

## INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

Peter Bird Martin  
ICWA/Crane-Rogers Foundation  
4 West Wheelock St.  
Hanover, New Hampshire 03255

March 30th 1992

Dear Peter,

Another offering for you and your friends. It started as a newspaper piece but grew into something more. 'Nuff said.

TURKEY LOOKS TOWARD THE EAST

by Thomas Goltz

It is Monday night in the frontier town and all the locals have come out to greet the coach as it pulls into the station.

The arrivals are a mixed lot: City-slicker businessmen, looking for a deal; carpet-bagger politicians trying to promote their own careers and pamphlet-pushing missionaries, ready to spread their own brand of religion in these backward parts.

Jammed in and among the outlanders are also a couple of wide-eyed natives fighting for their luggage: they are just back from their first look at the Big Town that now increasingly dominates their lives and imagination, and have brought back a small mountain of gifts: coffee, cheese, chocolate and even fashion magazines.

Livingston, Montana, circa 1892?

Try Baku, Azerbaijan 100 years later, with the stage coach replaced by a Turkish Airlines 'Wells Fargo' wagon of the sky.

Indeed, the main difference between the THY flight linking Istanbul and Baku and the stage coaches of the Old West is not so much the mode of transportation, but the fact that the 'frontier' is not being pushed westward, but rather eastward-- and into the terra incognita of the Turkic-speaking lands of the former Soviet Union.

Another major difference is identity of the pioneers.

With the exception of the occasional Texas oil man sniffing around for Caspian black gold, the arrivals in Baku airport on Monday nights are Turks (or Turkified foreigners) and they are redefining their country's role in world affairs. At the same time, they are also redefining the way their Turkic, Muslim 'cousins' in the Caucasus and Central Asia regard themselves and the world.

---

Thomas Goltz is an ICWA fellow researching the Turkic nations of the former Soviet Union with emphasis on Azerbaijan.

---

Since 1925 the Institute of Current World Affairs (the Crane-Rogers Foundation) has provided long-term fellowships to enable outstanding young adults to live outside the United States and write about international areas and issues. Endowed by the late Charles R. Crane, the Institute is also supported by contributions from like-minded individuals and foundations.

The search for a new identity on both sides has cast up a fundamental question: are we talking about Turks or Muslims? And if both, where does the emphasis fall?

The conventional wisdom has it that Islam is the primary factor in the inchoate political personality of the six 'Muslim Republics' of the former USSR.

Accepted as a truism, it almost ineluctably follows that there is a danger that a certain neighboring country might try and capitalize on the reborn identity for its own pernicious, ideological ends. The Islamic Republic of Iran up to its old tricks, in a word.

It is no doubt true that Tehran has its own agenda and interests. Iran, after all, is contiguous to the southern tier of the former Soviet republics and has centuries of cultural ties with the region--even before there was a religion called Islam.

As such, the recent fear that Iran is successfully promoting 'Islamic fundamentalism' throughout the region seems knee-jerk alarmist and certainly uninformed. Not only does the notion discount the initiative of local Muslims to re-embrace spirituality as they see fit, but it relies almost exclusively on the familiar Khomeini-As-Ultimate-Bogey-Man thinking that has dominated discussion about Islam for the past decade.

Such thinking also neglects to take into account the other--and perhaps primary--factor in the regional quest to find (or re-discover) a new identity: the emergence of a new, dynamic sense of 'Turkishness' that supersedes borders and religion.

"It is very convenient to look at Central Asia and Azerbaijan through the looking glass of Islam and extrapolate that Iran is on the march in the region," said a long time observer of the Turkic and Islamic worlds, "But the 'Islamic Threat' argument is a perception that lacks imagination and depth and, in the final analysis, rests on western cliches. Perhaps the reason that so few journalists and academicians refer to the Turkic content of the emerging identity of the region is that so few know anything about Turkey and the Turkic world, both past and present."

The language connection is crucial. Although nearly all Azeris, Kirghiz, Kazaks, Turkmen and Uzbeks can speak Russian perfectly well, the ability to communicate in one's local Turkic tongue has become one of the most potent symbols of the new nationalism embraced by the native population of the region.

Often, speaking one of the Turkic sub-languages is described by locals as 'speaking Muslim' in distinction to Russian. Understandably, some outside observers have assumed that the religious reference is imbued with religious content.

But within the cultural context of 'Turkeli' or 'Turan', as many residents of the Turkic-speaking parts of the former

Soviet Union now refer to their geographic setting, speaking 'Muslim' is rather like speaking 'English' in the United States: the name given the language is almost totally arbitrary, and contains very little cultural information about the speaker.

"Only an idiot would extrapolate from the question or statement that one 'speaks Muslim' that the individual is a committed believer in the necessity of imposing Islamic law," said an observer of the Central Asia scene, "Sadly, there are a lot of expert observers out there who seem to want to do just that. There is a lot of cultural baggage to be sorted through, but focusing on the 'Islamic' aspect of the emerging identity of the region seems to be an intellectual short cut through the mess of 70 years of foreign domination."

Those who are most prone to this error, not surprisingly, are those who approach the subject at hand through non-native languages, and usually through Russian.

"Many Azeris have a better command of Russian than Azeri but they speak better and mean more when they use Turkish," said a Turkish speaking western diplomat, elliptically describing how content is often more important than grammar in deciphering local attitudes toward everything from religion to recreation.

Another old hand in Azerbaijan echoed the thought.

"The idea that a foreigner can understand this society or the other Turkic speaking countries of Central Asia by speaking Russian is totally nonsense," said the first Turkish-speaking foreign correspondent to be based in Baku, "It is like speaking French in Algeria or English in India. You can get by in interviews with officials, but you can't get in a taxi cab or sit down in a coffee house and just listen. You need Turkish--or Turkic--to do that."

Acquiring such cultural tools is starting to catch on. Increasingly, the international press is sending in either Turkish reporters or 'Turkified' foreigners based in Istanbul or Ankara to cover events in the Caucasus and Central Asia--often to the chagrin and irritation of Moscow-based, Russian-speaking journalists who would like to keep all the territory that once belonged to the Soviet Union under their informational control.

The wisdom in calling in 'regional' (in this case, Turkic-world) specialists is evident from the results (or lack thereof) obtained by the two different schools.

During the recent crisis in Nagorno Karabakh, Russian-speaking correspondents from Moscow were either cold-shouldered by locals or even assaulted because they were assumed to be 'Russian spies.' Turkish and Turkish-speaking journalists, in contrast, were welcomed in the front lines and had complete access.

Cultural arrogance (or ignorance) also plays a role in gaining access to the new societies of Central Asia in times of peace.

"It was a totally closed society," complained a staff correspondent from the London Daily Telegraph, describing a quick trip through Turkmenistan with a Russian woman from Moscow as his translator and guide to find traces of Resurgent Islam, "We couldn't find anyone willing to talk."

In direct contrast to this was a two-week journey through Turkmenistan by a Turkish woman who works for Reuters.

"I had the time of my life and went everywhere--mosques, factories, homes," said Elif Kaban, "And it wasn't because I am Turkish because in the opinion of the Turkmens they are the only real Turks and anyone from Turkey is just sort of a diluted version, although still close enough to be treated as cousins."

The same rules governing cultural sensitivity also apply to businessmen and diplomats.

The American State Department, for example, has sent embassy teams packed with Turkish speakers to Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and even Kirghizia--a decision that reportedly went up against the resistance of Russian-speakers who wanted to regard the Turkic republics as still belonging to the purvey of the 'Soviet desk.'

Those attending the opening of the embassy-in-the-hotel-room in Baku in mid March quickly appreciated the wisdom of sending in Robert Finn, a Turcologist who now serves as the charge d' affaires in Azerbaijan. No sooner was the flag raised than Finn was engaged in a Turkish-language chit-chat with Prime Minister Hasan Hasanov, which made Finn the talk of the town.

The French and British delegations sent in to sign documents establishing diplomatic relations, in contrast, relied on Russian speaking interpreters--and were coolly received.

On a business level, too, the cultural touch appears to be crucial. A major American oil company discovered this to its chagrin when, at a meeting with then-president Ayaz Mutalibov, the company's Moscow-based translators were asked to wait outside the door and Azeri Turkish interpreters were brought in.

Other multinationals have taken the cue and now are using their Turkey-based operatives to sniff around Azerbaijan and Central Asia for business possibilities.

The German Siemens have sent in their 'Turks' from Istanbul to negotiate contracts--a recognition that knowledge of Turkish as a language and culture is the essential key to open doors that would be normally locked shut.

"We know how these people think because we are the same people," said Ugur, a Siemens representative who is a frequent visitor to Baku, "70 years of communist rule from Moscow can't wipe out 700 years of common language, culture and traditions."

In a real sense, that means the ability to establish personal connections with movers and shakers—even if that translates to having to sit through the endless series of wedding parties, birthday parties and circumcision parties that remain so important to the average Azeri.

"It takes a lot of time," admitted Murat Dizioglu, the regional director of the multi-faceted, Ankara-based Fet Holding investment in Azerbaijan (oil, leather, trade), "But the reality is that only after someone utters the magic words 'Bu adam Azerbaijan'a lap lazimdir!' ('This man is essential to Azerbaijan!') will any deal get done. We Turks understand the logic because we are engaged in such games ourselves."

But there are degrees of cultural and language affinity, and the Turkey connection is by far the strongest in Azerbaijan—a country whose citizens usually refer to themselves first as Turks, second as Azeris and third as Muslims.

Others—such as the Uzbeks—have a much more attenuated sense of 'Turkishness', and tend to regard themselves first by the amorphous concept of 'Muslim', then by the ill-defined 'Uzbek' and finally—and only maybe—as 'Turks.

But in Azerbaijan there is very little question about essential identity.

"Azerbaijan is a place where Turks live," said Abulfaz Elchibey, the chairman of the Popular Front, the broad-based democratic/nationalist movement that maintains a veto-vote over all decisions to re-associate the country with the rump Soviet Union, now called the Commonwealth of Independent States, "The idea that there is an ethnic group called 'Azerbaijanians' is a fallacy promoted by Moscow for its own ends."

Modern nationalists take particular pride in the fact that the short-lived Republic of Azerbaijan of 1918-20 was the first secular, Turkish republic ever established and, despite its truncated existence, was the model for the Republic of Turkey established by Mustafa Kemal (later Ataturk) in 1923.

Azerbaijan was also the first Turkish state to reject the Arabic/Ottoman/Farsi characters associated with the Islamic past and cast its language into a Latin-based alphabet—a system of writing to which it is now legally committed to return, albeit with the assistance of Turkey. Notably, even the electronic voting board in the Azerbaijan parliament now registers 'ye' and 'ney' in 'restored' Azeri Turkish, a language that contains the familiar symbols of Anatolian Turkish, plus three extra characters.

"The alphabet issue is the transcending issue for the new republics," said Mehmet Ali Bayar, a Baku-based Turkish diplomat who is intimately involved in the transition from Cyrillic to Latin, "It is the bridge between the Turkish concept of modern democracy and the emerging democracies of the Turkic lands. If you want to call that 'anti-Islamic' because Iran doesn't like it, so be it, but I fast through Ramadan like any mullah. I will also enjoy my first drink the day after."

Others go further.

"There is no question that Turkey and Turkishness are on the rise," said Rashid Gurdilek, a Turkish journalist who recently visited Azerbaijan and Central Asia, "And there is no question that the Turkic peoples are stuck with being Muslims. But the point has come where Ankara, in consort with the emerging republics, has to make a break between Turkish Islam and the 'other' Islam of the Arabs and Iran. We need to create a national, Turkish 'church', if you will, and declare ourselves the Protestants of the Muslim world. Watch the Turks of Azerbaijan and Central Asia fall in line."

If this sounds like a new version of Pan-Turkism, Gurdilek is not the only recent convert in Turkey or outside of it.

In a truly mind-boggling turn-around in attitude, thinking about the 'cousin' Turks of the erstwhile USSR has become a new pastime in the highest political circles in Ankara, with the formerly timid Turks positively relishing their new-found role as an inspiration and model for others.

And the role-model seekers have responded.

Almost without exception, the first stop of all the presidents of the Turkic-speaking republics of the USSR was Ankara, where they were afforded all the diplomatic niceties. In return, Turkey was singled out for special treatment: in the case of Uzbekistan, President Islam Karimov even went so far as to promise Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel the foreign ministry building in Tashkent for use as the new Turkish embassy.

Such symbolism is important, because for the past 70 years, espousing the idea of a common language and culture linking the Turkic has often been a criminal offense--both in the old Soviet Union as well as in Turkey itself. Almost all the current leaders of opposition movements in the Turkic republics of the old USSR have served time or been harassed for espousing Pan-Turkic ideas.

On the Turkish side of the fallen Iron Curtain, meanwhile, Pan-Turkists have long been regarded as loonie believers in the disastrous policies of the late Ottoman Empire, when the notion of a Turkish/Islamic synthesis began to supplant the prevalent 'Muslim' identity that had heretofore prevailed. Islam, the glue that had kept together the diverse ethnic groups in the House of Osman, was increasingly perceived as

the religion of the perfidious Arabs who had joined with the infidel British and French during World War One in order to destroy the last, great Muslim Empire--theirs.

The alternative to the heterogeneous, Mediterranean empire of the Ottomans was to reject the non-Turkish element (or to accept their departure) and to focus on a totally new identity: Turkishness, a concept that would include speakers of a language group stretching from China to Yugoslavia.

In the event, the search for the new, trans-national identity failed on two counts, although neither had much to do with a lack of native communal feeling between the dispersed Turks.

First and foremost was the decision by the branch of Turkish nationalism developed and controlled by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk that 'Turkishness', as such, was to be confined to Anatolia and eastern Thrace--IE, the borders of the Republic of Turkey.

Within those frontiers, Turkishness was to flourish as never before. 'Happy is he that calls himself a Turk,' was the famous, phrase that is now literally painted on mountainsides across the Republic. To give the new nationalism some teeth, the government in Ankara quickly moved to establish a language institute to weed out Arabic and Persian accretions in Ottoman Turkish so that the people might speak a 'pure' Turkish. Too, no effort was spared to discover instant ancestors from Anatolia like the Hittites, making 'Turkishness' synonymous with 'Anatolianess.' The idea that Turkishness might exist in some other form--like in the Pamir mountains of Afghanistan or along the shores of the Adriatic in Yugoslavia--was officially discouraged as threatening to the new, modern nation of the Turks. Distant cousins might come and embrace the Turkey idea of Turkishness, but additional ideas about its essence were not welcome.

The second stumbling block for the pan-Turkish crowd was the 'nationalities' policy of the Soviet Union, which complemented Ataturk's restriction of the zone of Turkishness with its own version of divide and rule.

In real terms, this translated into a policy of No Turks Around Here.

It is often misleading to dip too deeply into the historical record to search for primary causes of antipathy or friendship between nations or national groups, but to avoid all reference to the historic enmity that has existed between the Mongol/Turkic and Russian/Slavic peoples would be a gross oversight.

The essence of the argument is this: the series of Turkic/Mongol conquests of most of what is today's Russia between the time of Atilla the Hun and Chenghiz Khan prevented the Russians from developing ideas and institutions shared by other European states, and generally made Russia as

'different' as the 7th century Arab conquest of Spain made the Iberian peninsula 'different' from the other kingdoms or nations of Europe.

But unlike the Spanish, who, after driving the Arabs out in the 15th century, could disengage behind an ocean and who enjoyed a relative proximity to the other European states undergoing the Renaissance, the Russians not only remained far away from the source of new ideas but found themselves cheek-to-jowl with their old enemy long after their own territorial version of the Reconquistada was over.

With the exception of the wars fought with Napoleon and Hitler, the 'good fight' from the Russian perspective was always against the Turk--to the point where one is tempted to use the term 'implacable enemies' in the most rigorous sense of the word.

There were wars to the East and wars to the West, although the latter are better known: the slow crawl and then final conquest of the Crimea Khanate, when Russia finally reached the Black Sea; the roll down through the Caucasus at the expense of both Ottoman Turkey and Iran; the push into the Balkans, in support of Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian independence, and finally, in an effort to fulfill the dream of the deposed descendants of Byzantium, the planned capture of Constantinople as the prize for Russian participation in the Great War of 1914.

The November revolution of 1917 spiked those plans, but even after the last shots were fired between Russians and Turks in the closing days of World War One, one senses that the intuitive enmity held by the Russians toward their classic foe was being transformed into a new sort of strategy.

Unable or unwilling to salt the soil and destroy Turkishness root and branch, Moscow could still so trim the tree that the nightmare of a revitalized Turkic horde rolling over the steppe might disappear forever.

One route was assimilation--a policy attempted in fits and starts over the years toward such Turkic groups as the Tatars, but without a great deal of success. (Although it has to be said that the Tatars served as fine front-men during the period of Czarist Russian penetration of Central Asia.)

A parallel tactic picked up by the new, Soviet Russians from the British was the classic technique of divide and rule--a policy that scholarly commissars apparently embraced with glee.

There were to be no 'Turks' at all, but innumerable smaller groups and nations that went by such names as Azerbaijanians, Tatars, Baskurts, Uzbeks, Kirghiz and Kazaks--just to mention a few of the major groups. Although some of the labels arguably have some basis in the historic record, most had little local resonance and several were pure creations. Kazakhstan, for example, was first known as Kirghizistan



during the first years of its existence as a Soviet geographical entity, graphically underlining the arbitrary nature of selecting names for the new 'ethnic' groups and nations.

Accompanying the fracturing of any lingering sense of ethnic or racial unity among the Turkic peoples was the Moscow-designed campaign to make little islands of culture and language.

Even as Ankara was weeding out the lingual links between Turkey and the wider Muslim/Turkic world, Moscow was encouraging and even creating divisions among the Turkic peoples where none had previously existed.

The success of this policy is reflected even in western press reports: ~~and scholarship~~; *'Azerbaijanians'*, *'Baskirians'* and *'Meschetians'* are now regarded as acceptable labels of description for both people and language; the adjective 'Muslim' is usually added for spice, and swallowed by all; *'Shiite'*, *'Sunni'* and *'Fundamentalist'* are never far behind.

The same informational authorities rarely blink when confronted, say, with a Slavic group in eastern Siberia, undergoing a fundamentalist Christian revival. The idea that 'Orthodox Christian Irkutskian Siberians' might be doing something good or bad is totally unacceptable, because there is no such thing as an 'Orthodox Christian Irkutskian Siberian.' They are Russians, full stop.

That there are 'Shiite Muslim Azerbaijanians' or 'Sunni Muslim Uzbeks', though, is well known by all.

To underline the point in red ink: the confessional identity of anyone within the Islamic cultural zone is exaggerated out of all proportion with religious feeling or activity, while the native ethnic or even racial identity is diminished to the level of being wholly inconsequential.

There are no Azeri Turks; there are Muslim Azerbaijanians.  
There are no Kazan Turks; there are Muslim Tatars.

And if there is any discussion of a Turkic cultural rival, it is put in the context of the 'threat' of fundamentalist Islam.

Is there the potential for an Islamic cultural revival in the Turkish world, and especially in that part of the Turkish world where Islam has been subjected to a campaign to expropriate or expunge it from public and private life for 70 years?

Absolutely. How could it not be? Muslims, even Turkic Muslims, are people, and yearn for the same sort of spiritual pleasures that other, former atheists-by-diktat in the old USSR do.

The question of religious revival is better put in relative

terms: Is the prospect of an Islamic revival among the Turkic peoples any more (or any less) threatening than the revival of Orthodox Christianity in Russia or among Russians in general? I have limited experience in Mother Russia. But I watch Russian television and have spent enough time around the bearded men near Red Square in Moscow to be able to suggest this: rather than the West focusing on a couple of bead-counters in Akshabad, the trend-watchers might better take an equally long look at the rebirth of religion in Russia.

\*\*\*

Recently, an American friend resident in Tashkent summed up his 'Islamic threat' argument by noting that all the new republics have adopted the symbol of the star and crescent on their national flags. This was clear, living proof of subliminal Islam in their political thinking, he suggested--apparently unaware that the star and crescent emblem is only found on the flag of Turkey, and not on the banners of any other 'Islamic' country save for Tunisia, which enjoyed--or suffered--a long period of Ottoman cultural penetration.

You want symbolism? I've got symbolism.

In late 1991, the Russian Federation adopted the two-headed eagle as the new symbol of the post-communist state, to grace official stationary and to be cast in bronze and placed on the front door of Boris Yeltsin's White House. Did it occur to the soothsayers of 'Muslim' flags that the self-same eagle is the symbol of Byzantium, adopted by the Russian czars' in the 16th century as the stamp and seal of their claim to the throne that ruled much of the known world from Constantinople?

Irredentism run mad, or just acceptable nostalgia? We didn't mean to offend anyone or suggest that we claim your country; we just wanted to remind our nation of the grand imperial pretensions of the past...

But irredentism cuts both ways, and no matter how many times officials in Ankara disclaim interest in actively pursuing the dream of Pan-Turkism, the issue has taken on a life of its own.

The growing number of adherents to the doctrine even have tentatively settled on a dialect to be used as a sort of Esperanto in order to linguistically link everyone from the Christian Gagauz of Moldavia to the Bashkurts of Bashkiria to the Yakutsk of eastern Siberia. The main candidate is the sort of Turkish taught in schools in Ankara and Istanbul.

"Anatolian Turkish is not pure Turkish but it is the best Turkish," said Enver Berberoglu, a Pan-Turkist from Azerbaijan who spends most of his time organizing and participating in Turkic cultural and ideology conferences throughout Central Asia as well as in the Turkic speaking regions of Russia itself.

Appropriately, he is named after Enver Pasha, the Ottoman general who died in Uzbekistan while serving in the anti-Soviet 'Basmachi' movement, the last serious attempt to unite all the smaller nations of 'Turan' into a cohesive whole.

Previously, Enver might have been accused of being an agent of Ankara, stirring up an unwanted cultural revival among a problematic part of the population of the Soviet Union. From the Turkish perspective, too, he would probably have been persona non grata in mainstream circles and relegated to the Pan-Turanic fringe, represented by such figures as Alparslan Turkish, the leader of the violently nationalistic Grey Wolves movement.

But today Enver is very grata wherever he goes--be it Mahachkala in Daghestan or Kazan in Tataristan or Ufa in Bashkiria. He has even spent time in Moldava, where Christian Turks are pursuing their own Pan-Turkic agenda as well as in Tuva on the Mongolian/Chinese frontier, where several thousand Buddhist Turks dwell.

"Islam is part of main-stream Turkishness," said Enver, a short, skinny, non-descript guy who favors drab, non-descript clothes aside from his polished red boots, "But it isn't the whole picture--it can't be. We are a nation, not a religion. Think of the Americans, or Germans or French or even the Jews."

Supporting Enver's activities on the ground across the vastness of what was the Soviet Union are such Turkey-based projects as a new, pan-Turkic dictionary, put together by scholars from the twelve primary Turkic dialects running in alphabetical order across any given page, plus Arabic and Russian as reference points, and such Istanbul-based publications as the nationalist/Islamic newspaper 'Zaman' that now has two special editions--one for Azerbaijan and the second for Kazakistan.

One result of the dictionary project is talk, at present, of 'integrating' more words and concepts of the 'other' Turkic languages into Anatolian Turkish to close the dialectical gap even further--a radical change from the policy of the Ataturk-inspired Turkish Language Institute that has created more 'pure' Turkish words than ever existed in the original of 'Grandfather Korkut', the ancient Turkic epic referred to by all Turkic peoples from Singkiang in China to Northern Cyprus.

But the Zaman project remains essentially more interesting, because it addresses the issue of the modern media as a vehicle for communication and influence--and other, presumably more reasonable, sectors of the media have now started following the example of Zaman by opening their own offices and publications in Bridge Head Baku.

As with the rest of the world, the primary tool is television. And in Azerbaijan--or at least on the airways--Turkey is everywhere.

Due to an arrangement between the two countries, Turkish evening news is now beamed into Azerbaijan every night--and the nation, so inured to believing that Azeri television tells nothing but lies, is tuning in nightly.

Similar contractual agreements to beam in Turkish television to Central Asia have also been signed; unconfirmed reports also suggest that the entire telephone and telegraph system of the Turkic states will soon be routed through Turkey, making other pioneer entrepreneurs livid with rage.

"Turkey means to subsidize the entire, rotting communication system from Azerbaijan through Kirghizia," bemoaned an Austrian national who thought he had paid the right amount of 'bashish' to give him the exclusive right to develop a commercial satellite link for Azerbaijan, "There is no way we can compete."

Taking effective control of and developing the communications systems of six different countries may seem like a massive task, but there is no question that the Turks of Turkey are thinking big--and the Turks of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Kazakistan want them to do exactly that.

If the forward planners in Ankara have their way, Turkey will not only be the pre-eminent player in developing local business and diplomacy (a training center for Central Asia diplomats is already in the works) but also will soon be in the school system itself, promoting the Anatolian concept of 'Turkishness' in the books and brains of Azeri, Kazak, Kirghiz, Tatar, Turkmen and Uzbek students who will be obliged to pass a 'Turkish TOFEL' examination before being shipped off to a score of Turkish cities on scholarships. One thousand from each republic, per year, is the number being chewed on by Ankara planners.

The students will presumably be traveling aboard the new 'sky stage' servicing greater 'Turkeli': following the success of the THY Monday flight out of Baku, the service is soon to be expanded to twice a week. There is now talk of direct flights to Tashkent and other Central Asian destinations.

The students will join the growing crowd of businessmen who already favor the line--not the least because it starts and stops in Istanbul.

"Have you ever flown Aeroflot?" a Texas oil man asked rhetorically while waiting for the THY flight, "It is a flying cattle car, and usually late--especially if you have to route yourself through Moscow. The THY flight is a regular, first world journey. Punctual and pleasant, and you can actually buy drinks on board."

Raki, arak or kimiz, sir?

Welcome to the Protestant-Islamic-Turkic world.

Thomas Goltz  
Baku

Received in Hanover 04/10/92

