

NATO accelerates militarization of the Middle East—with Arab funds

by Judith Wyer and Nancy Coker

When Saudi Arabian financier Adnan Khashoggi visited Turkey this autumn, he was greeted by top Turkish officials not as the notorious gun-runner that he is so widely known to be, but as a moneybags to salvage Turkey's economy and finance an upgrading of the Turkish military. During his Oct. 3-5 visit, Khashoggi conferred with members of Turkey's general staff just two days before the arrival of U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary Richard Perle, and one week prior to the arrival of Defense Deputy Secretary Frank Carlucci and CIA chief William Casey.

The order of business for all four was the same: building up Turkey's military capability as the centerpiece of a scheme to extend NATO into the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean, and make Turkey the site of a regional arms industry, partly controlled by Mideast financiers.

Since the convening of a secretive NATO foreign minister's meeting in late September in Canada, plans to extend NATO into the developing sector beginning with the number-one target area, the Middle East, have dramatically intensified. Turkey, Egypt, and Pakistan—the only states with large standing armies in the region—have been pegged as the foundation of this out-of-area NATO strategy. Lebanon, as well, is now being integrated into this scheme both by virtue of the deployment of NATO forces as peacekeepers, including U.S. Marines, and through efforts being negotiated to triple and heavily rearm the Lebanese Army.

Though NATO is believed to be an alliance to protect vital western interests, in this case Mideast oil, extending NATO out-of-area is not a military policy but a financial one. The bid to extend NATO into the region via Turkey is potentially incendiary given its immediate proximity to the southern Soviet border. But in their zeal to bludgeon the developing sector into acquiescing to the International Monetary Fund's drive to extract debt repayments and loot raw materials, the NATO strategists around Kissinger are ignoring this danger.

Khashoggi and Perle met with the Turkish chief of staff

while Carlucci conferred with the Turkish defense minister in between lightning visits to Greece and Lebanon. The only thing made public about Perle's stay in Turkey was a terse announcement that 10 NATO air and naval bases in Turkey were to be upgraded and modernized, and the United States is to set up electronic listening posts including the dispatch of AWACS surveillance aircrafts to Turkey.

Less than 48 hours before Perle arrived there, Khashoggi had boasted to the Turkish *Daily News* that he was most interested in financing a plan to build a jet fighter assembly plant in Turkey. Khashoggi, a well-established dealer in the international arms black market, declared that the plan was contingent on ongoing U.S.-Turkish negotiations.

A similar scheme was leaked to the *Washington Post* in early October for Egypt, whereby the Saudis would foot the bill for a jet fighter assembly plant in Egypt. According to a Washington source, such "offshore" jet fighter plants, for which Northrup and General Dynamics are known to be in the running, would give these firms a free hand at peddling their merchandise, sidestepping all congressional supervision of sales of U.S. jet fighters.

Khashoggi has maintained longstanding ties with the large U.S.-based arms companies going back to the early 1970s when he acted as the middle man in deals between Saudi Arabia and Lockheed. But Khashoggi's free-wheeling business practices and his well-publicized womanizing forced Riyadh to publicly distance itself from the multi-millionaire. Khashoggi has an equally controversial reputation within the U.S. defense establishment, making any involvement with him and Defense Department officials a scandal.

Though it is not known what the subject of Carlucci and Casey's visits to Turkey was, Carlucci has a long history of brokering arms deals to the Mideast. In testimony to Italian authorities on the Propaganda-2 Freemasonic Lodge's illegal activities during a recent Italian state inquiry, it was revealed that P-2 chief Licio Gelli, Carlucci, and Henry Kissinger had attempted to set up a sale of jet fighter planes to an unnamed

company. Khashoggi is a close business partner of the same fascist P-2 circles that include New York organized-crime lawyer Roy Cohn.

According to Turkish press sources, Khashoggi and Saudi Defense Minister Sultan will both arrive in Turkey later this month, reportedly to resume negotiations on the proposal and to open talks on closer Saudi-Turkish military cooperation.

Pressuring Egypt

Turkish sources report that the United States is secretly attempting to sponsor an Egypt-Turkish pact as the core of tightened NATO control over the sea lanes of the Red Sea and eastern Mediterranean, with Pakistan playing a mercenary role in the Persian Gulf.

But Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is known to be quietly resisting such a scheme. Egypt withdrew from the third annual Rapid Deployment Force Bright Star exercises, and sources report that the Cairo regime is disturbed at "strong signals" it is getting from Washington that future military aid will be linked to Egypt's signing a written agreement giving military facilities to the Rapid Deployment Force, as Morocco's King Hassan did earlier this year. Such a demand challenges the foundation of Egyptian nationalism established by the 1952 revolution which even Mubarak's predecessor Anwar Sadat, who was far more cooperative with the RDF, would not agree to.

Pakistan's involvement in the militarization plan is already well advanced. Pakistani forces maintain a presence in 22 Muslim countries including Libya and Saudi Arabia. Without the estimated 10,000 to 15,000 Pakistani mercenaries in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi military would not function. In exchange for billions of dollars in Saudi aid, Pakistan mans vital military posts, and Washington sources say the British-trained Pakistani army will further increase its presence not only in Saudi Arabia but in its sparsely populated neighboring oil-producing states.

Greece is fully cooperating with the NATOization of the region despite the campaign promises of Socialist Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou to expel NATO bases from Greece. In a speech just before last week's local elections, Papandreou affirmed he would not challenge NATO's presence in Greece. Ironically Papandreou justified this stance on the basis of Turkey, Greece's regional adversary, becoming militarily stronger!

According to Greek sources, the Greek central bank governor and other high level Greek officials have recently been in Kuwait discussing financing for unnamed military ventures in Greece. Greece already has a burgeoning arms industry, reportedly privately funded by Arab money.

Lebanon is slated to play a vital role in the military buildup of the region, serving intelligence and communications functions as well as an upgraded ground troop capability. The State Department revealed Oct. 19 that for the past two weeks a team of Pentagon officials was in Lebanon, assessing

the needs of a Lebanese army, which U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger has already pledged to provide support in expanding. Lebanese President Amin Gemayel met with Weinberger Oct. 20 to discuss findings of the Pentagon team and recommendations from Carlucci. Sources state that the heightened contact between the Pentagon and Lebanon is, as well, a prelude to the dispatch of thousands of U.S. troops to Lebanon. Amin is asking the United States, Italy and France, the participants in the multinational force now south of Beirut, to increase the force's numbers from the current 4,000 to 20,000.

The oil angle

The increase in the NATO and surrogate NATO presence through Egypt and Pakistan, is part of a British-authored scheme to militarize strategically vital sea lanes through which raw materials such as oil are transported.

Last week, Saudi Oil Minister Zaki Yamani became the first government official of an Arabian peninsular nation to confirm that the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council is now actively considering building a massive oil pipeline system that will carry oil from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar down the western side of the peninsula to an oil depot in Oman.

The Arab country most integrated into the Rapid Deployment Force apparatus, Oman is run from the top by its long-standing colonial overlord, Great Britain. Over the past two years, the United States has invested millions of dollars in building a base on the Omani-controlled Masirah Island near the mouth of the Persian Gulf, from which this month's Bright Star exercises are to be conducted. A rerouting of oil via the proposed pipeline system would give NATO far greater control over the Gulf oil flows. The British and Pakistani officers run the Omani military and security services.

In October, Iraq had signed an agreement with Turkey, a member of NATO, to expand its oil pipeline (Iraq's only outlet for oil exports due to its war with Iran) to 1 million barrels a day, again effectively putting Iraq's oil exports in the hands of NATO.

At the same time, the Defense Ministers of the Gulf Corporation Council convened in Riyadh where not only was the pipeline scheme discussed, but also the establishment of a joint \$30 billion defense budget for the six states. Saudi Defense Minister Sultan proposed a unified air defense system as the first phase of total military integration of the six.

The GCC, as *EIR* has documented, was created by the British as the basis of a broader regionwide military alliance, sometimes known as the Middle East Treaty Organization (METO). An unstated aspect of the Kissinger crafted Camp David Accords, METO is the center of the Mideast policy of the Shultz State Department. Shultz and his top adviser Kissinger have sold a package to Saudi Arabia: the United States will deliver some kind of Palestinian solution in exchange for Saudi backing for the militarization of the Mideast.