid a complicated strategic situation in South and Central Asia, Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji made an official visit to India and Bangladesh on Jan. 12-18. The five-day trip to India, the first by a Chinese prime minister since 1991, had been set for November 2001, but was delayed because of the volatile international situation in the wake of the coup attempt against the U.S. government beginning Sept. 11, and the subsequent U.S. war on Afghanistan. Despite the alleged defeat of the Taliban, the security situation in the region has become much worse in the past months: There is essentially a dual-power situation in Pakistan, a long-term ally of China; the violent Dec. 13 attack against the national Parliament of India, one among several attacks on Indian institutions, has sharply raised Indian-Pakistani tensions; the U.S. military deployments, in Pakistan itself and into Central Asian nations, including Kyrgyzstan, which borders China, are obviously of serious concern to Beijing.

One commentary, by a deputy director of a government research institute, in China's national *Outlook Weekly* on Jan. 14, warned not only of the “fundamental impact of the slackening world economy” on China, but also of the critical problem of “China's oil security.”

“In the name of dealing blows to terrorism, the United States launched severe military attacks on the Taliban government in Afghanistan after the Sept. 11 incident. However, many men of insight, pointed out that the real purpose of the United States is to make the presence of its military force felt in Central Asia. This has posed a real threat to the source and channels of China's strategic resources,” the article stated.

Another indication that Beijing is fully aware that the “war on terrorism” has only increased regional tensions, was the State Council report issued on Jan. 21, on separatism in “East Turkestan,” or the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in western China. While noting that the “East Turkestan” separatists “are closely connected with international terrorist forces,” especially the Osama bin Laden network and the Taliban, the paper warns that these forces are going to *expand* their operations—something India has also experienced. “The terrorist organizations in South Asia lost no time in conducting a secret strategic shift, evacuating their members in Afghanistan to the surrounding South and Central Asian and Middle East regions, to preserve and accumulate their strength,” it said.