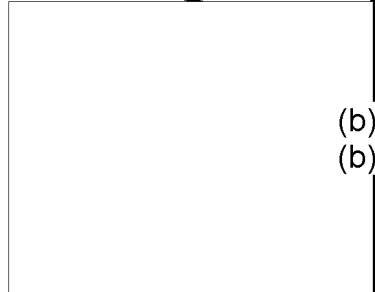




**Director of
Central
Intelligence**

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SPECIAL ANALYSIS

TURKEY: The Prospects for Military Intervention

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[redacted] CIA

Speculation about military intervention is increasing as Turkey is rocked by high-level political assassinations, endemic left-right violence with sectarian overtones, and an impasse between the government and opposition leaders over practically every important issue. The military's constitutional role is confined principally to advising the government through the National Security Council, which is composed of the President, the Prime Minister, and top commanders. Any moves outside of that framework would constitute extralegal intervention. The military took over the government in 1960 and 1971, but its dismal performance on those occasions and its commitment to democratic principles make it reluctant to try again. If the level of disorder becomes any greater, however, senior military officers may decide that their disruption of the democratic process is necessary to preserve it. [redacted]

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There are no signs that a "colonels' coup" similar to the one in 1960 is in the making. A more likely event would be a "coup by memorandum" patterned on the one that occurred in 1971, when senior officers persuaded the politicians to step aside and impose a nonpartisan government. The military might undertake such a move if political leaders seemed incapable of cooperation, although similar military-backed governments of 1971-73 were ineffective and discredited. [redacted]

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At this stage, senior commanders probably would prefer to exert behind-the-scenes pressure on Prime Minister Demirel, opposition leader Ecevit, and the parliament. Such pressure could be direct, where the officers impose their will on political leaders, or indirect, where the officers issue progressively more specific warnings. [redacted]

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The military also could choose to ignore the politicians and enforce rigorously existing martial law powers. The commanders have long pleaded for expanded

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29 July 1980

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powers; lacking a parliamentary response, they could pursue their own interpretation of martial law authority but would not act on it under current legislation. [Redacted]

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Implications

A military government probably could curtail violence-- after quelling the initial protest against the military takeover--but would not redress the basic causes of polarization or of economic malaise. Moreover, this approach would probably force extremists underground as in the aftermath of the coup in 1971. [Redacted]

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Turkey's foreign policy most likely would not change so long as the existing Demirel government, even though controlled by the military, remained in power. Most of the officer corps is pro-Western, and would advocate keeping Turkey in NATO and maintaining close ties with the US. If the junta were shunned by West European governments, however, it might become more neutral in its foreign policy than the current government. [Redacted]

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If the military replaced the current government with a nonpartisan government, it would find it difficult to address underlying causes. Lacking a political base, an above-parties government would tend toward neutrality. It would be more acceptable to Western Europe, however, and the military's influence probably would ensure that it remained cautiously pro-Western. [Redacted]

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The Turkish General Staff probably has applied direct behind-the-scenes pressure because the indirect approach has been unsuccessful until recently. A letter of warning on 2 January, supplemented by increasingly stern public and private statements, has had little effect. Direct military pressure might eventually produce legislation to combat violence and establish state security courts, but the lasting effects of such measures would be questionable. [Redacted]

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If the commanders decided on a strict and unilateral enforcement of martial law, they first would seek immunity

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29 July 1980

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from future prosecution. They would be reluctant to proceed if the politicians refused to provide such guarantees.

[redacted]

In any event, harsher martial law enforcement probably would not dissuade extremists, although it might contain the expansion of violence for a short while. The government would come under intense fire for acquiescing, and its tarnished public image would be further marred.

[redacted]

If the military commanders failed to take any action even as the country drifted toward anarchy, Turkey could be consumed in civil war. Senior officers would see this course as shirking their duty to protect the nation, and almost certainly would act before the situation deteriorated to that point. Nevertheless, they do not seem eager to become fully responsible for initiating what would be a last ditch effort to resolve Turkey's problems.

[redacted]

Outlook

The rapidly deteriorating situation is likely to lead the military to increase pressure on the politicians to bury their differences. The commanders, however, will be reluctant to go beyond backstage arm twisting because they know that they also lack the answers to critical issues. They probably would demand the quick election of a permanent president, expanded powers for combating violence, state security courts to expedite prosecution, and a prolonged period of political truce between Demirel and Ecevit.

Any form of intervention would not come easy to the General Staff, which apparently believes that involvement in politics would distract the military from its primary duty of national defense. Moreover, there are generals--evidently including General Staff Chief Evren--who are committed to democratic principles and want to give the elected government every chance.

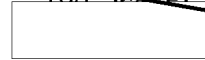
The politicians, probably reacting to military pressure, recently have shown some signs of cooperating to enact security legislation. At the same time, however, the level of violence and economic dislocation is reaching

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29 July 1980

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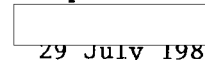


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a point where the institutional base of the government is being undermined. The generals thus may soon see no alternative to taking a stronger role if the politicians do not satisfactorily fulfill their commitment to act responsibly on stronger security legislation. 

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29 July 1980

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