

Erdogan promises Iran Turkish intelligence aid against Israel

DEBKAFfile Exclusive Report

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Turkish PM and Iranian president: Close friends In the secret part of their talks in Tehran on Oct. 28, DEBKAFfile's military sources reveal that Turkish prime minister Tayyep Recep Erdogan and Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad struck *military cooperation deals which promised Iran Turkish military intelligence and air force assistance* against a possible Israeli attack on its nuclear sites.

Their understandings have bound Turkish *to pass intelligence data to Tehran* on potential Israeli preparations for a strike and on US military movements in the Middle East for providing backup. Our sources report that the details *finalized in meetings between the Turkish and Iranian military specialists* in Istanbul Monday, Nov. 9, were due to be sealed by presidents Abdullah Gul and Ahmadinejad Tuesday. The Iranian president is to be in Turkey as guest of the Islamic Conference.

The Turkish prime minister has not only *buried his country's longstanding military and intelligence ties with Israel* but climbed aboard the adversarial axis confronting the Jewish state. Turkey has agreed to round out the forward surveillance outposts encircling Israel's borders: Hamas from the southwest in Gaza, Syria in the east, Lebanon in the north and now Turkey from the northwest. Tehran is banking on this encirclement for early warning of an approaching Israeli strike and any supportive American movements.

According to *Western intelligence sources in Ankara*, heads of the Turkish army objected to their *government's strategic turn to Iran and the cutoff of its ties with Israel*. However its pro-Islamic leaders, which have gradually eased the army out of policymaking, have forced them to accept operational ties with the military of an anti-Western Middle Eastern nation as being in the nation's best interests.

Erdogan's most compelling argument is that President Barack Obama's secret proposal for Iran to deposit 400 kilos of its enriched uranium in Turkey for safekeeping in charge of International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors, had elevated Turkey to an enhanced role as a broker between the US and Iran, sanctioned by Agency director Mohamed ElBaradei. If Turkey, a member of NATO, was able to gain the Iranian regime's trust, the Turkish prime minister maintained, it was only thanks to the military understandings he reached in Tehran.

DEBKAFfile's military sources report that word of the Turkish-Iranian military collaboration deal landed with shocking effect in Washington and Jerusalem. They had not forewarned by their intelligence services that Erdogan was willing to go as far as this to ally Turkey with the Islamic regime.

-- End Report