

VAIRLAINIT

S U P P L E M E N T

Byzantine Politics

The abduction and trial of Abdullah Ocalan

William Clark

Ocalan's abduction

"In another extension of the war against the rebel Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), the [Susurluk] report says, Turkish agents co-operated with the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad in an unsuccessful attempt on the life of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in Syria."

(Wall Street Journal 26/1/98)

Whatever the reality of the events leading up to Abdullah Ocalan's capture and eventual death sentence were, we should see it as part of wider US plans for the region.

In the UK the first mention of the CIA's involvement came in the Scotsman newspaper, which on the same day that the Guardian stated there was "no evidence" of Mossad involvement (18 Feb. 99) led with a front page "CIA behind mission to capture Ocalan". This followed on from German Kurdish newspaper's assertions. The Scotsman had been told that:

"The operation, code-named 'Watchful', was planned by the CIA and executed with the blessing of...Albright." It went on to say the actual snatch team were from Mossad. It also stated that surveillance had been underway for three months taking us back to November when Ocalan was in Rome. It would seem an attempt was made there too, but aborted. The Scotsman article provides further inference that Turkish operations in the North Iraq "no-fly zone" against the PKK were co-ordinated with the US, contrary to official statements:

"The operation was well co-ordinated, with US forces in Kuwait yesterday beginning manoeuvres on the border with Iraq..." Turkish forces were also aided by the KDP: a Kurdish group which I will discuss later.

The attacks on the 19th of February were also co-ordinated with attacks on political, human rights and religious organisations (any group beyond the control of the military) within Turkey. These continued in the lead up to the elections: the pro-Kurdish group HADEP were intimidated, arrested and banned outright together with Islamic parties. We can reasonably assume with US help.

The Scotsman's coverage followed up the next day with information that: "Sources say that the US State Department created a secret think tank six months ago to co-ordinate policy in the region." To my mind this would have been prompted to act as a counter to Ocalan's attempts to put the Kurdish issue on the World stage. The Scotsman maintain that the think tank is CIA led and co-ordinates with Mossad and Turkish special forces. Through treaties and shared military operations, Turkey and Israel are coming closer to police the region for the US. The report suggests that the State Department line is that: "With Ocalan out of the equation, the US believes that Kurdish nationalism will become more tolerant and tolerable." This will be enforced by the post Saddam break up of Iraq into three regions which they describe as "a northern Kurdish State [run by the PUK and KDP who are financed by the CIA] an Arab central democratic republic and a Shia-dominated state to the south" This also includes attempts to secure the borders of Turkey and Israel. It is a plan that has been around for some time.

Disruption

"My failure to stop the destruction of the Armenians had made Turkey for me a place of horror, and I found intolerable my further daily association with men who, however gracious and accommodating and good-natured they might have been to the American Ambassador, were still reeking with the blood of nearly a million human beings."

(Henry Morgenthau, US Ambassador to Turkey, 1913-1916)

How times have changed.

The US government has not exactly exhibited constancy in its press statements on the Ocalan capture, due obviously to its complicity in the matter.

"WASHINGTON, Feb 17 (IPS) – The administration of US President Bill Clinton has been quick to insist it played no part in the capture and removal of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan from Kenya to Turkey Monday."

"The United States did not apprehend or transfer Ocalan, or transport him to Turkey," said State

Department spokesman James Foley, reading from a prepared statement. "In other words, US personnel did not participate in any of those actions that I just described."

As an aside it could be pointed out that the same report also stated that: "During the war, western warplanes used Incirlik Air Base to launch intelligence flights and bombing raids. That base is still used by US and British warplanes who enforce the "no-fly zone" established after the war to protect the mainly Kurdish population of northern Iraq." Here it failed to include the fact that the same air base is used to attack Kurds by Turkish forces, other missions were soon to bomb Serbian forces in support of the KLA whom the State Department considered terrorists, until they were of use to them. In three days the US line changed slightly and we had this from Reuters:

"Officials confirmed the gist of reports appearing in the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times saying US diplomatic pressure helped put Ocalan in flight from a safe haven in Syria and eventually into the arms of Turkish commandos.

We've been engaged diplomatically for months to bring him to justice," said one US official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Members of a US team of intelligence and law enforcement officers, in Nairobi investigating the bombing of the US Embassy there last August, quickly discovered that Ocalan had arrived there, reports said. They placed the Greek Embassy under surveillance and monitored his phone conversations while he placed calls to political contacts, they said."

And then ten days later a CIA friendly report from CNN boasts of a new technique being used by the CIA called "Disruption":

"The key to disruption is that it takes place before terrorists strike, amounting to a pre-emptive, offensive form of counterterrorism, Richard Clarke, President Clinton's counterterrorism coordinator, said. After violent acts, arrests are difficult...U.S. counterterrorism officials increasingly use disruption because other options are so few."

Casting the constitution and international law to one side the report goes on:

organisations (see Private Eye no. 979) and disinformation seemingly directly at the behest of the Turkish foreign ministry.

While the EU can make statements such as that of EU Secretary of State, Georges Wohlfart July 1, 1997: "Turkey must improve its human rights and solve its conflict with the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) peacefully, if it wants to join the European Union...the Kurdish issue can only be resolved by political not military means." There are just too many multi national business interests in Turkey for this to last – and there are bigger moves which show a callous complicity by particularly the UK government, in the GAP project, arms sales and Oil development, which I will go into later.

Turkey has been under martial law since 1984, while this is relaxed slightly in the north, in the south east it is still in place. Martial law is not democratic rule, it is rule by the military. The political parties who could exert change in Turkey have been banned as have human rights groups; yet the pretence exists by the British government and sections of the press that Turkey is a democracy. This is motivated by financial gain. They have had to turn a blind eye to some astonishing events

The Susurluk Affair

"I am sure that Turkish academics and writers will confirm this. Yesterday's Prime Minister, today's deputy Prime Minister is well known as the leader of the criminal gangs. Court records have now registered how many criminals have been organised by former Interior Minister Mehmet Agar's signature and involved in drug trafficking to Europe. These crimes were previously blamed maliciously on the PKK."

(Abdullah Ocalan, Kurdistan Report No. 25 1997)

"...evidence suggests that at some time in the last five years, the criminal gangs began to work as enforcers for private interests tied to members of the political elite."

(Stephen Kinzer, NY Times 31/12/96)

Turkey's recent political history has revealed that the government interpenetrates to an enormous extent with very wild criminal factions. A car crash on 3/11/96 in the Susurluk district 90 miles south of Istanbul provided the starting point to proving what human rights groups and activists had argued for decades. What is now undeniable (and well-known to the governments and diplomats of the USA and UK) is that the Turkish Security apparatus developed a relationship with criminal gangs to perform killings and other 'counter-terrorist' activities including drug trafficking, and that this took place with official sanction at the highest level of government.

The driver of the car was Huseyin Kocadag – ex-deputy police chief of Istanbul who died. He was known for taking part in organising the first special counter-insurgency police teams in south east Turkey. Also in the car was Gonca Uz an ex-beauty Queen with links to organised crime who also died. Sedat Bucak MP (of the right-wing DYP party) – a tribal warlord/para-military village guard, survived badly injured. He was reportedly in charge of 2,000 Kurdish mercenaries, armed and paid by the government to fight the PKK. The car contained four people: the fourth, Abdullah Cati, riding along with top police and government officials was a Turkish Mafia Godfather wanted since 1978 by Interpol for the killings of left-wing activists. Catli was head of the fascist 'Grey Wolves' and a convicted international drug smuggler.

Interior minister Mehmet Agar (head of the police force) was forced to resign admitting that he had overseen "at least 1,000 secret operations." Found in the wreckage (together with a cache of automatic weapons and cocaine) were genuine special Interior ministry passports bearing Agar's signature and made out for Catli. Similar documents have also been found for other drug

Traffickers.

In Covert Action No. 61, (<<http://www.caq.com/CAQ/caq61/CAQ61turkey.html>>) Ertugrul Kurkeu, in an article about the affair, quotes other investigative journalists and the parliamentary commission into the Susurluk affair who found an explanation for the government-extremist-criminal alliance other than a shared affection for fascism. They concurred that:

"Ciller, Agar, and other affiliates of the "gang"...are only a few of the many corrupt links in a long chain of "counterinsurgency strategies" overseen by Turkey's high command"

The strategy the Turkish Armed Forces developed – and the national Security Council endorsed in 93 – tried to bring the war to the PKK and has all the hall marks of the "low-intensity conflict" practised and developed by the US in Central America. The strategic shift targeted civilian support for the PKK. Documents were leaked concerning tactical military schemes which included lists of prospective members of death-squads including Abdullah Cati, the Grey Wolves and special police team members.

"During the three fatal years that followed, 1993-95 with Tansu Ciller as prime minister and Suleyman Demirel as president, Kurdish civil society was shattered. Kurdish political, cultural and press organisations faced violent attacks. Their headquarters were bombed, scores of local Kurdish politicians, including pro-Kurdish DEP (democracy Party) deputy Mehmet Sincar were killed by mysterious assassins, other Kurdish DEP deputies were expelled from parliament and jailed or forced into exile; and hundreds of Kurdish activists were disappeared."

(Covert Action No. 61)

In February 1995 Hanefi Avci, deputy intelligence department chief of Turkish Security, testified before a parliamentary commission:

"Some officials believed that the Turkish security remained incapable of eliminating the PKK supporters as long as [the security forces] functioned within legal means. Thus, they arrived at the conclusion that the PKK could have been fought only through extra-legal methods."

According to Avci one gang was headed by Interior minister Mehmet Agar:

When Tansu Ciller was Turkey's ex-foreign minister several countries (including the US) made pronouncements on her similar to that of 22/1/97 by Judge Rudolph Schwalbe in the Frankfurt State Court, which accused her of having personal contacts with narcotic smugglers and protecting them. The Turkish Daily News of 12/12/96 made allegations that a meeting took place in 93 between the highest representatives of the Turkish state, top security officials and a group of twelve people:

"At the meeting was Tansu Ciller, along with president Suleyman Demirel, the then speaker of parliament, Husamettin Cindoruk,

the then Commandant general of the Gendarmerie, Aydin Ilter, the Interior Minister of the time, Nahit Mentese, and the then general Chief of Police, Mehmet Agar. The 12 people they met included some who were allegedly outlaws responsible for killing soldiers and police officers who were secretly brought in from the South east on a private plane.

Tansu Ciller allegedly addressed these men, who have long criminal record, declaring: "We are going to overcome terrorism together." reports suggest that she then went on to guarantee that all their needs would be met. the said "needs" were heavy machine guns, such as MG-35 and BCXs, RPG rocket launchers and flame throwers..."

(Kurdistan Report No. 25)

As the counter-insurgency campaign escalated the government terror gangs indulged in the luxury of utter recklessness. They made a grab for the enormous revenues from drug trafficking and money laundering and began fighting amongst themselves.

The government organised right-wing gangs linked into a network of secret security organisations known as "Gladio":

"A secret clause in the initial NATO agreement in 1949 required that before a nation could join, it must have already established a national security authority to fight communism through clandestine citizen cadres. This Stay Behind clause grew out of a secret committee set up at US insistence in the Atlantic Pact the forerunner of NATO"

(Covert Action 61)

The Turkish army's Special Warfare Department was part of Gladio and ran the Counter-guerrilla Organisation.

"The department was headquartered in the US Military Aid Mission building in Ankara and received funds and training from US advisers to create the Stay Behind squads. The Gray Wolves, headed by Catli, enjoyed official encouragement and protection.

In the late '70s, former military prosecutor and Turkish Military Supreme Court Justice Emin Deger documented collaboration between the Gray Wolves and the government's counter-guerrilla forces, as well as the close ties of the latter to the CIA. The Counter-guerrilla Organisation provided weapons to terrorist groups such as the Gray Wolves, who instigated much of the political violence that culminated in a 1980 coup by the Turkish military that deposed Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel. State security forces justified the coup in the name of restoring order and stability. Cold War realpolitik compelled the Gray Wolves and their institutional sponsor, the ultra-right National Action Party, to favour a discreet alliance with NATO and U.S. intelligence. Led by Col. Alpaslan Turkes, the National Action Party espoused a fanatical pan-Turkish ideology that called for repatriating whole sections of the Soviet Union under the flag of a reborn Turkish empire.

The Gray Wolves forged ties with the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, a CIA-backed coalition led by erstwhile fascist collaborators from Eastern Europe. Colleagues of Turkes controlled a Turkish chapter of the World Anti-Communist League, an umbrella group that functioned as a cat's paw for US intelligence in Latin America, Southwest Asia and other Cold War battlegrounds."

(Covert Action 61)

Or as our own Daily Telegraph stated on the 12 April 97: "The Turkish Republic is up to its neck in killings, drug trafficking, robbery and blackmail." And so are people who provide them with arms and military help – the UK government for instance.

When the report was published – in part of course – it was used by Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz as an attack on Tansu Ciller, his main rival for the leadership of Turkey's "centre right." The report blamed Ciller and exonerated the armed forces despite the fact that the killings of Kurds began in 1991, about the time Yilmaz began his first stint as Prime Minister.

The safe haven

"Nothing was written exposing the deal between President Ozal and Iraqi Kurdish leaders Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani. Ozal proposed a federated Iraq in the Fall of 1990, the north for the Kurds, the mid-section for the Turkmen of Iraq and leftovers for the Arabs. In return Iraqi Kurds were to "secure" their border against Kurdish guerrillas from Turkey. Less than two years later, this rapprochement culminated in Kurds killing Kurds when on October 4, 1992, in collaboration with the Turkish military, Iraqi Kurds attacked their kinsmen."

(Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, Center for Research, the Kurdish Library, No. 6, Spring 1993)

"Even in the land whose political structures gave rise to the term "Byzantine," untangling these ties is proving a very daunting challenge."

(Stephen Kinzer, New York Times 31/12/96)

While pressure was put on Syria to hand over Ocalan – at one point Turkey threatened to invade – the US continued in their post-Gulf war efforts to manipulate the PUK and KDP. They developed their moves to turn the 'no fly zone' or 'safe haven' in northern Iraq into a puppet state run by both groups. The moves are officially supported by Turkey – although it routinely bombs the region – and the UK, which also lends its military support



to the bombings.

Fighting between the PUK and KDP has been going on for some time and the internecine struggle between both are complex – too complex it would seem for most western commentators. The US has been manipulating ethnic rivalries in the area to attack Saddam Hussein, attack the PKK and make moves on Syria and Iran. In late 98 while arranging Ocalan's kidnapping Madeline Albright and the US State Department met for talks with the two groups. While Ocalan was hunted down and put on trial the US and UK kept up the talks and eventually invited PUK and KDP representatives to Washington together with British and Turkish diplomats.

Since the Gulf war US policy in the region has been to establish a 'protectorate' (for US interests) which uses the Kurds of Iraq as a buffer to keep 25 million Kurds divided. The documents outlining the 'government' of the 'country' were set out in 95 but in-fighting between the US' favoured clients has impeded any progress. The legality of the move is somewhat dubious, but that has never stopped the US in the past. For the US some Iraqi Kurds have an inalienable right to a slice of Iraq while others who seek to determine their own future have no right to exist.

"Operation Provide Comfort" was a cover for destabilising operations against Iraq and the use of what could accurately be described as CIA-backed Kurdish gangster formations against more politically responsible and determined Kurdish elements waging their struggle for freedom and liberty against Turkey. The situation again has parallels with American adventures in Central America. The use of contra guerrillas as 'death squads' is a common feature of colonial struggles as is the fomenting of ethnic divides. Traditionally these activities are conducted covertly, as long as possible: the USA and British governments have done a great job in silencing any media analysis of the KDP and PUK factions they have such faith in.

The Promise of America

Given what we now know about US involvement in Central America – the Turkish use of death squads, heroin trafficking by government officials and so on would hardly have shocked the US government. The American Government has been up to similar activities in the region.

According to Jon Elliston (The CIA's Failed Plot Against Saddam Hussein pscpdocs@aol.com) in 1992 the CIA helped establish the Iraqi National Congress, a coalition of Iraqi and Kurdish groups who had little in common except their disdain for Saddam. Since then, the CIA has supported the INC's activities including radio propaganda broadcasts, anti-Saddam publishing, intelligence gathering and efforts to entice Iraqi military personnel to defect. The results have been disastrous with most groups who worked with the CIA ending up dead and/or betrayed

In May 1994, the friction between competing Kurdish groups in the INC erupted into armed skirmishes. In late August the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) which had emerged as a major INC faction, solicited help from the Iraqi government to combat their main rivals, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The PUK, which receives some support from Iran, was effectively driven out of Iraq by KDP forces assisted by Saddam.

The CIA has backed and funded both factions: one would think that working with the US' arch enemy Saddam would be some kind of stumbling block but it is these close ties which the CIA wanted to exploit – so they were forgiven. The KDP is led by Massoud Barzani, and the PUK led by Jalal Talabani, the PUK branched off from the KDP in the early 1960s and both have been waging warfare against each other in their respective bids to control the proceeds of smuggling and other economic activities, while ferociously repressing the Kurdish population in the process.

"These two parties have taken turns selling their services to a variety of regimes while selling out the freedom and rights of the Kurds in the process. Besides killing over 2,000 of each other's supporters over the last

two years, they have attacked a variety of Kurdish critics and people of differing persuasions, also victimising the Kurdish population in the "safe haven" area through extortion and intimidation. They have collaborated with Turkish forces in attacking the Kurdish liberation movement directed against Turkey and led by the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party). PUK leader Talabani has openly courted Israel, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Saddam Hussein and Turkey, entering in a variety of "understandings" with all of these states in recent times. Such machinations have earned him the sobriquet "Everybody's Agent."

(Husayn Al-Kurdi, WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN IRAQ?)

The PUK has facilitated the entry of Iranian armed forces into (for what it's worth) internationally recognised Iraqi territory, at first to attack and disperse a Kurdish organisation resisting the Iranian occupation of one part of Kurdistan. The Iranian incursion penetrated up to 150 miles over the internationally-recognised Iran-Iraq border. It was only after the PUK was joined by Iran in attacking the KDP, and after the KDP leader pleaded unsuccessfully with the US government to intervene to halt the PUK/Iran onslaught, that Massoud Barzani turned to Saddam Hussein to send forces in to assist the KDP in gaining the upper hand. The US responded by letting matters take their course in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Al-Kurdi's article also quotes Council of Foreign Relations author Gidon Gottlieb providing the world banker line when he said that "The Kurds can at best hope for an internationally protected, internationally guaranteed, and internationally recognised autonomy within nominal Iraqi sovereignty," necessitating the repudiation "of any claim to the territory and provinces of Turkey, Iran, and Syria." Of course, Gottlieb adds the proviso that the Kurds "will have to demonstrate their effective control of Iraqi Kurdistan" by aiding Turkey in its drive to "restrain the violence of the Kurdish PKK rebels in Turkey."

US policy could be described as handing over the matter of the Kurds (PKK) to Turkey. The CIA has been meddling in Iraq with disastrous consequences for over four decades, part of which brought Saddam to power:

"After propping up the corrupt Nuri Said, the USA went after Abdul-Karim Kassem, whose popularly-supported coup eliminated the old British agent Nuri in 1958. Among those whom the CIA recruited to do its dirty work were the Iraqi Baath Party, including a brash power-hungry adventurer named Saddam Hussein. Saddam actually engaged in an attempt on Kassem's life, one of many engineered by CIA "assets." The Baath did finally succeed in overthrowing and killing Kassem in 1963. The CIA gave the emergent Baath a long list of Communists and others to liquidate, which they undertook to accomplish with their usual thoroughness."

(The CIA in Kurdistan, Husayn Al-Kurdi ZNET)

Al-Kurdi also provides evidence that the CIA has ran operations out of a building in Ankara since 1952. It proceeded to set up a fearsome intelligence-gathering/ death squad apparatus to deal with the Turkish Left:

"A part of this apparatus of repression spawned was the MHP (National Action Party), an ultra right Turkish organization which is still regarded as a paramilitary wing of the "Special Warfare Department". Military coups in Turkey in 1971 and 1980 were supported by the CIA- the Turkish commander of the air force returned from Washington just days before both events. After the second of these coups succeeded, President Jimmy Carter called CIA agent Paul Henze, who was then involved in Turkey and congratulated him, saying "Your people have just made a coup."

The KDP, whose leader was Massoud Barzani's father Mulla Mustafa Barzani, were hooked into doing the CIA's bidding as early as the early 1960s. By the early 1970s. the KDP was fighting the Iraqi government at the behest of Iran, Israel, and the USA. Agents of all three countries were seen moving about the KDP base camps. Iran was going after a boundary settlement with Iraq, using the Kurds to pressure Baghdad. Israel is forever scheming to destabilise all Arab and Muslim countries who do not come to an understanding with it on its own terms, i.e. recognition of its conquest of the Palestinians. The USA wants economic (oil and the

incredible sums of money that oil-rich client states such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait pour into U.S. financial markets) and political power in the region. Their interests usually dovetail. Israel and Turkey have signed at least two military cooperation treaties in recent years. Israel is suspected of bombing PKK camps in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley."

(The CIA in Kurdistan, Husayn Al-Kurdi Znet)

The US perceive the KDP as amenable to their interests because of these long standing arrangements:

"According to an article by ex-U.S. consul in Kirkuk (Iraqi Kurdistan), a secret agreement was reached between the CIA and Mulla Mustafa Barzani in August 1969. Barzani got an alleged \$14 million at the time. After the Iran-Iraq Agreement spelled the end of the KDP rebellion, the KDP and the Kurds were left in the lurch. Barzani had promised to turn oil fields over to the U.S., repeatedly saying that he wanted Kurdistan to be the 51st state. He wound up living in exile in the United States, where he died in 1979. He wrote a letter to then-President Carter in early 1977 in which he complained that "I could have prevented the calamity which befell my people had I not fully believed the promise of America. This could have been done by merely supporting Baath policy and joining forces with them, thereby taking a position contrary to American interests and principles and causing trouble for Iraq's neighbours. The assurances of the highest American officials made me disregard this alternative." Henry Kissinger put "American interests and principles" in proper perspective when he proclaimed that "Covert action should not be confused with missionary work."

(The CIA in Kurdistan, Husayn Al-Kurdi Znet)

The recent elections in Turkey

This is what the US State Department know and put out themselves concerning Turkey's elections this year and the banning of any opposition:

"A campaign against "reactionaries" (Islamists) and "separatists" (pro-Kurdish activists) – groups that the military publicly identified as the principal threats to Turkey's national security – continued throughout the year and broadened to include mainstream secular journalists, non-violent leaders of human rights groups, some devout politicians in mainline conservative parties, and religiously observant Muslim businessmen. Members of the legal pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP) were sometimes the object of arbitrary arrests and often were harassed in the Southeast for their legal political activities. The campaign against pro-Kurdish activists intensified after the November arrest in Italy of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, when some HADEP members expressed support for Ocalan. Authorities detained a large number of HADEP members, and party leaders allege that many were tortured or beaten. An 18-year-old party member died in police custody, allegedly from beatings during interrogation. At year's end the party faced closure by the authorities for alleged anticonstitutional activities. (Two of HADEP's predecessors, HEP and DEP, were closed on similar grounds.)"

(State Department, Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour, February 26, 1999.)

And this (note the broad support line) from the same source:

"In January as part of the intense private and public campaign of pressure led by the military and the judiciary, with broad support from several segments of society that view "fundamentalism" to be a threat to the secular republic, the Constitutional Court ordered the Islamist Refah Party closed and banned several of its leaders, including former Prime Minister Erbakan, from political activity for 5 years. The National Security Council continued to warn against Islamist activities. Istanbul mayor and prominent Islamist political leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan's 10-month sentence in April on charges of promoting separatism and threatening the unity of the state was upheld in September. The sentence carries a lifetime ban from politics."

The State Department also concede that:

"The Government and the law impose limits on freedom of assembly and association. Starting in May police with increasing frequency and force broke up public gatherings of the Saturday Mothers, a group that



Agent Marik, the man who led the CIA operation in Northern Iraq.



Ahmed Chalabi, leader of the INC.



Jalal Talabani, leader of the PUK.

has held weekly vigils in Istanbul for more than 3 years to protest the disappearances of their relatives.

Government officials continued to harass, intimidate, indict, and imprison human rights monitors, journalists, and lawyers for ideas that they expressed in public forums.”

They have also read the Susurluk report and are aware that:

“A Government report that came to light in January and a 1997 parliamentary report revealed ties between the authorities and illegal gangs – ultranationalists and members of organized crime – in the wake of the 1996 Susurluk incident, a car accident that provided evidence of such associations. These links raised serious concerns about corruption and the abuse of power in the security forces. The Government publicly committed to investigate corruption but was criticized for its slow progress. In April trials began of former Interior Minister Mehmet Agar, who was linked to the Susurluk victims, and Member of Parliament (M.P.) Sedat Bucak. Separately, in September State Minister Eyup Asik resigned amidst allegations of links to organized crime leader Alaattin Katici, who was apprehended abroad with a diplomatic passport. These same allegations of corruption led to a November vote of no-confidence in Parliament for the Government of Prime Minister Yilmaz.”

Yet they call it a democracy. As does Christopher Morris the Guardian's man in Ankara covering the “elections.”

The Turkish parliament is even more dominated by the extreme right. The second largest party is now the National Action Party (MHP), a fascist-like extreme chauvinist, anti-Kurdish organisation. It now holds 129 seats, 22 of which are occupied by notorious members of the Gray Wolves, a paramilitary organisation. The MHP is in alliance with the DSP of the premier Bulent Ecevit, sometimes regarded in Europe as a Social Democrat. This “Nationalist Bloc” totals 265 deputies, 48 percent of the assembly.

Coverage

“Taking recent developments into consideration...we do not want to leave room for future discussions or ill-intentioned debates stemming from terms that have been used.”

(Turkish Interior Ministry, The New York Times June 6, 1999)

During Ocalan's trial the Interior Ministry issued a directive listing terms that must be used in all press statements concerning the trial; together with terms that must not be used when discussing Ocalan the PKK or Kurds in general. It is binding on reporters and commentators for the Anatolia news agency, the state-run radio and television network, and public affairs officers at all government agencies. These terms are reproduced – or at the very least form the underpinning of most UK reports on the trial. Journalists were indoctrinated into the warped mind set of the Turkish state. They reflect the long-standing censorship of any language which concedes the existence of anything concerning the Kurds.

These are the unacceptable terms, followed by what the government says are correct ones that should be used in their place:

Guerrilla – Terrorist.

Urban guerrilla – Terrorist element.

Rural guerrilla/Rebel – Bandit.

Refugee – Shelter seekers.

Rebellion/Kurdish uprising/Kurdish rebellion/Kurdish national independence war/Kurds' independence struggle/revolution/armed revolt – Terrorist actions.

PKK/separatists/separatist gang/separatist groups – Terrorist organization PKK/ Bloody terrorist organization/murder gang.

Operation/military sweep/security operation – Search for terrorists and criminals/pursuit of criminals.

Kurdish/of Kurdish background – Turkish citizen/our citizens who are identified as

Kurds.

People of the Kurdish race – People from separatist environments.

Regional commander/governor – An official.

Temporary cease-fire – Break in terrorist actions/temporary halt of terror.

Calling for peace – Stopping terror actions temporarily.

Guerrilla commander – Person in charge of regional terrorists.

Apo – The terrorist Ocalan.

Kurdish militia – Those who help and conceal terrorists/terrorist collaborators.

Leader of the organization – Those accountable for terrorist actions.

Separatist – Terrorist.

Separatist organization – Terrorist organization.

Marxist-Leninist organization/Marxist-Leninist PKK – Terror organization/Terror organization PKK (NOTE: The fact that the organization is Marxist-Leninist may be used in personal contacts abroad.)

Crime against humanity – Terror crime/mass murder/massacre.

Resident of the Southeast/People of Southeast Anatolia/Eastern and Southeastern Anatolians – Our citizens in the east of Turkey.

Kurdish Parliament in Exile – Meeting under the terror organization PKK's control.

Member of Kurdish Parliament – Member of the terror organization.

Kurdish flag/so-called Kurdish flag – Symbol of the terror organization.

(The New York Times June 6, 1999)

The Ilusu Dam

“While Israel benefits from Iraq's destruction as an Arab power, its relations with Turkey may very well be detrimental to Israel's future. Beyond peace and security, arid Israel needs water. Shimon Peres and Turgut Ozal already discussed a plan to get water to Israel by creating a pipeline from Turkey traversing Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Peres was right when he argued that “the next war in the Middle East could well be over water, not land, and Turkey is the only land in the region with excess water. (Jerusalem Post 4.28.91)”

(Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, publication of the Center for Research, the Kurdish Library No. 6, Spring 1993)

The nonsense of the UK government's “ethical foreign policy” is evident in their dealings with Turkey. Here they are colluding in the displacement and erasure of Kurdish culture. The Guardian reported a DTI scheme on the border of Iran and Iraq:

“The 1.5bn Ilusu hydro-electric dam project could be underwritten by the British taxpayer to the tune of £200 million because Balfour Beatty, a British construction company, is leading the consortium hoping to build the dam.”

The project was even refused money by the World Bank since it does not meet their conditions for dam projects and further contradicts UN conventions which try to prevent border disputes over shared water supplies.

Nevertheless the UN have been made complicit in the project if indications on high level moves are correct. The company which has the contract for the dam, ABB, is a Swiss-Swedish company that has faced sustained campaigns by environmentalists and human rights advocates against its involvement in various hydro projects, including the Three Gorges Project in China and the now indefinitely postponed Bakun Dam in Malaysia.

An investigation by Corporate Watch (www.corpwatch.org) revealed it as part of a group of companies who are manipulating the independence of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), one of the most important UN agencies. This is threatened by a plan – not yet made public – for the UN to launch and promote collaboration with a group of global corporations in June, 1999. Called the Global Sustainable Development

Facility (GSDF) or 2B2M (2 Billion People to the Market by 2020) the plan is outlined in a series of internal documents obtained by Corporate Watch and other organisations. ABB, the Ilusu dam company is a GSDF steering committee member. The plan has made the UN the stooge of some of the most disreputable companies in the world. It promotes that which it should investigate.

“The documents and independent interviews show that the UNDP appears to be selling a group of global corporations- many of which are well known for their negative development, human rights and environmental records – unprecedented access to its country offices, high level governmental contacts and its reputation.”

(Corporate Watch)

The documents list 11 corporations as sponsors of the proposed facility. UNDP has reportedly recruited 7 more. UNDP is selling these sponsorships for \$50,000 each. The companies include:

“Rio Tinto Plc, a British mining corporation which has created so many environmental, human rights, and development problems that a global network of trade unions, indigenous peoples, church groups, and community activists has emerged to fight its abuses. The company stands accused of complicity in, or direct violations of environmental, labor and human rights in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Namibia, Madagascar, the United States and Australia, and elsewhere.

ABB Asea Brown Boveri (GSDF steering committee member) is a Swiss-Swedish company that has faced sustained campaigns by environmentalists and human rights advocates against its involvement in various hydro projects, including the Three Gorges Project in China and the now indefinitely postponed Bakun Dam in Malaysia.

Dow Chemical (GSDF steering committee member) is one of the biggest polluters in the United States, the world's largest producer of chlorine—the root source of the carcinogen and endocrine disrupter dioxin—and one of the world's largest pesticide companies.

Citibank played an important role in the Asian financial crisis that threw millions out of work in 1997. As a major lender to developing countries in the 1960s and 1970s, Citicorp's lending patterns fuelled the Third World debt crisis. It has recently made headlines for allegedly serving as a conduit for millions of dollars of drug money moved by Raul Salinas (brother of the former Mexican president) from Mexico to Switzerland.

Stat Oil, Norway's state-owned oil company is involved in several environmental and development conflicts at home, as well as in Venezuela, Russia, Malaysia and Nigeria.”

(Corporate Watch)

To return to the Ilusu dam: the DTI is responsible for the notorious Export Credit Guarantee Department and there are other export credit agencies to help along big business in difficult areas. If Balfour Beatty (the lead contractor in the notorious Pergau Dam project in Malaysia) get ripped off, the government will bail them out – back up their costs. Normally this service is extended to arms dealers, they being the biggest industry whose services tend to be called for in ‘trouble spots.’ Countries like Britain and American are in the forefront of the business of exporting war. In the case of the Ilusu dam, water (or rather the refusal to share it) will be used as a weapon, much in the way it is presently used by the Israeli state in the region.

The Guardian followed up their reporting on the Ilusu dam on the 26/6/99. Labour Trade minister, Brian Wilson:

“...is to be accused in the high court next week of breaching existing freedom of information legislation by keeping secret documents showing the impact of a controversial mega-dam project in Turkey.

The move comes after he refused to comply within two months to a legal request that he release an environmental impact assessment of the dam project which will take waters from the Tigris and cut off part of the flow to Syria and Iraq. [Who] have objected to the damage the dam will do to drinking water supplies and the livelihoods of local farmers. The Kurds, whose homelands will be flooded, fear they will be left landless and without compensation.”



Which is of course precisely the point of the scheme and the intentions of the Turkish State, which Wilson knows and is dedicated to support – to the point of trawling through the courts. Friends of the Earth report that:

“The proposed dam is on the Tigris River, forty miles from the Turkish/Iraqi/Syrian border. It will flood 15 towns and 52 villages and displace up to 20,000 Kurdish people. The Ilusu project is part of the South East Anatolia Project (GAP), which has already displaced hundreds of thousands of Kurdish people, many without compensation. Because of the war between the Turkish army and Kurdish guerrillas, local opposition to such schemes cannot be voiced for fear of state reprisals.”

The water-resource development plan consists of 13 massive projects in the Euphrates/Tigris Basin including Ilusu. Coming into South East Turkey one is impressed by the sheer amount of construction projects carving through the arid countryside and mountains. The entire area, the very land and mountains are in upheaval in the state's attempts to destroy the Kurds.

Halabja

Generous facilities such as the ECGD do not extend to projects which aim to help the victims of the war exports the government promotes; such as that of two government backed scientists working in Halabja – the place where Saddam Hussein gassed the Kurds.

“This is the first time anyone has tried to establish a medical assessment programme for a civilian population that has been gassed. Most studies before now have been of military men aged 18 to 25.”

(Guardian 26/2/99)

Chemical weapons are used to kill people who are hiding in bunkers or bomb shelters or are otherwise hard to get at. The government (and the military) want the research hence the meagre funding.

“Although supported by the British Government, the two doctors have been frustrated by lack of equipment...Dr Kerim works by candlelight every night.”

The report touches on the abject horror of Halabja, which, more than ten years on includes a population suffering from: malignant carcinomas, leukaemia, infertility in women, miscarriages, congenital abnormalities, cancers of the head and Larynx, blindness, spinal deformities...

“At the time Iraq was gassing the Kurds in Halabja, David Mellor (UK Foreign Office Minister) was an honoured guest of Saddam Hussein. Within a month of the gas attack Iraq was offered £340 million of export credit. Later in the year sales to Iraq had risen from £2.9 million a year ago to £31.5 million.”

(Campaign Against the Arms Trade
<<http://www.gn.apc.org/caat/>>)

Some time ago a Channel 4 documentary on Halabja tried to find out where the chemical weapons had come from – their empty shells still litter the area or are gathered into heaps where their serial numbers are clear to see. The people with the register of the weapons are the UN and

they refused to tell Channel 4 – the information was ‘too sensitive’.

“in the 1980s [Saddam Hussein] was quietly supported and supplied with arms by the West, and his shipping in the Gulf was protected against attack, while he was committing aggression against Iran. Western support didn't flag when evidence surfaced that Hussein was using chemical weapons against the Kurds at home and in the war against Iran. The New York Times even commended the United States and Soviet Union for having jointly supported Hussein in his war against Iran, apparently regarding this evidence of collective action as more important than the fact that it contributed to a major blood bath.”

(Beyond Hypocrisy, Edward Herman)

Chemicals weapons proliferate in the region whose mountain-

ous terrain makes a hard battlefield for conventional weapons and troops. Their trade is covert. Although initially covered up – the El Al plane which crashed in Amsterdam in 92 was carrying 42 gallons of sarin nerve gas components. Evidence is now emerging that Israel had made many similar flights of chemical weapons using civilian and military aircraft in Holland.

Özgür Politika reported in May 22 that the Turkish army has been using poison gas against the PKK. It quoted a Turkish colonel:

“Turkish pharmaceutical factories have been producing poison gas and the Turkish armed forces have been using it at various times against the Kurdish people and are continuing to do so...German poison gas is slaughtering the Kurdish people.”

The paper claimed that 23 Kurdish people had died from a poison gas attack in Bingol on 24/9/98, among other cases.

The Italian daily Il Manifesto of the same date reported:

“Legal experts have confirmed ... the use of chemical weapons, which [recently] have killed at least 20 members of the PKK. Their bodies were subsequently disfigured to make them unrecognizable.”

The colonel cited in Özgür Politika called on the European Union to establish a committee to look into the production of poison gas for the Turkish forces by joint Turkish-Swiss and Turkish-German companies. Among others, he accused the following companies in Istanbul: Henkel Kimya Sanayi (Turkish-German), the Hochst Ilaç Fabrikasi (Turkish-German), and Roche Ilaç Sanayi (Turkish-Swiss).

Turkey was showered with praise for its “humanitarian” act in admitting the fleeing Iraqi Kurds after the Halabja gas attack. Obscured in brief phrases beneath headlines that misled readers was US complicity with Turkey which effectively stymied the admission of legitimate humanitarian aid organisations. But this fact never did become an issue in the press. Ankara denied symptoms of the use of poison gas by Iraq, refused to designate the refugees as such, and deliberately denied the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN High Commission for Refugees access to carry out tests on Kurds to establish the use of chemical weapons. The actual Kurds didn't receive so much as a blanket.

Nearly three years later the issue could be used to press the common agenda of the West in the Gulf crisis.

El Shifa

The US as we know is busy tracking down terrorists who threaten to use chemical weapons, or so they say. The 20/8/98 bombing of the El Shifa factory in Khartoum (Sudan) was in retaliation for the bombings of US Embassies in Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania) and Nairobi (Kenya), purportedly by Osama bin Laden an old CIA agent. For the US a bombing of an Embassy means retaliation anywhere is justified. What embassy wasn't bombed

in Serbia?

El Shifa produced 50% of Sudan's medicine, including 90% of the most critically needed drugs: the bombings will cause the suffering and death of tens of thousand of people all over Africa by depriving them of basic medicines for easily curable diseases, it also provided veterinary medicine. This follows years of sanctions and bans on loans and trade, which have curtailed the development of basic infrastructure and the purchase of medicines. The US has also funded a contra army to destabilise the Sudanese government.

El Shifa was called an “imminent threat...to our national security,” by President Clinton, National Security advisor, Sandy Berger said : “This was a plant...producing chemical warfare related weapons, and we have physical evidence of the fact.” Joint Chief of Staff, General Henry Shelton said that the : “Intelligence community is confident that this factory is involved in the production of chemical weapons.” Hours after the missile launch El Shifa was described by senior security advisors as “a secret chemical weapons factory financed by bin Laden.” The same officials a month later conceded they had no evidence linking bin Laden.

No real discussion or debate on the implications of destroying more than half of the medicine in a poor country has taken place and there is scant coverage of the admission by US officials that they had no solid evidence at all. A six-member team organised by the International Centre and led by former Attorney General Ramsay Clark flew out to the wreckage and went through official US documents and reports together with meeting Sudanese officials and representatives. The delegation concluded that “the plant was a medicine factory whose bombing falls under the definition of a war crime.”

“What seems most incredible are the claims by US officials that they knew nothing about the plant. It was, in fact, promoted and treasured by the Sudanese government as the pride of “Africa.” The plant opened, in June 1997, with a fanfare, in the presence of heads of state, foreign ministers and ambassadors. It was visited by international guests including the president of the Republic of Niger, the World Health Organisation's director for the Mediterranean region...[and] the British and German ambassadors to Khartoum...”

(Covert Action 66)

Given the US involvement with the Sudan, the plant's official UN authorisation, all the high tech surveillance, the fact that the plant was designed by an American (Henry R Jobe) and a British technical manager (Tom Carnaffin) it is hard to believe that top US officials were so ignorant. They continue to block a UN investigation.

The Observer journalist in a report of 23/8/98 stated a familiar refrain: “There is no sign amidst the wreckage of anything sinister...there is no sign of anyone trying to hide anything either.” Except for the US. The International Action Centre (IAC) report outlines the real reasons behind the attack:

“Ever since Sudan opposed the 1991 US led war against Iraq, US policy has aimed at destabilising the Sudan government. Washington has helped finance a secessionist civil war against the Khartoum government and imposed economic sanctions on Sudan. The missile attack came soon after Sudan took steps to access a 300-million-barrel reservoir of crude oil in the country's South. There is a clear relationship between US oil policy and US government hostility toward Sudan.”

The Sudan government has offered that the FBI inspect the country to deal with terrorism but they refused. The US funds its pet rebels through funding channels to Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia who funnel arms and other equipment to the rebels, Madeline Albright has even met rebel leader John Garang.

The IAC delegation was shown a letter which informed the Sudanese Central Medical supplies company that the United States Treasury department refused to allow it to sell insulin to Sudan. Similar denials exist all, enforced by the US – what was the bomb attack if not a violently enforced sanction? Collaboration between the CIA and Israeli intelligence to support a secession movement in the Sudan dates back to at least 1968.

Madeline Albright – a short appreciation

“A very hard choice,” Madeleine Albright commented on national TV in 1996 when asked for her reaction to the killing of half a million Iraqi children in 5 years, but “we think the price is worth it.” Current estimates remain about 5000 children killed a month, and the price is still ‘worth it.’ These and other examples might also be kept in mind when we read awed rhetoric about how the “moral compass” of the Clinton Administration is at last functioning properly...”

(The Current Bombings: Behind the Rhetoric, Noam Chomsky ZNET)

The Baku Pipeline

“The [Susurluk] report also says Mr. Catli and senior Turkish officials played a key role in a 1995 coup attempt in Azerbaijan, where previously published Turkish reports say the Susurluk gang hoped to install a leader who would allow them to take advantage of a new drug-smuggling route through Baku to the West. Azerbaijani President Haidar Aliyev has said the coup was foiled when Turkish President Suleyman Demirel heard of the plot and tipped him off.”

(The Wall Street Journal, 26 January 1998)

Turkey figures large in the US strategy for the oil-rich Central Asia region. The US has been putting strong pressure on the new states of the region and on multinational oil companies to build a pipeline that would transport oil and gas from the Caspian area to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, thus avoiding routes through Russia and Iran.

Investment and military involvement have an increasing tendency to take place side by side in this and other ‘war-torn’ regions. They can also lead government attitudes towards whitewashing the reputations of states hitherto considered pariahs on the basis of sound evidence. US oil companies interested in the Caspian for profit now argue for some form of alliance between Azerbaijan and the United States as their interests become entrenched.

Ambassador Richard Morningstar, special advisor to the president and secretary of state for Caspian basin energy diplomacy (whose job it is to promote the project) spins it like this:

“The fundamental objective of U.S. policy in the Caspian ... is not simply to build oil and gas pipelines. Rather it is to use those pipelines ... as tools for advancing the sovereignty and independence of the new independent states and for establishing a political and economic framework that will strengthen regional cooperation and stability and encourage reform for the next several decades.”

Morningstar argues that the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the trans-Caspian natural gas pipeline (which would run parallel to the oil pipeline for most of its length) make sense for both national security and commercial reasons:

“Both pipelines will enhance the sovereignty and independence of the Caspian Newly Independent States (NIS) by allowing them to export their hydrocarbon resources without tying them into the pipeline systems of their primary competitors for energy markets...In addition, both pipelines will increase energy security by avoiding the concentration of a vast new source of oil and gas in the Persian Gulf region. Finally, both pipelines enjoy great potential to become lucrative investment opportunities for U.S. companies.”

(Morningstar, remarks to the 17th Congress of the World Energy Council in Houston, Texas, September 15 1998)

To push through the plan Morningstar aims to strengthen ties with Azerbaijan (now defined as an ‘oil-rich state on the western shore of the Caspian’). In order to successfully pursue his ‘diplomatic’ goals Morningstar also requested that the American Congress lift restrictions on non-military assistance to Azerbaijan and repeal section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which was passed to punish Azerbaijan for human rights abuses. So the pipeline will create a channel for some big arms deals. The pipeline has the backing of US-based General Electric and the Bechtel Corporation who are also major arms manufacturers.

Speaking of the project as a whole in a remark which seems diplomatically oblivious of US imperial history, Morningstar states:

“The United States views its proper role as that of an honest broker...Our job is to encourage the relevant companies and countries of the region to negotiate in good faith on the commercial and political factors that must be satisfied in order to make any of these pipelines viable.”

(Ambassador Richard Morningstar, On Caspian Basin Energy Policy at a forum organised by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace)

Alternative pipelines to the Baku-Ceyhan route would run through Russia and Iran, which are competitors with the Caspian Sea oil-producing countries. The Baku-Ceyhan pipeline is intended to provide an independent route to markets in Turkey and Europe and is predicated on a belief that global demand for oil will rise. Very few of these big construction companies actually meet the needs of the inhabitants of the area; denying as they do the link between production and consumption. Despite Turkey’s claims to the contrary, analysts doubt that the country will need gas from both the trans-Caspian and Black Sea lines.

The United States has encouraged a growing alliance between Turkey and Israel part of which includes business deals as well as military help such as the abduction of Ocalan. Israel has a role in the trans-Caspian pipeline through the Israeli Merhav Group. Israel’s growing military alliance with Turkey is becoming increasingly important as a factor in regional policy. Commercial projects such as Baku-Ceyhan will receive military protection against rebel groups who are expected to target them as military ventures rather than business deals. Thus states achieve common enemies.

“Like the Kurdish issue, the Caspian pipelines through Turkey are an international problem. It seems inevitable that some elements will see sabotage as a way to raise both international awareness and the costs of continued neglect. Conversely, Turkey could use pipeline security to gain international support for tight controls on the Kurds.”

(Michael Lelyveld 22/2/99 Radio Liberty)

The preferred pipeline route is supposed to carefully skirt Kurdish strongholds where Turkey has fought to exert its control. Turkey has already conveniently blamed the PKK for blowing up an oil line from Iraq near Diyarbakir; a Kurdish centre 400 kilometres east of Ceyhan. Lelyveld (who writes for the Journal of Commerce) asks questions on the stability the project will bring to the area.

“The danger is that all of the interests involved will take sides, turning Caspian competition into a conflict that cannot be stopped. Some alliances have already formed, in part because of arguments about national security and Caspian oil. The United States, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Israel are aligned in promoting the Baku-Ceyhan and trans-Caspian routes. How long will it take before countries that are left out of the pipeline schemes find reasons to support rebel Kurds if they cause disruptions?”

There exists Russian plans to construct a gas pipeline to Turkey under the Black Sea with help from Italy’s ENI. Such is the difficulty of the region that an undersea pipeline is seen as a viable method rather than the land route. The competition between the U.S. and Russian projects may ultimately depend on which encounters more difficulty. Kurdish resistance, could reduce the feasibility of both the US-sponsored oil and gas projects but draw the PKK into the big game.

Med TV

“So, for the moment, Med-TV is unable to broadcast, unable to inform its viewers of the results of bombing raids in Iraq, of the elections in Turkey and the forthcoming trial of the PKK leader there (who faces a death sentence), of the actions of NATO countries, many with significant Kurdish refugee communities, in the Balkans – denying Kurds, effectively, a voice.”

(Gill Newsham, Index On Censorship 21 May 1999)

“After a hearing on April 9 this year, Sir Robin Biggam announced that the ITC was revoking the licence of the Kurdish satellite television station MED-TV for

“repeatedly flouting the regulations on incitement to violence and impartiality by sympathising with Turkey’s Kurdish separatists.”

(Guardian 28/4/99)

Another company of which Sir Robin is a director – British Aerospace (BAe) – is about to start up licensed production in Turkey of assault rifles and grenade launchers for the security forces, who are far from impartial or non-violent themselves. MED had already been fined £90,000 by the ITC. The Turkish ‘government’ have been leaning on the UK government for some time to ban the station – the bargaining chips are all those lucrative defence contracts. The Turkish prime minister took credit for the decision as soon as it was announced. Sir Robin is maintaining that he was perfectly impartial in the matter.

Other pathetic lies (and also the government’s position) came from the Defence Secretary, George Robinson who told a BBC News 24 interviewer that Turkey does not use the weapons that the UK arms companies sell it “on anyone inside or outside the country”. It is wrong now to even talk of UK arms companies – a planned merger between BAe and GEC Marconi reported in Statewatch Vol. 9 no. 2 means that “for all practical purposes 90 to 95% of all British production is by one company.”

In Turkey the standard charge for anyone – be they Kurdish, Turkish, a writer, journalist or politician – who supports any form of Kurdish expression, is to label them a ‘PKK terrorist’. Our own government are following in their footsteps if indications with Med are correct.

“We knew, from diplomatic sources, that Turkey had given a dossier on Med-TV to the then PM, John Major, asking for it to be closed down. Reports were that America had been approached in the same way, urged to do whatever was in its power...We knew our opponents would stop at nothing – the experience of working at the station involved being followed, threatened, beaten up, homes raided, working undercover (for our newsgathering teams in the Middle East), being excluded from press conferences, arrested, questioned, detained, and for one of our reporters in Iraq, murdered.”

(Gill Newsham, Index On Censorship 21/5/99)

Newsham, who has worked with Med, states that the station knew that the Foreign Office had expressed ‘concerns’ about Med-TV. She couples this with the current climate of the ‘information war’ backing up the UK’s war with Serbia:

“...when television stations are bombed without



embarrassment, journalists killed and declared as ‘legitimate targets’. Of course, the bombardments are largely controlled by the emperor of NATO, America, but our own government insists we are fighting a ‘moral’ war and have to be seen to be primary motivators behind any actions.”

She hopefully points to the future when the ITC may have its own battle if the Human Rights Act comes into force, this will give important rights to companies and individuals, including a right to free expression. It supposedly comes into force in 2001 but, on the pretext of Home Office ‘concerns’ that Whitehall and the courts are not ready to cope with the legislative changes, it will surely be delayed.

The assassination attempt

It is not hard to see why Med was banned. A report of 12/1/98 outlined an assassination bid against Ocalan. High ranking Turkish officials – principally the then police Chief, Mehmet Agar –

were ordered to prepare plans in 1994 by the then Prime Minister, Tansu Ciller. The plot was part of her attempts to win the elections of that year.

The Turkish officials are said to have enlisted the help of the Israeli secret service to train undercover contra-guerrillas that would be given the task of assassination. Israel is said to have charged the Turkish government some \$10m for the training program. The report states that camps near Ankara were used which accommodated some 20 contra-guerrillas. The training program lasted 35 days. The plans to assassinate Ocalan included the use of seaborne troops along with Israeli assisted Turkish land troops; however, the plan was cancelled on the orders of its instigators for reasons not outlined in the report.

Mossad collaboration in the abduction is not such a hard thing to believe if knowledge and analysis of recent Turkish history is available.

Recent Attacks in the UK

There has been a concerted effort to destroy any pro-Kurdish activity in the UK.

Private Eye no. 954 reported on a Kurdish community centre in North London which was raided by Special Branch on 20/11 97. They were investigating "alleged terrorism" and took lists of members, files computers, discs and so on:

"No one has been arrested or even interviewed. The Kurdish Community Centre is a highly respected charity. Its main activity is giving advice and teaching English to Kurdish asylum-seekers..."

Private Eye also state that Special Branch informed the charities board about the raid with a view to poisoning the centre's funding relationship. The board responded by freezing the centre's grant of £120,000, effectively disrupting their activities.

A follow up story in Private Eye No. 962 revealed that after leaving the centre without funds for 11 months, Special Branch contacted them on 21/10/98 stating that: "Police will not be bringing any criminal proceedings in connection with this matter." Special Branch also sent a letter to the charities commissioners questioning the right of the centre to register as a charity, thus further preventing the re-instatement of the grant.

A more direct approach was used on another Kurdish community centre in London. It was fire-bombed.

Human Rights Watch

New York based Human Rights Watch in a press release of 21/11/98, urged Italy to prosecute Ocalan; a day after the Court of Appeals in Rome ruled that he was free to stay in Rome. The day before, for some peculiar reason, Madeleine Albright backed away from her earlier statements that Ocalan should be extradited to Turkey:

"We don't want extradition...There are other countries that are concerned in terms of extradition - Germany and Italy."

These were possibly attempts to distance the US from what was about to happen or to make sure Ocalan stayed in one place. The villa near Rome where he was living was under heavy police protection. Albright made those remarks knowing full well that the CIA had for the moment aborted a plan to abduct Ocalan in Italy, furthermore she knew that the State Department had and would proceed to harass and threaten any country who would shelter him with any form of shelter or asylum.

Human Rights Watch (HRW), a privately funded operation, has been seriously criticised by independent journalists and its material laundered uncritically by those connected to government agencies and/or private business. It is becoming all too useful to US State Department's foreign policy - so much so that it is beginning to look like either a "bunch of useful idiots" to use a CIA term, or a front.

HRW has also been criticised for its role in the

Kosovo crisis:

"At least in the case of Yugoslavia, the Helsinki and Human Rights Watch approach differs fundamentally from that of Amnesty International in that it clearly aims not at calling attention to specific abuses that might be corrected, not at reforming but at discrediting the targeted State. By the excessive nature of its accusations, it does not ally with reformist forces in the targeted country so much as it undermines them. Its lack of balance, its rejection of any effort at remaining neutral between conflicting parties, contributes to a disintegrative polarization rather than to reconciliation and mutual understanding. It therefore contributes, deliberately or inadvertently, to a deepening cycle of repression and chaos that eventually may justify, or require, outside intervention.

This is an approach which, like its partner, economic globalization, breaks down the defences and authority of weaker States. Rather than helping to enforce democratic institutions at the national level, it carries the notion of democracy to the largely abstract level of the "international community", whose sporadic and partial interest in the region is dictated by Great Power interests, lobbies, media attention and the institutional ambitions of "non-governmental organizations" - often linked to powerful governments - whose competition with each other for donations provides motivation for exaggeration of the abuses they specialize in denouncing."

(Diana Johnstone, Seeing Yugoslavia Through a Dark Glass, Covert Action No. 66)

Kurdish groups have also noticed the deficiencies and prejudice in HRW pronouncements.

"Mr. Ocalan was taken into custody on November 12, 1998, in Rome, Italy. Why didn't the HRW issue a press release urging Italy not to extradite Mr. Ocalan to Turkey in the intervening nine days? If the Court of Appeals in Rome had ruled to extradite Mr. Ocalan to Turkey, would the HRW have now "expressed" its regrets for the decision?

Why does the HRW feel the need to express, "...under International law, the government [Turkey's] abuses cannot under any circumstances be seen to justify or excuse [killings] committed by Ocalan's PKK"? Why doesn't it feel the need to note the United Nation Resolution 3103 which expresses the rights of subject peoples to fight for self-determination?"

(The American Kurdish Information Network Press Release #38, 21/11/98)

There is surely something imbalanced in HRW's methods if the group manages to accuse Ocalan of 786 extra-judicial killings while, missing in its press releases, are figures for thousands of murdered Kurdish civilians, the destruction of more than 3 thousand Kurdish villages, and the refugees whose number now exceeds 3 million generated by the policies of war undertaken by the Turkish government.

One can see how HRW information once put into circulation is used by certain journalists. Take

Sean Boyne described as "a freelance author...who specialises in security affairs" who wrote this for weapons advertiser Jane's Intelligence Review:

"In November 1998 there was a considerable blow to his reputation when Human Rights Watch, which has been at the forefront in exposing Turkey's human-rights abuses, urged Italy not to grant him asylum. The group stated that those believed responsible for crimes against humanity were ineligible for asylum under international law. The group called for the prosecution of Ocalan, but backed the decision not to extradite him to Turkey where

there was a 'substantial risk' he would face torture and possibly the death penalty."

Obeying the Law, Kani Yilmaz and not obeying the law

Very few publications have devoted much space to the Kurdish struggle. Generally speaking the majority of people still know very little about the

history or the realities of the situation. Although their struggle is as significant as that of the African National Congress - in many ways the treatment of Kurds is worse than that of non-whites in apartheid South Africa in that Turkey seeks the annihilation of Kurdish existence - there has been no support for boycotts against Turkey in and around parliament. Instead the UK has encouraged all manner of trade from the Spice Girls to betting shops and of course all those lucrative arms deals. The UK government is happy with the Turkish state, and has supported the war against the Kurds, even though they know it is run by gangsters and is one of the most corrupt regimes in the world. But, occasionally they do play out little farces.

In mid-August 97 a Kurdish spokesman was finally extradited to Germany to face charges of organising attacks on Turkish businesses and properties. Home secretary Jack Straw ignored campaigners' pleas and upheld the court order for his extradition:

"Yilmaz had spent almost three years in detention in Belmarsh prison. The decision, following the House of Lords' rejection of his petition against the extradition, was a slap in the face to supporters who believed that Straw would carry his opposition convictions into government; Straw was one of several Labour MPs who protested strongly when Yilmaz was arrested and detained for deportation on "national security" grounds on his way to a meeting at Westminster in October 1994. The arrest caused embarrassment to the Tory government because Yilmaz had been allowed into the country freely days beforehand; the German government's action in seeking his extradition was widely seen as too convenient, particularly since Yilmaz, a refugee from Turkey, had spent much time in Germany, where he had stayed quite openly, and there was never any attempt to charge him with criminal offences."

(Statewatch bulletin, July-October 1997, <http://www.poptel.org.uk/statewatch/>)

The Home Secretary's record on Kurdish issues is appalling - because the UK's record on Kurdish issues proves it has contributed to and supported the genocidal war against them by Turkey. Let us assume that Jack Straw did have convictions and did seek justice in this area: the treatment of Yilmaz reveals that the Kurdish issue is beyond the predilections of a single politician, beyond the powers of the Home Secretary of the UK. As for the law it is applied and ignored when it suits each state.

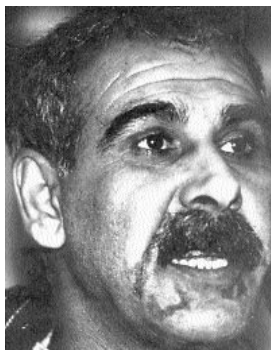
This can be clearly seen with the incidents surrounding Ocalan's non-extradition to Germany - legality was simply overridden by the German State. In November of 98, Ocalan was detained in Italy because of an outstanding German warrant for his arrest issued in 1990. The warrant accused Ocalan of involvement in a murder in 1984.

The chairman of the Bundestag's Foreign Affairs Committee, Hans-Ulrich Klose, said on German radio that Bonn must consider what he called "the possible negative consequences of an extradition request" - as it is permitted to do under Paragraph 153 of the German criminal code. The clause allows Germany not to implement an extradition request if it considers that doing so could create problems. So much for the rule of law.

Klose said Bonn feared that bringing Ocalan to Germany could lead to violence and street fighting between Turks and Kurds resident in the country. This could have what he described as further negative consequences. Klose said Germany did not want to import "the Turkish war." It is happy enough exporting war materials to promote the Turkish war without inheriting the actual consequences. Bring on the loophole:

"Klose emphasized that the decision is now a political one. German law makes a clear distinction between the operations of the federal prosecutors department and political necessity. Article 32 of the Constitution says the foreign ministry alone is responsible for relations with foreign states. As a number of German commentators have pointed out this week, this means the Government is not entirely bound by the law but can also take political considerations into account...According to this view, the prosecutors acted correctly and without regard

Right:
Kani Yilmaz



to political issues by issuing the original warrant for Ocalan's arrest in 1990 and by renewing it recently."

(Roland Eggleston Prague 26/11/98 Radio Liberty)

The final decision on whether to implement the warrant and ask for Ocalan's extradition to Germany rested with German politicians. To implement it would have kept Ocalan out of the clutches of Turkey and that is why the German state did not implement their warrant. It is also possible that they were told by the US that other plans were being arranged for Ocalan which would have been more to their liking. The CIA disruption operation, codenamed Watchful, had been well underway when Ocalan was in Rome.

Germany is more than happy to deport any Kurds it has a problem with – straight to Turkey. It has turned a blind eye to their persecution and murder by far-right groups in Germany since the attacks started. Kurds are granted a sub-human status in the country with no real legal rights. When protests against Ocalan's abduction broke out 200 Kurds were arrested in Berlin with a further 1,000 across Germany. Eberhard Diepgen, the mayor of Berlin, said "the full force of the law" (Guardian 19/2/99) would be brought to bear on the Kurdish protesters. The German Chancellor threatened Kurds with deportation if they protested. No mention of a trial to establish what crimes, if any, have been committed, just summary deportation. Perhaps they will set up camps...



Italy and beyond

Ocalan stated that he had come to Italy to open the way to a political settlement. He had travelled to Italy to help create the political conditions for this. He bound himself to abide by the laws of the Italy. His statement also read:

"It is inevitable that a civilised method, politics, should be used to find a solution to the real causes of war in the region. There can be no humane explanation for genocidal attacks on cultures and the freedoms of peoples. We must stop this. I am opposed to all terror, even if it originates from us. I am ready to do whatever I can so that it will be stopped immediately. In order for this to happen I wish only that the international community, first and foremost the UN and EU and human rights and democratic organisations and individuals move into action."

(Statement by the PKK President Abdullah Ocalan 16/11/98. Translation from Turkish original By Jim Lobe, IPS News)

He emphasised that the PKK was seeking mediators to start a dialogue with Turkey that would resolve the conflict. Pressure by the US (aided by organisations like HRW) was directed towards stopping these efforts – stopping any peace process.

Ocalan had moved to Russia in October. He had been in Syria, which because of his presence was under a direct threat of war from Turkey and an implicit one from Israel. The US made no real comment on Turkey's attempts to throw the middle east into conflict over one man. Some reports reveal that the Syrian government received a strongly worded letter (which should be seen as backing up Turkish military pressure) from President Bill Clinton:

"...warning Syrian President Hafez al Assad 'that he is playing with fire in the Ocalan case and asking him to deport him'. The American effort to corner Ocalan and bar him from finding asylum or even safe refuge in any country resurfaced at another critical juncture...as he awaited political asylum in Italy. That is when US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott 'called the Italians and pressured them to boot Ocalan', according to the same [US] National Security Council source.

Such personal diplomacy was combined with a broader effort of American intelligence services to block Ocalan from settling or being granted asylum in any country. 'As soon as we had indications that Ocalan would go to a certain city we immediately activated our [intelligence]

services to avert his settling down there,' an unnamed White House official is quoted as saying.

...Both the CIA and Mossad were responsible for tracking down Ocalan in Russia, after he left Syria. At that point, Talbott interceded with the Russian government to banish Ocalan while other 'American officials' pressured Moscow to deport him in return for 'high-tech military equipment that Turkey gave the Russian armed forces.'"

(Socialist Action June 99)

The report (by Alexis Papahelas) also reveals that Madeleine Albright instructed that Turkey receives a 'continuous flow of information' from US satellites as well as other 'technical means' and the assistance of US agents on the ground. Top level US NSC sources have also indicated that:

"The US exercised catalytic pressures on Kenyan security authorities to turn Ocalan over to the Turks. We knew all the key people on a personal basis and asked them to help."

The US pressure (coupled with bribery) put on Russia to ensure that it did not provide a refuge completely bypassed the democracy that the US makes great show of telling us they are keen to promote in the former Soviet

Union. Prime minister Primakov would not allow Ocalan to find refuge in Russia despite an overwhelming show of support from the Duma, which voted 298 to 1 in favour of granting Ocalan asylum. Ocalan had been based in a suburb of Moscow and had travelled to other former Soviet Republics.

Travelling to Italy – where there is tremendous popular support for the Kurdish struggle – Ocalan had been hoping that his presence would act as a focus for an international debate on the conflict in Turkey, that would somehow bring Ankara to the negotiating table. The PKK has received support from some political parties and politicians in Western countries in recent years. In the wake of his enforced move to Europe, Ocalan had clearly been hoping to build on this support and to translate it into backing from states at a governmental level. For this he risked his life, but all the world was against him.

Even establishment opinion criticised both Italian and German behaviour in the Ocalan affair as they tossed back and forth their pieces of paper:

"Both Italy and Germany have been strikingly transparent in their desire to off-load the Ocalan problem. Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder have called for, in the vaguest possible terms, an "international court" to try the PKK, while creating a diversion with a European initiative aimed at solving the 'Kurdish question...By throwing the case to an international court, Italy and Germany have cleverly made Ocalan everybody's problem and nobody's problem. It is a neat solution that allows both countries to parry an irritating EU neighbour (Turkey) and maintain the appearance of seeking 'justice' without alienating those volatile Kurds...Notwithstanding its undeniable political appeal for German and Italian leaders, [their] Ocalan solution is deplorable...If it is a new court they wish to create, by what authority will it derive its jurisdiction and which laws will serve as a basis for adjudicating? Even using an existing international court, the danger is obvious: When governments refuse recourse to the domestic laws of democratic societies...they undermine the rule of law itself."

(The Wall Street Journal 30/11/98)

The US put diplomatic pressure on Syria, Russia, and the West European states to deny the Kurdish leader the right of political asylum despite the fact that the right of political asylum is included in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, to which the United States was an original signatory. The

US officials quoted in the New York Times above, also admitted that Israel had monitored Ocalan's departure from Damascus, after the Syrians were forced to expel him. In Greece US pressures were to be ultimately decisive

Eventually the US would finally admit that it had engineered Ocalan's kidnapping – they just couldn't help boasting – with the New York Times (20/2/99) quoting an unnamed "senior" US official as saying: "We spent a good deal of time working with Italy and Germany and Turkey to find a creative way to bring him to justice."

Kenya

"Kenya and the Ivory Coast are two African countries in which the Mossad has a very large and active presence. Its officers work there under various covers such as businessmen, academics, journalists, and advisers and instructors to the local intelligence and other security agencies, including the airport security and immigration."

(B. Raman Director, Institute for Topical Studies, Chennai, 19/2/99 SAPRA)

Such is US and Israeli involvement in Kenya – intelligence and security agencies have had close ties at least since the days of the Entebbe operation in 1977 – that Bin Laden's International Islamic Front For Jihad against the US And Israel seemed to have chosen Nairobi for its first operation in order to convey a simultaneous message to the US as well as Israel. In any case after the bombing, a large contingent of Israeli rescue and salvage experts, including reportedly many Israeli security experts, had flown to Nairobi to help in the rescue and salvage work and assist the FBI in its investigation.

Ocalan was a very well-known figure and his descriptive particulars were known to all counter-terrorism experts. Even if the Greek intelligence service had not actually phoned them and told them Ocalan was coming, Israeli experts would have had no difficulty in detecting the arrival of Ocalan in Nairobi, alerting the Turkish agencies, keeping a watch on Ocalan till the arrival of the Turkish Special Forces team and helping them in smuggling a drugged and gagged Ocalan into the aircraft without going through the airport security and immigration formalities.

Co-operation between the intelligence and security agencies of Israel and Turkey date back to the visit Tansu Ciller (then Turkish Prime Minister) to Jerusalem in 1995. She and the late Yitzhak Rabin (then Israeli Prime Minister) signed an agreement on co-operation between their respective security agencies in dealing with terrorism and other threats to their respective national security.

The agreement reportedly provided for not only exchange of intelligence, but Israeli training for Turkish counter-terrorism experts and Special Forces and a joint monitoring of the movements and activities of Islamic extremist and Kurdish elements in Malta, Cyprus and West Europe. Part of this seems to have included an assassination attempt on Ocalan. (Med TV 12/1/98)

In a report datelined Jerusalem, February 18/2/99, the New York Times said:

"In recent years, Israel and Turkey have forged a high profile strategic alliance that has served as a counter-weight to mutual perceived threats from Syria and Iran. Israeli pilots have trained in Turkish air space, the two countries have carried out a joint naval exercise and Israel has upgraded Turkish fighter planes...There have been mutual visits by defence and military chiefs from both countries, meetings between intelligence officials and a military co-operation agreement signed in 1996. Along with intelligence-sharing, Israel has advised Turkey on anti-terrorism methods, which the Turks have used in their long war with Ocalan's separatist Kurdish movement."

Yet, Israeli Governments have avoided taking a direct and active role in Turkey's war with the



Kurds. Probably because the extermination is so reminiscent of the Nazi experience and would be difficult to sell at home.

For what it's worth the New York Times also quoted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as telling a news conference: "Israel's activity does not include any role in the struggle against Ocalan and we did not co-operate with any element in apprehending Ocalan. We always fight terrorism and we will always fight terrorism, but we certainly had no part in the capture of Ocalan."

The Abduction

In April 20 this year the editors and publishers of La Tea, the largest daily newspaper in Greece, faced criminal charges for printing an essay by George Kostoulas, the Greek ambassador to Kenya. Kostoulas was with Ocalan before his capture on February 16. His account of Ocalan's last moments of freedom is, according to the indictment: "information which the interest of the state required to be kept secret from foreign governments."

The article conveys the gradual process of betrayal and bartering over Ocalan by the Greek government, diplomatic officials and secret service – at one point they ask him for \$15 million to fly him to the Seychelles. Those travelling with Ocalan did everything to protect him in the ambassador's residence where he was kept, supposedly under Greek protection. Eventually Greek Embassy officials began to receiving phone calls asking if Ocalan was there as agents pretended to be Greek then foreign journalists.

Time Magazine has a (somewhat contradictory) account that attention was drawn to the ambassador's residence by the activities of Ocalan's followers:

"Holed up at the ambassador's villa, Ocalan was soon joined by three female followers and a team of lawyers. The activity raised suspicions and, according to Greek sources, attracted the attention of FBI agents in Nairobi investigating last year's U.S. embassy bombing. On Feb. 12 four Greek intelligence agents told Ocalan to "move out as soon as possible because his whereabouts had been spotted." They offered to hide him at a local Greek Orthodox church or fly him to another state. "Ocalan turned down all the options," recounts Kranidiotis, who was with him in Nairobi, "but the officers tried to physically evict and drug him. That's when an Ocalan aide flashed a revolver under her throat and threatened to commit suicide if they dared to move him."

(Thomas Sanction, Time 1/3/99)

It also makes no mention of US attempts to stop Ocalan obtaining political sanction. Many reports convey a sense that Ocalan was hidden in Niarobi, then supposedly discovered by Turkish special forces, then captured.

Every government involved seems to have a differing account of events. Kenya's foreign minister, said his government didn't know Ocalan was even in the country and ordered his removal as soon as it found out. Insisting that Kenyan security personnel would not have violated the diplomatic immunity of the compound. Other reports have it that they threatened to raid the residence:

"Mr Ocalan is said to have finally agreed to leave the compound after Mr Pangalos rang to tell him, the embassy was about to be stormed by Kenyan security forces."

(Helena Smith, Guardian 19/2/99)

The discrepancy between those two accounts leaves ample room for a covert operation. Eyewitness accounts cited by Kenya's Daily Nation newspaper, the Associated Press and Ocalan's German attorneys suggest that Ocalan was lured or dragged out of the embassy compound by men who were – or were at best believed to be – Kenyan security officials.

The Guardian report also stated that a leading officer in Greece's Intelligence Service (EYP), Colonel Savvas Kalenterides, who had been dis-

patched to Nairobi, said "Athens had openly co-operated with the CIA to deliver Mr Ocalan to Turkey." When the Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos decided to extend "humanitarian assistance" this was in fact the beginning of the operation. According to the Guardian when Ocalan was taken to a villa outside Athens – subsequent to transportation to Kenya – the head of EYP told him of Mr Simitis' decision and leaked the news of his whereabouts to the CIA.

"At first Washington wanted Athens to hand Ocalan straight over to the Turks. When it said it couldn't do that, the bargaining began and Kenya was chosen as a face-saving solution...They were so keen to get him out of the mission that it was even suggested that he be drugged and delivered to the Turks."

Reading between the lines the Guardian perhaps reveals the bargaining chip:

"Embarrassed as much abroad as he is at home, the Greek leader is concerned that the affair should not harm his government's main goal: securing the country's entry into the European single currency by 2001."



The official statements also fell back on the over-used excuse when the machinations of government are revealed: the Greek ministers said the government had "little control over the Greek intelligence service." In an interview on MED-TV, however, Ocalan's aide, Semsil Kilinc, said that the

"Kurdish leader was handed over to the Kenyan police-supposedly at the behest of Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos – despite their pleas that he be transported to the Nairobi airport in a Greek embassy car.

It was a whole police force that was involved, according to Kilinc, not just the driver of the car transporting Ocalan. A number of policemen and police cars forcibly separated Ocalan from his companions.

Ocalan's companions have accused Pangalos of deliberately shipping him to Nairobi because the Greek minister knew that the Kenyan government was subservient to the United States and Israel and because, in the wake of the recent bombing of the U.S. embassy there, the city was flooded with American intelligence forces.

Pangalos's decision to ship Ocalan there must have been part of a some kind of deal with Washington."

(Gerry Foley, Socialist Action, March 1999)

In 1994 the PKK undertook to abide by the Geneva Convention. The exhibition and humiliation of a prisoner is against the Geneva Convention which Turkey openly flouted after the capture of Ocalan. A blindfolded and drugged Ocalan was displayed as a trophy of war under a giant Turkish flag. They were assisted in this by most of the British press who published the photographs supplied by Turkey's secret service. ITN news' graphics department actually put together a montage of him beside the Turkish flag.

UK Press coverage of the trial

"The Ocalan case especially concerns the future of Turkey. It is a chance for Turkey that we have to evaluate properly for the sake of putting an end to the violence resulting from the Kurdish issue that has caused so much pain to many, and to establish the superiority of democracy with all its institutions and rules in our country. It must be noted that Abdullah Ocalan spends an effort to contribute to a solution to the issue even under conditions of complete solitary confinement and isolation.

The trial should rather be transformed into a platform for a democratic and peaceful solution than to be reduced to an ordinary criminal case determined by an understanding of revenge and hatred. To analyse the real causes of the conflict and refrain from the methods applied in it will be only to the benefit of Turkey."

(Press Conference of Ocalan's Lawyers 29 May 99)

British press coverage of the Ocalan trial perversely dedicated itself to enforcing the Turkish state line as if paid by them. They seemed keen to hasten his death and portray him as a cowardly but

psychopathic mass murderer.

The Independent of 1/6/99 stated he had: "turned craven yesterday, begging for his life before a Turkish Court."

Adding that with

'apparent cowardice...he quickly shed what dignity the state had allowed him with his statement, "I share the pain of these families of martyrs."

The Daily Telegraph of the same date gratuitously provided an unattributed quote from an "anonymous PKK sympathiser" speaking by telephone: "he is a coward and a traitor."

The Financial Times under the banner headline of "New-look Ocalan pleads for his life" noted that he "did not fit the image "of the ferocious "baby killer" for whom the Turks have been prepared for decades."

None of the papers really convey any interest in the reality of the case. Any discussion of how he got there is non-existent. Chris Morris – a long time Ocalan hater and the Guardian's man in Ankara – had as his headline of 31/5/99 "Unfairness in court would wreck strong case against Kurd leader." Alongside the article is the humiliation photograph supplied by the security services – the words are presumably his own:

"The wall poster in this old Anatolian city speaks louder than a thousand words. It pictures Abdullah Ocalan as a devil, dripping blood on to a small, defenceless child."

He then tells us what people he has just bumped into – who are from a familiar sounding New York based Human rights organisation (which happens to be called Human Rights Watch) wanted him to say, which are the mildest references to the trial imaginable. Skirting over the fact that one of the judges happens to be a military one and that the European Court of Human rights has already ruled that the presence of a military judge prevents a civilian from having a fair trial, he tells us:

"The authorities are particularly concerned for the court to be seen as legitimate in the world's eyes because the case against Mr. Ocalan is so strong."

Yes – If only the South Africans had made a better job of Mandela everything would have been all right. Having been there I can understand that, based in Ankara, he has to watch what he says otherwise there may be a knock on his door in the middle of the night – or who knows – broad daylight.

The lawyers acknowledged the background of defamatory news by some parts of the media, attorney Ercan Kanar explained the motives why the group of lawyers have taken on defending Ocalan:

"The result of the trial would deeply affect the future destiny of the Turkish and the Kurdish people and the chances for a social peace in Turkey. The motive of the lawyers was to promote the basis for a democratic solution to the Kurdish issue, even if the conditions under which the trial will presumably be held contravene every legal provision one can think of."

The Financial Times did actually note that the court trying Ocalan is made up of two civilians and a military officer "the presence of whom the European Court of Human Rights has ruled unacceptable." Yet it ignores that one of the Prosecutors of the State Security Court Ankara has publicly stated that the decisions of the European Human Rights Court would not bind Turkey. As the lawyers state:

"As long as the detention conditions of the client, the conditions of the Defence and the conditions of the trial are being determined by the Crisis Management Center of the Prime Minister, apparently a military authority, even an amendment to the Regulations on the State Security Courts to withdraw the military judge from the Court can not provide the conditions of a fair trial"

The British press ignored the sane rational statements of the lawyers that:

"The trial should rather be transformed into a platform for a democratic and peaceful solution than to be reduced to an ordinary criminal case determined by an understanding of revenge and hatred. To analyse the real causes of the conflict and refrain from the methods applied in it will be only to the benefit of Turkey."

The number of press members admitted was limited and the right to visually follow the hearings was reserved to the notoriously biased "state monopoly media TRT and Anadolu Agency", so UK journalists are re-hashing biased material, probably in a bar somewhere or lounging in their hotels. Does that sound like craven cowardice to you?

Trial

In court immediately after the establishment of his identity, Ocalan declared that the trial against him did not rest on legal grounds but was a purely political trial. Accordingly, he would also defend himself only politically. He reiterated that he still meant what he said on the day he was apprehended by Turkey: "I want to live for the sake of peace. And for the sake of peace it is important that I stay alive." Ocalan protested against the breaches of international safeguards on part of Russia, Greece, Kenya and partially Italy who played a role in his illegal abduction.

Alone on these grounds the lawfulness of the trial was not given, he said. Thus, also his defence was of no legal value. But his urge to contribute to a solution to the conflict on the basis of a democratic republic was the reason why he had to stay alive. Addressing the relatives of Turkish soldiers who lost their lives in the war, Ocalan said that he deeply shared the pains they felt in their hearts. He apologised to them for that part of their grievances that he was responsible for and repeated that he on his part was ready to get together and stop the bloodshed.



This is his statement which was also ignored:
TO THE ATTENTION OF THE TURKISH AND WORLD PUBLIC:

THIS IS MY STATEMENT ON CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. The unilateral cease-fire declared [by the PKK] on September 1, 1998 should be continued unabated in all arenas, with full responsibility.
2. On the basis of any [Turkish] State initiative, primarily in the form of a general amnesty and other measures that might bring peace, [the PKK will] suspend the armed conflict permanently.
3. Despite some deviations that set in with the 1990's, if it creates some trust, gives some guaranty, the democratic republican system which has also opened up to freedom of expression for the Kurds, should be considered the framework within which peaceful solutions to all problems sought.
4. If this materialises, the PKK should prepare itself to become a legal, political party.
5. At the minimum, until the attitude of the state and the new parliament and government becomes clear, adopt a vigorous and decisive line of political action under the motto of social peace, general amnesty and brotherhood of people.
6. All international peace and human rights organisations, governments and parliaments should support the initiative based on these principles.
7. If an initiative of this sort is undertaken [by Turkey], the UN, the European Union, and European Council and the OSCE should also participate in the process as observers.
8. I would like to inform all concerned circles in Turkey, such as the public and the private institutions, political parties, the media, and all of the non-governmental organisations that, this is how I basically see the question. And, I would like to remind all that it is vitally important for our country and the democratic system to fully participate in this process.

Greetings to all and I wish success in your work for peace with freedom.

April 4 1999, Abdullah Ocalan, Imrali Prison

The Mockery of Justice

"The accused, after nearly 90 days imprisonment – in conditions which themselves constitute an infringement of Turkish law – was still denied confidential access to counsel. Of the eighty or so

Turkish lawyers who had put themselves forward to defend him, the key protagonists had become so public a focus of nationalist wrath that they were virtually in the same boat as their client – hapless scapegoats of a well-oiled political agenda. Lynch mobs greeted their every arrival and departure to and from the prison island of Imrali with attacks, insults and threats of death. The police stood back and allowed them to be beaten. The death threats continued in their homes and workplaces. Vicious phone-calls, abusive and violent letters."

(Mockery Of Justice, Sheri Laizer <kurdl@burn.ucsd.edu>)

It was after the monumental abuses of national and international law; after bribery and corruption at the highest levels that Ocalan was put in solitary confinement and then put on show-trial. Articles such as Laizer's – who worked for the Kurdish Centre shut down by UK Special branch – would have been circulated to the British press. They more or less ignored them. They also seem to have ignored any potential British involvement in any aspect of the capture process.

There seems no curiosity that a British citizen was part of Ocalan's group – despite the source of the information:

"The Government has established that the Mr. Ocalan arrived in the Country from Milan, Italy. According to the Greek Ambassador Nationals from the following Countries accompanied Mr. Ocalan: Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Greece."

(Press Statement Of Kenyan Government On The Entry Into The Country By Abdullah Ocalan, provided by Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign affairs)

The UK government are heavily involved in the PUK/KDP cut up of northern Iraq. Two British diplomats attended the Washington meeting of both factions of 17/6/99. Despite the fact that Ocalan's abduction ran concurrent with these moves they have also been ignored, yet they can be seen as facilitating or at least being linked to them. It may exist, but I know of no official UK government statement on the trial either for or against.

The European Court in the Hauge can whip up charges that Milosovich is a war criminal seemingly to order – but they don't seem to notice kangaroo courts in Turkey when speed is of the essence.

"In answers made to lawyer's questions about aspects of his health, Ocalan replied that he was losing his memory, that he could no longer control his feelings, and that he was suffering from weakness, dizziness and palpitations of the heart previously unknown to him. In fact, he had not even been able to get out of bed to see them the day before. He said he felt as if he might fall over at any moment. The interrogation by highly-trained intelligence operatives, the strange monitoring by special doctors and psychiatrists who make no public disclosures about his situation seem to carry on behind closed doors unabated."

(Mockery Of Justice, Sheri Laizer)

The trial was as much a parade of depravity as if we had returned to the days of the Soviet show trials or the Volksgericht of Nazi Germany. Every conceivable obstacle was put in the path of the defence, the prosecution flaunted procedure at every step of the way. In addition dubious statements attributed to Ocalan were placed in the media that his lawyers had no prior knowledge of. Ocalan's lawyers confirmed with Laizer that:

"...not a single written request sent by Ocalan's lawyers to the prosecution requesting their cooperation, inviting a response to questions, or asking for copies of documents etc. had even been answered. Rather, developments had become known to them afterwards through the media."

Ocalan had recognised that just as prior to his capture, the sole hope of justice being done for the Kurdish cause as much as for himself, lay in initiatives to internationalise debate on the political basis of the case. As we have seen, perversely, international forces were arrayed against him to prevent this very basis. The Turkish state was try-

ing him as a common criminal with the process of criminalisation extending to the lawyers. This was broadly supported in the western press.

Propaganda always follows in 'low-intensity conflicts' and can be seen as part of the tactics used to attack the Kurdish struggle by the US and Turkey.

The US Information Agency pumps out pre-digested summaries of 'world opinion' as part of its propaganda operations in the hope that these will be reproduced – a helping hand for journalists. In their, obviously highly selective, survey based on 61 reports from 28 countries (February 18 – 23), analysis critical of the US is rendered meagre:

"Papers in Italy, Croatia, Malta, Egypt, Jordan, China, South Korea, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Argentina found common cause with Rome's centrist *Il Messaggero*, which stressed, "Ocalan's head was provided in order to guarantee Turkey's loyalty toward Clinton's policy...against Saddam.""

(US Information Agency Office of Public Liaison 23/2/99)

The vast majority of mainstream reporting I have seen downplayed or omitted CIA/Mossad involvement in the lead up or aftermath of the 'judicial process.' As regards the trial one could hardly paint a blacker picture of the easily led, biddable, cynical apathy and ignorance of our news media. As Sheri Laizer has it:

"For so long as Turkey and its Allies managed to criminalize the figure of Ocalan, the underlying political facts were conveniently obscured. Since the Kosovo Crisis had diverted world attention from the headlines the Kurds had seized after suffering the shock of Ocalan's capture resulting in the occupation of Greek Embassies, self-immolations, hungerstrikes to the death in Turkish prisons and the spectacle of ordinary people being lynched in the streets of western Turkey, not even the daily bombings ensuing in Turkey had grabbed a headline. No reporting of substance appeared concerning the atrocious conditions to which Abdullah Ocalan has been subjected, nor of the jeopardy in which his lawyers lived as they struggled to win a "fair hearing". In fact, the Western media had apparently been struck dumb at the very moment when their response was read by the Turkish state as a blessing to continue the psychological torture of Abdullah Ocalan and the brutal suppression of the Kurdish people."

The lawyers produced press releases concerning what they believed to be "Obstacles Facing a Fair Trial" which were:

1. The investigation is not being conducted by any legal mechanisms. The investigation is conducted by the so called Crisis Desk, which is attached to General Secretariat of the Chief of Staff.
2. It is impossible to have any connection with Imrali, where Ocalan is held, other than through Mudanya. It is almost impossible both for the family members and lawyers to make any contact with Abdullah Ocalan during his imprisonment [in Imrali].
3. Under the [Turkish] law, Imrali island should be attached to the Justice Ministry and Prosecution Offices of the SSC. However at the moment the island is run under the control of the Crisis Desk which is attached to the Chief of Staff.
4. The duration of the interrogation must be 7 days. However Ocalan is still being interrogated and his life is in danger. He could be killed at any time and/or they could claim that he had committed suicide.
5. The lawyers' lives are in danger. The lawyers are made targets. Under these circumstances it is impossible to talk about the right to defence.
6. The [Turkish] media, government, President all speak in a manner as if Ocalan was already convicted and views such as [that] he should receive capital punishment and executed, are being publicly expressed. All these create pressure mechanisms both on the court and public opinion."

And, when they could proceed no further and survive, the lawyers put out this:

"The defence lawyers of Abdullah Ocalan and his relatives have decided to leave for Istanbul after having been confronted with repeated harassment and attacks. Due to the sustained pressure by the police that originally was meant to protect the lawyers, the hotel owner of the Omur Hotel in Bursa has cancelled the

contract with the defence team and the family of Mr. Ocalan.

Due to the hostile atmosphere and the pressure of the security forces, no other hotel was available for the lawyers in the area. Facing attacks from a nationalist inspired crowd outside their hotels under the eyes of the police, the attorneys and the family members of Mr. Ocalan were forced to leave Bursa in a hurry.

They said that they would not participate in tomorrow's sessions and demanded that the state ensures their security so that they could participate again in later sessions."

Old cold warriors

While the Ocalan drama was unfolding the *Guardian* (2/3/99) published an article by "Cold War Veteran" John le Carre. In part just the rantings of an old flake:

"I do believe that from 1945 until the death of Stalin, Communism was unappeasable, and you couldn't educate it either..."

It is also an indication of the ideology of the intelligence services and the Foreign Office.

Le Carre wanted to oppose communism (which he confuses with the Soviet Union) and writes: "that might be through dividing it against itself – by trying to find cracks in the monolith and so on." Only five paragraphs before he had stated: "As long as the former Soviet Union was a monolith it was much easier to spy upon than when it is fragmented. We now face 30,000 nuclear warheads in the Ukraine. Chechnia is screaming for independence and it is a potential terror problem." It is as hard to prove the contradictions in his argument as it is to compare paragraphs sitting opposite each other.

In his wanderings at the end we glimpse the moral vagueness of his class:

"It seems to me that we didn't have any contingency plan for peace – in propagating what we thought was democracy we refined and developed spin and the lie to the point where we live with it like a curse. There is no example, no longer any standard of truth."

The old gods are no use anymore:

"The Reagan – Thatcher alliance and Thatcherite politics and economics licensed greed and reduced the nobility of man in the Western democratic world as a concept."

As one look at Tony Blair will tell us. Although his analysis is useless we can read some into it in retrospect:

"We always had an excuse for not stopping beside the casualties, not caring for the losers."

The big point of the article was to promote the intelligence services, and for that you need threats. 'terrorists' being the easiest type of threat to generate:

"In the future I think the great burden of intelligence work will be counter-terrorist, from wherever the terrorist threat comes. It will be concerned with international crime on a grand scale. Many threats will come from landless people – potentially the Kurds, formerly the Palestinians."

While its front page condemned racism as part of its reporting on the Steven Lawrence murder, the le Carre article seemed to celebrate it.

The US state and the British perceive the PKK in this decrepit cold war perspective i.e. it is categorised as a Marxist Leninist organisation with an anti-US orientation whose existence is contrary to the interests of the US state and its clients in the region.

This is not the case. Ocalan has gone on the record in several occasions describing it thus:

"The international press and media have been manufacturing unfair and grossly distorted views about our party. The USA plays a significant role in promoting these negative views. The chief of the CIA has referred to our party as a foremost international terrorist organization. Such a portrayal of the PKK obviously does not rely on facts but on deliberate distortions. The PKK has no other role but to promote the demands of the

Kurds for their own national identity and national rights, as they today face genocide. How can our resistance against this genocide be mistaken for terrorism? The chief of the CIA should understand that we are the victims of terrorism. The Republic of Turkey is a well known perpetrator of genocide and of the destruction of cultures."

As for the question of separatism, we do not insist on a separate state, on the contrary, we defend a form of government that respects our people's distinct cultural, social, political, and economic rights. These rights can be realized under one state just as they would be under two states. It is inappropriate in today's political reality to conceive of forms of government as either unitary or separatist. We live in an age within which distinct political and social groups come together to form federal states. Belgium is a federal state composed of two distinct national groups. Spain is also an example, and I should also mention the Russian Federation.

...Evidently under the influence of socialism of Stalin and the fascism of Mussolini and Hitler, Mustafa Kemal developed the Turkish style unitary state. You certainly know that the Turkish state is not democratic. There is no cultural freedom for non-Turkish groups. Turkish democracy is a sham, and it is in reality under the control of the military junta. The Turkish government not only disregards the human rights of the Kurdish people but it also oppresses its own Turkish people. The PKK struggles for democracy against such an anti-democratic government. To refer to our struggle as separatist is to ignore reality. The Kemalist regime has reached a point where either it will survive by reforming itself or it will destroy itself by becoming trapped in the narrow structure of a unitary state.

We have often stated that we are ready to participate in any political process that the Turkish government will undertake to make democratic reforms. We hereby explicitly state that we do not insist on a separate state of our own. Should the Turkish side be open for dialogue, we can reach solutions based on the equality and liberty of both peoples within the existing borders. It is nonsense to see our demands as separatist in intention. We want a Spanish or American style of federalism.

Question: What response have you received from the Turkish government to your calls for negotiation?

Ocalan: Unfortunately, our opponents pretend not to hear our calls. It seems as if we were talking to a wall. I think that there is no other regime in the world which is so inflexible. The Turkish state has never recognized the existence of other peoples or distinct ethnic groups within its territory. It waged wars on those ethnic groups who demanded the same rights as the Turks themselves and, as in the case of the Armenian extermination, served the Turkish goal of maintaining a unitary state. Now the Turkish regime seems to be deaf to any proposals made by us for civilized and democratic solutions to the conflict between us. Indeed, the Turkish government is more resolved than ever to solve the Kurdish question by bloodshed. The Turkish government has no tolerance for the Kurdish question. It has brutally repressed all Kurdish uprisings in the past. Turkish President Demirel has boasted of crushing the twenty-ninth uprising. During his visit to Chile, Demirel vehemently denied the existence of a Kurdish question in Turkey.

The Turkish authorities continue to ignore any just solution to this conflict due to the mixed signals and encouragements they receive from NATO countries. All our reform proposals have been turned down by the Turkish government. It rejects formal or informal dialogue even with non-armed Kurdish political organizations.

(David Korn, translated by AKIN April 95)

The cold warriors in the CIA and MI6 have read what Ocalan has to say and have looked at the pitiful record of the PUK and KDP and asked themselves 'who will make the most stable power in the region'. They have come to the conclusion that the PKK must be removed from the equation. The answer would be the PKK if the small faction at the head of the Turkish state were out of the equation. The alliances being forged between the US and the UK and the PUK and KDP will not

stand up to any analysis in the light of day – this is why they are hidden.

The Turkish state, the NSC, also maintains a cold war mentality. At best the government (the NSC) has offered the country a society dominated by Big Brother as some defence against imaginary enemies – and although the war against the Kurds could be seen as a race war it is also a political war: The Turkish state persecutes the Kurds for political and financial reasons, and all of Turkey suffers.

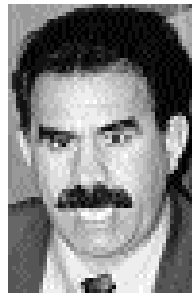
The situation in south east Turkey is similar to the worst atrocities of the American war in Vietnam – the 'counter-insurgency' tactics are the same. Troops in the field in Vietnam (Turkey has relied on a conscript army) could not distinguish between 'villagers' and 'guerrillas' so it became policy not to do so. The US tried ruthless moves such as Operation Phoenix – a major program for the murder of civilians "possibly linked to or supporting the enemy" in Vietnam between 1967-1971. It was headed by William Colby, it resulted in the deaths of between 25 to 40,000 people and Colby subsequently was promoted to head of the CIA.

The military tactic established for dealing with 'counter-insurgency' by the British and American military can be summed up by the phrase "if you cannot catch the fish in the water you take away the water." Meaning you destroy the population. This extends into destroying those who aid the enemy journalists, academics, politicians and so forth, this has the added bonus that the group you oppose can never build a successful social infrastructure.

"In country after country over the past half-century, the United States has organised governments run by scoundrels who would do the necessary dirty work. The list is impressive: the old Chiang-Kai-Shek clique, the rapacious and former collaborationist military leaders of Thailand, Argentine and Chilean Generals, the Shah of Iran, the Indonesian generals, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, Stroessner in Paraguay, the Guatemalan generals, Mobutu in Zaire. Our favourite collaborationists tend to be crooks as well as murderers, and because of the corruption endemic in these US-sponsored governments that have been called "shakedown states."

(Edward Herman, *Beyond Hypocrisy*)

We can add another one to that list: Turkey.



Turkish troops, in search of the PKK.