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There are many terrorist states in the world, but the United States is unusual in that it is officially committed to international terrorism.

– Noam Chomsky

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## Cheney's Man Slated to Replace Feith

by Tom Barry and Tanya I. Garcia

**A** career diplomat and foreign policy operative, Eric S. Edelman has just replaced the controversial Douglas Feith at the Pentagon as the new undersecretary of defense for policy, having been appointed by President Bush during a congressional recess. Many observers had wrongly assumed that Edelman would become Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's top deputy. Instead Rice named former U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick as Deputy Secretary of State.

Inside and outside the administration, Feith's announcement in late January 2005 that he would resign when a replacement was found was greeted with widespread relief. Feith's role in establishing the Office of Special Plans within the Pentagon, his connections to officials being investigated for passing intelligence to Israel, and his role in drafting the new national security

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directive on Iran have created unwanted attention to the Pentagon's policy division. Although the administration wanted Feith out of the Pentagon, there were no signs that his departure signaled any change in policy direction. To the contrary, Feith's replacement by Edelman underscored that the administration was continuing with the foreign policy agenda set forward by the neoconservative camp.

As a career Foreign Service officer, Edelman has been less outspoken than his predecessor and, unlike Feith, not directly connected with many of the neoconservative organizations, such as the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs and Center for Security Policy, with which Feith was associated. However, Edelman will bring with him to the top DOD post his own political baggage and radical ideological views.

Over his government career, Edelman has shuttled back and forth between the State Department and DOD. His latest assignment was as ambassador to Turkey, where he gained the reputation as a meddlesome critic of the government at a time when anti-Americanism began flaring up throughout the country.

President Bush named Edelman ambassador to Turkey a few months after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The Pentagon had been counting

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on Turkey to provide a backdoor into Iraq for its invasion force, but despite repeated entreaties by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, Ankara declined to provide the access into northern Iraq that the Pentagon coveted. After the Turkish parliament rejected the Pentagon's request on March 1, 2003, Wolfowitz met with the country's military leaders in an attempt to reverse the decision.

Serving at the time as Vice President Cheney's national security adviser, Edelman assumed the ambassadorship in Ankara in July 2003. It was widely speculated that Edelman was named to this key post not only because of his close ties to Washington's war party but also due to his family connections to Turkey. Edelman's grandmother fled Russia in the early 1920s, and his mother was born in Turkey. His great uncle taught at Ankara University.

Rather than improving U.S.-Turkish relations, Edelman's two-year stay in Ankara was a lightning rod for deepening anti-U.S. sentiment in Turkey. Typical of the anti-U.S. and anti-Edelman sentiment in the media was an assessment by columnist Ibrahim Karagul that "Edelman is probably the least-liked and -trusted American ambassador in Turkish history."

In his column in *Yeni Safak*, Karagul wrote: "Considering the range of his

activities, his statements which violate the decorum of democracy, and his interest in Turkey's internal affairs, Eric Edelman acts more like a colonial governor than an ambassador... Edelman's actions have exceeded his diplomatic mission. His 'interest' in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the Turkish media, and ethnic minorities make him go beyond his role as an ambassador. His presence here has never contributed to Turkish-American relations, and it never will. If we want to address the reasons for anti-Americanism, Edelman must be issue one. As long as Edelman stays in Turkey, the chill wind disturbing bilateral relations will last."

Another prominent columnist, Can Dündar, wrote an article in *Milliyet* entitled, "Persona Non Grata," in which he observed: "If Turkey today is the leader in the race of 'America-hating countries,' Edelman is a major part of it."

As the war and occupation in Iraq went badly for the United States, the U.S. government blamed Turkey for failing to join the "coalition of the willing." DOD chief Donald Rumsfeld told Fox News on March 20, 2005 that "the insurgency today would be less" if Turkey had cooperated with U.S. invasion plans. "Given the level of the insurgency today, two years later, clearly, if we had been able to get the Fourth Infantry Division

in from the north through Turkey, more of the Iraqi Saddam Hussein Ba'athist regime would have been captured or killed," said Rumsfeld.

Washington also charged that Turkey viewed "liberated" Iraq with increasing hostility. As tensions with Syria increased, rather than siding with the United States, Turkey increased its contacts with the besieged regime of President Bashar Assad. A turning point in Syrian-Turkey relations was Assad's visit to Ankara in 2004, and when President Ahmet Necdet Sezer told the media in mid-March that he would visit Syria as planned in mid-April, Washington and the U.S. Embassy in Ankara quickly reacted.

Angering Washington, Turkey did not echo the U.S. government's and France's demand that Syria remove all its troops from Lebanon. Many in Turkey believe that Washington has attempted to "franchise" what is increasingly called the "Cedar revolution" in Lebanon. Stepping into the fray, Edelman said, "What can be said on Syria is that the international community is completely unanimous on UN Security Council Resolution 1559," which calls on Syria immediately to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. "We hope Turkey will join the international community," said Edelman.

All but chased out of Turkey as a "persona non grata," Edelman is being

promoted to undersecretary of defense for policy. Like many other top officials of the Bush administration's foreign policy team, Edelman began his government career in the Reagan administration. While completing his doctorate in history at Yale University, Edelman joined the U.S. Middle East Delegation to the West Bank/Gaza Autonomy Talks. He then became a special assistant to Secretary of State George Shultz. In 1990 Edelman moved from the State Department to the Pentagon, where he officially served as assistant deputy undersecretary of defense for Soviet and East European affairs.

Edelman served under Defense Secretary, now Vice President, Cheney during the administration of the president's father. At that time he worked as part of a team headed by Paul Wolfowitz that was charged with formulating a Defense Policy Guidance that would serve as the post-Cold War framework for U.S. military strategy. Others working on the draft grand strategy were Zalmay Khalilzad and I. Lewis Libby, Cheney's chief of staff. According to Nicholas Lehman, writing in the *New Yorker*, this team picked by Cheney was "generally speaking, a cohesive group of conservatives who regard themselves as bigger-thinking, tougher-minded, and intellectually bolder than most other people in Washington." In the draft Defense Policy Guidance,

Wolfowitz and team laid out a policy agenda for U.S. military power that stipulated that the U.S. should wage preventive war to maintain unchallenged U.S. military supremacy.

During the Clinton administration, Edelman moved back to the State Department. As ambassador-at-large and special adviser to the secretary of state on the Newly Independent States, Edelman oversaw defense, security, and space issues.

Vice President Cheney brought Edelman back under his wing as principal deputy assistant for national security affairs. As an assistant to Cheney, he was part of the foreign policy network that hurriedly established the "intelligence" rationales for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Edelman, who is close to such leading neocons as Michael Ledeen and Richard Perle, worked closely in the vice president's office with Scooter Libby in establishing a policy network of hawks and neocons that was based at the Pentagon and Cheney's office but extended through key figures into State, the various intelligence agencies, and the National Security Council.

Replacing Douglas Feith with Edelman allows the radicals running U.S. foreign policy to leave behind the controversies building around Feith and get a relatively clean start with a new undersecretary of defense for planning.

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